

The Hotels of Riverstone and the East Family

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Riverstone Hotel

The first license for a hotel in the town was issued for the 'Riverstone Hotel' in 1879, the hotel was located in Riverstone Parade opposite the railway station, near the corner of Garfield Road . The first record of a hotel keeper in Riverstone is that of J. Parrington, described in 21 August 1879 as a publican and butcher.

The licensees were –

1879 – 1882	John Parrington
1883 - 1892	George Ireland
1893 - 1909	Emanuel Joseph
1910	Thomas Buckley
1911 - 1913	Charles Watson

It is likely that George Ireland who held the license from 1883 to 1892 also acquired the adjacent butchers shop at the same time, as an article in the *Windsor & Richmond Gazette* 4 February 1993 noted that Ireland sold his butchers shop to Jack Doyle, after 10 years service.

The hotel was permanently closed on 23 March 1914. The *Gazette* 22 January 1915, noted the hotel premises were taken over by Tom Schoffel and used as a butchers shop. The *Gazette* of 11 June 1915 noted *Mr H. Saundercock had purchased the buildings opposite the railway station and is now demolishing, including the old hotel and other small shops thereon.* The site remained vacant until Conway's Newsagency was built on it in 1925.

In the 1890s the *Gazette* noted that Colonial wine licenses were issued at various times to Mr Trautwein, Herman Wendel, John Mangold, T. Schofield, E. Meyers, G. Daley, J. Daley, Julius Schoffel and Tom Schoffel.

Following the death of H. Wendel in 1901, his license was transferred to Mrs Wendel and then to Charles Davis. This license was transferred to Charles Knight who in turn transferred it to Wally Woods when he bought his shop in 1949. (This shop is now the AP Motor Spares, in Railway Terrace.)

Never Fail Hotel

The second hotel to be built was the 'Never Fail', a two-storey weather board building on the park side of the corner of Carlton Street and Garfield Road West; the hotel is believed to have been built in 1886 by owner/builder David Jackson. Land Title records show David Jackson leased the hotel and license to George Solomon in 1887, and the licensees in 1888 were Joseph and James Marshall.

Early records are confusing but it appears Jackson sold the hotel in 1889 to Mary Kane, who then leased it to John Thomas Neale in 1892. When John died the lease was taken over by his wife Hannah Maria Neale.

The *Gazette* in 1891 noted that E. Joseph was the licensee. On 26 August 1893 it noted that E. Joseph moved from the Never Fail and took over G. Ireland's Riverstone Hotel. Mary Kane, who owned the Never Fail hotel, then became its licensee.

Historian Doug Bowd's book claims the hotel was opened by A. G. East in 1887.

28/9/1912 - The *Gazette* noted the ruins of the old Royal (Never Fail) Hotel, which had been vacant for some time, were being demolished.

Other items in the *Gazette* noted the following –

19/8/1893 - A Riverstone man (unnamed) had inherited 1,000 pounds.

26/8/1893 - A presentation to Mr W. East.

15/12/1894 - Mrs Kane transfers hotel license to Mr W. East.

22/12/1894 - Mrs Kane transferred hotel to Mr A. East, a brother of Mr W. East, the foreman at the meatworks.

26/1/1895 - A liquor license was granted to Mr A. East.

27/4/1895 - The Never Fail hotel changed its name to the Royal Hotel.

14/7/ 1900 - noted the flood of the previous week had reached the ceiling of the first floor of James Wonson's Royal hotel.

20/6/1903 - noted Miss Kane was staying with her sister Mrs Wonson (J. Wonson was the publican 1899-1903)

27/1/1906 - Mrs Kane applied for the transfer of Royal Hotel license to fresh premises. Plans of the new place were exhibited.

12/5/1906 - Mrs Kane is having the rooms at the rear of the old Royal hotel demolished and the bricks utilised in erecting an addition to the premises opposite the railway gates for which she has a conditional transfer, and where the business will be eventually carried out.

19/5/1906 - Mrs Kane is having the premises opposite the railway gates renovated and new buildings erected, it is expected to take three months to complete.

16/6/1906 - The renovations and additions to the large brick building lately owned by Mrs C. P. Ayling are being proceeded with. Some little time ago a provisional hotel licence was granted for this building. A large balcony is now being erected. When completed it should be a commodious hotel.

15/12/1906 - The new Royal Hotel opened last Saturday.

28/9/1912 - The ruins of the old Royal Hotel were being demolished.

19/3/1915 - A Black Ban was placed on G. James Royal Hotel by the local meatworkers.

G. James was farewelled from the district on 14 May.

20/8/1915 – W. J. East complains to Windsor Council re condition of road at front of the Royal.

22/10/1915 - The Royal Hotel license was transferred to W. J. East, after having purchased the freehold of that property two years earlier.

The *Gazette* in 1889 noted there were now two hotels in Riverstone. Records indicate the town could boast of two hotels for a period of 28 years –

1887 to 1895 - the 'Riverstone' and the 'Never Fail'.

1895 to 1914 - the 'Riverstone' and the 'Royal'.

Royal Hotel

The new 'Royal' was the town's first substantial brick hotel and was owned by Mary Kane. It was a two storey structure built in 1906 on the corner of Garfield Road and West Parade, and it was to serve the community until 1977, a period of 81 years. The hotel was expanded in the 1930s with increased accommodation and a ladies lounge.

John Finnegan, who has provided all the Land Titles information and is a descendant of Mary Kane, confirmed that Mary had changed the name in 1895 and then in 1906 transferred the license from the old site to the Garfield Road corner, opposite the railway gates. Records show Rose Kane, Mary's daughter, married William J. East in 1894. Land Title records show Mary Kane as the owner of the 'Royal' in 1907, when the lease passed from Patrick Kiely to George James. The *Gazette* of 20 June 1903, noted that a Miss Kane was staying with her sister, Mrs Wonson.

In the period from 1896 to 1906 the *Gazette* notes the holding of several race meetings on the race track at back of this Royal hotel, sometimes attended by crowds of up to 800.

Royal Hotel licensees:

1896 -98	James Collumb	1943 - 51	W. Morgan
1899 -03	James Wonson	1951	G. Punch
1904	Fred Kingham	1952	E. Butler
1905	Roger Glanville	1953 - 57	J. Shapiro
1906-07	Mary Kane	1957 - 61	F. Butcher
1908	Patrick Kiely	1961 - 62	J. McGrath
1909 - 15	George James	1962 - 64	G. Jefferies
1915 - 19	William East	1964 - 66	K. Williams
1919 - 28	William East Jnr	1966 - 68	E. Webb
1928 - 35	Mrs V. East	1968 - 69	A. Rafael
1935 - 39	Frank Hosford	1969 - 70	D. Ewings
1939 - 40	E. Harten	1970 - 71	E. Lewis
1940 - 43	W. Douse	1971 - 80	L. Dawson

Records indicate the Royal Hotel was owned by members of the Kane/East families from 1887 to 1939. The hotel was known as the 'Neverfail' until 1895 when the name was changed to the Royal Hotel. The name 'Royal' was then transferred to the new hotel built near the railway crossing in 1906. This Royal Hotel was demolished in 1977 to make way for the new Royal Tavern.

The East Family

George and Hannah East arrived in Sydney from England on the *Herefordshire* in 1853 and it appears they first settled in the Maitland area. The eldest son Alfred G. (b.1854) moved to Penrith where he ran a successful butchery business in High Street, a slaughter house at Castlereagh, a farm at Llandilo and became a prominent land owner in the Penrith business area.

The second born son, William Joseph East was born on 18 March 1859, along with a twin sister Lydia Elizabeth. William came to Riverstone in 1878 to work for Benjamin Richards at his new meat works. He was one of the original four slaughter men and was popularly known throughout the district as Billy East. An article in the *Gazette* of 29 June 1934 stated Billy was the first man to grade sheep for the export trade to England.

Billy married Rose Kane, daughter of Mary Kane, the owner of the 'Never Fail' hotel in August 1894, the *Gazette* (1/9/1894) noting that it was a quiet wedding. Their only child, William Joseph East (Junior) was born on 10 September 1898.

Around 1900 the brothers Alfred G. and Billy J. East returned from England and America with a great deal of money they inherited from their grandfather, John Smithers, a silversmith. A book dated 1898 and titled "Unclaimed Money in Chancery in England and America" showed the East family with a full page of entries.

When Billy retired from the Meatworks in 1912 he was presented with a gold watch and chain in recognition of his loyal service. He was immensely proud of this watch. He wore it every day and was never seen without it.

After more than 30 years as a resident of Riverstone, W. J. East and his wife decided to leave the district and take over the Rugby Hotel at Newtown. On 27 July 1912 the front page of the *Gazette* featured a report of their farewell –

A crowd of more than 100 assembled in the Oddfellows Hall at Riverstone when a complimentary smoke concert was tendered to Mr W. J. East who has left the district after more than 30 years as a resident. During the evening Mr East was presented with a beautiful illuminated address. Mrs East was not forgotten, for Mr East received for his good wife a solid silver toilet tray bearing the inscription –

"From the residents of Riverstone to Mrs W. J. East, 20th July 1912", and also a pair of brushes and a hand mirror with silver backs, each engraved with Mrs W. J. East's initials.

Mr H. Kirwan occupied the chair saying that Mr East had been with them for more than 30 years, and had been a good citizen. As an employee at the Riverstone meatworks, Mr East had by merit and his own exertion worked himself up to the very responsible position of overseer of the mutton shed, and was a trusted servant of the Company. All would admit that he deserved the greatest praise in which he had fought the battle of life. When he was only 8 years old, he lost both his father and mother, and had to go out into the world to forge his own career. He was a native of Maitland and at the age of 17 was managing a butchers shop in Singleton.

He had large experience in the shop trade and came to Riverstone aged 31, with splendid qualifications. After 11 years he was promoted to overseer of the mutton shed, a position he held until his retirement last week. The fact that no strikes had occurred during the whole time he held that position spoke volumes for his management and the tact and ability he displayed. It was generally admitted in the trade that there was no better judge of a sheep than Mr W. J. East.

The Illuminated Address he was presented with was embellished with photos of scenes around the works taken by George Wiggins. It read –

"To William J. East Riverstone, 20th July 1912

We, the residents of Riverstone district and employees of the Riverstone Meat Company, regret to learn of your departure from us. Your 30 years of sojourn amongst us has been educational to those engaged in the capacity of mutton butchering. Your explicit skill with knife and chopper is envied by many and accomplished by few. This achievement has been embellished by many with the tact displayed as foremen. Your departure from this district will be felt by all, and your future watched with eager eyes and zealous hearts, trusting your new endeavours will attain the exalted positions of the past.

We unite in wishing Mrs East, yourself and your family prosperity and good health in your new career.

Yours Sincerely

H. B. Francis, W. High, John P. Quinn, G. H. Scott, H. J. Ludeke, J. Edwards, Charles Watson, R. Cruikshank, J.A. Shaw, R. J. Bowden, F. Hundsdorfer, E. B. Shoular, H. A. Kirwan, Chas. Davis, F. C. Bray, L. J. Darling, James H. Smith, R. Small, R. Hodgson, A. C. Crisp and H. L. Lawson.”

After an absence from Riverstone for a period of three years at his Rugby Hotel in Newtown, Billy and his wife returned to Riverstone to manage the Royal Hotel in 1915. On 20 August 1915, the *Gazette* noted he had sent a letter to Windsor Council complaining of the condition of the road at the front of the hotel, near the railway gates. On 22 October it noted the Royal Hotel license had been transferred to W J East, after having purchased the freehold of the property two years earlier.

In the meantime, on 10 September 1915 it noted that Billy had sold the goodwill of the Rugby Hotel at Newtown.

Billy was an active member of the Masonic Lodge. The *Gazette* of 16 June 1928 noted “the Lodge Loyal Prince (W. J. East) bade farewell to Dr. Baden Cook, at a large function held in Riverstone”.

On 21 February 1930, the *Gazette* noted “our good town man (W.J. East) has donated a block of land 70 by 120 feet on the corner of George Street and Garfield Road to the Loyal Pride Lodge of Riverstone. It is understood the Lodge intends to build an up to date hall on this land. His gift is greatly appreciated.”

Billy was a man of short stature, best remembered for his bowler hat and wearing a suit to show off his gold watch and chain. He enjoyed meeting with Harry Kirwan (the post master) and Norm Conway at Norm’s hairdressers shop where they would sit in the front room on the top floor and discuss the events of the day. Following the death of Norm Conway, his son Eric joined in these discussions and he recalled that Bill had become so deaf that to communicate with him the message had to be written on paper.

Eric Conway said Billy then became a father like figure to him and often they would go over to the men’s club for a quiet game of billiards, a game Billy loved to play. Shortly after the death of his wife Billy asked Eric to accompany him to Melbourne to see the running of the 1936 Melbourne Cup. Eric, aged 18 at the time, said it was the trip of a life time: they travelled to Melbourne on the boat *Westralia* and stayed at one of Melbourne’s best hotels. Eric recalled the cup that year was won by the 100 to 1 outsider *Wotan*.

Billy’s wife Rose died on the 20 May 1935 and was buried in the R. C. cemetery at Riverstone, alongside her son. The obituary read –

With tragic suddenness the death took place early on Monday afternoon of Mrs Rose East, Royal Hotel, Riverstone. Wife of W. J. East, aged 64 years. Born at Greymouth, N.Z. daughter of late Henry Kane, married to W. J. East for 40 years. Issue, one son, whose tragic death occurred in Riverstone seven years ago. Brother - Bert Kane, sisters - Mrs Hosford and Mrs Trautwein (Belfields hotel).

William Joseph East (Snr) was killed in a tragic train accident on 7 July 1938. At the time of his death William was profoundly deaf and was wearing a large battery operated device on his chest for hearing. The *Sydney Morning Herald* on 8 July 1938 reported –

Elderly man killed at Riverstone. Legs cut off by shunting goods train. W. J. East, 79 years, widower of independent means, well known Riverstone resident was killed last night by shunting goods trucks at Riverstone Railway crossing. Mr East lived at the Royal Hotel Riverstone which he owned. Late in the evening of the 7th July, he left his premises to post a letter. Shunting operations were being carried out for the meat works and the main railway gates were closed. It is believed he went through the small pedestrian gate and tried to cross the line but was run down by train trucks. Both legs were cut off and he was otherwise injured. His watch had stopped at 9.24 pm and was badly damaged. Parramatta ambulance took his remains to the Windsor Morgue. He was buried in the C. of E. section of Riverstone cemetery.

The Gazette 15 July 1938 reported:

His wide circle of friends throughout the Hawkesbury were deeply shocked to hear of the tragic death on Thursday evening of last week of one of Riverstone's oldest and most popular residents, in the person of Mr William Joseph East, who was struck and killed instantly by a string of rail trucks while crossing the line to post a letter; his chronic deafness having prevented him from hearing the approach of the trucks, which were being shunted over the crossing the deceased was using.

The unfortunate occurrence took place at 9.24 pm (at which hour it was subsequently found that deceased's watch, which was badly damaged, had stopped) and from the fact that a stamped and addressed letter, was found beside the body, it is evident that he had left the hotel, where he was residing, to post this letter. He walked through the pedestrian gate at the railway crossing, and was seen by two young girls walking across the rails with his head bent, as though picking his steps. An engine with a string of trucks was shunting back from the loop at the Schofields end of the station, but deceased did not appear to notice the trucks approaching him, and, as he was very deaf, he obviously could not hear them, or hear the girls calling to him, while the latter had no other means of attracting his attention.

He was struck by the leading truck and thrown beneath the wheels, two trucks passing over him before his clothing caught in the brake equipment of one and he was carried 70 to 80 yards along the line. The train crew were unaware of the tragedy until the guard, while examining the couplings, discovered deceased lying dead beneath a truck, it being necessary to cut the clothing before the body could be released. Dr. Rich was immediately summoned and pronounced life extinct, while Constable Pike, who had been informed in the meantime, communicated with Parramatta, and Sergeant Avery and Constable Rash of the wireless patrol were despatched to the scene. Their examination indicated the occurrence was obviously an accident, for which no blame was attachable to anyone, and the Parramatta Ambulance conveyed the body to the Hawkesbury District Hospital morgue.

The late Mr. East, whose only son predeceased some 10 years ago, and his wife 3 years ago, had been a resident of Riverstone for over 50 years, being 79 years of age at the time of his death, and was known and respected by everyone in and around Riverstone and district, as well as enjoying the friendship and esteem of a very large number of Hawkesbury residents. He is survived by three sisters, Emily (Mrs Furlong), Lydia (Mrs Larter), and Rose (Mrs Fanning), while Frank, Girlie and Renie Hoskins are nephews and nieces respectively.

The attendance at the funeral which took place on Saturday, the interment being conducted in the Church of England portion of the Riverstone Cemetery, was ample evidence of the universal respect in which the deceased had been held, being one of the largest ever seen at that centre. Rev. Hawkins conducted the last rites of the church, while the Masonic service was read by W. M. Bro. W. Nichols. The mortuary arrangements were carried out by Mr Chandler.

In his will William J. left his gold watch along with 500 pounds to George Fletcher, and relatives recalled when the solicitor handed the damaged watch to George, it was in a brown paper bag.

From an estate worth 26,000 pounds, he left money and properties to his three surviving grandchildren, and also left varying amounts to many other relatives and friends. Included in his friends were Harry Kirwan (100 pounds) and Eric Conway (100 pounds and the land on the corner of Garfield Road and Riverstone Parade).

He also left large sums to many organisations including –

Freemasons Benevolent Fund - 300 pounds
Riverstone Presbyterian Church - 100 pounds
Riverstone C. of E. - 300 pounds
Windsor Salvation Army - 100 pounds
Riverstone Catholic Church - 100 pounds
Riverstone Methodist Church - 100 pounds
Masonic Boys Home - 200 pounds.

He also left 300 pounds to his twin sister Lydia and requested that she be buried side by side with him in the cemetery at Riverstone. Lydia later declined this request and chose to be buried with her husband, Henry Larter.

The family of William and Rose East had suffered earlier tragedy when their only son had died in 1928 at the age of 29, leaving a wife and four young children.

William Joseph East (Jnr)

William Joseph East (Junior) had been born on 10 September 1898, the only child of Billy and Rose. He married Veronica Josephine Freeman in 1920 at Riverstone and they had four children - Rose b. 1921, Jean b.1923, Francis b.1925 and Shirley b.1926.

This account of William Jnr's death appeared in the *Gazette* on 20 July 1928:

Hawkesbury people could scarcely believe the report which was circulated late on Tuesday afternoon last, to the effect that William Joseph East Jnr. proprietor of the Royal Hotel, Riverstone, had passed away. Many people did not know he was ill, and the untimely end was a shock to the community. To the relatives and many friends the bereavement was particularly severe because of its pathetic suddenness.

Less than a week ago the deceased was apparently in normal health, and his death was caused by the simplest of mishaps. One day recently he was proceeding to Llandilo, where he had a farm in partnership with his father, when he happened to scratch his arm on the side of the car. The injury was so slight that little notice was taken of it, and among the things he did at the farm was the handling of some sheep. 'Tis surmised that a germ from a sheep's wool got into the wound, as on Friday last he became ill and the symptoms were diagnosed as blood poisoning. So serious was the development that a specialist was consulted and operations performed, the troublesome limb being opened no fewer the 18 times. But the deceased gradually became worse, and notwithstanding that all the loving regard of his parents could suggest was done for him, he passed away on Tuesday afternoon in the 'Craignish' Private Hospital at Windsor, to which institution he had been removed that morning.

Born at Riverstone, the late Billy East, as he was affectionately called by his intimates, was the only son of Mr and Mrs W. J. East (Senior) of that town. He was educated at Riverstone Public School and later at Riverview College, and after leaving his Alma Mater he turned his hand to engineering. Subsequently, however, he assisted his father in the conduct of the Royal Hotel, Riverstone, and upon the latter's retirement a few years ago, he took over the licence of the house. He was married to Miss Josephine Freeman, a daughter of Mr. and the late Mrs George Freeman of Riverstone, who survives him, together with four young children, Rose, Jean, Francis, and Shirley, the latter being a baby in arms.

The late 'Billy' East was a general favourite in and around Riverstone, where he spent the whole of his life, and his death caused profound sorrow among those who had been his companions. Always bright and cheerful, with a lovable disposition, he was a dutiful son and a kind and loving husband and father. In the prime of life he was only 29 years of age at the time of his death and he was a splendid specimen of robust Australian manhood. To be called away so soon, together with the fact that he was the only child, makes the grief of the parents and the young widow all the more poignant.

If any further evidence was needed of the esteem and respect in which the deceased man was held it was seen at the funeral on Wednesday afternoon. It was certainly one of the largest corteges ever seen in Riverstone, people coming from long distances to show their sympathy for the bereaved parents, widow and family. The remains were laid to rest in the Roman Catholic portion of the Riverstone general cemetery, Rev. Father McNally, assisted by Rev. Father Fabian Dwyer conducting the last sad rites. Mr. Chandler was the undertaker.

A magnificent lot of floral tributes were sent by relatives and friends, the top of the motor hearse being covered, whilst a special car was engaged to carry the overflow.

Billy East (Jnr) became a qualified Engineer at the University of Sydney and lived with his family in the Royal Hotel at Riverstone. He had taken over managing the hotel when his father 'retired' in 1924. He was fondly known locally as Billy East and was a member of the Parents and Citizens Association at the Riverstone Public School.

His wife Veronica became the Licensee of the Royal hotel though Billy (Snr) and his wife Rose continued to run it. Frank Hosford, another family member became the licensee in 1935 and held it till 1939.

Other descendants of the East family to have a long association with the Riverstone district were the family of Billy Brookes and his wife Lindia, who was a daughter of Billy East's twin sister Lydia. Their children were Eric (the town's bootmaker for 50 years), Joyce, Ray, Elsie, Allen and Gregory.

Compiled by Clarrie Neal in 2003/5 from information supplied by Evelyn Lauer, Eric Brookes, Eric Conway, John Finnegan and from the Windsor & Richmond Gazette.