



THE MASONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Paper No. 53

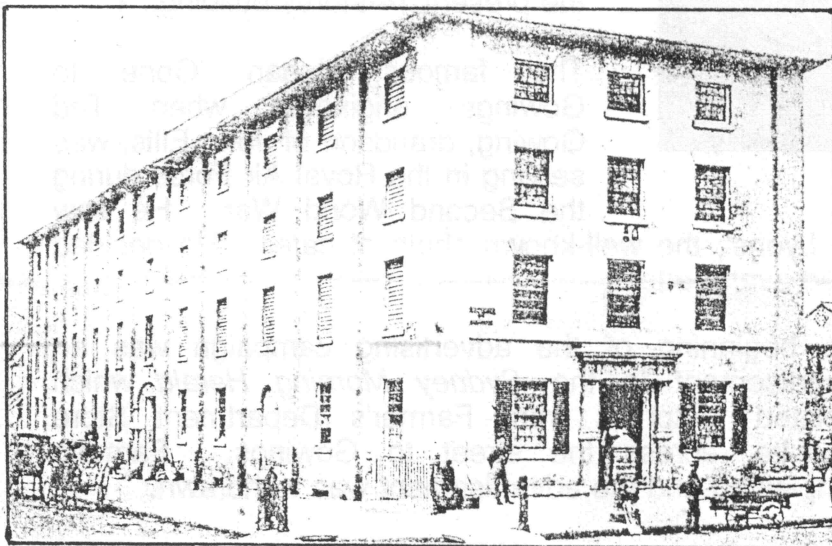
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'GONE TO GOWINGS'

On 2 January 1819, the Governor, Bro. Lachlan Macquarie, leased a parcel of land on the south-east corner of George and Market Streets to James Smith for 14 years.

Two years later, on 13 February 1821, the land was auctioned and purchased by Daniel Cooper who, with his partner, Bro. Solomon Levey, erected a stone and brick warehouse which, with patriotic fervour for Bro. the Duke of Wellington's famous victory, they called the Waterloo Stores. 2



The Waterloo Stores

at Sydney Cove with £400 in his pocket. His people were struggling English farmers and young John had come to seek his fortune on the goldfields. 3

He quickly found that the streets were not paved with gold and, after other members of his family arrived in Sydney in 1858, John took a job in a waterfront warehouse and then joined the live-in staff of the well established retail firm of David Jones. He became manager of the mercery department.

In 1863, John Ellis Gowing went out on his own and opened a small drapery business in Crown Street, East Sydney. He did well and so he decided to move to the city.

On 28 November 1868, he advertised his new Mercery and Glove Depot at 318 George Street. He sold "Ladies and Gents first choice kid gloves in all shades and silk umbrellas."

John took his brother Preston Robert into partnership and the firm of Gowing Bros.

The Stores became a thriving business and even issued its own currency known as Waterloo notes.

The building stood for some 60 years and in the 1920's, it was replaced by Hunter's City Bag Store.

Meanwhile, on Christmas morning 1857, the twenty-two years old John Ellis Gowing stepped ashore

moved into a new Mercery Warehouse at *Edinburgh House*, 344 George Street.



John Ellis Gowing

A second store was opened at 498 George Street and Gowings had become known as "Gentlemens" Outfitters".

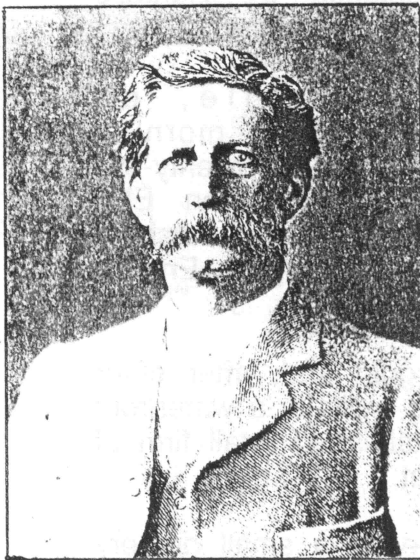
Preston Robert Gowing died in 1900 and John Ellis on 2 October 1908.

The firm, however was in good hands as their sons were there to carry on the business.

In 1922, Gowings purchased Hunter's shop at 454 George Street which gave a George Street entrance to the Market Street property and, in 1930, they erected the present 14-storey building. 4

The famous slogan 'Gone to Gowings' originated when Ted Gowing, grandson of John Ellis, was serving in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War. He saw

placards advertising 'Gone to Lyons', the well-known chain of cafes. He decided that 'Gone to Gowings' sounded even better.



Preston Robert Gowing

The beginning of the advertising campaign was an advertisement in the *Sydney Morning Herald* which depicted footprints from Farmer's Department Store opposite, across the street to Gowings. Farmers complained and the advertisement was withdrawn.

Another famous use of the slogan was when the notorious criminal Darcy Dugan, escaped from custody and scrawled 'Gone to Gowings' on the prison wall. The staff were told 'If you see Darcy Dugan, give him a suit.'

The Macquarie Dictionary has the entry:

Gowings in the phrase gone to Gowings Colloq 1. deteriorating financially 2. ill esp. with a hangover 3. feeling dismally, as if a horse in a race, a football team etc.

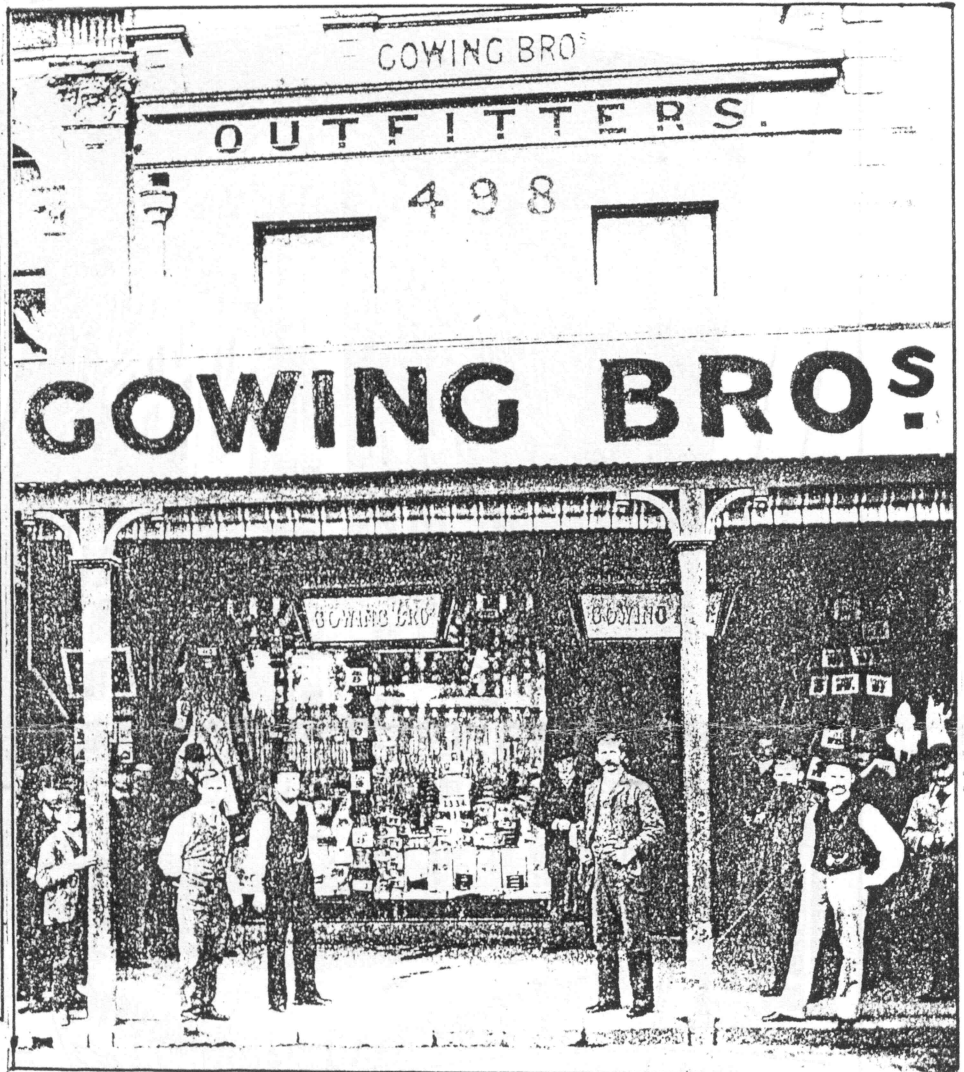
Ironically, the firm of Gowing Bros. Ltd., is certainly none of those things, and the sign outside the store which reads 'Walk thru, no one asked to buy' is still true to its word.

Sydney's oldest family-owned retailer began 136 years ago and four years after John Ellis Gowing opened for business, he was initiated into Freemasonry on 4

March 1867, passed a Fellowcraft on 6 May and raised a Master Mason on 17 June 1867 in the Lodge of Australia, No. 390, English Constitution and now No. 3 on the Register of the United Grand Lodge of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. 5
 He called off on 4 May 1868 but re-joined on 3 May 1869.



Sketch showing Gowing's first store at 318 George Street, Sydney.

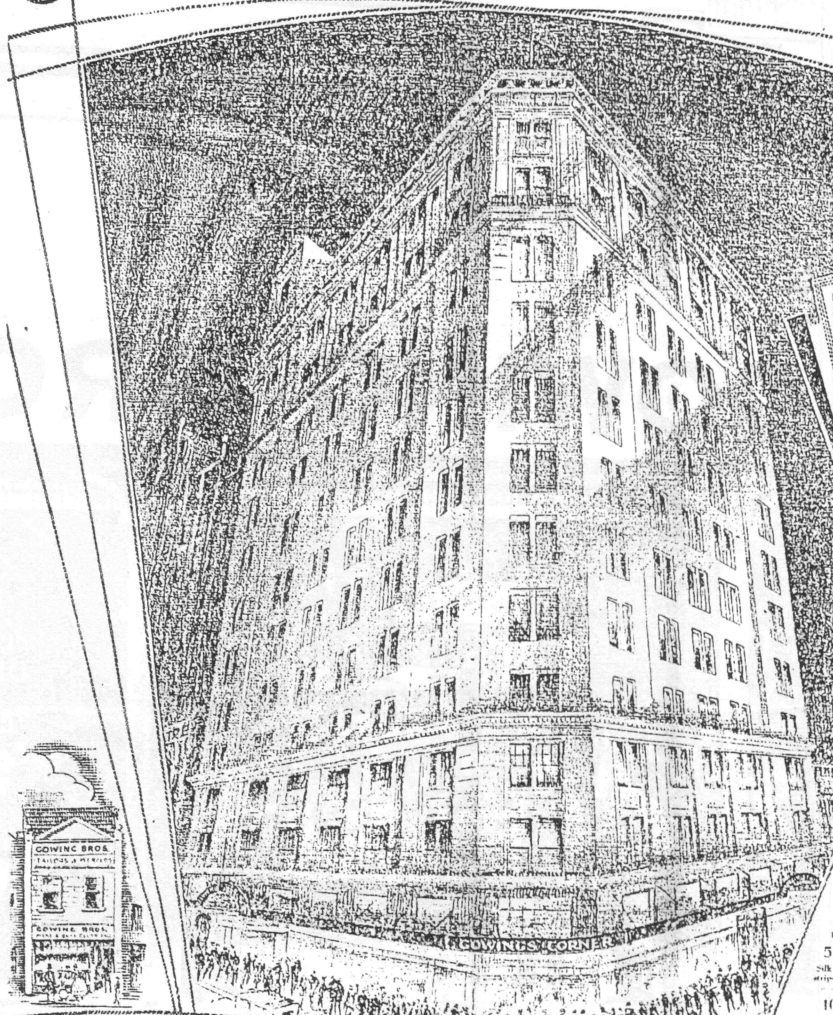


Gowing's second Store at 498 George Street, Sydney.

Bibliography

- 1 Robyn Howard - *The Story of Sydney's George Street*, View Productions Pty Ltd, Sydney, 1984, p 38.
2. Grahame Cumming - *Freemasonry and the Streets of Sydney*, privately published, Sydney 1998, p 59.
- 3 Stephanie Gowing - *Gone to Gowings*, State Library of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 1993.
- 4 Frances Pollon - *Shopkeepers and Shoppers*, The Retail Traders Association of New South Wales, Sydney, 1989, p 104.
- 5 Minute Book of the Lodge of Australia No. 390, United Grand Lodge of England.

Opening Tuesday 10 a.m. *Closed All Day*
GOWINGS' GREAT NEW STORE *Tomorrow (Monday)*



1868 1929

GOWING BROS. LTD
 Corner of **GEORGE** and **MARKET** Sts.
 SYDNEY

COMMENCING business in 1868 in a small shop at 321 George Street the firm of Gowing Bros. has developed into one of the largest Men's Wear Houses in Australia.

Today a magnificent New Store marks the progress of the Firm. For the opening party effort has been made to assemble a range of stocks which in completeness, style and variety, should please the vast majority. Particulars does this apply to the new Christmas goods.

A wide range of fabrics are available, with the location of the various departments. Everything in this section has been planned to secure the utmost convenience and comfort for our customers. Your inspection will be much appreciated and will make no obligation whatever.

In addition to our present sections for Men and Boys we are opening a Tailors Department. This will be found at the Market Street entrance. In a few weeks, on Market Street, a new branch will be installed as well as a Dressing Room with Shower Bath, Wash Room, etc. In the way of customers.

However, satisfaction we must have been able to make our mark in the past, we hope to do even better in the future. We shall look forward to a long continuance of our pleasant business relationship at our new location.

To Commemorate the Opening
GOWINGS
 offer these special Values

- 19/6 United Surf Costumes, 10/6
 United Bathing Costumes with various striped effects on shirt or skirt also with hat striped tops. All-wool. Usually 19/6. Special opening offer 10/6
- 8/4/- Art. Silk Dressing Gowns, 6/7/6
 Dressing Gowns, with mixed designs on Fancy Art. Silks, also the latest designs in Silk Foulards. All smart colours. Usually 8/4/-. Special opening offer 6/7/6
- 25/- Pure Fur Felt Hats, 21/-
 Seven kinds available in Pure Fur Felt. Available in Seal, Mink, Fox, Blue Grey, Fox and Lamb Grey. Full range of sizes. Usually 25/-. Special opening offer 21/-
- 84/- Two-Piece Flannel Suits, 69/6
 All-wool Flannel Suits in two-piece style. Single or Double-breasted models. Good range of new tones with fancy stripes. Usually 84/-. Special opening offer 69/6
- 5/6 and 6/6 Broadway Ties, 3/9
 Silk Broadway Ties. All the latest designs including figured, striped and small pattern effects. They last Christmas Gilt. 5/6 and 6/6. Special opening offer 3/9
- 10/6 Poplin Golf Shirts, 8/9
 11/6 Poplin (Cotton) Shirts with 1 soft collar to match. Choice from a good range of neat all-over patterns. Usually 10/6. Special opening offer 8/9
- 4/6 Fancy Half Hose, 2/11
 Fancy Half Hose in Art. Silk and Cotton or All-wool. Immense range of designs for choice. All sizes available. Usually 4/6. Special opening offer 2/11
- Boys' 50/- Worsted Suits, 45/-
 Boys' All-wool Worsted Suits in Grey shades. Coats have plain backs and Kickers have Golf lines. Fit boys 10 to 14. Usually 50/-. Special opening offer 45/-
- Boys' 5/6 All-wool Golf Hose, 4/6
 Boys' Golf Hose in New Brown shades. Light Summer weight All-wool Cashmere finish. Fit boys 11 to 17. Usually 5/6. Special opening offer 4/6
- Youths' 115/- Worsted Suits, 92/6
 Youths' All-wool Worsted Suits with extra trousers. Neat designs in shades of Grey. Well-cut and made throughout. Usually 115/-. Special opening offer 92/6

An advertisement in the *Sunday Sun* of 24 November 1929 showing the new building on the corner of George and Market Streets, and advertising the official opening on Tuesday, 26 November 1929.

COLD WEATHER WEAR.

CHILLY WESTERLIES. BOISTEROUS SOUTHERLIES.
 RAIN, FOG, MUD, AND WIND.
 What does it all mean? It means discomfort, bad health, and a bad time generally unless you are properly clad. When cold weather catches you, you need not catch cold.—it is unnecessary.

BE CLOTHED WITH GOWING'S WINTER WEAR,

All Wool Undershirts, medium and heavy, all sizes	2s 11d, 3s 6d, 4s 6d	Lambs' Wool Undershirts	2s 11d, 3s 11d, 4s 6d
Natural Wool Undershirts, medium and heavy, $\frac{1}{2}$ sleeves, extra quality	3s 11d, 4s 11d, 5s 11d	All Wool Underpants.....	2s 6d, 2s 11d, 3s 6d
Heavy Winter-weight Natural Wool Undershirts, up to 48 chest	4s 11s, 6s 6d	Natural Wool Underpants, medium & heavy, extra quality	3s 11d, 4s 11d, 5s 11d
		Heavy Winter-weight Natural Wool Underpants, extra quality.....	5s 6d, 6s 6d
		Lambs' Wool Underpants	2s 11d, 3s 11d, 4s 6d

SPECIAL—
 GENT'S DRESS DINNER JACKETS AND VESTS,
 SILK-FACED, 37s 6d.
 FINISH AND CUT EQUAL TO ORDER.

Gowings advertised frequently in Masonic journals in the early years of the Company.

The advertisement on the left is from the *Freemasons' Chronicle* of 30 June 1900, and the one below is from the *Australian Freemason* of April 1877.

OVERCOATS! WATERPROOFS!

HIGH-CLASS GOODS.

Brown, Fawn, Navy, Melton Chesters, Perfect Fitting	21s 0d	Black and Blue, Double Texture, Parramatta Waterproofs, Deep Capes, Sewn Seams,	20s, 25s
Brown, Fawn, Navy, Melton Chesterfield Overcoats, Velvet Collars and Silk-faced	22s 6d	Black and Blue, Extra Quality, Waterproofs, Double Texture, Sewn Seams, Storm Proof, Guarantee 2 years	30s, 35s, 40s
Fawn and Navy Chesterfield Overcoats, Silk-faced and Velvet Collar.....	25s	Tweed Waterproofs, Deep Capes, Fashionable Checks.....	25s, 30s, 35s
Navy and Brown Chesterfields, Silk Velvet Collar, Silk-faced; a Gentlemanly and Stylish Garment.....	30s	The New Goodwood Waterproof Coat, Long Chester, Full Back, Covert Coatings, Sewn Seams, Guaranteed	30s, 35s, 45s
Brown and Navy Melton Chesterfield Overcoats, Superior Finish, with Silk Facings and Silk Velvet Collar	32s 6d	Black Serge Chesterfields, Tailor-made, Satin faced, and equal to bespoke.....	35s
Black Serge Chesterfields, Tailor-made, a perfect fitting garment	30s	Brown and Navy Beaver Chesterfield Overcoats, Silk-faced and Silk Velvet Collar	42s

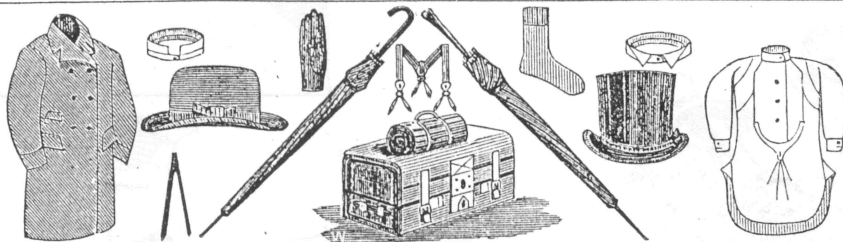
CARRIAGE PAID ON ALL PARCELS
 BY POST, BOAT, OR RAIL
 THROUGHOUT N.S.W.

GOWING BROS.,

MERCERS, OUTFITTERS, HATTERS, TAILORS, AND JUVENILE CLOTHIERS,

486, 488, and 490 GEORGE-ST., SYDNEY (Opposite Main Entrance Queen Victoria Markets).

J. E. GOWING has opened this week 17 cases of Gentlemen's Autumn and Winter Clothing.



Gentlemen requiring Clothing for immediate wear will find a well-selected stock of superior Clothing to select from.

J. E. GOWING,
GENTLEMEN'S OUTFITTER, MEN'S MERCER, &C.,
346, GEORGE STREET, SYDNEY.
 (Half-way between Hunter Street and Post Office.)

Brown and Blue Beaver Overcoats, from 30s. to 45s.
 Blue and Grey Witney Overcoats, from 25s to 45s.

The new Ulster Overcoats in Witney, Irish Frieze, &c.
 Superfine Black Cloth Frock Coats, 63s.

Gentlemen's White Shirts, open front or back, 36s, 40s., and 45s. the half-dozen.



SINCE 1868

Gowing's Logo

J. E. GOWING,
Men's Mercer, Hosiery, Globes,
HATTER, & C.,
No. 346, GEORGE STREET,
Halfway between Hunter Street and New Post Office.)
Gentlemen's White Shirts, open Front or Back, 30s., 35s.,
40s., 45s., and 50s., the half-dozen,
For Fit and Quality not to be surpassed in Sydney.

Advertisement in the
Australian Freemason
of July 1874



Cartoons depicting the slogan that grew and grew!

