



THE MASONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PICNIC SHEET

LUNA PARK

TUESDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2004

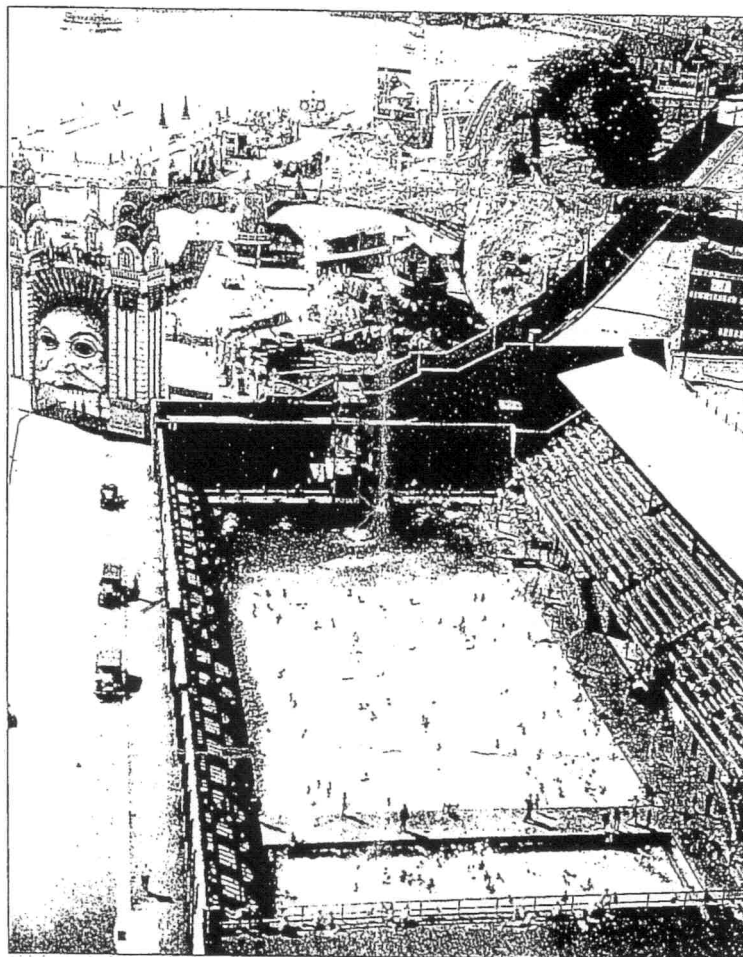
- * Situated at Lavendar Bay, Luna Park opened on Friday, 4 October 1935. The park covers a total area of 5 acres (2 ha). It takes its name from the original Luna Park built at Coney Island, Brooklyn, New York. There were 50 metre queues when the gates opened. It was established by Herman F. and Leon Phillips, who had previously established parks in Melbourne and Glenelg in South Australia in conjunction with the Abrahams family.
- * The Milson's Point site had been used as a construction site for the building of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Phillips won a tender to develop the site.
- * Construction of Luna Park took 3 months and over 1 million metres of timber and 60,000 bags of cement were used. The works gave employment to some 800 people. A team of electricians installed the electrical equipment in 6 weeks and the whole area was paved in 4 days.
- * Many of the attractions were brought by ship from Glenelg, after the park there had closed, including the Big Dipper, the River Caves and the Penny Arcade slot machines.
- * The entrance fee to the Park was 6 pence (5 cents) and each ride cost 6 pence, except the Big Dipper and Coney Island, which cost 9 pence.
- * The first of the huge gateway faces was created by Rupert Brown.
- * In April 1979, 13 people were injured on the Big Dipper.
- * On Saturday night 9 June 1979, a fire, believed to have been caused by an electrical fault, swept through the Ghost Train, one of the Park's original attractions. Seven people died as a result. It could have been more but for the courageous efforts of the staff. Twelve fire units kept the blaze to two buildings by pumping water from the harbour. The Managing Director, Maurice Spatt immediately closed the Park.



- * Harbourside land prices had soared and there were many proposals to develop the site, including a Harry Seidler-designed hotel and convention centre.
- * When the leaseholders failed to re-open the Park in 1989, the State Government legislated for a new Luna Park Trust and, with an injection of public funds, the Park re-opened in 1994.
- * -- The new rollercoaster, with its screaming patrons, passed by Harry Seidler's office window and, as a result, legal restrictions were applied to operating times.
- * Government funding was cut and the Park closed again in 1995.
- * It re-opened again in April 2004.

HAVE A GOOD DAY

G.H.C.



An early publicity photo showing the North Sydney Olympic Pool with Luna Park in the background.