

Herald  
23 March 1968



# It's goodbye to Cliveden

Is it "Cliveden Mansion"? Or is it "Cliveden"? It all depends on which particular school your people sent you to.

In any case, it won't matter very much longer.

The great, grey house on Jolimont Hill has been sold for \$444,000, and the contents will be auctioned next month in 2500 lots.

The place will be pulled down not long afterwards, and from the dust and rubble will rise a \$5 million multi-storey motel with 400 suites and "convention centre."

If the shade of Sir William Clarke, the founder of the line of Australian baronets and builder of Cliveden, could speak, it is doubtful whether he would object. Overly much, anyway.

Sir William built the house in 1887 at a cost of some \$182,000 (more than a million in today's terms) as a sort of family seat for his knighted descendants. It lasted only a generation.

When it was sold to the Baillieus in 1909 it fetched a mere \$44,000 — a loss, in a little over 20 years, of some \$138,000.

The latest sale at least puts the place on the right side of the ledger book.

Allowing for the variables and eccentricities of

## Your City

**STORY:**  
Anthony Hill  
**ARTIST:**  
Gerry Lants.

Victorian "taste," Sir William built his mansion after the style of the original Cliveden, seat of Lord Astor in Buckinghamshire.

It had a 100 ft. by 50 ft. ballroom, a vast billiards room, dining rooms, reception rooms, 28 bedrooms, and five bathrooms. Not bad for 1887.

There were, in addition, 17 rooms for the servants — the indoor servants — with the grooms and the muck-

abouts sleeping over the stables.

The oak panelling and the great oak staircase came from London; the acres of stained glass from Italy, as did the team of workmen who did the woodcarving.

There were chandeliers, marble fireplaces — the dining room has three — beautifully moulded ceilings, and Victoriana by the shop-load.

In 1910 another storey was added and Cliveden

was turned into a boarding house and the place to stay in Melbourne.

There were 57 apartments, each with bedroom, sitting room and bathroom. Nobody who was anybody, and anybody who was nobody had apartments.

Now it is all to go, though the company that bought the place, Dillingham Constructions Pty. Ltd., says there is a chance that some of the panelling, the stained glass and the marble may be incorporated into the new motel.

Whether the name may also be retained in some shape or form is another matter. It is registered, and there may be difficulties.

But what's in a name? Especially when you are not sure of the pronunciation.

# An owl in the ward

From Ruth Jowett

The high cost of kindness is threatening to close down a small hospital in the beautiful British county of Berkshire.

The hospital receives no National Health assistance because the patients are wild birds.

It was founded about three years ago by a young housewife, Mrs Jean Rubenis, who so far has cared for some 1300 injured birds.

The hospital receives no grant of any kind — an appeal to the RSPCA, who sometimes refer people to the hospital, brought a donation of \$110 — but a refusal for a regular monthly allowance.

"I had only enough

money to keep the hospital going for three weeks when I appealed through the British Press for help," Mrs Rubenis said.

"I now have enough to keep it going until September. The first overseas cheque I received came from Australia."

"Star" patient at the hospital is a young swan named Lucifer.

He was rescued by Mrs Rubenis from the reeds on the banks of the flooded Thames, after being blinded and badly concussed in a fight over territory by another swan.

At present there are about 50 birds at the hospital, ranging from a buzzard called Beauty, to a coy, Tawny owl called Coochi that bats its eyelids like a starlet.

## Testing by numbers

By BRYAN HANRAHAN

# GUESTS

# HOME FURNISHING WORLD

## BIG 14-STORE CARPET EVENT