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The Granville Guardian

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The next general meeting of the Granville Historical Society will be held at 2.00 pm on Saturday 23rd June 2011 at our Research Centre
62 Railway Parade Granville
Executive Meeting 1.00 pm

Guest Speaker:
June Bullivant
Powerpoint Presentation
The Aboriginal Contribution to
Australia

Our Centre is open every Wednesday from 10 am to 4 pm and on the fourth Saturday of the month for personal research. Visitors and members of family history societies are welcome. A fee applies for non-members

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

June 2011

Granville Historical Society

A Place where heritage & culture are valued & celebrated

Dear Members, suddenly realised it is time for the June meeting, time is moving so fast that I can't catch up. We have been extremely busy at our working bees. A big thank you to Daphne Wiles and her daughter Frances: Frances has been bringing Daphne to our centre each Wednesday afternoon, and she has been assisting Arthur Naylor to learn the finer details of the database, while Frances has loaded the database structure onto John Scarborough's computer. Welcome back Daphne.

We were given a grant of \$1,500 from the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, which will further our activities. We were also the recipients of a grant from Parramatta City Council of \$5,000 to research the stories of the villages and immigration of the Lebanese families who have made Parramatta their home.

Granville Historical Society has joined the Parramatta Female Factory Action Group's campaign to save from decay and misuse a site that is equally important to Australia as the Sydney Rocks district. They need members who will offer support. The Society challenges other community organisations (not just historical and family history groups) to join as groups (cost \$20), sign their petition, and give financial support, as they are running on committee members' money. Our society is helping with public relations and publicity, and we hope to rally Australians to support the Group's push to have this site given to the community and maintained for future generations to enjoy as an historical precinct. The professional tour operators are already making people aware of the Female Factory Precinct, but the committee will conduct tours on the 9th July to commemorate the laying of the foundation stone when it was built. The tours will commence at 10 am. To book, contact 989 63321 or 0409 830564. A gold coin donation would be appreciated.

Come on Australia, get behind this massive cause and save this bit of Australia which was built in the early 1800's. Join, Donate & Participate.

Barry G Bullivant OAM President.

HISTORIC PRECINCT

The Parramatta Female Factory Action Group has been raising awareness about the historic precinct for the past five years, and currently is gathering signatures for a petition to the government.

In 1817 Governor Macquarie ordered emancipated convict architect Francis Greenway to design a Factory and Barracks that could accommodate up to 300 women on riverside land formerly owned by Governor Bligh. Macquarie laid the foundation stone in 1818, work was completed in 1821, and women were relocated to the new premises in February of that year. The Female Factory precinct also includes the Roman Catholic Orphan School (1841-1886) and the Parramatta Girls Industrial School (1887-1974).

The Female Factory was the destination of all unassigned convict women and their children sent to New South Wales. It was also the colony's principal female penitentiary and played an important role in the provision of medical care for the wider female population. The Female Factory was reassigned as the Convict Lunatic and Invalid Establishment in 1847. For full details, see the web site: <http://pmattafemalefactoryactiongroup.wordpress.com> the petition site is <http://www.petitionbuzz.com/petitions/savethefemalefactory>

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF GROWING UP IN CLYDE By George and Max Pearce

Kendall Street and Wentworth Street were two streets which ran north from Parramatta Road to the banks of Duck Creek. Children growing up here were free to roam around the area which encompassed various places with local names to enable the whereabouts of children to be known to parents. Local location names included "The Flood Gates", "The Showground", "The White Bridge", "Shell", and "The Duck Ponds".

"The Flood Gates" indicated that we were to be in the vicinity of Duck Creek at the northern end of Wentworth Street, which terminated at the banks of Duck Creek. Before my time there used to be a set of flood gates in Duck Creek at the junction of

Wentworth Street but I only saw the partial wooden remains of the structure. This end of Wentworth Street was used as a dumping ground for land spoil and non-putrescent items, which included papers, cigarette packets, and small metal items such as nuts and bolts, which became good ammunition to use with catapults.

“The Showground” was to indicate that we could be found at the northern end of the Granville Showground, in the natural bush area which bordered the mangrove banks of Duck Creek. This area contained natural bush which was annually trimmed of branches to provide fuel for the Empire Day bonfire that was always constructed on a vacant block of ground in Kendall Street. Two weeks before Empire Day (cracker night) branches of bush would be cut, then dragged to be stored on a vacant block in Kendall Street, where they were left to dry before being constructed into a bonfire in the afternoon of Empire Day. The bonfire would be guarded by volunteers till the official bonfire lighting time, when all the residents would gather for the big event. It was necessary to guard the constructed bonfire till the official lighting time to prevent strangers taking delight in prematurely lighting the bonfire and thus ruining our night of celebration. Many bonfires were lit prematurely throughout Sydney but we never suffered that type of disappointment with our bonfires.

At the northeast corner of the showground, in the vicinity of the “White Bridge”, was a swampy area that had water ponds surrounded by reed bushes, together with open mud flats which were firm, but which became slippery when wet and provided entertainment for us by enabling us to run then slide on the slippery mud flat. This area of bush was also home to homeless men during the 1930s and early 1940s where they would construct rude shelters of any material they could scrounge, with corrugated iron being the favoured material. Whilst our activities were mainly conducted in the area of the showground adjacent to Duck Creek, we occasionally rode our bicycles around the paved areas of the showground, or played cricket on the cricket pitch which was inside the trotting track and towards the southern end, or football (soccer) on the football field which was inside the trotting track . In the 1940s there were some remnants of the greyhound trial track which was conducted there by Harold Piper. This trial track consisted of some starting boxes and a lure line which was operated by turning a bicycle wheel.

Negro troops of the American army were stationed in barracks built at Granville Showground during World War Two, and after the war the buildings were utilised by various groups including a practice location for a Scottish pipe band, and an exhibition location for a bird society. The Granville Bus Company was located at the southern end, just inside the entry gate from Martha Street at the intersection of Harbord Street, and was located adjacent to the trotting track and had a large shed-type building for maintenance work on the bus fleet. Some buses were stored to the east of the building and adjacent to the front fence. Trotting Gymkhanas were held there in the 1950s, and some rugby league (Granville Diggers?) was played there. In the late 1950s a Go Kart track was constructed at the southern end of the Showground between the trotting track and the front boundary facing Martha Street. The Granville Showground is now the site of the Parramatta Speedway.

“The White Bridge” was to indicate that we could be located in the area near a wooden bridge which spanned Duck Creek between Deniehy Street, which bordered the eastern side of Granville Showground, and Shirley Street, which was on the northern bank of

Duck Creek. Shirley Street ran from the banks of Duck Creek to Unwin Street which led into Shell refinery, so the bridge would have provided a short cut method of travel for some refinery workers rather than travel via Unwin Street, which at that time traversed the Clyde to Carlingford railway tracks and intersected with Aston Street (now James Ruse Drive). The Duck Creek bridge was always painted white, hence the name the White Bridge, and although it was wide enough to take a single car there were posts installed at the bridge approaches to prevent vehicle access, only allowing bicycle and motor cycle access to the bridge. An old street directory indicates that Shirley Street was once named Ansley Street and may have been changed to reflect Shirley Fertiliser, the fertiliser company which was located in that street. Shirley Street consisted of properties of two companies, Shirley Fertiliser, on the western side, and the Australian Aluminium Company (subsequently Comalco) on the eastern side. The Australian Aluminium Company office was in a cream brick two storey building that was located on the eastern corner of the Shirley Street and Unwin Street intersection. A railway goods spur line ran from near the Aston Street railway crossing, bisecting the Department of Main Roads Granville Depot, and the aluminium company property, and into the Shell Australia terminal. Adjacent to the "White Bridge" in Tennyson Street on the eastern side of the bridge was located the Bates' Ferry terminal. As Duck Creek was not wide enough to turn a ferry around at that spot, it would have meant that ferries would have had to be reversed up Duck Creek from the Duck River confluence to the ferry terminal, or driven up Duck Creek to the terminal then reversed down Duck Creek to Duck River where the ferry would have been able to be turned. Family information suggests that Bates' ferries were used to transport families to Shell staff picnics, and indeed one such ferry was in danger of overturning when all of the passengers went to one side as they attempted to view the "Queen Mary" which was in Sydney Harbour and was being used as a troop ship during World War Two.

The "White Bridge" is no longer in existence and two large pipelines now utilise the concrete bridge supports. Access to the bridge location from the south side from Deniehy Street is now blocked as the street has been fenced off to be part of the Parramatta Speedway and now provides access to the pit area of the speedway.

"Shell" would indicate that we could be found riding our bicycles in the area adjacent to the Shell Australia Clyde Terminal grounds. The Shell Terminal in the 1940s was bounded by Unwin Street and Devon Street, and had a high cyclone wire fence around the property. Also adjacent to the Shell Terminal were a series of warehouse type buildings in Colquhoun Street opposite the Rosehill Racecourse eastern boundary, and which had sloping ends up to a flat loading dock which was similar to a railway platform, and which provided interesting places to ride your bicycle. Travelling down Devon Street to Durham Street then along Durham Street brought you to a marshy area between Durham Street and Duck River. This area was marshy with reed beds and large mud flats, and also two ponds, one being larger than the other. These ponds were known locally as the "Duck Ponds" and contained fish, so was the site of the occasional fishing attempt. Motorcycle clubs used the area and had unofficial motor cycle races on the mud flats. This general area was popular with learner drivers as it provided good roads with little or no traffic and gave them vehicle handling experience before venturing into traffic conditions. I am a product of learner driver experience of this area.