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The Granville Guardian

Patron Laurie Ferguson M.P. B.Ec.(Syd) M.A.(Syd)

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The next general meeting of the Granville Historical Society will be held at 2.00 pm on Saturday 28th July 2012

**At our Research Centre
62 Railway Parade Granville
Executive Meeting 1.00 pm**

**Guest Speaker
Barry G Bullivant OAM
River Reflections River of Stories**

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 ANNUAL REPORT

Granville Historical Society

“A Place where heritage & culture are valued & celebrated.”

This month is our AGM. The year seems to have gone extremely fast. The Working Bee teams have been working extremely hard, and have accomplished many projects. One of which is the Metcalfe and Morris Funeral arrangements. The middle room girls Stephanie Humphreys, Betty Higginson, Robyn Gibson, and Lynn Willing, have been working on database entry and the Metcalfe & Morris funeral arrangements. For our 25th Anniversary next year we will be putting their work on line. So far they have over 66 lever arch folders, with a spreadsheet in the front of each, with the deceased person's name, date of death and folio number. This has speeded up our service to family historians and Guardian Funerals inquiries; thank you girls.

We have assisted Granville Boys High School with three history projects for the year. The next one, where the students are able to assist us with research for our files, is due in September.

We have spoken to over 25 groups this year, with Botany Bay Family History group next on the 1st August. Thank you to June for her assistance with this project. Also June has been extremely busy with inquiries and people seeking assistance with school projects. Thank you to Arthur Naylor for his assistance, not only with the database, but in opening and locking up the centre when we have been ill or attending specialists' appointments. Also a big thank you to Frances Bluhdorn who works with Arthur Naylor keeping the database on track.

The projects that we have performed outside the centre, such as the Granville RSL Memorial Cabinet, were both rewarding and fruitful. Members of the RSL Sub-branch were happy and proud that they were recognised by putting their service and photograph in the cabinet. Thank you to Arthur Naylor and June Bullivant for their assistance. Work on this project

has stalled at the moment, because the grant that we applied for has not been available. Arthur has been responsible for what we call Arthur's lists; he quietly works at home compiling spreadsheets of Parramatta & District Soldiers, and the Sand's Directories which he has scanned and put on a disk for portability. His latest task was to scan two pages of Parramatta Rugby Union Club (The Two Blues) news clippings, as well as numerous pieces of research on Highfield Hall and other subjects. If I need information I just ask Arthur.

Our meeting room team Daphne Wiles, Stephen Carroll and John Tompsett are powering through the back log of cataloguing of books, artefacts, files etc. and have created a mountain of white data entry sheets for Stephanie Humphreys to enter. The middle room boys' team of John Scarborough, John Parkins, Dennis Lovely and Clifford Howard has done a remarkable amount of work this year - data entry of A F Anderson funeral records, scanning, and mounting photographs.

Our archives have been given a tremendous boost by donations of reference books from Elinor Richeal from Scottish House and Marj Hatherley's daughter Gail Kelly and her husband Peter. Much of the research that we have been doing is family history; we have set up networks of people that we are in constant contact with. A young bloke, John Portelli, is updating the History of the Holy Trinity Church that was written by Darley Davey's husband Vic Davey. His work is very thorough and he has been working with Darley and the society to do this important task. He is a young person with a passion; he and his father Spiro have been members of the Church for a long time and John is the organist. We have also been asked to write the history of Metcalfe & Morris of which we hold the funeral arrangements records; we now have a network of historians from the families of the men whom we are in touch with.

Also thank you to Colin Humphreys News Letter el Supremo! A job well done! We have had tremendous feedback from members who say that the Guardian is very interesting. His research skills and knowledge are unbelievable and his dedication to the task is over and beyond all expectations.

June Bullivant and her grant-writing has not been successful, with two grants missing out from Parramatta City Council. From time to time the council's criteria changes, if this is not noticed, the grants miss out. We were successful with a small grant from Parramatta City Council for \$600 for our continuing project of archiving records of community groups namely this time the Parramatta Two Blues, Rugby Union Club.

Thank you to our Public Officer and our Publicity Officer David Eglon for his dedication and determination to keep the society in the public eye. Thank you to Betty Higginson for supplying morning tea and cleaning up after us, a fantastic job, we sure miss her when she goes on holidays. Also thank you to Susan Russell and Judy Forrest for their work on research and mounting newspaper items.

June and I work in the front office where things get a bit hectic. Many people have availed themselves of our files and resources, including the sales team of L.J. Hooker of Granville, who were so impressed by the service they received they gave a donation of \$200 for our efforts.

Our cultural groups, the Chinese Friendship English class and the Cantonese Opera group, and our society are now sharing the premises with Scottish House, a long standing Scottish Group who assist with Scottish history. With their cultural events, they are a very active group that keeps the Scottish culture alive. It's a very nice marriage for us as they make a

small donation which assists the running of the centre, and with keeping the centre clean, and of course Granville History has its roots in Scotland as many of the early skilled immigrants were from Clyde in Scotland.

We welcomed back Maureen McManus, good to see her looking fit and well. To our members, thank you for your support, comments and donations. We appreciate your continuing membership which I might add, is now due, \$10 single, and \$15 for families. People who have recently joined the society and who have paid will not be due until July 2013. We wish all members health and happiness and our condolences go out to members and friends who have lost loved ones.

Barry G Bullivant OAM

OBITUARIES

MARY ELLEN CLARE FERGUSON (1924-2012)



Mrs Mary Ferguson of Guildford, mother of the Granville Historical Society's Patron, Laurie Ferguson MP, died on 15 June 2012.

She was a member of a prominent political family. Her late husband, Jack, had served New South Wales as a member of the Legislative Assembly for almost 25 years, including seven years as Deputy Premier to Neville Wran. Two sons – Laurie, the Member for Werriwa, and Martin, the Federal Resources, Energy and Tourism Minister – are Members of Federal Parliament.

Mary was the daughter of a farming couple in the Riverina, and was brought up in two homes, a rural homestead, and a stately mansion on several acres of gardens and lawn at Guildford.

Her father, Donald Frank Bett, had emigrated from England in 1909, and served in World War I with the First Light Horse Regiment at Gallipoli and in Egypt, before transferring to the Australian Flying Corps in June 1917, serving as an air mechanic in Palestine. Home from the war, he took up a soldier settlers' block at Dirnaseer, 26 kilometres west of Cootamundra, and in 1922 married Alice Barrett, whose parents, John and Mary Ellen Barrett, owned the fine Guildford residence *St Elmo*.

Bett was no novice in the pastoral industry, having spent several years farming at Ariaiah Park near Wyalong before the war, and unlike many soldier settlers, knew how to run a successful farm. He became involved in community activities, including politics, and was secretary of the Temora branch of the Country Party.

Mary attended the small Dirnaseer school, whose sole teacher boarded with her family. From fourth class, however, she lived with her grandparents at *St Elmo* during school terms in order to attend the Guildford Convent and later St Patrick's Church Hill. She also went to business college to learn shorthand and typing. In his tribute to his mother at her Mass of Christian Burial in St Patrick's Church Guildford on 21 June, Laurie

Ferguson said while she was raised in a comfortable homestead and a two-storey mansion, she did not believe, and was not allowed to believe, she was any better than the many children at Guildford who were living in poverty.

Mary first met Jack Ferguson at a Catholic Youth dance in the Merrylands Church Hall in the early 1940s, before he enlisted in World War II. Laurie said she was blessed with a photographic memory for personal exchanges, and could recall each of the occasions she spoke to him. They started going out together and became engaged in 1948. They married on 1 September 1951, after a three-year engagement that Jack said was necessary so he could build a new home for his bride.

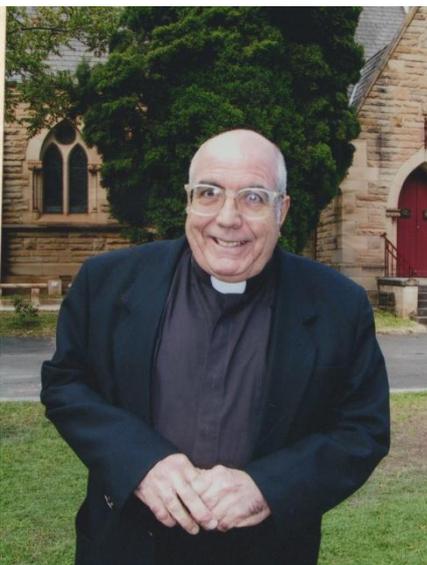
Jack was elected to the New South Wales Parliament in 1959, and when he was elevated to the Labor front bench and became Deputy Premier to Neville Wran, Mary was effectively the local member. Many of the residents of the electorate of Merrylands were of Italian or Maltese extraction, but Laurie said she had a perfect touch with all people, especially those in difficulty. ‘Her kindness transcended language’, he said.

Her Catholic faith was absolute. She worshipped at St Patrick’s Guildford from childhood. She was married there, each of her five children was christened and confirmed there, and when Jack died in 2002 he was farewelled there. At the end of the Mass on 21 June last, Mary Ferguson’s sons and son-in-law and grandsons carried the coffin from the church, as they had done – the same six – with Jack in 2002. The coffin had entered the church on wheels pushed by her daughters and grand-daughters and daughters-in-law and nieces. Mary had first entered that church 88 years earlier.

She is survived by her children Laurie, Martin, Andrew, Deborah and Jenny, 14 grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

[Source: Laurie Ferguson’s tribute to his mother at her Mass of Christian Burial]

REVEREND JOHN KOHLER (1944-2012)



Father John Kohler served the Anglican parishes of Granville and Burwood for 30 years. A lover of fine music, theatre and history, he died on 22 June 2012.

John Maxwell Kohler was born on 26 April 1944 at the Hillcrest Private Hospital, corner of Good and Crown Streets Harris Park, on the ridge overlooking Granville, Auburn and Parramatta – suburbs where he lived for much of his life. The hospital later became the home of the late Doctor John Edward Sheehy, who was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 2002 for service to the Harris Park community as a general practitioner, and as a benefactor for the arts and education.

John’s Swiss-born grandfather, Jules Max Kohler, arrived in Sydney with his English wife in 1912, built a home for the family in Mona Street Auburn, and established J. Kohler and Sons

Engineering Works. The factory was a landmark on the corner of Silverwater and Parramatta Roads for more than 60 years. His mother, Anna Kydd Sym Stopani, was of Italian descent and from a family that had been in Scotland for four generations. She came to Sydney with her parents in 1921. They made their home in a house in Railway Street Granville that was later demolished to make way for the widening of the motorway. Anna married John's father, Norman John Kohler, in 1943.

John lived at Mona Street Auburn until he was eight when his family moved to Pennant Hills Road North Parramatta. He attended Auburn and North Parramatta Public Schools, but he was enrolled at The Kings School for his final two years of primary and four years of secondary education. He enjoyed his time at The Kings School, where he said the atmosphere suited his personality and character. He became an enthusiastic participant in the school musical society's productions of Gilbert and Sullivan. He also developed a love of choral music, singing in the All Saints Parramatta church choir, initially as a treble, and then, as his voice changed, as an alto and tenor. He left school with thoughts of a musical career, and as a first step, worked for three years at Nicholson's music store in George Street City.

However his love of the High Church liturgy and some advice from the Rector of Christ Church St Laurence, Father Austin Day, induced him to train for the ministry at a theological college run by the Society of the Sacred Mission in Adelaide. He also trained at St John's College Canberra and the Morpeth College in the Hunter Valley, and taught in a mission school in Papua New Guinea. He became a deacon in 1971 and was ordained to the priesthood in Goulburn Cathedral the following year. In Adelaide he had met his future wife, Gay Catherine Ladd, and they married in 1973. Then came posts as an assistant priest or curate at Queanbeyan, Cooma, Hornsby and Hunters Hill, before he accepted the invitation of Archbishop Marcus Loane to take over as Rector of St Mark's Granville in 1979.

John Kohler was a warm-hearted and friendly man, who settled down quickly in a congregation that included traditional Anglicans from other parts of the Sydney Diocese as well as local residents. The high points of his tenure came with the celebration of the parish's centenary, and the consecration of the church following the completion of a new vestry. But in 1993, after 14 years at Granville, he felt his stewardship of the church had run its course, and while it was difficult to leave a parish he loved so much, he accepted an offer to become Rector of St Paul's Burwood.

This was his final parish, one he served faithfully until he retired in 2009. He was proud of his association with three historic churches by colonial architect Edmund Blackett – Holy Trinity at Kameruka near Bega, St Mark's and St Paul's. One of his great achievements was to make St Paul's available to the Joan Sutherland Society of Sydney for its fund-raising concerts for the benefit of promising young singers. The church proved to be an excellent venue. He suffered health problems in his twilight years, and died in Concord Hospital, aged 68. He is survived by Gay, daughters Katherine and Annamarie, and four grandchildren.

[Sources: St Paul's Anglican Church website <http://www.stpaulsburwood.anglican.asn.au/> ; Stephanie Humphreys, Oral history interview with John Kohler, 24 October 2007, Granville Historical Society archives; Nigel Hubbard, One hundred years St Mark's Granville 1882-1982, Anglican Parish of St Mark, 1982; *Parramatta Advertiser*, 23 November 1984, p. 5