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The Granville Guardian

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The next general meeting of the Granville Historical Society will be held at 2.00pm on Saturday 27 June 2015 at our Research Centre 62 Railway Parade Granville

Guest Speaker Steven Carruthers
"Mini Subs Sydney Harbour WW2"

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Granville Historical Society

"A Place where heritage & culture are valued & celebrated."

Half the year gone already, I don't believe it. Annual Dues are due 1st July. Our AGM has been moved to 22 August 2015, as June and I have our member Gerry Lefurgy's wedding to attend on the July date.

A busy half year, but it has been very rewarding. Members have been working on many projects; some are ground breaking for our society. Our resident artist Tam Cao has completed the painting of the Royal Gate, and it has been framed and presented to St John's Church; they were very grateful for the presentation. This work was made available by a grant from Parramatta City Council, and was painted by a young artist from Parramatta who is passionate about Parramatta history. Go see it for yourself and post on your Facebook page and share.

We are visiting Delaney College again this week to help with the history and a memorial on WW1 for the school. This is very exciting for Delaney as students from the school were selected to visit Gallipoli for the 100th Anniversary of WW1.

Michelle Desailly who is working on the interpretation for the Lennox Bridge portals, and Granville Park, has referred two men Greg and Shane who are working on an historical piece for Granville. It will be a pole, and when you walk past you can listen to excerpts of oral history.

Work is continuing on our WW1 research for the Parramatta LGA. We were fortunate in procuring two grants from Parramatta City Council to widen our research. Holroyd Local History Research, which hosts the Western Sydney Historical Forum, has offered to research soldiers from Guildford-Sherwood, which is in the Granville area and the



society is to research the many war Memorials in the Parramatta LGA. Thank you Parramatta City Council for your support and taking an interest in the history of Parramatta.

Granville Diggers mounted this display in the Memorial Courtyard; they had TV screens playing different parts of WW1 in the Memorial walkway which houses the RSL Memorial

Cabinet near the reception desk. We would like to thank them for their dedication and assistance which made people attending the Anzac breakfast feel very special when the placemats on the tables featured photos and the personal history of a soldier from their family. We would like this opportunity to thank the management and staff for a very special 100th anniversary Anzac Breakfast.

Our research on WW1 still continues, we are finding many unusual and interesting facts in our endeavours that reveal the social history of the Parramatta LGA.

Barry G Bullivant OAM
President.

THE RESIDENTS OF HIGHFIELD HALL

In our February issue, we told the story of William Robison, a Scottish immigrant who established a successful engineering business in Sydney in the 1860s and built a family home on the *Highfield Hall* estate at South Granville, before moving to Western Australia where he became a leader of the pearling industry. The estate comprised *Highfield Hall*, a large cottage built on a 17-acre block of land, and a smaller cottage of seven rooms known as *Normanhurst* on an adjacent block of 41 acres. The second property was the home of Robison's business partner and son-in-law, Hugh Davis Norman, husband of his step-daughter, Margaret Mary Norman.

William Robison died at *Highfield Hall* in 1894, aged 67, and his wife Margaret passed away in 1896. After Margaret's death, the family decided to lease the two properties to tenants, but in 1905 there was a change of heart and they were advertised for sale in one or two lots. According to the advertising, they were the ideal home for a retired or leisured gentleman, with "a delightful climate, elevated view, and a quick train ride to the city." The selling agents failed to finalise a sale, though there were tenants willing to agree to a lease. Jam company executive, Thomas Bailey Nossiter, and his wife Helen Amy, the daughter of Thomas Irons, the chief executive of Clyde Engineering, lived there from 1905 to 1907 before moving into their new home at Cheltenham. Gregory Keighery, a young greyhound breeder from Melbourne, ran his kennels at *Normanhurst* and then at *Highfield Hall* from 1907 to 1914, before he disposed of his greyhounds to become licensee of the Auburn Hotel at Auburn.¹

A new owner moved into *Highfield Hall* in May 1908. Trotting horse breeder and publican Walter Riddle, was the owner of a breeding stud at Cowra that was the largest in the country, He was also one of several people responsible for the establishment of the Harold Park racetrack in Sydney. Riddle sold his stable of 100 horses at Cowra and set up his stud farm on the 41 acres of *Normanhurst*. In the next nine years in Granville, he was elected to Granville Council from 1911 to 1914, took over the licence of Macks Hotel at North Parramatta, and also received a little bad publicity when he was charged in Parramatta Police Court with drunkenness and "driving furiously" in Darcy Street Parramatta. But it was soon time for him to move on, and between April 1915 and February 1917 he sold all his trotters and farming implements, and moved to Tasmania.²

On 10 July 1917, *Highfield Hall* and its 17 acres of land was again on the market, and was quickly sold at auction for £1,400. Ludwig Deutscher from Arian Park in the Riverina, took up residence in March 1918, and began stocking the farm with cattle. In May, he advertised the sale of 16 cows and heifers, including some with calves or about

¹ *Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)*, 9 December 1905 p. 25, 26 August 1905, p. 15; Sands Directory; *Referee (Sydney NSW) newspaper*, 30 January 1907 p. 4, 30 December 1914, p. 6

² *Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers' Gazette*, 23 May 1908 p. 4, 28 November 1908 p. 8, 2 December 1918 p. 1; *SMH* 19 April 1915 p. 2, 24 February 1917 p. 15

to calve. Then in November that year he announced he had sold the farm to another colourful identity, Ellis Stanley Josephs. Born in Bombay, India, and raised in San Francisco, Josephs was an importer and exporter of animals, including lions, tigers and leopards. Interviewed by a reporter at Broken Hill in 1910, he said he had personally captured 23 lions to that time. He said he had supplied animals to Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide zoos, and others in America and Europe. He first came to Australia with a consignment of small birds, and then took Australian birds to England. Later he exported platypuses to America. Apparently Josephs travelled frequently, leaving animal keepers Arthur and Hannah Moore in charge of his property until late 1925, when the For Sale sign was put up again. *Highfield Hall* was now being marketed as “a lovely country home...standing in park-like grounds of 18 acres, highly suitable for subdivision into building allotments.” At the same time, Hannah Moore, preparing to

move abroad, sold her “superior household furniture’, baby grand piano, Buick car, and two horses and a cart at auction.³



Mrs Laycock (1826) State Library NSW 1

In 1922, John Thomas Piccles, a descendant of two convicts who were early settlers in the Southern Highlands, started a dairy farm on the estate. Although Piccles lived in Sydney in the eastern suburb of Kensington from 1904 to 1921, he had retained an interest in dairying and piggeries in the Richmond River district in the north of the State. In fact, his son Richard gave evidence to a court at Woodburn in 1931 that his father owned all the cattle on his dairy farm. He was a member of the Ayrshire Cattle Society and the Royal Agricultural Society. His grandfather, John Pickles, arrived in Sydney Cove on the convict ship *Minerva* in November 1824, aged 20, after being sentenced to transportation for life at the York Assizes.

He was assigned to a Mrs Laycock (probably Hannah Laycock, who had a farm she named King’s Grove Farm on a 500-acre block granted to her by Governor King in 1804. The land forms part of the present Sydney suburb of Kingsgrove.) Hannah was the wife of Thomas Laycock, quartermaster in the New South Wales Corps, who died in 1809. On 5 January 1837, Pickles was given permission to marry Margaret Catherine Murphy (aka Ranalds). The Reverend Frederick Wilkinson, Church of England minister at Wollongong, performed the ceremony at Dapto on 4 March 1837. Margaret Murphy, convicted in Dublin of stealing a hat, arrived in Sydney from Cork on the *Surry* on 9 March 1833. The couple

• ³ *SMH* 7 July 1917 p. 19, 21 July 1917 p.7; *Cumberland Argus* 9 March 1918 p. 2, 9 November 1918 p. 2; *SMH* 24 May 1918 p. 11; *Barrier Miner*(Broken Hill NSW) newspaper, 27 April 1910 p. 6; Sands Directory; *SMH* 28 November 1925, pp. 20, 23

had one child - John Thomas Piccles's father, John Pickles, who was born at Dapto on 26 November 1838. (The first two generations were named Pickles, but John Thomas and his family adopted the spelling Piccles.)⁴

John Pickles (Senior) remained a resident of the Illawarra for about 20 years. In 1858 he inserted a lost notice in the *Illawarra Mercury*, offering a reward for a double barrel gun he had lost travelling from Dapto Post Office to Brownsville. In 1860, his 22-year-old son John Thomas married 20-year-old Mary Ann Loseby of Bong Bong in St Luke's Church at Dapto. She was the daughter of Thomas Loseby, one of three brothers who had settled in the Bong Bong area. The first of the brothers to arrive in the colony was Richard Loseby who was sentenced in 1822, when he was only 17, to transportation for seven years for stealing five shillings worth of copper. He married another former convict, Mary Rice, became an innkeeper at Bong Bong, and accumulated land. The second brother Thomas arrived in 1832 as a soldier, and was appointed police sergeant at Bong Bong. The pair then persuaded the other brother, Charles to emigrate.

John Pickles died at Bong Bong in 1878 aged 71, a year after his wife passed away.⁵

Young John Pickles continued to work the family farm at Bong Bong, and in 1882 leased two properties, each of 150 acres, in the Oxley Estate at Bowral. The land was part of the first subdivision, created in about 1860, from the original grants of 5,000 acres made to explorer John Oxley. One of the farms was 1½ kilometres from Bowral town and the other five kilometres distant. Pickles became involved in what turned out to be a costly argument with a well-known local resident James Neich in 1885. He approached Neich at an auction in Bowral, complaining about a horse he said Neich had "palmed off" on him, and calling him "nothing but a swindler." Neich took exception to the comment and sued Pickles for slander. A magistrate at Moss Vale upheld the claim and awarded Neich £15 plus costs. Pickles died on 29 October 1886, leaving a wife and nine children, three of them under 13 years of age. They weren't left entirely destitute as his estate was valued at £445.⁶

John Thomas Pickles was 18 when his father died, and must have moved within a few years to Sydney. His published obituary says he spent the greater part of his life in the city. He was a member of the NSW Lancers as a young man, and after he married a Grafton girl, Catherine Lydia Murphy, in 1896, they lived at Paddington, and from 1904 at Kensington. He had moved to *Normanhurst* in Granville by 18 February 1922 when his only daughter, Kitty Dorothy, married James Henry Barnes of Parramatta in Holy Trinity Catholic Church.⁷

⁴ Sands Directory; Obit, UK National Archives: List of Convicts 1788-1825, No. 140, 34/1384 John Pickles.; Laycock, Thomas (1756–1809), Australian Dictionary of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/laycock-thomas-2339/text3049>, accessed online 20 June 2015 ; State Records New South Wales: Records of convicts' applications to marry, Series 12212; Convict Indents, 1788-1842, List of female convicts by ship *Surry* 6 *Richmond River Herald*

⁵ *Illawarra Mercury*, 26 April 1858 p. 3; *Goulburn Herald and Chronicle* 7 March 1866 p. 3; NSW Death Registrations

⁶ *Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, 23 December 1882 p. 2; Loseby Family History, www.farmergroup.com/richardloseby.html ; *Bowral Free Press and Berrima Intelligencer*, 25 April 1885 p. 6; Memorial Inscription, Berrima General Cemetery; *SMH* 18 February 1887 p. 4

⁷ Obituary, *Northern Star (Lismore)*; 14 July 1938 p. 3, 19 March 1937 p. 7

In 1927, Granville Council gave the green light to Piccles to sub-divide his 40-acre dairy farm into 222 building allotments. Developer T.M. Burke took over the sale of blocks in what it called the Norwood Estate. The Piccles family moved out of *Normanhurst* into a house in The Trongate, and later to Harris Street Harris Park. The cottage, re-named *Norwood*, was rented to Dagmar Williams in 1930. Catherine Piccles died at their Harris Park home on 15 March 1937; her husband John passed away 16 months later, aged 69.⁸

⁸ *Cumberland Argus*, 14 January 1927 p. 16; Sands Directory; *Northern Star*, 14 July 1938, p. 3