

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
24 October 2015
At our Research Centre
62 Railway Parade Granville

Guest Speaker

Rodney Rietdyk
“What to do before you Go”

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Granville Historical Society

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

The launch of the Granville Historical Society's World War 1 Soldiers publication has been put back to 2016. This is due to the amount of work involved in the final editing process. The publication was compiled by Colin Humphreys, with assistance from researcher Arthur Naylor. It comprises “Granville Roll of Honour”, which gives details of the Granville men killed in action, together with where and how they died, and “Forgotten Heroes”, men who were awarded medals for bravery. Our research on the Royal Gate is continuing, and we are assisting the Holroyd group by sharing any information we find about Guildford and Sherwood soldiers. Arthur Naylor is involved in that research. We are also compiling details of Granville RSL Sub-branch members who served their country and who have passed on.

The society has continued its presentations to groups this year despite Barry and June having to take time off through illness. We missed two presentations because of that. Artists from Milne and Stonehouse, planners and curators of public artwork, have erected Historical Sound Trees in Granville. When you walk past, you hear excerpts of Granville history, such as oral history from Barry Bullivant, Gary Raymond (Granville Train Disaster) and Yoky (Chinese Opera).

We have also worked with Delaney College on WW1 research, and Holy Family Catholic School (“Forest to Factory” the History of Granville). We supplied our photo boards and information from our files. We put up a display at Westmead Rehabilitation Centre for their 10th birthday on 21 October. We have finished writing the history of the Granville Multicultural Centre and digitising their archives; the project is now in the hands of GMC who want to add to the publication. **Barry Bullivant OAM President**

THE COOEEES RECRUITMENT MARCH

One of the more remarkable aspects of life in Australia during the darker days of World War 1 was what became known as the Gilgandra Snowball – a series of recruiting marches from country towns. Gilgandra in central western New South Wales was where they began 100 years ago this month. The men from Gilgandra passed through Parramatta and Granville after 32 days on the road and were given a stirring welcome.

In the second half of 1915, the number of men enlisting in the Australian Imperial Force began to fall, and in October there was real concern about the difficulty of obtaining sufficient recruits. A recruiting campaign had boosted enlistments in July and August, despite the high casualty lists from the Gallipoli campaign. But the figures after August declined sharply from more than 25,000 to just over 10,000 in October.¹



THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE GREAT RECRUITING MARCH FROM GILGANDRA ON SUNDAY.

The Start of the Cooees March at Gilgandra

The idea of recruitment marches in rural areas to encourage more men to enlist came from the captain of the rifle club at Gilgandra, William Hitchen, a local plumber. He and his brother Dick devised a plan for three recruitment marches, attracting hundreds of volunteers, to converge on Sydney from the north, west and south of the State. At each town the marchers passed through, there would be meetings to persuade local men to join them. Despite some official reluctance to support the scheme, the idea snowballed and at least nine marches were held over the next few months.²

The people of Gilgandra demonstrated their support for the plan with fundraising events and donations of supplies. When the big day arrived on Sunday 10 October 1915, 25 men turned up, prepared to walk the 320 kilometres to Sydney, led by 52-year-old Bill Hitchen. There were farmers, businessmen, stockmen, shearers, cooks and even a swagman.

¹ C.E.W. Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, vol. 11 pp. 290-294

² *The Cooees, the story of the Gilgandra Route March of 1915*,
http://www.rfd.org.au/documents/cooees_story.pdf



Picture Gilgandra - Gilgandra Shire Library
 The Cooees in the Blue Mountains. Smoke from bushfires burning near Springwood, hot humid conditions, and dusty rough roads made the going tough.

By the time they reached Sydney the group had grown to 263. The roads they trekked along were generally rough and unsealed, dusty in dry weather and ribbons of mud in the wet. The group's aim was to cover 16 kilometres a day, stopping at towns like Dubbo, Orange, Bathurst and Katoomba, where they were greeted by cheering crowds, school children waving flags and brass bands, as well as tiny villages such as Geurie, Dripstone and Millthorpe.³

On Day 32, the Cooees reached Parramatta, and after the official welcome and dinner in the Town Hall they had time for a swim in the Parramatta River, before camping overnight in Parramatta Park. Twenty-two men were accepted as recruits, including Allan Colquhoun of Merrylands. The next day the contingent marched along Church Street towards Granville, led by a combined brass band. Crowds again gathered at the Town Hall for a welcome by the mayor Alderman Willoughby before the marchers continued on their way through Sydney's industrial suburbs. Another recruit, Henry Whittemore, had signed up at Granville, followed by two more at Auburn. Finally they arrived in the heart of Sydney where they received a rapturous reception in Martin Place from Prime Minister Billy Hughes and a crowd of 100,000 people.⁴

The Gilgandra March was followed by eight more in the next two months, coming from Nowra, and Wagga Wagga (both ending in Sydney) and from Narrabri, Warwick, Delegate, Inverell, Tooraweenaa and Grafton to various other centres. More than 1,500 men were recruited from the route marches.⁵

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³ *The 1915 Cooee march* <http://cooeemarch1915.com>

⁴ *Cumberland Argus*, 13 November 1915, p. 11; *The 1915 Cooee March*

⁵ *Bean*, p. 316

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

Life Membership certificates were presented to the Granville Historical Society's President, Barry Bullivant OAM, and Secretary, June Bullivant OAM, at the Society's annual meeting on Saturday 22 August 2015.

The certificates were presented by Vice-President Stephanie Humphreys, after Life Member Daphne Wiles addressed the meeting and spoke about the tremendous service Barry and June have given the society since its formation.



Barry receives his framed certificate

The presentation recognised the roles Barry and June have played, firstly in the foundation of the Society, and secondly in the Society's growth and financial stability over many years.

Both were founding members of the Granville Historical Society. Barry was the foundation president, and has been re-elected to that position numerous times. June was the foundation secretary-treasurer.

HERALD DEATHS INDEX

Just over seventeen years ago, members of the Sydney DPS decided to start indexing the death notices from the Sydney Morning Herald. Last week (ending 17 October), they completed the job.

Every death notice published in the Herald since 1831 is now included in Ryerson ... all 1,861,095 of them.

That works out at more than 2,000 death notices per week for 17 years! In addition, over 200,000 funeral notices are included, some of them in addition to a death notice, but many as a substitute for a death notice.

Anyone interested in assisting to complete other papers, are asked to contact the Ryerson Index Secretary via the main page of the index found at: <http://www.ryersonindex.org/>