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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
23 April 2016
At our Research Centre
62 Railway Parade
Granville
Guest Speaker
Greg Wood
“Flynn of the Inland”

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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

Well, we have had a busy two months! The schools around us are using our premises for their archives, and they want to know more of the area to give the students a sense of place. With my work for the Granville RSL Sub-Branch and ANZAC Day, the visits to the schools allow us to talk about the archives that we have.

Some of the questions have been from people like the Alfred Street Preschool. We went to the opening of the Centre many years ago when Terry Murphy and his son Glen owned it. They have asked how they can tell the children about ANZAC Day; with a school of children aged 0-5 years, this was a hard one. We could not do it on the day but we decided that the Historical Society could help.

When we received the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Anzac grant we purchased things like poppies and wreaths, and we made memory planters, book marks and place mats with the soldier's history on them. We decided the preschool could arrange their own little ceremony on ANZAC Day, with place mats and book marks, and a wreath-laying etc, but in a very short simple ceremony. The preschool was delighted. So this has been a spinoff from our work.

Five members of the Society are attending Delany College on 27 April next. Susan Russell and John Fairweather will lay a wreath on behalf of their fathers in WW1, Harry Stephens because he is writing a history of the Holy Family Church and is interested in Catholic soldiers who served in WW1, myself - I have to address the school, and June, our secretary.

I will also attend Granville South High on the same day but at 11 am. We are assisting Leia Tookey, (whose family has been in Granville and was involved in building the RSL in

Blaxcell Street) by supplying and digitising our holdings for their upcoming anniversary, the school has donated us duplicate copies of some of the magazines and we are to swap images etc.

I will not be able to attend Granville East Public for their service as it will be held at the same time as at Delany, but I have arranged for one of our members to be there, and we have donated a box of Fowlie's History of Granville for their end of year school awards.

Our research on the Royal Gate is progressing slowly, but it is important to finish due to the interesting connection of who knows who, and the social history of Granville and Parramatta. This also links into Dorothy Warwick and her Holroyd, Sherwood, Guildford and Merrylands soldiers. Enid Turbit has finished research she undertook for the Parramatta Square and we are looking forward to seeing that in print. Colin Humphreys has finished the Forgotten Heroes and the Granville Honour Roll, and we will launch that at our Christmas Party and Arthur Naylor has been wearing his tyres out chasing up the Honour Rolls in the Parramatta LGA. Our Speaker for this month is Greg Woodward "Flynn of the Inland.

Barry Bullivant OAM
President.

THE AIF AFTER GALLIPOLI

After the safe evacuation of Anzac forces from Gallipoli in December 1915, the reorganised Anzac brigades comprising the Gallipoli veterans and thousands of recruits newly arrived from Australia spent three months camped in Egypt, undergoing training. They began arriving in France on 19 March 1916. Advance parties reached the front line near Armentières in the first week in April, and it wasn't long before they suffered their first casualties.¹

The first Granville man killed in France was Private Robert Dennison, 27, a former shearer, and a member of the 28th Battalion. Born in Granville and educated at Granville Public School, he enlisted on 27 May 1915, and within five months was in the trenches at Gallipoli. In November, he suffered a shrapnel wound to the thigh and was evacuated to hospital in Malta and Egypt. Four months later he was fit for duty and re-joined his unit before it moved on to France. The battalion arrived in Marseilles on 28 March and marched to the firing line at Bois Grenier on 7 April. It suffered its first casualties a day later, when four men, including Private Dennison, were wounded in enemy shelling of its trenches. He suffered severe wounds to the abdomen and back, and died at a casualty clearing station near Armentières.²

Australian infantry were in action in France for the first time on the night of 5 May. After heavy shelling of a salient held by the 5th Infantry Brigade, a party of Germans raided a position held by the 20th Battalion, killing or wounding about 100 men, and taking an officer and 10 other ranks prisoner.³

¹ Bean, *Anzac to Amiens*, pp. 201-202

² NAA: B2455, Dennison R 1119; AWM: ROH Circular, Unit War Diaries, 28 Battalion, April 1916

³ Bean, pp. 207-208



Pte. R. W. LEE (standing), son of Mrs. T. A. Lee, Clyde; and Pte. W. FREEMAN, embarked June, 1915, killed in France May, 1916. Son of Mr. and Mrs. T. Freeman, Clyde.

Among the dead were two Granville men, Privates William Alexander Martin, 26, and William Henry Freeman, aged 29. Private Martin, son of William and Annie Martin of Denman, was educated at Fort Street Public School, and enlisted on 12 May 1915. His mother was the daughter of a Granville solicitor, W.H. Johnston. Private Freeman, of Clyde Street Granville, and married with a two-year-old child, was born in Guildford to Thomas and Elizabeth Freeman. He worked as a fitter and turner after being educated at Guildford Public School. He enlisted on 26 May 1915 and was in the firing line at Gallipoli from the end of August. But in October he became ill with influenza and 'nervous strain' and spent four months in hospital. In a letter home three weeks before his death, he said he was anxious to 'take a pot at the Huns', but confessed he was worried about whether his nerves would stand it.⁴



Lieut. J. DAVIDSON.
Harris Park. Died of wounds, May, 1916.

Barely three weeks later, a Granville officer was killed in a training exercise. Twenty-one-year-old Lieutenant John Charles Davidson, of the 1st Battalion, a carpenter by trade, was commanding a party on a rifle range and had just given the ceasefire signal when a soldier on the mound fired a shot and he was fatally wounded. An inquiry returned a verdict of accidental death, but found that both Lieutenant Davidson and the soldier who fired the shot were negligent. John Davidson, son of James and Ellen Davidson of Harris Park, was born at Bathurst but went to Auburn Public School. He had trained for more than four years with the senior cadets and militia before enlisting in December 1915. He had left Sydney at the end of March and joined the battalion only a few weeks before his death.⁵

But ahead was the first major engagement of Australian forces in France, the Battle of Fromelles on 19 July 1916, when the Australian 5th Division suffered more than five-and-a-half thousand casualties in the overnight battle

⁴ NAA: B2455, Martin W A 617; AWM: ROH Circular; NAA, B2455, Freeman W H 1706; *Cumberland Argus*, 10 June 1916, p. 10; Unit War Diaries, 20 Battalion, May 1916

⁵ NAA: B2455, Davidson J C; AWM: ROH Circular, First World War Diaries, 1 Battalion June 1916; Bean *The AIF in France 1916*, vol 3, p. 471; *Cumberland Argus*, 29 July 1916 p. 10

EARLY HISTORY OF GRANVILLE HOTEL



The Granville Hotel dates back to the early 1880s when Granville was beginning to emerge as an industrial town. The hotel has undergone several structural changes over the years, but part of the original building remains.

In 1865, James Niblett, a railway signalman, purchased 2.5 acres (1.01 hectares) of land at Parramatta Junction (the old name for Granville) between Good, Cowper and Bold Streets and the railway line for £24. Niblett claimed to be the earliest settler in Granville. With his wife and children, he arrived in Sydney in November 1853 on the *Maidstone* among the 500 labourers, recruited in England to replace the workforce on the Sydney to Parramatta railway construction that deserted to the goldfields when gold was discovered at Ophir near Bathurst in 1851. Niblett worked on the railway for about a year until he, too, couldn't resist the lure of the goldfields. However he re-entered the railway service as a senior porter at Liverpool railway station in 1856, and for 20 years from about 1860 until his retirement was a signalman at Granville.⁶



As he moved into retirement, Niblett engaged Sydney architect Thomas Butement to design a two-storey family home on part of his land in May 1880. He also contracted local builders Dawes Brothers to erect a two-storey 13-room hotel in Good Street. In July 1881 Niblett applied to the Licensing Court for a publican's licence, but the court would only grant permission for a wine and fruit

⁶ Land and Property NSW (LPI), Old System Land Titles, Book 91 No. 891; State Records NSW, Persons on Bounty Ships 1853-1855, Per *Maidstone* Reel 2137; *Cumberland Mercury*, 16 May 1885 p. 8

shop. Niblett changed his approach and leased the premises to Samuel Robert Horwood , licensed victualler of Parramatta, who was able to transfer his liquor licence from North Parramatta in 1882. In April 1882 architect Thomas Butement called tenders for additions to “Horwood’s Granville Hotel”.⁷



The hotel with balcony c. 1914-1919



After the 1920 renovation with the publican Jeremiah Dwyer’s sulky parked outside

⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)*, 11 May 1880 p. 6, 24 May 1880 p. 8; T. Fowlie, *The History of Granville 1919*, Granville Historical Society, 2001; Old System Land Titles, Book 270 No. 238; Fowlie p. 105; *Mercury*, 16 May 1885 p. 8; Land Titles, Book 336 No.340; *Cumberland Argus*, 7 February 1891 p. 4, *SMH 20 1898*
NSW Heritage Inventory
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=2240224>

A new licensee, New Zealander Richard B. Goff, took over the licence in 1884, but 12 months later, Niblett – by then a member of the new Granville Council - collapsed and died at a council meeting. The hotel and all Niblett properties were sold, in accordance with his will. The hotel's new owner, the Castlemaine Brewing Malting and Wine and Spirit Company, paid £5050 at auction. Goff retained the licence until February 1891 when he sold it to Michael Bourke., who transferred it to his brother-in-law, Stephen Guinnery, in 1898. He remained the licensee for 20 years, and in about 1914 launched another major renovation. The front section facing Good Street including a balcony was demolished, but the old 1881-82 two-story wing was incorporated in the new building.

Jeremiah Dwyer who took over the licence in May 1919 completed another renovation c. 1920-1923 with the construction of a new saloon bar with additional frontage to Good Street. The hotel has continued to change hands over the years, and a Liquor Royal Commission in 1951 was told that along with the Ship Inn at Circular Quay and the Liverpool Hotel it was one of three very profitable hotels run by the Plasto family.⁸

⁸ *Cumberland Argus*, 26 June 1920 p.2, 24 November 1923 p. 2