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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 24 September 2016 At our Research Centre 62 Railway Parade Granville  
**Guest Speaker:**  
**Ron Ray**  
**“Alcohol at Sea”**

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Friends of Mays Hill Cemetery

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### Granville Historical Society

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

We have had another busy month of activities. The society was invited to speak for History Week by the local studies of Holroyd Library and Auburn Library. We also provided the venue for one of the talks; we spoke about the history of Granville while the other Librarians spoke about the Auburn and Holroyd areas. The three meetings were well attended and congratulations are extended to Stephen, Jane and Thomas for their idea to host this activity. A good time was had by all and people were attentive and interested.

Working bees have continued, with some people not making it for various reasons; a big thank you to the people who have soldiered on and managed to keep the society going. A big Get Well is sent on behalf of all members to Pam Tompsett who is suffering ill health at the moment. We extend your thoughts and prayers to her and John for a rapid recovery. We lost member Warren Fox who passed away peacefully in his sleep, and we send our condolences to his family. Fox Sports rang about someone from Granville Magpies who served in the war, we contacted Dennis Overton who put us in contact with Tom Newhouse who will fulfil that brief. Fox Sport was very grateful for our efforts, and this will air around Remembrance Day in November. Other enquiries have been pouring in and thank you to Arthur Naylor and Colin Humphreys for their ongoing assistance with this; we are receiving at least three a week. It never ceases to amaze me the knowledge and the passion of these two boys.

Congratulations from members for the wine makers of Guildford have been coming in.

The continuation of our Parramatta project took a further move forward when we wrote up a grant for the Parramatta Female Factory Friends (they do not have an ABN required by the Smarty Grants to apply themselves). The grant was from the “Stronger Community Building Grants”. It was mainly for basic resources to run the organisation and to print necessary brochures and fact sheets to further impart knowledge to the wider Australian community. The management of the social media and website was lacking some input, and to this end we have built a website that will run alongside the “official site”. The society has purchased the domain of “parramattafemalefactoryfriends.org.au” entitled “The Fleet Street Heritage Precinct. This site is to highlight the Female Factory and their activities and also bring attention to the other heritage buildings which are part of the North Parramatta Urban Growth Development.

Social media including Facebook is being used to share information; the PFFF Facebook page went from 361 members to 642 [ <https://www.facebook.com/parrafactory/> ] in a little over a month. The secret to this surge in interest is liking and sharing. A post put up to ask people to make submissions to express “interest” in listing the site as National Interest reached over 30,450 people in that month. We can only hope that this will encourage more people to be aware of the importance of the Parramatta site. If the ruins of the Tasmanian site of “Cascade” can be “World Heritage Listed”, Parramatta with a lot more intact buildings should be. This is the link to the Fleet Street website:

<http://www.parramattafemalefactoryfriends.org.au/>

The society has been supporting the “Friends” by encouraging members to participate and network with other groups in the area that have similar aims.

The “Friends” have a dedicated team of people who work hard to promote the Factory site; they are participating in the “Wisteria Fete” this weekend, and also ran a very successful stall at the NSW & ACT Family History Association at Camden. They have booked a table for the Linnwood House open day on Sunday, and as well they will run a “Riot Day” on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> October. Details will be attached to the “Guardian”. Tours and Trade tables will be available.

Thank you to all our members for your continued support of our “Heritage Projects”. June and I continue to serve on the City of Parramatta Council Heritage Advisory Committee. We are also working with the North Parramatta Resident Action Group, and the Granville Residents Action Group, the Crown Land Alliance which is interested in the management of “Crown Land” (this land covers the majority of open spaces in NSW like “Beaches, Showgrounds, Dog Tracks and Parks”) The continued privatisation and leasing of these assets that belong to the people of Australia is the subject of an Upper House Inquiry that has uncovered massive mismanagement resulting in public land being sold to private enterprise for high rise development and private profit.

Don’t forget our November meeting is coming up; we will launch the WW1 publication “Forgotten Heroes and the War Memorial Honour Roll”

The Guest Speaker for September is Ron Ray, a volunteer guide and member of the Australian National Maritime Museum. His topic “Alcohol at Sea” He is bringing along a

lucky door prize of a ticket to the value of \$75 to visit the “Maritime Museum” and will draw the lucky winner on the day (Thank you to Roy Burton for securing this speaker)

**Barry G Bullivant OAM**  
President

## THE COMPLICATED LIFE OF WILLIAM S. FORBES

At the turn of the 19th century William Stanley Forbes was a respected member of the small community of Guildford on the western outskirts of Sydney near Parramatta. He was a church warden of Christ Church of England, and first president of the Guildford Progress Association. He was also well known in the Sydney CBD where he was New South Wales manager of the Scottish Union and Caledonian Insurance Companies, and honorary secretary of the Insurance Club. But there was a dark side to his character – he was at times a violent man, and his wife and family were the victims of his domestic violence. His wife became so afraid she left the family home and sued for divorce. But this did not become widely known until he was charged with stealing from his employer.<sup>1</sup>

**1031** Name *William Stanley Forbes* 53  
 Date when Portrait was taken *11-8-1908*

Place of Birth *India*  
 Year of Birth *25-6-1854*  
 Arrived in (Ship) *India*  
 Colony (Year) *1877*  
 Trade or occupation (previous to registration) *Insurance*  
 Religion *Church of England*  
 Education, degree of *None*  
 Height, without shoes, *5' 8"*  
 Weight (in committal) *145*  
 Colour of hair *Brown*  
 Colour of eyes *Blue*  
 Marks or special features *Scars on face, back, and forearms. Scar on left upper arm, scar on back, scar on left wrist, scar on right temple, scar on right knee.*

Where and When.	Offence.	Punishment.
<i>Sydney 01/10/08</i>	<i>Stealing</i>	<i>3 years in the Reformatory</i>

*W.S. Forbes*

Official Prison Record of W.S. Forbes

Forbes was born in India on 25 June 1854 and was christened William Alexander Brooke Forbes, but for some reason that is not now clear he changed this to William Stanley Forbes when he came to Australia. He married Eva Marion Walbridge Smith at Calcutta on 17 February 1877. They had nine children; the first two, born in India, died in infancy, and another baby was stillborn at Guildford. The couple and three children arrived in Sydney in the early 1880s, possibly in July 1880. They lived first at Waverley, where a son, Archibald Douglas, was born, and then from about 1891 at Springfield House Guildford. Forbes had purchased this two-acre property, Lot 1 Section 7 of the Ettinger Orchard subdivision (the Springfield

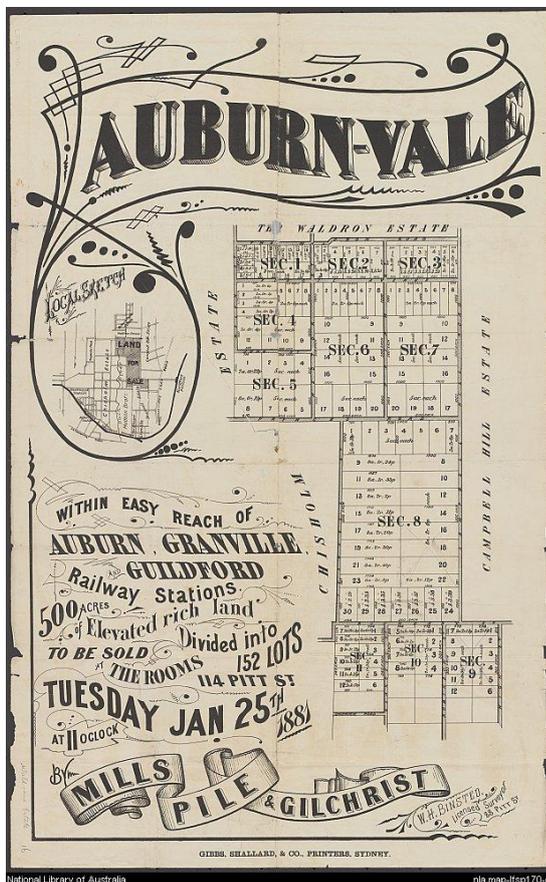
Estate) from developers Thomas Isaac Boyd and George Kennedy King. King

was a local resident in the 1890s although he was living at Strathfield when he died in 1904 at the age of 52. Boyd and King had acquired the entire Section 7 of the

<sup>1</sup> *Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers' Gazette*, 14 September 1901 p. 3, *Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)*, 9 September 1891 p. 8, 16 January 1889 p. 10, *Cumberland Argus*, 15 August 1908 p. 8

subdivision, along with Sections 3 and 6, from Frederick Alfred Adolphus Wilson, a banker and investor, on 31 July 1886.<sup>2</sup>

Prior to the 1870s, large tracts of land in the Guildford district were mainly rural with the occasional farm or vineyard. The main southern railway line had been extended from Granville to Liverpool, but there was only one intermediate station - a small building and platform “in the midst of the scrub at Fairfield”. The opening of a new station at Guildford in April 1876 was the signal for the owners of nearby land such as Henry Whitaker, A.T. Holroyd and William Stimson, to place their subdivisions on the market. By this time, a small village had been established in what is now known as Old Guildford. It had a post office, established in 1867, a public school on land donated by the Whitaker family, and a population (including the surrounding area) of about 100. In October 1876, Whitaker’s subdivision, Orchardleigh, comprising about 170 acres of Samuel North’s original 1831 grant, was advertised as villa and market garden blocks.



His initial sales included three large lots to William Stimson, William Ethelred Jennings, and John Gardiner Laing. (Jennings onsold his 19 acre block, the southern half of Lots 19, 20 and 21 to W.S. Forbes in 1902) Stimson followed Whitaker with the release of 140 acres, divided into five acre blocks, adjoining Arthur Todd Holroyd’s Sherwood Estate, and in January 1877, Holroyd auctioned 126 allotments in a 63 acre estate, that was originally part of the Church and School lands on the northerly side of North’s grant. About one quarter of the blocks on offer were sold at the auction. Typically most of the blocks listed remained unsold at the end of the day, but the vendors’ policy was to continue advertising subdivisions until the land was sold.<sup>3</sup>

More land sales were held in 1881, including John Lackey’s Auburn Vale estate, comprising 152 allotments spread over 500 acres. Sydney copper and brass merchant William Robison purchased 58 acres of this estate at an auction in

<sup>2</sup> FamilySearch.org (India Births and Baptisms, 1786-1947); NSW Birth registrations; State Records: Passengers arriving 1855-1922, NRS 13278/442; NSW Land and Property Information (LPI Online): Torrens Purchasers Index, Book 734 No. 142; *SMH*, 5 June 1904, p.6; LPI Online: Torrens Purchasers Index, 31 July 1886, F.A. Wilson to Thomas Isaac Boyd and George Kennedy King

<sup>3</sup> G. Karskens, *Holroyd: a social history of Western Sydney*, University of NSW Press, 1991, pp. 74-75; M Flynn, *Early History of the 2161 Postcode area*, 2014. *SMH*, 5 October 1876, p. 10; LPI Online: Old System Vendors Index, Book 165 No. 7 Whitaker to Stimson, Book 167 No. 460 Whitaker to Jennings, Book 174 No. 870 Whitaker to Laing; *SMH* 4 November 1876 p. 12; 16 January 1877 p. 10, 23 January 1877 p. 6; LPI Online: Old System Vendors Index, Conveyance Jennings to Forbes, Book 714 No. 969

1884 and built two family homes on the property. [See *Granville Guardian*, February 2015] Lackey decided to sell off a large slice of his land holdings in the Guildford district after the death of his wife in 1901. This included the unsold 274 acres of the Auburn Vale estate, and his properties on the Dog Trap Road (Woodville Road). It didn't take long to find a buyer. The *Cumberland Argus* published this report on 19 October 1901:<sup>4</sup>

*Big Deal in Land*

*Mr W.S. Forbes has just completed the purchase of the whole of the Lackey estate, comprising some 450 acres of the very best land in Guildford. Most of the land has been for over 30 years in the possession of Sir John Lackey, who has persistently refused to sell any part of certain portions at fabulous prices. Mr Forbes intends cutting up the land in lots to suit buyers, and it is expected that with the improved railway service, a large influx of population will take place round Guildford. The Lackey Estate comprises the very best positions on the Woodville-road*

Forbes also purchased two farm blocks in the Guildford Estate between Junction Street and the Springfield Estate in 1903.<sup>5</sup>

Land sales in the Lackey Estate between Guildford Road, Woodville Road and High Street began in 1902, and continued for four years. They were advertised in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Sydney Evening News*, *Sunday Times*, *Cumberland Argus*, *Freeman's Journal*, and *Town and Country Journal*. In 1906, Forbes's acquisition of 52 acres between Boundary Road, Woodville Road and High Street was on the market in a subdivision known as Guildford Park South Granville, "1,000 yards from the Guildford railway station, and the highest point between Sydney and Campbelltown".<sup>6</sup>

Forbes's wife Eva Marion ended their often tempestuous marriage in 1902 and filed an application for a divorce. She had become increasingly afraid of her husband, who was at times very violent, and subject to "mental attacks". She alleged he would wander about [the house] at night with a revolver and knives. Shortly before she left him, he had thrown the youngest child on the floor, and on another occasion gave a severe flogging to his son Adrian. After the start of World War 1, she returned to India to be near another son, Douglas, who had enlisted in the Indian Army.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *SMH* 25 January 1881; LPI Online: John Lackey to Wm. Robison and John T. Walters, 58 acres 2½ pch. Auburn Vale Estate, June 1884; *SMH* 28 September 1901 p. 17; LPI Online: Conveyance John Lackey to Wm. S. Forbes, Book 706 No. 54

<sup>5</sup> LPI Online: Old System Vendors Index, Jennings to Forbes, Lots 19, 20, 21 Guildford Est. Book 714, No. 969, Wilson to Forbes, Book 1458 No. 245

<sup>6</sup> *SMH* 30 May 1902 p. 10 (among others); *SMH* 13 April 1906 p. 8

<sup>7</sup> *Cumberland Argus*, 15 August 1908 p. 8

On 30 June 1908 Forbes, who was living at North Sydney at the time, was thrown from a tram in Bent Street Sydney and although not seriously injured was unable to return to work. He went missing six days later, and police issued a warrant for his arrest on a charge of stealing cheques valued at £2,000 from his employer. He was arrested in the bush at the back of Berry's Bay on 13 July. Forbes admitted to police he had paid the cheques into his bank account, and had drawn on the account to buy a schooner and supplies, with the intention of trading in the South Pacific islands. The vessel was fully laden and ready for sea, and would have already sailed but for an unforeseen delay.<sup>8</sup>

At his trial in Darlinghurst Quarter Sessions, Forbes's defence lawyer submitted his client was so affected mentally after the tram accident he was not responsible for his actions. The jury found him guilty, but recommended mercy because of his previous good character, and he was sentenced to three years hard labour in Goulburn Jail. Further court proceedings followed a month later, when Forbes's estate was sequestered [confiscated] under the Crimes Act. The court was told his debt to the two insurance companies was £3,130, of which £1,563 had been recovered. In September 1908, Springfield House – described as a desirable country residence – was advertised for sale by the law firm, Hughes and Hughes of Hunter Street Sydney, on behalf of the mortgagees. The advertisement noted that it was “at present occupied by Mrs Davis”, who was the mother of Forbes's daughter-in-law. It appears the property was not sold until 1913.<sup>9</sup>

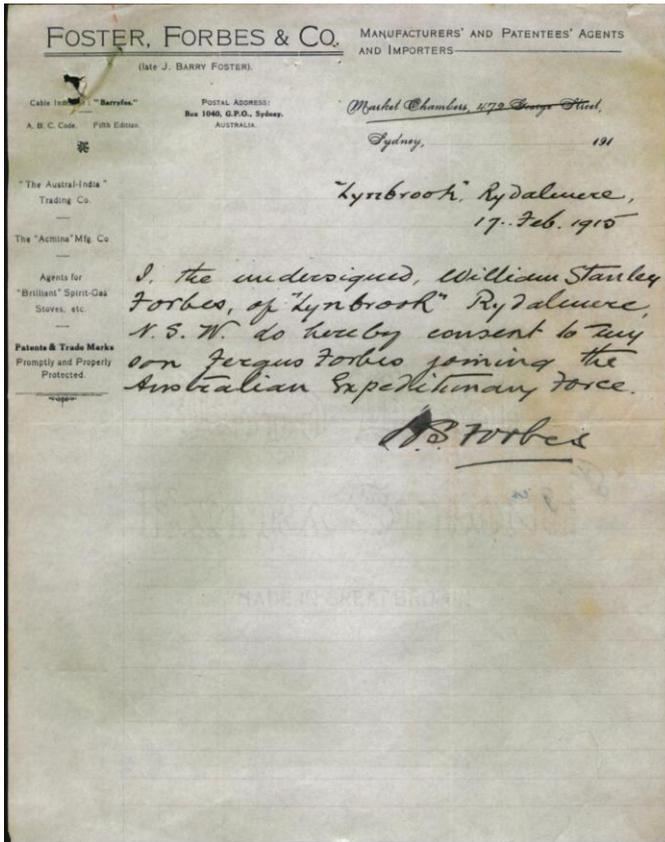
Forbes was out of jail by then and living at Rydalmere. Three years behind bars was seemingly no impediment to his plans to pursue business success, particularly as an importer – a field in which he had previous experience in India. In September 1914 he appeared before the Federal Government's Interstate Commission, which had begun hearings into tariff protection for Australian industry. Forbes identified himself as William Sydney Forbes, an indent agent trading as Foster, Forbes and Co. World War I had just begun, and Forbes, an importer of aluminium kitchenware and spirit stoves, expressed a preference for British products over the alternative of German goods. Foster, Forbes and Co. was apparently absorbed into another firm, Harris Taylor and Co. in September 1915.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *SMH*, 14 July 1908 p. 6

<sup>9</sup> *SMH* 15 August 1908 p. 12; *Evening News (Sydney)* 24 September 1908, p. 5;

<sup>10</sup> *Weekly Times (Melbourne)*, 14 April 1877 p. 1; *SMH* 2 September 1914 p. 9



On 17 February 1915 Forbes gave written permission for his son Fergus Decimus to join the Australian Expeditionary Force. Fergus, a railway porter, embarked from Sydney on 25 June 1915, and joined the 1st Battalion at Lone Pine on the Gallipoli Peninsula on 5 August. Three days later he was killed in action. The Army told the family he was “wounded and missing” and they had to wait until 5 June 1916 before it confirmed he was dead. Forbes’s daughter, Dorothy, accused the army of callous indifference for failing to inform them of the dead soldier’s fate earlier. Between 1920 and 1926, there was another exchange of correspondence with the army over a range of matters, including the wording of an epitaph on the Lone Pine Memorial. Forbes also sought

unsuccessfully to have his son’s full name, Fergus Decimus Forbes, on the Memorial rather than the proposed Fergus D. Forbes. At one stage, a frustrated Forbes complained about “the contemptibly mean attitude of the Commonwealth authorities when dealing with matters in connection with Dead men (who have no votes) and their poor relations.”<sup>11</sup>

William Stanley Forbes died in a private hospital at Glebe on 22 December 1938, aged 84. His former wife, Eva Marion, died at Auburn six weeks earlier on 12 August 1938. They were survived by two sons, Adrian (Mount Victoria) and Douglas (India) and a daughter, Dorothy Stevenson (Merrylands).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> National Archives of Australia, World War 1 Service Records, NAA/B2455 Forbes Fergus 2088

<sup>12</sup> SMH, Death Notices, 23 September 1938 p. 10, 13 August 1938 p. 10