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The Granville Guardian

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

The next general meeting of the Granville Historical Society will be held at 2.00 pm on Saturday 22 July 2017 At our Research Centre 1A Enid Avenue Granville

TO CONTACT US
Write to
P.O. Box 320
Granville NSW 2142
Phone:
Mobile: 0438 31 0216
02 9631 0216

Email:
granvillehistorical@bigpond.com

Website
www.granvillehistorical.org.au
Heritage Watch NSW Website
www.heritagewatchnsw.org.au
Friends of Mays Hill Cemetery
www.mayshillcemetery.org
Facebook:https://www.facebook.com/GranvilleHistoricietyIncNswAustralia?ref=hl

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Granville Historical Society
"*A Place where heritage & culture are valued & celebrated.*"

Dear Members, a communication we received from Member Dorothy Warwick: It is with great sadness that I write this email tonight to let you know that our dear friend and colleague, Pat O'Brien, passed away this afternoon [Sunday 16 July 2017] at St. Joseph's Hospital at Auburn. Pat's condition had been deteriorating in recent times and she was admitted to the Palliative Care/Hospice Unit about 2 weeks ago, but lost her battle earlier this afternoon [Sunday] Pat will be greatly missed by many ………Pat attended the very first meeting with Council in the early days of the Save Linnwood Action Group, and has been a Committee member of the Friends of Linnwood since then. As further details come to hand regarding the funeral arrangements, I will pass them on to you. If anyone would like to send a card to the O'Brien family – please send to 2 Hilltop Road, Merrylands 2160 Regards, Dorothy. Our thoughts and prayers are with Pat's family.

Our rooms are up and running, the working bees are continuing, Wednesday 19 July has been set down for the move of our artefacts from the old rooms to our new venue. I would like to thank the members involved in this massive task. Their work has been remarkable to say the least, and the results achieved by the team of Daphne, Frances, Barry Benson, Vince Hanley, Arthur Naylor, with assistance from Clifford Howard, Dennis Lovely and our resident caterer Karen Hanley have been nothing short of a miracle.

We had a visit from Viv May the administrator of Cumberland Council a week ago and he was very impressed with our new set-up as well as our holdings. President Barry and members thanked Viv over a cup of tea and cake.

Members, as you were made aware in the June President's report, our AGM will be held this Saturday 22 July 2017; thank you to the people who have offered to stand for office and have lodged a nomination form. I would like to thank our members who have served the society for 2016-17; without your work and dedication we would not be where we are today.

Here is the link to the tributes page for our past member David Eglon, from the Sydney Morning Herald, if you would like to leave a message please do
http://tributes.smh.com.au/obituaries/smh-au/obituary.aspx?pid=185088879

At the conclusion of our annual meeting, we will watch the last episode of the video "Banished"

Barry G Bullivant OAM
President

THE AIF HOMECOMING IN WORLD WAR 1

When World War 1 ended on 11 November 1918, there were 171,000 Australian soldiers serving in France, Belgium, England and Egypt. A further four thousand were prisoners of war. If they felt they would be quickly repatriated, they would be mistaken. Although the homeward journey for some would begin in about three weeks, it would be 21 months before the last troopship sailed for Australia. Thousands more veterans were already home, having been invalided back to Australia during the war because of their wounds, or due to illness and problems such as shell shock.

After the armistice, all units of the AIF went into camp and began the process of demobilisation. Some men in no hurry to return home took the opportunity to travel around Britain and France. Several hundred served in Russia as part of a British force fighting Bolshevik forces. Hundreds of thousands returned with permanent injuries, reminders of the horrors they had experienced. Some were so traumatised they could not talk about it. Some had lost limbs or their sight, and the minds of others had been permanently shattered. Historian Manning Clark wrote that no one knew how to handle these broken comrades whose lives had been shattered by the war.

The army had been planning how to bring the men home for months, but it was not easy. There was a great demand for shipping. Australia was not the only country urging the Ministry of Shipping in London to allocate ships to them. The United States, India, Canada and New Zealand also had military forces requiring transport home. Prisoners-of-war were clamouring to be freed; tens of thousands of Asiatic and African coolies, brought into Europe during the war, had to be sent back to their own countries as soon as possible; Belgian refugees in Great Britain had to be returned. However every port was crowded with shipping, while French and Belgian railways were extremely

congested. **Eventually the Australian military authorities were able to put together a fleet of 16 ships, allowing the mammoth 'Bring Them Home´ operation to begin on 3 December 1918 with the departure of the *Port Hacking* from Devonport with 673 Australian soldiers on board.**

The operation struck an unexpected problem when an outbreak of influenza was discovered on a troopship carrying almost 400 men, off the West Australian coast. The ship was the 5,900 tonne former German liner Boonah which had been captured in Sydney at the outbreak of war. The discovery signalled the arrival in Australia of the 1918 Spanish Influenza pandemic that killed 50-million people around the world. The *Boonah* was a former German liner, captured in Sydney at the outbreak of the war. The flu discovered mean it was immediately placed in quarantine, but not before scores of men were affected. Some days later, the ship

HMAT Boonah, formerly the German liner Melbourne

was allowed to continue its journey, and **arrived in Melbourne on 22 January 1919.**

The other Australian troopships in transit were also quarantined on reaching Australian waters. Soldiers on the *Port Hacking* complained that quarantining was unnecessary, and that the only cases of temperature on board were of malaria. Their complaints fell on deaf ears and they were held in quarantine for five days. Meanwhile there was good news about the release of Australian prisoners-of-war. The Red Cross reported 2,912 prisoners held by the Germans had arrived in London, and a further 158 had reached neutral countries, en route to England. However there were still about 130 in Germany, two months after the end of the war.

Returning soldiers classified as wounded or invalids, and men who enlisted in 1914 were given priority in the first wave of ships coming home. Thirteen-hundred were on the steamer L*eicestershire* when it arrived in Melbourne on 22 January, including 380 who travelled on to Sydney on a special train. The vessel made only one trip to Australia as a troopship before resuming on the London to Rangoon route. It was sunk by a German raider in World War 2. Another hospital ship, the *Nestor*, disembarked a further 13-hundred men in Melbourne on 25 January. Eight more Australian troopships were scheduled to arrive before the end of January.

Meanwhile in Egypt plans were being finalised to bring home the Australian Light Horse regiments. Veterinary officers gave all horses a through check-up; fit horses were transferred to the Indian Cavalry, and those in poor condition were destroyed. The First Light Horse Regiment embarked from Egypt for Australia on 12 March 1919 followed by others later that month and in June.

Australian troops were not part of the Allied occupation force in Germany after the war, apart from Number 4 Squadron of the Australian Flying Corps AFC). It served with the British Army of Occupation around Cologne from December 1918 to March 1919, before rejoining the three other Australian Squadrons to return to Australia. More than 300 airmen and mechanics from the AFC arrived back in Sydney on 19 June 1919 on the troopship *Kaisar-i-Hind.*

Women wait to greet returning soldiers in Sydney

The veterans were returning to a country very different to what it was like when they left up to five years earlier. The conscription debate had polarised Australian society. There were bitter divisions between those who had supported conscription and its opponents, and there was also ill-feeling between those who served overseas in the war and those who had stayed at home. A new Empire Loyalist movement had emerged, attracting the support of many ex-soldiers. The Loyalists had strongly supported the war effort at home and abroad, and believed those who opposed them belonged to a network of radical union members, shirkers and Bolsheviks. Tensions between Catholics and Protestants had increased Many Irish Catholics opposed conscription, angering loyal Protestants. Trade unions had stepped up industrial action, and were concerned over another issue – they feared the hundreds and thousands of soldiers about to return from the war might take the jobs of union members.

Some of our war heroes were among the arrivals in the middle of 1919. Victoria Cross winner Arthur Hall arrived back on 26 June 1919 on the troop transport *Devanha,* in a group of 442 New South Wales soldiers, three months after George Cartwright VC. Major Claude Easterbrook, (Distinguished Service Order and Military Cross) returned on *HMAT Borda,* which arrived on 28 June 1919 carrying 1,200 NSW troops, and Captain Patrick Joseph Francis O'Shea, also DSO and MC, returned in March 1919. The greater part of the AIF was embarked within eight months. The last of the main transports bringing the men and women home was the *Port Napier* which left England on 23 December 1919.