

Published by Granville Historical Society Inc.



The Granville Guardian

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

Volume 24 Issue 7

November 2017

There's no general meeting this month. Instead, you are invited to attend our Xmas luncheon at Diggers, 5 Memorial Drive, Granville at 12 noon on Saturday 25 November 2017.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Granville Historical Society

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

Dear Members, this is our last Newsletter for 2017, and the last one that Colin will produce. I would like to take this opportunity to thank members Colin and Stephanie Humphreys for the dedication and service for many years, my computer has not outlasted their service, but I believe it was about 2002 when we first met Colin and Stephanie at St Marks to copy the Church's archives. Since that time, Colin has researched Granville history prior to 1900. His research has been so thorough, the society has amassed a huge amount of resources for our archives. Colin remarked that the Society has one of the best local history libraries that he has seen, and as that comes from a man who was a professional research person for the media, we can take pride in our collection. Colin also designed and presented PowerPoint presentations on "New Guinea", for the 100th Anniversary of WW1, and other resources in our collection.

Producing a newsletter each month is an exacting task and to do that for so long as well as research and produce a book of Granville WW1 soldiers is brilliant and dedicated for a volunteer with such a passion for recording our history; thank you so much Colin.

Stephanie has worked alongside Colin and attended our working bee Wednesdays, but with a slightly different focus, we also thank her for researching and writing a brilliant book on St Mark's Anglican Church for her Thesis for her University course, it

is a brilliant resource which is in our collection and available for the community. Also Stephanie is responsible for our collection of Oral Histories, this was done the hard way, with old fashioned cassette tape, then sitting for hours typing the transcript. In between Stephanie mastered the data entry into the database, and sat each Wednesday to add to our extensive holdings, I have an old one on my computer and the list numbers thousands of photos, nearly one thousand artefacts, hundreds of books, resource files and family history files. Stephanie organised our photographic displays for St Mark's Fete each year, where she was a member of St Mark's Choir. Stephanie has been responsible for photographs of the members at social gatherings and at working bees. Both Colin and Stephanie have been members of the executive committee for many years.

On behalf of the members of Granville Historical Society, we thank you both for your dedication and service to Granville History and hope that while you are lying sunbaking on the Gold Coast, you think of us once in a while.

Our Christmas Party is on 25th November 2017, Diggers Granville 12.00 noon, please let us know 9631 0216, for catering purposes.

On another note, we have sent you out notice of the National Listing, with links to various sites, would you be kind enough to support our new push for World Heritage Listing by signing the petition and sharing the Chanel 7 video with your friends worldwide.

June and I take this time to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Barry G. Bullivant OAM

TREGOTHNAN

A century-old landmark at the highest point of the corner of Good and Harris Streets Harris Park went under the auctioneer's hammer last weekend. Tregothnan was built about 1905 for Parramatta solicitor, C.E Byrnes, on part of the first land grant made to James Ruse in 1789, and was named after one of the world's most magnificent private gardens, near Truro in Cornwall. The two-storey residence is a classic example of the Federation Queen Anne style, the dominant style in Australian architecture in the period before and after 1900. It includes influences of English and American architecture with some distinctively Australian features.

The Harris Park residence was converted into a private hospital in the 1940s but is best remembered as the home of the Sheehy family for more than 50 years. Doctor John Joseph Edward Sheehy conducted a general medical practice there from 1948 to 2001. After he died in 2010, aged 90, his widow, Mrs Jean Sheehy, continued to live at Tregothnan until she was in her late 90s. She died in June this year aged 100.

Mrs Sheehy was a talented singer and radio performer. She was also a supporter of the Arts, Patron of Rosehill Women's Bowling Club for more than 50 years and fund raiser for many causes including The Elizabethan Theatre Trust, Opera Australia and St. John's College, University of Sydney.

LIGHTS ON IN GRANVILLE

A moonlit night might be propitious for romance, but in Colonial Granville it was the best time for a political meeting.

John Nobbs, organiser of many a meeting in the days when there was constant agitation for improvements to the fledgling town's facilities, knew this well. Only the brave ventured out at night on the unlit streets in the late 1870s and early 1880s. So Nobbs's advice to colleagues was "choose a night with a full moon, to ensure that people coming from a distance might be able to drive along the roads with safety".¹

Street lighting was a top priority for the new Granville Borough Council when it took office in March 1885. The issue first came up for discussion in April when the Parramatta Gas Company wrote with an offer to erect and install gas lighting in the borough within a reasonable distance of its distribution mains. Gaslights had first appeared in neighbouring Parramatta in 1876, and by 1884 the company had extended the mains into Harris Park and Granville. In May, Mayor Nobbs asked the council's Lighting Committee to report as soon as possible on the advisability of lighting the borough by gas or other means, and in the following month the council decided on a lighting rate of threepence in the pound. This would bring in revenue of more than £470, sufficient to meet the initial cost of lighting the principal streets.²

But when the Lighting Committee of Aldermen Scarborough, Baker, Ritchie and Grimwood produced its report, it called for the installation of kerosene lamps. This was not what influential aldermen like Robert Hudson and Harry Richardson had in mind, and the report was sent back to the committee for further consideration. Alderman Richardson later called for the council to build its own gasworks to supply the area. He argued that a municipal gas works would be able to halve the cost of gas 'without any difficulty'. There was, however, a major drawback. It would take three years to bring a new plant into operation, and some aldermen felt such a delay might jeopardise the town's progress. Thus in November the full council adopted a committee recommendation for the installation of 22 street lamps by the Parramatta Gas Company and 13 kerosene lamps, at a cost of about £400. An agreement with the gas company was finalised in January. Then on the evening of Thursday the first of April 1886, company officials and the town's leading citizens watched as the newly installed mayor, Harry Richardson, officially lit Granville's first gas street lamp at the corner of Cowper and Good Streets, just up from the council offices in the School of Arts building.³

Gaslights illuminated the streets of Granville for 38 years, until electric lighting spread from Parramatta throughout the western region in the 1920s. In November 1923, Granville Council signed an agreement with the Parramatta Electric Supply Company to switch from gas to electricity, generated at the company's coal-fired plant in Macquarie Street Parramatta. The electricity network was progressively extended through Granville, Merrylands, Guildford and Clyde throughout 1924.⁴

¹ *Cumberland Mercury*, 19 November 1887, p. 3.

² *Ibid.*, 2 May 1885, p. 5; T. Kass, C. Liston & J. McClymont, *Parramatta, A Past Revealed*, Parramatta, 1996, pp. 191, 220; *Mercury*, 30 May 1885, p. 8, 27 June 1885, p. 8.

³ *Ibid.*, 14 November 1885, p. 3, 28 November 1885, p. 4, 9 January 1886, p. 3, 3 April 1886, p. 3.

⁴ R. Low, *Switched on in the West, A History of Electricity Supply to Parramatta and the Western Region of Sydney, 1890-1990*, Parramatta & District Historical Society, 1992.

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[This article was first published in *The Granville Guardian* Volume 12 Issue 3 March 2005]

Editor's note:

I have enjoyed producing *The Granville Guardian* over the past 15 years. However Steph and I want to move to a warmer climate. We have sold our home where we've lived for 47 years, and are moving to the Gold Coast. *Granville Historical Society* is a very active group, but there is scope for further research projects, in such time zones as post Federation, and the Inter-war years. Historical research and writing is very rewarding, and I urge more members to take an interest in it.