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The next general meeting of the Granville Historical Society will be held at 2.00 pm on Saturday 28 October 2017
At our Research Centre
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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Granville Historical Society

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

Daphne Wiles, the Life Member and former Treasurer of our Society, is in hospital. She is not very well and our thoughts were expressed to her on behalf of all members. Frances Bluhdorn, her daughter, has kept us up to date with her progress. Our best wishes to Daphne from your friends at the Granville Historical Society.

At our October meeting on Saturday 28 October, we will have a video especially made to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Granville Train Disaster.

On 11 November next, the Society is holding a special Memorial Service at 10.30 for 11.00 am remember the people from Granville who served in all wars. You are invited to attend a short ceremony to lay photos of your loved one, followed by a PowerPoint “When War Came to Australia” with light refreshments plus tea and coffee. Please RSVP by 4th November for catering purposes, either by email or phone.

I don't believe that we only have a month to go for the Christmas break. The Christmas party will be held on Saturday 25 November at Diggers 5 Memorial Drive at 12.00 noon. Please RSVP by 18 November 2017 for catering purposes.

Your committee has some forward planning in mind; this is to be discussed and members will be informed shortly.

There are exciting projects planned for our society. June Bullivant has been researching for a publication on Early Parramatta which was part of our grant for the Female Factory. The plan is to illustrate the years from 1788 to 1860 and find out what the ordinary people were doing and experiencing. So far it has uncovered some very interesting material - rape, murder and bigamy. If you were infamous, you ended up in the government gazettes and named. Modern technology has made such a difference since my days of closing the factory at 12.00 noon on a Saturday and catching a train to the Mitchell Library to do research. But now, many of the original resource documents are available for use online.

The 31st October is the 100th anniversary of the day that Australian Light Horse fought the Battle of Beersheba, The 12th Light Horse Regiment was raised, as part of the 4th Light Horse Brigade, at Liverpool, New South Wales, on 1 March 1915.



Light horsemen at Beersheba

It sailed from Australia in two contingents in June 1915. The first contingent put in at Aden on 12 July to reinforce the British garrison there against a predicted enemy attack; they only left their ship for a single route march, and sailed again on 18 July without having seen action. The regiment was reunited in Egypt on 23 July 1915 and began training as infantry, having been ordered to leave its horses in Australia. A month later it deployed to Gallipoli. The regiment was again split up, to reinforce three light horse regiments already ashore.

- A Squadron went to the 1st Light Horse Regiment, B Squadron to the 7th, and C Squadron to the 6th. It was not reunited until 22 February 1916, by which time all of the AIF troops from Gallipoli had returned to Egypt.

Returning to its mounted role, the 12th Light Horse joined the forces defending the Suez Canal on 14 May 1916. In ensuing months it conducted patrols and participated in several forays out into the Sinai Desert. In April 1917 the regiment moved into Palestine to join the main British and dominion advance. It joined its first major battle on 19 April when it attacked, dismounted, as part of the ill-fated second battle of Gaza.

With two frontal attacks on Gaza having failed, the next attempt to capture the Turkish bastion was a wide outflanking move via the town of Beersheba, launched on 31 October 1917. A deteriorating tactical situation late on the first day of the operation caused the 12th and its sister regiment, the 4th, to be unleashed on Beersheba at the gallop - an action which has gone down in history as the charge of Beersheba.

We would like to remember Hubert William Brown and Stuart Bingham from Granville, Lance Bathie from Parramatta and Thomas Bunnel from Lidcombe, also Clyde Easterbrook from Alfred Street, Granville.

Barry Bullivant OAM, President

<p>WILLIAM KAY – ACTOR, BLACKSMITH, FARM SALESMAN AND MAYOR OF GRANVILLE</p>

In 1906, William F. Kay, former Granville Mayor and one-time Shakespearean actor, came to the conclusion that the growing popularity of the horseless carriage would inevitably kill off his blacksmith and coach-building business. So he disposed of the business and went into real estate. What he didn't foresee was that a motor car would kill him too. On the morning of Wednesday 10 December 1941, 82-year-old William was knocked down by a car while crossing Church Street at Parramatta near Dixon Street. He was taken to Parramatta Hospital but died about two hours later.¹

William Kay was born in 1859 at Campbell's Creek near Castlemaine in Victoria, the son of a gold miner. Gold was discovered there in 1851 and within two years three thousand miners were living in a shanty town along the creek's banks. His parents had given William a good education in the district's leading school, but his romantic notion of the village blacksmith in the Longfellow poem led him to secure an apprenticeship with a coachbuilder. He learned his trade apprenticed to a local coachbuilder for five years and then went to Melbourne to work for a railway carriage manufacturer. But at the age of 23 he decided to 'see the world' and travelled to Sydney with the aim of boarding a ship for San Francisco. However a job offer from R.D. Ritchie's works at Auburn persuaded him to settle down in Parramatta. Then in 1882 Hudson Brothers hired him as a blacksmith to work in their new engineering works in Granville, along with 19 smiths they had brought out from Scotland. The Scots were keen footballers and formed the nucleus of a new soccer club, founded in 1883. William Kay, aged 24, accepted the first of his many voluntary community positions to become the club's honorary secretary. Soccer wasn't his only love – he enjoyed Shakespeare, and toyed for a while with the idea of a professional career as an actor. This didn't eventuate, but he was for years a prominent member of the Granville Dramatic Club.²

William married a local girl, Lydia Butfield, in St Mark's Church of England in 1886. When Lydia gave birth to five children – three boys and two girls – the couple chose some interesting given names for their offspring. The eldest boy was christened William Shakspeare [*sic*] Kay. He would become a solicitor, an alderman on Granville Council for more than 10 years, and Mayor of Granville in 1927. Another son was named Norman Federal, after Kay's Federal Coach Factory, and a daughter was christened Thelma Agnes Granvilline Kay.³

With his wife pregnant with their first child, Kay decided to leave Hudson's and start his own blacksmith's business in 1887 on Sydney Road [Parramatta Road] near Kemp Street [now Rowell Street]. At about the same time he joined the newly-established Granville branch of the Political Protectionist Association, and was elected honorary secretary. Harry Richardson, Granville's mayor in 1886 and later a New South Wales railways commissioner, was the first president. William began to dabble in local politics in 1889 when he was elected to Granville Council, but resigned after six months to move back to Melbourne. However he returned four years later, re-purchased his old business, and was again elected to the council in 1895, unseating the incumbent John Mahony. His success encouraged him to stand as a Protectionist candidate for the seat of Granville in the July 1895 Legislative Assembly election, but he withdrew 11 days

before the poll. His withdrawal, he said, was due to ‘the phenomenal rush of business’ for his Federal Forge, particularly in coach-building. [Kay, it must be said, missed no opportunity to generate publicity for his business enterprises] He stood down at the 1898 council election, saying he didn’t have sufficient time for council affairs because of the heavy demands of his business. But he was back on the council three years later and was elected to a 12-month term as mayor in 1902.⁴

William Kay switched careers and opened a real estate office, the Granville Property Exchange, in Good Street on 5 February 1906 and within three weeks was telling the *Cumberland Argus* that ‘business is brisk’. In March he was appointed Returning Officer for the Granville electoral district, and presided over Legislative Assembly elections in 1907 and 1910. His property agency thrived during the development boom before World War One, and in 1911 he announced that the business had outgrown Granville and he was moving his headquarters into the city. At about the same time, he and Lydia left Granville to live in Manly, in one of the flats in a small block they had purchased in Augusta Road, within walking distance of the ferry wharf. He took up bowls, was a vice-president of the Manly club for several years, and a life member of the Parramatta club. From about 1917 he specialised in farm sales, and operated from several city addresses from time to time, including Pitt Street, Hunter Street, George Street, and in the same building as son William’s legal practice, Culwulla Chambers at 67 Castlereagh Street. After his wife passed away in 1931, William moved to Parramatta where he spent the rest of his life until that unfortunate accident with the motor car in December 1941. His eldest son, William S. Kay, born in 1894, was educated at Camden Grammar School and worked in a warehouse until he gained a position as an articled law clerk. After graduating, he became a successful lawyer, and was elected mayor in 1927 during a 10-year term on Granville Council. He enlisted in the AIF in August 1915, served with the 13th Battalion on the Western Front, but was wounded in May 1917 and returned to Australia at the end of that year.⁵

¹ Obituary, *Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers’ Advocate*, 17 December 1941, p. 2.

² *Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers’ Advocate*, 30 August 1902, p. 8; Op. Cit. Obituary; W.F. Kay, “Early Granville” in *Granville Jubilee*, 1935.

³ St Mark’s Marriage and Baptism Registers, 27 September 1886; St Marks’ Baptism Registers 15 September 1894, 11 April 1897, 15 February 1903

⁴ T. Fowlie, *The History of Granville 1919*, Granville Historical Society, 2001, p. 70; *Cumberland Mercury*, 28 January 1888, p. 2; *Cumberland Argus*, 10 August 1889, p. 4, 10 February 1900, 16 February 1895, p. 8, 13 July 1895, p. 7, 22 January 1898, p. 2, 9 February 1901, p. 6, 15 February 1902, p. 11.

⁵ *Cumberland Argus*, 27 January 1906, p. 9, 24 February 1906, p. 2, 17 March 1906, p. 2, 30 September 1911, p. 7; Op. Cit. Obituary; Sand’s Directories, 1906-1932; State Records NSW: Probate Jurisdiction, Supreme Court of NSW, Series 4, Lydia Kay, 3 August 1931, No. 177555; *Cumberland Argus*, 28 February 1927; National Archives of Australia, World War 1 Service Records..

Colin Humphreys