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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 April 2010 at our Centre at 62 Railway Parade Granville Executive Meeting 1.00 pm

Speaker: Ralph Hawkins (Archives Officer – SAG)

The Granville Historical Heritage Research Centre is open every Wednesday from 10 am to 4 pm and on the fourth Saturday of the month for personal research. Visitors and members of family history societies are welcome. A fee applies for non-members

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

First and foremost I would like to report on Daphne Wiles, who underwent surgery Friday the 16th. Had a phone call from her daughter Frances, two days after the six hour operation, reporting that the little mouse that roared is roaring. She has told the nurses that they haven't brought the correct pills; she is experiencing a fair amount of pain, but is progressing well. She has asked for a crossword, and we told Frances that we would take her in a box of research. The committee has sent flowers on your behalf with your best wishes. Stephanie Humphreys has also had a stint in hospital for an operation, as has David Eglon; both are progressing well despite being quite uncomfortable. Our best wishes to John & June Parkins who are not experiencing the best of health. Our best wishes also to Paul Garrard who has started treatment for his problems. We wish a speedy recovery to everyone who is ill.

Despite the best work by June Bullivant for the past two years we were unable to procure the old Police Station for a Heritage Research Centre. Thanks must be extended to Parramatta City Council for their work on our behalf. It might be as well that we missed out, I am not sure the available space will be large enough for our needs. We are working on another solution at the moment, and will let members know when there is any progress.

Further to the mystery soldiers from 24 Albert Street, Granville, members Maureen McManus and Audrey Meisenhelter have been working on solving the mystery. We

believe that the family who lived there in 1968 (Electoral Rolls donated by Laurie Ferguson) were the family of John Albert Brunell. Two of his brothers also served in World War II - Edward Charles and Leslie Norman. We have paid to have the other brothers' records digitised so we can assess which two are in the photographs and have a bit of a story.

Twelve boxes of ashes that we inherited from A F Anderson when they moved have been identified; their records have been paid for to be digitised. The nine WWII soldiers and three WWI soldiers will be interred in the Remembrance Garden at Granville RSL. Each soldier has been researched, their army number and battalion has been identified. Their records will be archived in our family history files. Their remains will be given a dedicated service; their details are listed in this issue.

June and I have had two meetings with John Haines OAM, President of the Granville RSL Sub-branch, with the view to writing a history of the Sub-branch. If anyone has material and images that could assist us with our research please contact us.

Our Guest Speaker this month is Ralph Hawkins, Archives Officer of SAG, his topic will be the convicts that he has researched.

Thank you to the members who have volunteered to try and cover the tasks that Daphne Wiles usually performs, all help is appreciated.

Barry G Bullivant OAM President

<p>GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN</p>
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The ashes of nine World War II soldiers and three from World War I will be interred in the Remembrance Garden at Granville RSL on Anzac Day. Funeral Director A.F. Anderson handed the boxes to the Society when they moved their premises:-.

Barnes, Gregory Neil -Number NX155614 (N240136) Served in the Australian Army during World War II and attained the rank of Private. His posting on discharge was the 2/30 Transport Platoon. He was born in Singleton on 16 December 1920, and he died on 5 October 1968.

Bishop, Eric Jack- Number 78158. Served in the Royal Australian Air Force during World War II and attained the rank of Leading Aircraftman. His posting on discharge was the 9th Transport & Movements Office. He was born in Brisbane Queensland on 28 July 1924, and he died on 17 March 1969.

Chapman, Frederick Walker -Number 26471. Served in the Australian Imperial Force during World War I. He was a Gunner in the 11th Field Artillery Brigade, and returned to Australia on 12 May 1919. He was born in Dulwich Hill in 1896, and died on 4 November 1974.

French, Charles Albert – Number NX200071. Served in the Australian Army during World War II, and attained the rank of Private. His posting on discharge was the 103rd Convalescent Depot. He was born in Marrickville on 13 April 1909, and he died on 12 May 1972.

Hall, John – Number NX122748 (N191197) Served in the Australian Army during World War II, and attained the rank of Private. His posting on discharge was the 2/2 Australian Infantry Battalion. He was born in Parramatta on 5 March 1923, and he died on 2 March 1978.

Hutchison, Arthur - Number 11760. Served in the Royal Australian Navy during World War II, and attained the rank of Chief Stoker. His posting on discharge was HMAS Rushcutter. He was born on 22 August 1901 in Lauriston, Victoria, and he died on 23 August 1968.

Richardson, Douglas David - Number 16387. Served in the Royal Australian Navy during World War II, and attained the rank of Able Seaman. His posting on discharge was HMAS Rushcutter. He was born on 18 October 1907 at Wynnum, Queensland, and he died on 25 May 1968.

Robertson, Norman Torrie – Number NX50152. Served in the Australian Army during World War II, and attained the rank of Bombardier. His posting on discharge was the 2/3 Tank Attack Regiment, He was born in Gladesville on 1 April 1919, and he died on 23 January 1971.

Stewart, Neil McIver – Number NX67122. Served in the Australian Army during World War II and attained the rank of Private, Neil was a prisoner of war in Malaya, his posting on discharge was GBD 8th Division, He was born on 25 November 1915 in Rozelle, and he died on 3 May 1972.

Tollner, Johan (John) – Number N101018. Served in the Australian Army during World War II, and attained the rank of Warrant Officer Class 2. His posting on discharge was 1 Hospital Maintenance Plant. He was born on 11 April 1892, in Natimuk, Victoria, and he died on 19 December 1967.

Tookey, Albert Charles William – Number 2243. He served in the Australian Imperial Force during World War I, in the 45th Battalion at Rouen, France. He was born in 1896 in Peckham, London, England, and he died on 23 July 1971.

Wroe, Frank – Number 1290. Served in the Australian Imperial Force during World War I, with the 35th Battalion in France as a driver. He was born in 1887 at Dulwich Hill, and he died on 28 June 1967.

These ashes are to be interred in the Remembrance Garden of the Granville R.S.L., Memorial Drive, Granville, on Anzac Day 25 April 2010. May they rest in Peace. Courtesy A F Anderson Funeral Parlour, Granville Historical Society & Granville R.S.L. Sub-Branch President John Haines.

<p>A RAIL TRAGEDY NARROWLY AVOIDED</p>

Boxing Day 1879 was one of the busiest days of the colonial era at the Parramatta railway station. Fifty trains were scheduled, including special excursion trains taking people to sporting events and the Sydney International Exhibition.

The International Exhibition opened on 17 September 1879 in the specially built Garden Palace, designed by James Barnet (Colonial Architect from 1865 to 1890) and erected on a five acre site that is now part of the Royal Botanical Gardens. Constructed mainly of timber, it was destroyed by fire early in the morning of 22 September 1882. On Boxing Day 1879, trains from Parramatta to the city were crowded as a total of 24,000 people attended the exhibition. Parramatta itself attracted a large number of visitors, including up to six thousand at the Parramatta races, and there were also excursion trains passing through, taking patrons to the Hawkesbury Race Club's Boxing Day meeting.¹

In the late afternoon, a thunderstorm swept over Parramatta, causing many of the visitors to seek shelter at the railway station. A train had arrived from Sydney at 5.34 pm, and was scheduled to begin the return trip at 5.40. In the meantime, an excursion train had left the Hawkesbury racecourse. According to the day's timetable, it was expected at Parramatta at 6 pm. But while it was passing through Blacktown station, the Railways Traffic Manager Mr Carlisle, who was travelling in the locomotive, had sent a telegram requesting permission to leave Parramatta ahead of the 5.40 pm service.²

(Before the telephonic age began in the 1880s, a telegram was a message tapped out by an operator in one place and transcribed by another operator at the destination. Railway systems were enthusiastic users of telegraphy after the first Australian trial in Victoria in the mid-1850s.³)

The man in charge on the platform at Parramatta was the Superintendent of Lines, Harry Richardson, a Granville resident after he bought one of the first blocks offered for sale in the Drainwell Estate in 1875. On receiving the telegram from Blacktown, he issued instructions for the special train to be switched to a loop to bypass the 5.40 pm service that was stationary on the main line while its engine was being shunted to the Sydney end of the platform. But before the points could be changed, Mr Richardson noticed that despite the distant and main signals being set at danger, the excursion train was approaching through the Parramatta Park cutting. Seeing that a collision was inevitable, he shouted to passengers crowding into the carriages at the platform to get out or they might be killed. He then rushed to the end of the platform, waving frantically to the crew in the cabin of the Hawkesbury train. The driver had

¹ D. I. McDonald, 'Barnet, James Johnstone (1827 - 1904)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Online Edition, <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A030097b.htm> ; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 December 1879, p. 6

² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 January 1880, p. 7

³ R. Lee, 'The Telegraph in Colonial Australia' in *Linking a Nation: Australia's Transport and Communications 1788 – 1970*, accessed on line 19 April 2010,

<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/ahc/publications/commission/books/linking-a-nation/chapter-7.html#telegraph>

started applying the brakes upon sighting the danger signal 770 yards from the station, but this had little effect because of the wet rails. He didn't notice the train at the platform until he was 200 yards from the loop points. He hit the brakes hard and put the engine into reverse, but couldn't stop the train crashing into the stationary train at an estimated speed of 13 kilometres an hour.⁴

Nine people were injured in the collision, but fortunately their injuries were not serious. Two carriages were completely destroyed, while a third carriage and the locomotive were damaged. An inquiry ruled that in the face of all the danger signals, the special train 'ran into Parramatta at a most unusual and unwarrantable speed'. It found train driver Edward Harrison and Traffic Manager Carlisle at fault. Driver Harrison was criticised for disregarding a danger signal, and failing to take into consideration the unusual weight of his train and the added hazard of wet rails after the thunderstorm. He was demoted to the position of third class fireman. Carlisle was docked one month's salary for failing to ensure the driver drove with proper caution in the circumstances. Harry Richardson was commended for his actions in the moments before the collision. Announcing the outcome of the inquiry, the Minister for Public Works, John Lackey, said he had saved many lives by evacuating passengers from the stationary train. Within months Richardson was rewarded with the first of a series of promotions that reached a peak in April 1907 with his appointment to a seven year term as one of the State's three railway commissioners. He died in June 1915.⁵

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⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 January 1880, p. 7

⁵ *ibid.*; Obituary in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 June 1915, p. 8