



The Granville Guardian

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

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The next general meeting of the Granville Historical Society will be held at 2.00 pm on Saturday 26 June 2010 at our Centre at 62 Railway Parade Granville
Executive Meeting 1.00 pm

Speaker:
JOHN BRODIE

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

"A place where Heritage & Culture is valued and celebrated"

Members, half way, June already. Next month (July 2010) is the AGM, anyone wishing to stand for office please contact June Bullivant for a nomination form. Daphne Wiles seems to be progressing nicely, she is now standing by herself for two minutes and is playing games on the laptop that Frances has taken in to her, and we have let the Maroons win especially for her. Welcome back to Stephanie Humphreys, over her couple of operations, glad to see you back Stephanie.

We have been successful in obtaining a grant for \$4,900 for Dream Time and the Duck River from Parramatta City Council; we pick up the cheque this week. Also we received \$1,500 from the Dept of Water and the Environment for a volunteer grant. The support that we have received from these two groups has been very rewarding; it helps us to research our history in depth, and many hours have gone into research by our members. Members have come forward with photographs and information for our project on the Shell area. Thank you to those responsible.

We have sent The History of Granville by Thomas Fowle to Vision Australia; they have undertaken to turn the volume into a talking book. The project will finalise the grant that we received from Parramatta City Council for the project. This is a very worthwhile project. Copies will be sent to 75 people in the LGA who are vision impaired, Vision Australia will keep copies for their library as well, we will give it an ISBN and it will be distributed to the legal entities such as State and National Libraries etc. The result of this will make our history available to people with dyslexia as well as vision impaired people. Audrey Meisenhelter rang to tell us that Barker Pottery was closing, June and I went down last Saturday, took some photos of the old kiln, sad to see part of our history gone. Alan Barker gave us a couple of artefacts for our

archives. We wished them well; some of our founding members will remember Des and Joan Barker who donated a lot of photographs when they were involved in the Magpies Soccer Club. Des has passed on but Joan is in her eighties, and goes to the Wyong Historical Society. Good on you Joan.

Our Speaker this month is John Brodie (past councillor on Holroyd Council) who will give us the history of his family.

Barry G Bullivant OAM
President

THE NAMING OF GRANVILLE

The mid-nineteenth century name for what is now most of Granville was Parramatta South - the name given to the early land subdivisions. Then after the Sydney to Parramatta railway was built, the district became Parramatta Junction and this was changed to Granville in 1880.

Before 1853, the district's land was held by a handful of individuals. It was sparsely settled and used mainly for timber cutting and grazing. The largest block was the 1,125 acre Drainwell Estate, granted to Garnham Blaxcell in 1806. In August and November 1853, William Randle, the contractor for the Sydney to Parramatta railway, brought out 500 English workers, and established workshops and camps for the men near the western terminus, in an area bounded by the railway, Dog Trap Road (Woodville Road), Spring Garden Street and Railway Street (The Avenue). As the construction of the line to the temporary terminus at Dog Trap Road neared completion, the owners of the Drainwell Estate subdivided part of their holding and announced the auction of a large number of town, villa and suburban allotments in the Town of Parramatta South on 5 February 1855. The blocks had frontages to Parramatta and Dog Trap Roads, and Railway, Cowper, Creek, Station, Wallace, Russell, Queen, Raglan, William, John and Jamieson Streets. The sale advertisement said Parramatta South 'occupies a pretty, elevated position, and as it almost surrounds the railway terminus, the opening of the line will make it the principal business part of town'. Another portion of the estate was put up for auction on 10 December 1855, 11 weeks after the railway's official opening. This comprised approximately 450 lots, with frontages to Sydney, Parramatta and Dog Trap Roads, and Mort, Cowper, Bold, Good, Kemp, East, Railway, High, John, Jane and William Streets. Prospective buyers were told the expansion of the railway already under way, and promised, could make Parramatta South a town of great importance, 'second perhaps to none in the colony'.¹

Land on the western side of Dog Trap Road, opposite the rail terminus, was also auctioned in late December 1855. The owner, Randolph J. Want, described his offering

¹ T Fowlie, *The History of Granville 1919*, Granville Historical Society, 2001, pp. 17, 36; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 January 1855, p. 8, 24 November 1855, p. 7

as ‘the western and choicest portion of Parramatta South’, and ‘the most valuable section of this important inland town’. It comprised town and suburban allotments with frontages to Dog Trap Road and ‘good wide streets’. Press advertisements stated ‘the most liberal reserves’ had been set aside for churches, schools and markets, a Roman Catholic Cathedral was ‘in the course of erection’, and Mr Want planned a large hotel and tea gardens that would ‘form a great attraction for Sydney people on holidays’.²

Any thought of Parramatta South becoming an important inland town disappeared when the railway was extended to Parramatta and Blacktown in July 1860. Where the Blacktown and Liverpool lines merged was called Parramatta Junction, but the Railway Department didn’t believe passenger traffic there warranted a station with platform. So when the old station at the temporary terminus was closed and demolished, no passenger facilities were provided, until local protests forced the department to build a new station towards the end of the year. The hamlet around the station also became known as Parramatta Junction, or simply The Junction. James Niblett, one of the 500 workers brought out in 1853 to work on the construction of the railway, built the first house there in 1860. Other former railway workers, including George Gapes, Robert Lee and John Smith were among the earliest residents. However the township grew very slowly over the next 15 years and in the mid-1870s consisted of about a dozen houses, with the surrounding land occupied by orchards and orangeries. John Nobbs, the ‘Father of Granville’ first came to the area in 1875 for an auction of 114 acres of the Drainwell Estate. He and a few others such as Harry Richardson and John Rayner, who would become members of the town’s elite, snapped up some of the land. Nobbs said the population then was about 60.³

Parramatta Junction in 1877 ‘was a presumptuous little place, which loved to call itself a town, but which with its small railway station, one hotel, and half a dozen half-built houses, accessible only through pathless fields, was barely a village’, according to an article headed ‘Granville Re-visited’ in the *Cumberland Mercury* of 19 November 1887. The description might have been a slight exaggeration, because in September 1878 a petition requesting a public school at Parramatta Junction contained the signatures of 70 parents or guardians, and the names of 212 children, and the Census of 1881 found the population to be 312.⁴

Sir Henry Parkes, having purchased 25 acres facing the Sydney Road in the Harris Park Estate, formerly owned by the late Captain Fairclough, became a local land-owner a short time before he returned to office as Premier for the third time in December 1878. Thomas Fowlie wrote in his *History of Granville* that Sir Henry ‘was averse to the name Parramatta Junction’ and had urged John Nobbs to have it changed. Nobbs consulted a few friends at the Vauxhall Hotel and they decided to invite leading residents to a meeting to discuss a change in name. The meeting of about 60 people was held on 12 July 1880 and resolved by a majority of three votes to request the Colonial Secretary to re-name Parramatta Junction Granville, after the Second Earl of Granville, the then British Foreign Minister. Nine names were suggested at the meeting.

² *Ibid.*, 24 December 1855, p. 7

³ J. Jervis, *The Story of Parramatta and District*, Shakespeare Head Press, 1933, p. 89; *Cumberland Mercury*, 23 October 1875

⁴ *Cumberland Mercury*, 19 November 1887; *Granville Public School History, 1880-1890*

They were Westbourne, Southcoates, Coniston, Junction Town, Nobbsville, Loftus Junction, Stoneville, Woodville, and Vauxhall Junction.⁵

The decision ignited a heated public debate. Most people agreed the name Parramatta Junction was too easily confused with Parramatta Town and that letters and goods addressed to The Junction were continually being forwarded to the town. But they were divided over possible substitutes. Some claimed that Granville sounded too French, and the minority at the June gathering believed the chairman had stacked that meeting with people who had ‘no interest at The Junction’. They called a second public meeting on 19 July 1880.

About 250 people packed the Iron Church on Sydney Road for what the *Herald* described as ‘a meeting disorderly enough to have done credit to the most closely contested election’. It was clear from the start that those attending were divided into two parties bitterly opposed to each other. Alderman H.T. Jones of Prospect and Sherwood Council opened proceedings as chairman, but his authority was quickly challenged by members of the opposing faction. Eventually a motion that Mr Jones should remain chairman was defeated, and Mr J. Bergan took the chair. After some heated exchanges, Mr John Elliott moved, seconded by Mr Enos Hawker, that the Government be sent five names – Drainwell, Westbourn, Vauxhall, Martinville and Starbourn.

John Nobbs then rose to his feet, indignantly rejected ‘the slurs’ cast upon him and defended the proceedings of the previous meeting. He concluded by moving an amendment ‘that the name Granville be submitted to the Colonial Secretary in lieu of the present one of [Parramatta Junction]’ The motion was carried by a large majority.⁶

In a curious postscript in the debate, the Reverend William Augustus Phillips, the priest in charge of the local Church of England Iron Church, wrote to the *Herald* to clear up what he said were several inaccuracies in the paper’s report of the 12 July meeting. He said he was responsible for bringing forward only three of the nine names – Westbourn, Southcoates and Coniston. They are the names of English villages, and one would think they had been proposed by someone with nostalgic memories of Mother England. But the Reverend Mr Phillips was a native Australian, born at Scone in the Upper Hunter, who received his theological training in England.⁷

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⁵ *Cumberland Mercury*, 21 December 1878, p. 4; T. Fowlie, pp. 43-44; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 July 1880, p. 7

⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 July 1880, p. 3

⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 July 1880, p. 5