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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 26 March 2011 at our Research Centre 62 Railway Parade Granville Executive Meeting 1.00 pm Guest Speaker Jack Brook *From Canton with Courage*

Our 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 MARCH 2011

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

Dear members,

Thank you for your work and support over the past six or seven months, our efforts to mount the *River Reflections River of Stories* photographic display appears to have been a success. The Society has had tremendous feedback from the official launch on Saturday last 19 March 2011.

Thank you to Shell Australia and Parramatta Council for making this possible. Their grants allowed us to purchase resources for research, and many images and publications on Parramatta and the Aboriginal people. The result is many items to add to our database, and many more volunteer work hours, but many more resources that will allow members and the community to do further research at the centre rather than go to other facilities. Also the team of photographers who have added the many photographs to our collection; they will be a tremendous resource for researchers in the future.

One hundred and ten people attended, many staying on, after the crowd had receded, to have a closer look. Parramatta Council supplied the catering which was extremely nice, the special guest speaker was the Federal Member for Parramatta, Julie Owens, and the official opening was conducted by Councillor Paul Garrard who represented the Lord Mayor John Chedid. A network of societies including the Parramatta Art Society, Parramatta & District Historical Society, the Darug Tribal Aboriginal Corporation, and the generosity of the members who worked with us is recognised and appreciated. We had a tremendous team to erect the display over the two days; the amount of work and effort had to be seen to be believed. Thank you to everyone who has participated in any way and contributed to the success of the event.

We were successful with the Salute their Service grant receiving $3,000 to produce a DVD for distribution to schools in time for Anzac Day this year. This will be

finalised for early April 2011 so that schools have it for playing before they break up in Easter.

We are looking for genealogy, stories and photographs from World War I. This is to prepare for another display in the Heritage Centre in Parramatta in 2015. We are making an application to the Heritage Centre to do this. Colin Humphreys has written some tremendous material on Granville & World War I soldiers, and this will be included in the display which will commemorate the hundredth year of the landing at Gallipoli, but will include Parramatta & District Soldiers.

Our guest speaker this month is Jack Brook on the topic *From Canton with Courage.* He will talk about the Chinese who came into Parramatta.

Our meeting will go ahead in April as planned. Our speaker will be Kim Phillips and her topic will be "The Spirits of Gallipoli".

President Barry G Bullivant OAM

LAST MONTH'S SPEAKER

The guest speaker at our February meeting was Eric Sindfield of Friends of Rookwood, who gave a very interesting talk on the history of the Rookwood Necropolis. Friends of Rookwood is a community support group that assists with the restoration and conservation of the historic cemetery by raising funds for conservation and ongoing care, conducting guided tours, and raising an awareness of the social, historical, and cultural values of the cemetery.

Sydney's first official cemetery was on the site of the Sydney Town Hall, corner of George and Druitt Streets. It is usually called the Old Sydney Burial Ground. The site was in use by 1793, but it was full by 1820 and was closed.

A new burial ground, the Devonshire Street Cemeteries, was then laid out at Brickfield Hill on land that is now the site of Central Station. This also filled rapidly and was full by 1860. It was closed in 1867 and the site was resumed in 1901 for the development of Central Station.

Thus there was an urgent need for a new cemetery by 1860, and in 1862 the government purchased 80 hectares of land at Haslem's Creek, now known as Lidcombe. The cemetery was then divided into sections for the various denominations according to their numbers in the 1861 census.

A railway branch line, to cater for funerals and visitors, was built into the cemetery and was opened in April 1867. In 1879, it was clear more land was needed; the original area, in the northwest corner of the site, was expanded to 283 hectares, making Rookwood one of the largest cemeteries in the world. As a result of the expansion, the railway was extended in 1897 and again in 1908. Mortuary stations served each of the three sections of the necropolis, with a fourth at the main junction and a fifth on Regent Street adjacent to Central Station. Trains continued running into Rookwood Cemetery until 1948 when the wide use of motor vehicle funeral processions made them redundant.

A.S.LOW – INVESTOR AND PROPERTY OWNER

Andrew Sutherland Low was possibly the richest man in the Granville district in the late 19th century. The wealth came from successful mining ventures, particularly gold, as well as from real estate investments.

Low was born in Golspie, Scotland in 1831, and arrived in Melbourne in the early 1850s. His Scottish father was a merchant, but Low spent most of his life in the colonies involved in the mining industry. So, like most new arrivals of that era, he probably took part in the Victorian gold rush. It seems he had connections in Geelong where his wife's family was located. Low married Mary Ann Douglass in about 1873; he was 42 and she was 18.[1]

Andrew Low came to New South Wales by ship in 1866, and turned up on the Gulgong gold field in the central west after gold was discovered there in 1870. He was part of a syndicate working the Happy Valley claim that struck one of the best alluvial patches on the field. His share of the claim's yield was worth £10,000. The Bank of New South Wales brought in a gold expert from New Zealand, Claudius Beresford Cairnes, to manage its Gulgong branch, and during his time there he bought from Mr Low the largest parcel of gold that had been purchased from one person, namely six thousand ounces. Cairnes would later become manager of the bank's branch at Parramatta and a trustee of Low's estate. Another contact Low made at Gulgong was the local police magistrate and gold commissioner, Thomas Alexander Browne, better known as Rolf Boldrewood, author of the Australian classic *Robbery under Arms*. Most of the incidents in the book were based on real events and people, including Andrew Sutherland Low.[2]

After discoveries of tin at Inverell in New South Wales and Stanthorpe in Queensland in 1872, Low established the Australian Tin Smelting Company in Chowne Street Pyrmont in 1874, in partnership with Messrs Kelly and Meeks. The timing was fortunate because Australia would become the world's main source of tin over the next decade. About a year later, he purchased the major portion of a 100 acre property at Merrylands, originally granted to Richard Atkins, for the site of his family home. The block was bounded by Dog Trap Road (Woodville Road), the railway to Liverpool, Merrylands Road, and land that would become Granville Park.[3]

When Low was ready to build on his estate, he engaged Sydney architect Albert Bond to design his new house. In 1873, Bond had been appointed the first full-time architect for the City of Sydney, and was responsible for the design of the mansard roof and vestibule interiors of the Sydney Town Hall, which was built in stages between 1869 and 1889. The vestibule served as the meeting hall until the larger Centennial Hall was built. Bond resigned as City Architect in 1877, and opened an office in Pitt Street City. His major work during his architectural career was the Anthony Hordern's department store, and

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[1] Index to Unassisted Inward Passenger List for Victoria; *Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers' Advocate (Cumberland Argus),* 8 September 1894, p. 2

[2] State Records New South Wales (SRNSW), Passengers Arriving (1855-1922), *Alexander,* 1866; *Cumberland Argus,* 8 September 1894, p. 2;T. Inglis Moore, 'Browne, Thomas Alexander [Rolf Boldrewood] (1826-1915)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography,* Online Edition, http:/www..adb.online.anu.edu/biogsA30247B.htm

[3] Sands Directory; *The Brisbane Courier,* 18 August 1874, p. 1; Report: The Australian Mining Industry: From Settlement to 2000, Australian Bureau of Statistics, www.abs.gov.au ; T. Fowlie, *The History of Granville 1919,* Granville Historical Society 2001.

he also designed the main building at the Presbyterian Ladies' College (Pymble Ladies' College). For Andrew Low, Bond designed a two-story villa in Victorian Filigree style, built of bricks made locally at Low's own brickyard. The verandah on the upper storey featured decorative cast iron lace with ultra thin classical columns.[4]

 In December 1878, Bond called tenders for the erection of 'a Villa Residence at Merrylands Platform near Parramatta Junction for A.S.Low'. Construction started the next year but the house and estate were not completed until 1881. A few months after they had moved in, Mary Ann Low gave birth to their fifth child on 9 April 1881. Low planted ornamental trees around the boundary of the estate, and a bowling green near the house, as well as extensive flower gardens and an orchard, irrigated by water pumped from a creek, which he had excavated and widened to form a lake. The excavated earth was used to create an island, on which were erected a 'bathing house' and a boat house. [The lake was filled in during World War Two] Low named his home 'Sutherland House', but a later owner re-named it Locksley Hall, and it was demolished in 1937. The only part of the estate remaining is a cottage at 56 Merrylands Road Merrylands, which appears to have been a gatehouse.[5]

Upon the completion of his showpiece estate, Low acquired a wide portfolio of real estate, including prime inner city blocks. His initial foray into central business district properties was the purchase of a site in one of the most historically significant areas in Sydney, Macquarie Place. He paid £10,500 in February 1881 for a four-storey brick warehouse at No. 9 Macquarie Place, known as Marshall's Bon Accord Works. Some months later, he bought the adjoining block, No. 7 Macquarie Place, the two-storey Customs House Hotel, with 15 rooms, believed to have been established in 1846. He also acquired a single-storey factory in an adjacent block, located off No. 3 Macquarie Place. Between 1882 and 1891 he purchased a three-storey stone office building at 267 George Street City. Then between 1891 and 1894 he bought a three-storey brick house containing 36 rooms at 2-22 Carrington Street Wynyard Square, as well as four three-storey brick houses at 30, 32, 34 and 36 Carrington Street, and four two-storey buildings at 2, 4, 6 and 8 Market Street. Three of these were shops and the other contained offices. When he died in 1894, Low owned 19 other pieces of real estate in Randwick, Coogee Bay, Burwood, Homebush, Granville, Parramatta, Merrylands, Longueville, Scarborough, Jervis Bay, Mittagong and Moss Vale.[6]

Low sold off much of his personal property at auction in March 1886, before leaving for Victoria and overseas. The auction comprised the whole of the contents of his mansion, including furniture, glass and china, an upright grand pianoforte, billiard table, valuable oil paintings, livestock, buggies, and even a set of signals and flags. He leased the property for two years and moved his family to Geelong. Then on 23 April 1887, he and his wife sailed for England. But before departing, he made a rushed trip to Sydney to be among the 200 or so 'invited gentlemen' at the opening of the David Jones store on the corner of George and Barrack Streets. They returned in February 1888, but

[4] City of Sydney, Town Hall History, www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au ; Dictionary of Australian Artists Online www.daao.org.au

[5] *Sydney Morning Herald,* 9 December 1878, p. 2, Birth Notice, 12 April 1881, p. 1; *Cumberland Mercury,* 22 November 1884, p. 3; Online Heritage Database, NSW Heritage Branch, http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/07_subnav_01_2.cfm?itemid=2240393

[6] *Sydney Morning Herald,* 25 February 1881, p.4; Heritage Branch, Heritage Database, Customs House Hotel; City of Sydney Archives, Sydney City Council Rate Assessment Book, Bourke, Brisbane and Gipps wards, 1882, 1891, 1896; SRNSW, Probate Package, Andrew Low (died 1894), SC00323, Item 7872

remained in Melbourne or Geelong for eight months. On 2 October 1888, the couple and their six children, accompanied by a governess, boarded the Melbourne to Sydney Express for the journey home. They lived at Randwick for several months, but returned to Sutherland House at Merrylands prior to the birth of their eighth child in September 1890.[7]

In late August 1894, Andrew Low and his wife entertained a large group of friends at a private function in the Parramatta Town Hall. He left the next day on a week-long visit to Cowra and Peak Hill, a gold mining town in the central west of New South Wales. Gold was discovered there five years earlier, and Low had a financial interest in the Peak Hill Proprietary Gold Company. He returned to Granville on the western mail train at 5.30 am on Saturday 1 August, and was met by an employee who drove him home in a buggy. At Sutherland House, he spoke briefly to his wife and told her he was tired after travelling all night, and would take a bath. When he hadn't reappeared more than hour later, a maid alerted family members and he was found dead in the bath. Reports he had recently taken out two life insurance policies prompted the insurance companies to ask the Justice Department to conduct a searching inquiry into his death. But an inquest, held over two, days, found there were no suspicious circumstances, and that he died from a heart attack.[8]

Probate of his will was granted in the New South Wales Supreme Court on 1 November 1894. However the executors, who included his widow, Mary Ann, and Claudius Beresford Cairnes, soon found they had a major problem. Creditors began pressing for payment of debts, and there was not enough 'ready money' to meet their demands. The executors decided to place the estate in the Bankruptcy Court in order to facilitate administration of the estate, and a sequestration order was made on 29 August 1895. Low's assets were estimated to be worth more than £67,000, including £52,000 in real estate, £8,700 in life insurance, and £975 in mining shares. His debts totalled more than £54,000, including £43,000 in mortgages on his inner-city properties and £11,000 in overdrafts to the English Scottish and Australian (ES&A) Bank, and the Australian Joint Stock (AJS) Bank. Over the next three-and-a-half years, the executors disposed of a number of assets and in May 1899 were able to go back to the Supreme Court to advise that a large surplus had been realised, and creditors would be paid in full. The court then cancelled the sequestration of the estate.[9]

A newspaper obituary described A.S. Low as being 'not really as well known in the district as his prominent position would have suggested'. He was a man whose perceived influence made him the ideal representative on deputations to government ministers. When Granville's elite was pressing strongly for a new municipality in 1884, he was in a seven-man deputation to the Colonial Secretary. He was a Justice of the Peace, and a member of the Parramatta Bench of Magistrates. He was involved in negotiations to build St Mark's Church of England, as a member of the planning committee elected by parishioners in September 1879. And when the first Presbyterian Church was built in 1885 he was one of the five guarantors of a bank loan. His wife laid the foundation stone of the new church, and then donated £100 to church funds. In

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[7] *Cumberland Mercury,* 27 March 1886, p. 5; *Sydney Morning Herald,* 25 April 1887, 24 March 1887 p. 4; 'Overland Passenger Traffic' in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1888-89;Birth Notice, 22 September 1890

[8] *Cumberland Argus,* 8 September 1894, p. 2, 15 September 1894, p. 3

[9] Probate File op. cit., Statement of Assets and Liabilities; *SydneyMorning Herald,* 19 May 1899, p. 8, 7 June 1899, p.5

1889/90, he was a leader of the political group, the Central Cumberland Protection League, and a member of the Prospect School Board.[10]

Andrew and Mary Ann Low had eight children between 1876 and 1890. Their second eldest child, Isabel, drowned aged 22, at Narrandera in south-western New South Wales in 1899 while working as a governess on a station property. After her husband's death and the sale of Sutherland House, Mary Ann and some family members moved to Western Australia.

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**ONLINE SHIPPING
PASSENGER LISTS**

State Records has recently added to the microfilmed shipping passenger lists available online.

The additions are from two more series of records, the Family Colonisation Loan Society records: NRS 5322 Members of the Family Colonisation Loan Society, 1854-57 and NRS 5323 Passenger lists of the Family Colonisation Loan Society, 1854-55.

This is part of a pilot project to microfilm copies of the following shipping lists: Persons on bounty ships (Agent's Immigrant Lists), 1838-96 (NRS 5316); Persons on bounty ships arriving at Port Phillip, 1839-51 (NRS 5318); Germans on bounty ships, 1849-52 (NRS 5320); and the Family Colonisation lists.

Several hundred passenger lists are now available online.

You can scroll through the digital copies of assisted passenger lists, ship by ship, just as you would if you were going through a microfilm in the reading rooms.

Go to:

http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/state-archives/guides-and-finding-aids/nrs-lists/nrs-5316#the-list-of-ships

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[10] N. Hubbard, *St Mark's Granville 1882-1892*; Fowlie, op. cit., p. 128;*Cumberland Mercury,* 26 November 1884; *Sydney Morning Herald,* 11 June 1889, 19 June 1890