

Published by Granville Historical Society Inc.



The Granville Guardian

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Volume 19 Issue 2

March 2012

**The next general meeting of the Granville Historical Society will be held at 2.00 pm on Saturday 24th March at our Research Centre
62 Railway Parade Granville
Executive Meeting 1.00 pm**

Guest Speaker

**Steve Norton
“Prospect Canal Reserve”**

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

Granville Historical Society

A Place where heritage & culture are valued & celebrated

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello members! Well we have had a busy month; I hope to bring you up to speed in what has been happening.

June and I attended a meeting earlier this month of local historical and family history societies from the Blue Mountains to the Sutherland Shire, Baulkham Hills and all areas in between. At the meeting we were informed that a Development Application had been submitted to Parramatta City Council to drill holes through the 1836 Lennox Bridge in Church Street Parramatta. With two days left for submissions, Granville Historical Society used our network of people to advise them of the proposal. With the help of the network and members of the committee we had attended, it was possible to deliver to Council and the NSW Heritage Office a record 79 submissions with more still to come. Thank you to all members and others who put in submissions. The result was that the DA has been withdrawn and the matter will not proceed. Having said that, this was a serious threat to an important heritage item, and if anyone has knowledge of anything important happening in this field in the Parramatta local government area, please advise us.

June and I have been appointed to the Parramatta City Council Heritage Advisory Committee; I am Granville's delegate with June as alternate. The Advisory Committee was not advised about the Lennox Bridge, but the committee sent a strongly worded message to the Council advising them that the DA was not appropriate and that the Council website needed to be more user friendly as people were not able to access the relevant documents concerning the bridge proposal.

June and I attended the Meet with the NSW Government Community Consultant Meeting at Rosehill Racecourse. We had ten minutes with Robyn Parker, the Minister for Heritage, and attended the public forum where we asked what was happening re Heritage and Tourism in Parramatta; we received a sympathetic ear but were told there is no money.

June and I attended a meeting with Tony Issa MP to interview him for our publication the Lebanese Contribution to Parramatta.

I spoke to the Friends of Mays Hill on River Reflections. This talk created a most interesting meeting with the audience participating

in the presentations. Feedback has suggested the people attending enjoyed the talk and they stated that they had not seen Parramatta heritage portrayed in that manner. A good time was had by all.

June & I attended the Penrith City Council Conference. This conference has been operating for eleven years, but this year was not as interesting as previous years. However the weekend was not completely a waste of time, the Nepean Family History Fair gave us many leads, as well as good public relations for the society.

We have successfully purchased a full set of C W Bean war history which will add depth of knowledge from Bean's Official War History of World War 1.

The Society had an impromptu school excursion last Wednesday when member Arthur Naylor accosted two teachers and ten pupils reading the Granville Train Disaster Memorial and invited them to the centre to view photographs and take copies back with them, together with two copies of videos for further study. Well done Arthur, good public relations!

Arthur Naylor also assisted June and I on Tuesday last to dress a mannequin in a sailor's uniform for the Granville RSL Memorabilia cabinet. The society has been asked to assist with the refurbishment of the cabinet, and to that end we have agreed, and hope to make the project educational and interesting so that the local schools will be able to visit. We have the blessing of Margaret Ward who is the general manager for this project.

Susan Russell nominated June Bullivant for the University of Western Sydney's Women of the West. There were 13 entrants, but June was not successful. June would like to thank Susan and all who helped with the submission for their work and support for this International Women's Day event.

Barry G Bullivant OAM
President

HUGUENOTS IN AUSTRALIA

If some of your ancestors were silk weavers in London's East End, in Spitalfields for example, and they had a French sounding name, they might have been Huguenots.

Huguenots were French Protestants who suffered religious persecution in their homeland. Their suffering intensified in the 1680s under Louis XIV who tried to force them to become Catholics. Two-hundred-and-fifty thousand people, about one quarter of the country's Huguenots, fled France to any country that would take them and allow them religious freedom - including the Netherlands, England, Germany, Switzerland and Ireland.

No Huguenot refugees came directly to Australia, although many of their descendants did. Some famous Australians were descended from Huguenots, including film producer Charles Chauvel, soldier Sir Harry Chauvel, photographer Harold Casneaux, conductor Richard Bonyng, former ABC chairman Sir Richard Boyer, and AFL great Roy Cazaly. The Huguenot Society of Australia's website has a list of surnames with confirmed Huguenot connections.

The secretary of the Society, Robert Nash, gave a talk on Huguenots at our February meeting, and told the stories of two Huguenot descendants who had interesting roles in Parramatta history.

Elizabeth Azire was the first Matron of the Parramatta Female Factory, one of the most senior roles in the colony for women. She was born in London circa 1780, married John

Fulloon in Whitechapel in 1802, and had seven children between 1803 and 1817. She and her family sailed from London in November 1823, and she took up her appointment at Parramatta on 19 May 1824. Her husband died on the voyage and was buried at sea. She resigned as matron when she married Robert Raine in 1826, and started a day school for young women with her daughter Matilda in O'Connell Street Sydney. She died at her home in O'Connell Street in 1842.

The second Huguenot descendant, Mary Amanet, was born at Mile End in East London in 1788 and married Samuel Gilbert at Stepney in May 1806. After Gilbert was transported for possession of forged banknotes, Mary came out as a free settler on the *Lord Melville* in February 1817, the year Samuel was granted a ticket of leave. Samuel received a conditional pardon in 1820, by which time his wife owned a farm and was selling wheat to the Government Stores. Samuel started a successful bakery in Parramatta and became a major landholder in the district. In 1831 he received a government grant of 140 acres at Castle Hill, where the Samuel Gilbert public school, built in 1986 on nearby land, honours his name. Mary Gilbert died, aged 38, in 1827, after a year-long illness that she bore, according to the *Sydney Gazette*, 'with exemplary patience and resignation.'

For more information on the Huguenot Society of Australia, see its website: www.huguenotsaustralia.org.au

For more information about Samuel and Mary Gilbert, see the Samuel Gilbert Public School website: <http://www.samuelgilb-p.schools.nsw.edu.au/information.html>

PETER KREMINSKI

Peter Kreminski (formerly Krzeminski) is an Adelaide medical practitioner, the author of a book, *Under false pretences : a family migrates to Australia*, - the story of the Krzeminski family in Poland and its experiences under the Nazi and Soviet regimes.

In an article in the February *Guardian*, he told how he and his father lived in a tent when the family arrived in Australia as refugees. In this month's issue he writes about his experiences at school in Granville before he went to high school at Parramatta and then to Sydney University where he studied medicine.

1950 to 1952

Granville Public School

My father had to decide about my schooling. He first went to a Catholic boarding school at Baulkham Hills, but apparently was greeted indifferently by the nuns who only seemed to be interested in whether the fees would be paid. Hence, in early 1950, I was enrolled in Granville Public School (referred to as Granville Central School in 1950) in William Street. We walked up the hill to the school, finding the Granville Junior Tech first (now Granville High School) and on showing a piece of paper with the school's name written on it, being re-directed. Neither of us spoke English.

The teacher worked out what class to put me in on the strength of what maths and geometry I could do on the blackboard and on my German and French school reports, as much as he could understand them. I was put into 4A: the upper stream class. Then I was on my own - a strange looking child with a strange looking bag, strange clothes and living in a tent in the railway yards. My father had bought me my school-lunch that day - a pound of bananas! My reputation as being weird was established for ever. I wasn't even circumcised, as most Australian boys were. Out of kindness the teacher, Mr John R. George, gave me sixpence to buy something at the tuck-shop in Lena Street; this I did by pointing at some lamingtons.

Things were hard for me, but that kind gesture by the teacher was followed by many others from Australians over the years. However, this is when I began to develop a feeling of being ashamed of my father. It lasted throughout my childhood life. He was so different to other children's fathers. Like all children I wanted to fit in, and when the teacher expressed amazement that I did not have a middle name I invented 'Andrews' (from the 'Archie' comics), and when again questioned I dropped the's'.

There was no playground equipment at the school and I was very poor at ball sports. I had not grown up in the atmosphere of cricket and rugby, so possessed no skills or understanding of these sports which were so vital to being an Australian child. Mr George understood this and in spite of having 35 other pupils to worry about he somehow found a soccer ball, put me into goal and the class proceeded to play, what was to me, real football. A boy gently kicked the ball towards me and I let it dribble between my legs into the goal. My reputation for being poor at sport was established. Of course the teacher was not to know that I had no idea of soccer either, because balls of any kind had been almost unobtainable in post-war Germany.

As stated before, it was hard for me to fit in. I had a calf-skin back-pack that my father had laboriously and proudly made for me in Schweighof and a hooded raincoat. Both were absolute no-no's in the days when hand-carried cases and hoodless raincoats (with a sou'wester) were the only acceptable accessories for any self-respecting child. Father quickly took the straps off my school-bag and fitted a handle, but I had to wait until finances permitted a proper raincoat and a cheap painted cardboard school-case. At least my shod feet were acceptable, as only about half the children came to school in bare feet, even in summer.

Although living in Canley Vale from mid 1950, I continued to attend Granville Public School, travelling alone (I was already nine years old after all) the twenty minutes by

train, then walking the kilometre up from the old Granville station (the new one is one hundred metres east of the old, which abutted the Bold St bridge). In 1953, when I began at Parramatta High School, there was an extra half-hour of travel involved. To minimise the expense, my parents bought me a metal railway pass valid for three months at a time. To my credit I never lost one.

Whilst travelling by train, standing on Canley Vale station I witnessed one of the few examples of 'Old Australians' irritation with 'New Australians'. Two migrants were catching the train. One was going north, the other south. Hence they were standing on different platforms with a double railway line separating them. Nevertheless they insisted on carrying on a conversation which entailed shouting across to one another, I have forgotten what language was used, but because I have always been sensitive about imposing myself on others, I silently concurred when someone told them to speak English.

Granville Public School, unlike my previous schools, was segregated; there being a separate school for girls and for boys after third class. Even Parramatta High School that I attended later, although nominally co-educational, had the two sexes sitting on opposite sides of the classroom and having separate playgrounds.

A curiosity in schools all over Australia in those days and well into the 1960's was the provision of free milk to the children. The scheme was probably more politically than nutritionally motivated: a concession to the milk farmers of the nation. The milk was full-cream, pasteurised, but not homogenised and hence had a layer of cream on top. It came in 1/3 pint bottles, was delivered early in the morning and handed out at 'Recess'. By then, because there was no refrigeration, it was for many children including myself, almost undrinkable, but most swallowed it without complaint.

At school I played marbles and 'cigarette-cards', 'hidings', and 'chasings'. Gangs would sometimes be formed and chase each other around the school grounds and sometimes fight. 'Cigarette-Cards' was an interesting pastime. One would find an empty cigarette packet (and I had the advantage of travelling by train so finding empty packets was no problem), and fashion it into a stiff 'spinnable' card. Possession of a large number and greatest variety of these cards was the aim. Whoever could throw his card nearest to a nominated wall would win his opponents cards. I became quite adept. I wasn't bad at marbles either.

The making of paper aeroplanes reached an art form for a lot of the pupils: complex folds of exercise book or foolscap paper resulting in various shapes and sizes but all aimed to achieve long soaring, graceful flight. Pocket pistols, firing dead matches, were manufactured from match boxes and rubber bands.

Some, including me, made these from wood and achieved the ability to project a small pebble inaccurately for two or three metres. 'Shanghais' (catapults) were made from a forked stick, rubber from a discarded bicycle inner tube, a scrap of leather and string (or better still copper wire). Heaven help you if a teacher caught you with one though. Necessity being the mother of invention, by high school, with the more readily availability of rubber bands, these shanghais were pared down to just a sliver of leather with the rubber bands wrapped around the fore and middle finger; the weapon being instantly concealable after firing. It projected a small wad of paper hardened with

saliva which certainly stung when it hit the back of one's neck. Ultimately, lead BB shot was available and made this mini catapult into a really potent weapon, but like the hydrogen bomb of the adults it was never used against people.

Table-top games played include 'Noughts and Crosses', 'Boxes' and one best described as 'Pearl Harbour'. Here a map of an island with various military installations would be drawn; the contestant would close his eyes, and then blindly 'bomb' the target with a pencil-point to see what damage he could do. The Second World War was fresh on everybody's minds. In 1951 the school had a scrap-metal drive to raise funds. Many children brought bullet and shell cases - surplus souvenirs of the war. I was so fascinated with a .50 calibre case that I took it home as my own souvenir.

The Korean War had started in June 1950. Thousands of Australian troops were fighting there and the newspapers published daily maps showing the black stain of the Communist armies overrunning Seoul, spreading down the Korean peninsula and surrounding Pusan. Then the Allied forces under General MacArthur established a beach-head and liberated Seoul only to have it captured again by the 'Reds' and needing to be re-taken again by the 'Allies'. The war went on right through my time at Granville and so had some effect on most children; me perhaps more than others, because of my memories of Europe as the war was ending and immediately after.

Pupils were addressed by the teachers and called each other by their surnames or nicknames. Hence 'Star' became 'Rats', Warren Fox became 'Foxy' (he lived in Walter St). Other names that I can remember are Baker (lived in an old house on East St), Foley (a friend of Baker's in the B stream, lived across the tracks in an old terrace house on Mary St, he taught me to eat chokos), Gollan (who was having boxing lessons), 'Dickey' Woodorth (a very popular out-going boy, he and three friends sang 'Sweet Violets' in front of the class; his father owned a produce store on South St) and Peter Macarthy. The last two accompanied me on to the selective and thus exclusive Parramatta High School but did not continue past third year. My own surname was regularly mangled by old and young alike. Krzeminski in Polish is pronounced 'ksheminski'; I usually got 'krezeminski' or, from the more sophisticated, 'sheminski'. I was happy to answer to 'Shem'. It is no wonder that I dropped the offending 'z' when enrolling at Sydney University in 1958.

In summer, apart from the cricketers, the whole school would walk to the Granville swimming baths and for two hours everybody would attempt to swim or at least play in the incredibly crowded pool. Being a chubby child it was a long time before I could dive under water and I never learnt the 'Australian Crawl'.

Having seen that I had no aptitude for sport, the school turned a blind eye to me wandering off during the compulsory weekly sports Friday afternoons. In the last year I was joined by another New Australian: a 'Pom' from Manchester. Jim Deeney who, like I, was also a social misfit, lived in the migrant camp at Warwick Farm. He was very sensitive that he lived in an ex-army barrack and always maintained that he did not. Although Deeney visited my family's shack-like home I never went to his. At least here was someone who was more ashamed of his home than I was.

Deeney and I roamed the streets together on those Friday sports afternoons. He was two years older than me and 'street-smart'. Someone had left an old bicycle in the ditch

outside Canley Vale station. After three or four days it was still there and having spoken to my parents I brought it home. I proceeded to trade the bicycle for Deeney's crystal radio set. He of course got the better on the deal, but I had many hours of satisfaction listening to my own radio after buying copper wire at the hardware shop in South St Granville and hanging it as high as possible to have reasonable reception. My best friend had no aptitude for study and after finishing at Granville I never saw him again.

Another incident which I shamefully record is my making lead pennies. Perhaps Deeney gave me the idea, but I cannot be sure. I obtained lead scraps from my father's shed and melted them down in an old tin cup over a primus stove, then poured the molten lead out to form blobs which could be cut and hammered into the exact shape of a penny. 'Milk Bars' in those days often had a mechanical game which cost a penny to play; if you won, it gave you a penny back (not the one you had just played). With four or five lead pennies in my pocket I ventured forth to rob these machines in the two milk bars that I knew in Granville. I think Deeney was with me. We were successful in the first and left with two real pennies, but in the second my lead coin became stuck in the machine, the shop-keeper realised what was happening (my scheme was obviously not original), he yelled at me and we ran away. That was the end of my life as a forger.

One skill that I did possess to some extent was singing. The pupils were tested for their abilities in this and I was put into the class and later the school choir. We won an inter-school competition in my last year in Granville.

In those days school discipline was tighter than nowadays. Regular corporal punishment was meted out for misdemeanours. This consisted of 'the cuts': hitting the open palm with a light cane. Two cuts for minor misbehaviour and up to six for major sins. I cannot remember what all these were, but speaking in class, giggling, throwing paper aeroplanes, or passing notes would have earned at least two strokes; more for repeat offences. I can only remember being punished once or twice. It stung and hurt and my fingers were painful for a day afterwards.

I would like to record that my teacher in 5th class was R E Haigh, and in 6th class, R Taylor (from memory the deputy headmaster). They were both good men and Mr Taylor's laconic comment on my performance in my final school report was: 'High (Parramatta)'.

My last contact with Granville Public School was at the annual Speech Day. The whole of the boys' school was marched to the Granville movie theatre on Parramatta Road. School halls big enough for the whole school were non-existent in State schools in those days. Speeches were made and prizes were presented. I was given my prize (a book that I had chosen previously myself): Alexander Dumas' 'The Three Musketeers' which I still have. It is covered in the brown paper that my mother put around it (as one did with books in those days to protect them), and inside is a plaque stating: *Presented to Peter Krzeminski, Dux of School, by Granville Public School Old Boys' Association, 5/12/52.* Under that is pasted a very small article from the Fairfield 'Biz' newspaper praising my efforts. I am sure that it had been informed of my achievement by Mr Pike (an elderly man who sold us the land we lived on at Canley Vale), on my mother's behest.

They two of them were reasonably friendly and as I recollect it now, he was similar in appearance to my maternal grandfather, the only other survivor of her family. Dziadek had been left behind, together with my adopted sister, in far-away Poland in 1946. This was on the other side of the Iron Curtain, and we never saw either again.

At the school ceremony the elderly gentleman who presented the book to me stated that his Association would contact me at some future time. It never did.

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TIME, DATE & CALENDAR

Here's an interesting website: <http://www.timeanddate.com/>

It provides current time in various places around the world, time zones, which countries have daylight saving, current weather, seasons, holidays worldwide, and international events.

You can also create a calendar for any year you choose, be it 2014 or 1814 etc., showing holidays and observances, in any country you choose.