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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 2.00pm on Saturday 26th October 2013

At our Research Centre
62 Railway Parade Granville
Executive Meeting 1.00 pm
Guest Speaker
Judith Dunn OAM
The Inns of Parramatta

TO CONTACT US:

Write to

P.O. Box 320
Granville NSW 2142

Phone:

9682 1290 (Wed. only)
9631 0216
(Barry & June Bullivant)

Email:

granvillehistorical@bigpond.com

Website

www.granvillehistorical.org.au

Heritage Watch NSW Website

www.heritagewatchnsw.org.au

Friends of Mays Hill Cemetery

www.mayshillcemetery.org

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/GranvilleHistoricalSocietyIncNswAustralia?ref=hl>

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Granville Historical Society

"A Place where heritage & culture are valued & celebrated."

Granville Historical Society has been extremely busy; we've averaged three talks a month since January 2013. We have had to design more, to cater for the people who wanted diversity, especially the Westmead Rehabilitation Centre, where we speak monthly. The ones added to our usual round of talks were Parramatta the Cradle City, this has been circulated to a school in Mount Drutt, the curator of Parramatta Park. Another is the story of David Lennox, master bridge builder of Australia, Scottish Immigration from The Thistle to the Wattle, An Aboriginal Story, Down Memory Lane 2, The Tale of a Dignified Profession, Victory in the Pacific, River Reflections, A Walk on the North Side and the History of the Granville Historical Society. There are two more talks in the development stage.

Our travelling photographic exhibition on David Lennox has been mounted at the Linnwood House open days three times, and another will be shown on the 10th November. June Bullivant has also been involved in the establishment of NSW Heritage Network – Linked to Protect Heritage. This is a group of professionals who are passionate about retaining and protecting our heritage. The Network and its publication will be launched at the Linnwood House Open Day, 25 Byron Road, Linnwood, on the 10th November next.

Probably one of the more exciting projects we have been involved with is the "Pearls of Granville" which is an architectural study tour of Granville. We have been working with the Information and Cultural Exchange of Parramatta, and supplying the group with knowledge, images and access to our files, and interviews with our volunteers. This project will use modern technology to conduct a tour of about ten sites in Granville for Architectural Week over the first and second weekends in November. This project will be

Ground-breaking and it is hoped that further opportunities will present itself for David Lennox and the Centenary of World War 1.



Granville Historical Society has had three meetings for the Centenary of Anzac, one with John Haines president of Granville RSL Sub-Branch re a project he is planning and would like Granville to do the research. Another, with the Parramatta Heritage Centre, was to ascertain what people are planning to do to mark the commemoration. This was attended by the Parramatta Lancers, RSL Sub-Branchees from Epping, Parramatta, and Granville, and the staff from the Heritage Centre. This resulted in the Heritage Centre putting an index of soldiers from the LGA on the website. The Society was offered expertise and advice from members of staff. The Holroyd Local Studies workers are in a similar situation as Parramatta, the workers are restricted as far as research is concerned due to time restraints. Granville has established collaboration with Dorothy Warwick and Pat O'Brien from Holroyd and Guildford

Local History Research to research the Parramatta and Holroyd LGA's. To this end, Arthur Naylor and Colin Humphreys have nearly finished Granville; this has been a work in progress for the boys, over the past four years. Arthur and Tracy Bullivant are assisting HGLHR to research Guildford. What forms this will take will depend on financing, but we have put out a message to the community asking for information and images.

Granville has also collected the history of the Two Blues Rugby Union Club, and written the history of the Granville Multicultural Community Centre - this will be finalised shortly. We are also working on research into the funeral industry in Parramatta and have uncovered some fascinating insights into the practices of people associated with the industry. Of course our normal research for family history inquiries from members of the community and students continues. This includes digitising files for easy transfer over the internet, thus saving on costs associated with this heavily used facility. The last one we were able to do was from a young university student from Bathurst who wanted information sent. This meant scanning 286 pages and transferring it over the internet, the project was the Granville Train Disaster and the response of essential services. Students are asked for a copy of their project for our files and how they went with their assignment.

Thank you to Colin, Stephanie and Jordan Humphreys for mounting the stall at St Mark's Food and Fun Fair last Saturday. They picked up the boards, and mounted the display that included old photos of the church, and photographs of all the church ministers since the



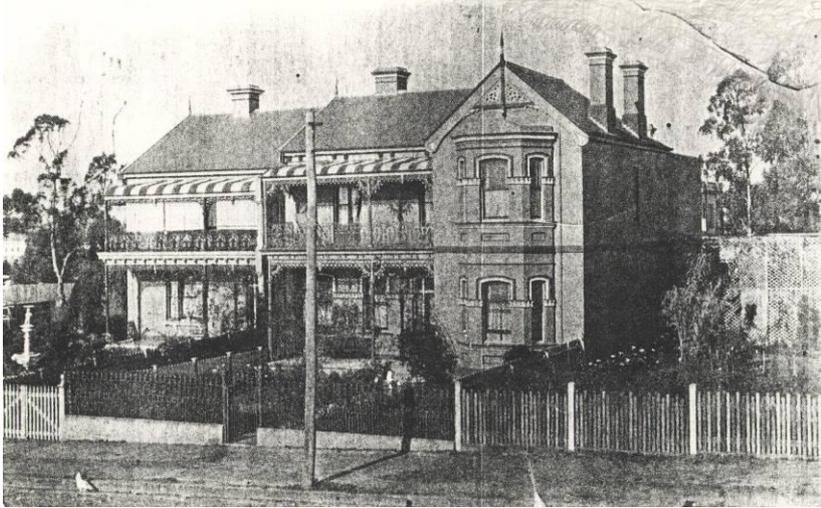
1880s. It looked very professional. Stephanie also managed to photograph the stall holders. The day was attended by members of the English, Cantonese and Mandarin community, and also of the Pacific Island Community. The Church is a very vibrant community facility and busier than it has been in years. The Rector David Wong and his wife walked around mingling with the church community, a lovely mixture of cultures. The organising was done extremely well, with an abundance of food, both English and Chinese, and I enjoyed a feed of noodles washed down

with a can of Sprite and June had a steak sandwich followed by a cup of tea and cake. A very nice relaxing day, it was fun to watch the children play for coupons on game stalls that we haven't seen for many years - ball in the basket and hoopla.

Barry G Bullivant OAM
President

**JAMES BELLENGER –
MAJOR GRANVILLE HOME
OWNER**

James Bellenger, an early land owner in Granville, was one of five siblings who emigrated to Australia between 1827 and 1842 from Overton near Southampton in the English county of Hampshire. Most of the family settled in Tasmania, including the eldest brother, Thomas, who was appointed Chief Constable of Marlborough in north-eastern Tasmania in 1852. James came to Granville in 1885 after 30 years in the fruit and vegetable industry – firstly as a retailer in Woolloomooloo, and



James Bellenger's houses, *Overton* on the left, and *Overton Villa* on the right

then as an orchardist at Fairfield.¹

James Bellenger was born on 15 March 1822 at Overton, a rural village 40 kilometres north of Southampton, the youngest of the nine children of Thomas and Jane Bellenger. He was 19 when he arrived at Port Phillip on the *Thetis* in February 1842, to join family members already in Tasmania. By

1850, he had moved to Sydney where he married Martha Lynn at Scots Presbyterian Church in Pitt Street on 12 December 1853. The marriage register described him as a widower. Martha, who signed the register with her mark, was born on 18 April 1830, the second daughter of convict William Lynn and his wife, Hannah Irons, who married in 1828. The witnesses were Martha's mother, Anna Lynn, and her 26-year-old sister, Mary Ann Dennett. Mary Ann's husband of four years, George Dennett, had died at the age of 31 in May 1853. On 9 May 1855, she married John Clement Beare, a 24-year-old grocer, at St James's Church of England in Sydney. Beare was born at Plymouth in England, and had joined the Royal Navy when he was only 12 after being orphaned at quite a young age. He left the Navy to prospect for gold on the Victorian goldfields, and came to Sydney in the early 1850s. In his later life he served as an alderman on the Sydney City Council from 1881 to 1889.²

James and Martha Bellenger had six children, two of whom died at a very early age. The surviving children were Martha, born in 1850, Matilda, born 1856, and Henry, born 1860, both at a two-story shop and residence at 101 South Head Road, and Betsy, born in 1862 at 209 Victoria Street. While Martha was pregnant with Henry, James advertised for a competent female general servant, and a nurse to care for her. James had started a greengrocer business in the rented South Head Road shop about 1857, but had bought the premises before 1861. Around 1862 he and John Beare became partners in the firm of Beare and Bellenger, "Poulterers, Fruiterers and Greengrocers", at the corner of William and Brougham Streets, Woolloomooloo, near the present location of the Kings Cross railway station. The family was then living in a brick two-storey five-room house at 209 Victoria Street. They moved again in 1866 and rented a larger two-storey seven-room house at 220 Victoria Street. Business partner John Beare was a neighbour. James Bellenger and John Beare won prizes for fruit and vegetables and flowers, at Sydney Horticultural Society Exhibitions, but the partnership broke up in

¹ *Heaven and Hell Together*, The Bellenger Family, www.heavenandhelltogether.com; *Hobart Courier*, 1 September 1852, p. 3

² Scots Church Marriage Register, Volume 81 No. 908; NSW Marriage Registration V 1853618 81/1853; St Philip's Church Sydney, Baptism Register, 1830 pp. 47-48, No. 704; NSW Marriage, V1849107 33/B; *Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)*, 18 May 1853 p. 3; NSW Births Index V1830181 14/1830; NSW Marriage Index V1828629 44B/1828; *SMH* 14 July 1855 p. 8; City of Sydney Archives: Aldermen's Files, www.sydneyaldermen.com.au

1865. When the partners went their separate ways, James bought a one-to-two level stone building at 214 William Street and ran a poultry business in the street level shop while living in the upstairs section. John Beare's grocer and greengrocer shop was next door.³

In 1867, the Bellenger family moved to Fairfield where James had bought 40 acres of farming land on Smithfield Road near Prospect Creek. There he developed a profitable orchard and vineyard, *Overton Park*, growing oranges, apples and stone fruit. When the big land sales opening up the Parramatta Junction (Granville) area began with the auction of Wetherill's subdivision of a section of the Drainwell Estate on 16 October 1875, James purchased one of the best blocks. His two-acre (0.81 hectare) plot was bounded by Mary Street, Railway Street (now The Avenue), and Jamieson Street. Between 1880 and 1883, he built a block of five terraces on land on the western side of Jamieson Street that he had substantially bought on 5 December 1875. These were the first of a large number of rental properties he built between 1880 and his death in 1912. He owned 22 houses in Granville in 1898, according to a letter he wrote to Granville Council, requesting the installation of a street light near one of the properties. In 1880, he took the first step towards building his own home in the area. He bought a block of two roods (2,024 sq. metres) on the eastern side of Jamieson Street, from Thomas Carson, who had become his son-in-law the previous year. He contracted a builder, believed to have been John Fewster, to build a two-storey house, and occupied it in 1885 or 1886. He named the house *Overton*, after the English village where he was born. At 29 Jamieson Street, it's now owned by Granville Historical Society members David and June Eglon. In September 1885, James asked architects Hill and Smith, who had offices in Parramatta and Elizabeth Street Sydney, to design a 10-room two-storey house for the adjacent site, which is now number 31 Jamieson Street. Builder T.H. Marshall won the contract and completed the house at the end of 1885. James named the house *Overton Villa*. This was built as a superior type rental house. It was demolished in the 1970s.⁴

James's wife Martha died at their home in Jamieson Street on 12 August 1901 aged 71. James remained the owner of the orchard at Fairfield orchard, and it was run by his son, Henry, until 1919, when he bought a fruit and confectionery shop in the main street of Fairfield. James continued to live in Jamieson Street and at 90 was strong enough to climb a ladder to repair his roof. But he became ill months later and died on 11 September 1912. He left an estate worth £7,240, mainly real estate. Henry inherited the family orchard but James's other real estate was shared among the four children. When Betsy died on 4 August 1930 she left her entire estate to her sister Matilda. This included a terrace of four houses in the Avenue, two houses in The Avenue and Jamieson Street, and 17 other houses she jointly owned with Matilda. Matilda died on 19 June 1937,

³ *SMH* Death and Funeral Notices: 4 June 1857, p. 8, 18 January 1859, p. 1; NSW Births: V1850/274 35/1850, 1856/270, 1861/171; *SMH* 18 December 1860 p. 1, 1 August 1862, p. 1; Birth Registration: 1862/1476; Help wanted advertisement *SMH* 13 June 1860, p.1; City of Sydney Archives, Rate Assessment Books, <http://photosau.com.au/CosRates/scripts/home.asp> ; *SMH* 11 June 1864, p. 10, 10 March 1864, p. 5, 28 February 1865, p. 1; City of Sydney Archives, Rate Assessment Books

⁴ V. George, *Fairfield, A History of the District*, Council of the City of Fairfield, p. 40; *SMH*, 22 October 1885, p. 18, *SMH*, 23 October 1875, p. 10; NSW Land and Property Information, Old System Records, Book 155 No. 342, Conveyance, Wetherill to James Bellenger, 4 December 1875; *Cumberland Argus*, 6 August 1898, p. 11, Land Titles Old System Records, Book 206 No. 626, Thomas Carson to James Bellenger, 14 May 1880; Information on the naming of the houses provided by David Eglon; *Cumberland Mercury*, 12 September 1885, p.5, 14 November 1885, p. 3; T. Kass, *The Streets of Granville, Its History and Heritage*, Granville Historical Society, 1995, p. 21;

leaving an estate worth more than £16,000. She bequeathed her 34 houses to various relatives.⁵

Note: Is the family name Bellenger or Bellinger? The Tasmanian branch of the family was generally Bellinger. In New South Wales, the births of two of James's children were registered as Bellinger, the other four as Bellenger. James's marriage to Martha was registered as Bellinger. The legal documents drawn up for probate for James, Henry, Betsy and Matilda, were all spelt Bellenger. Henry's signature on one of the documents was clearly Bellenger, and Matilda's signature on her Will was also Bellenger. So I have used Bellenger throughout this article, even when documents or reports have stated Bellinger.

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⁵ *Cumberland Argus*, 17 August 1901, p. 2; *The Biz* (Fairfield newspaper) 9 March 1939, p. 2 (Henry Bellenger Obituary); State Records New South Wales (SRNSW): Probate Jurisdiction, Supreme Court of NSW; Series 4, James Bellenger, 11-9-1912; 2396 No. 58189; Series 4, Betsy Bellenger, 4-8-1930; 717 No. 169727; Series 4, Matilda Bellenger, 19-6-1937