



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 2.00pm on Saturday 24th August 2013

At our Research Centre
62 Railway Parade Granville
Executive Meeting 1.00 pm

Guest Speaker
Bruce Roberts
1st Granville Scouts
“Scouting in Granville”

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Friends of Mays Hill Cemetery

www.mayshillcemetery.org

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Granville Historical Society

“A Place where heritage & culture are valued & celebrated.”

Granville Historical Society Annual General Meeting was held last month. The results were President Barry Bullivant, Vice President Stephanie Humphreys, Secretary/Treasurer June Bullivant, Committee Susan Russell, Arthur Naylor, Betty Higginson, and Colin Humphreys. Society members were thanked for their service for year 2012/13 by President Barry Bullivant and he congratulated them on the excellent work accomplished in the year. He welcomed everyone to the new financial year and said that he was proud of the way that the society had achieved their high standard of delivery of service to the community.

The society has formed partnerships with the other groups in the immediate area. There is a project with the Friends of Mays Hill Cemetery which is being worked on by Arthur Naylor, Pat O'Brien, Dorothy Warwick, Judith Dunn and June Bullivant. This is the history of the funeral Industry in Parramatta and beyond, an interesting research programme due to the fact that it is new research and that it has really interesting stories, stories of the grave digger and Church sexton Samuel Cook, stories of a stonemason George Peters. I would like to thank the above mentioned people for the research, the descendants of the undertakers in Parramatta, and special thanks to Janine Morgan who has assisted us from her wonderful archives of photographs and memorabilia she has made available for this publication. Janine is the granddaughter of Frank Morris who bought the business from Ralph Metcalfe after his death and it was owned by the family until 1980 as Metcalfe and Morris, although it was run by several prominent undertakers during that period. This publication will be published and sold by the Friends of Mays Hill, and should be finished midyear 2014.

The second partnership that has been formed is with Holroyd Local History Research and their project to research and record World War 1 soldiers is being assisted by our newest recruit Tracy Bullivant, who is also working with Robyn Gibson, Lynne Willing, and Dulcie Willing, with the group chaired by Betty Higginson, to process the mountain of funeral plans from Metcalfe and Morris. This project is going full speed and will allow easier access to the many people who are tracing their family tree. The indexes will be put on the website as this work continues.

Our project with ICE (Information Cultural Exchange) is progressing well and is extremely



interesting. The architecture of Granville is being featured and it is taking shape as a tour, but it will be enabled to produce something that can be put on line. Also we are looking at forming a partnership with ICE to produce something on The David Lenox Story, from his landing in Australia to the demolition of his work in Victoria and Parramatta. We have also mounted a photographic exhibition for Lennox that is portable. This will be displayed 8th September 2013 at Linnwood House, 25 Byron Road, Guildford. This is

their historical day, together with other stalls - a good relaxing day. All welcome.

Barry G Bullivant OAM

THE JUNCTION BRICKWORKS

Technological change arising out of the industrial revolution swept through the New South Wales brickmaking industry in the late 1870s. What was once a cottage industry producing hand-made bricks was transformed into 'a sophisticated and highly capitalised enterprise.'¹

There is a long history of brickmaking in the Granville Merrylands area that is discussed in detail by Thomas Fowlie in his book *History of Granville 1919*. He lists more than 20 local brickyards dating back to the early 1850s. Many of these yards were located on the banks of A'Becketts Creek where there was an ample supply of alluvial clay. Bricklayers sourced bricks for the construction of several local landmarks to these early brickyards. Want's brickyard near A'Becketts Creek produced bricks for the old Vauxhall Inn and Carhullen House in the 1850s. Bricks from Mumford's brickyard in William Street between The Trongate and Clyde Streets were used in the construction of the School of Arts in 1882 and the Albert Hall. Try's Brickyard north of Merrylands Station made bricks for the construction of Brunton's Flour Mill and its chimney.²

¹ W. Gemmill, *And so we graft from six to six – the brickmakers of New South Wales*, p. 1

² T. Fowlie, *The History of Granville 1919*, Granville Historical Society, 2001, pp. 58-65

Meanwhile a group of investors who were promoting the prospects for a new brickyard at Parramatta Junction formed The Junction Brick and Pottery Company. It took its name from Parramatta Junction, the pre-1880 name for the Granville district, and although its plant would be on land in Merrylands (Holroyd), the location was generally said to be Granville. Parramatta Junction was described in 1877 as ‘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’. This presumptuous little place, however, was stirring. When John Wetherill’s subdivision of part of the old Drainwell Estate was offered for sale in September 1875, buyers snapped up 53 blocks totalling nearly 70 acres. They included a few men who would become prominent in Granville’s early history. Railways clerk Harry Richardson of Parramatta, who rose through the bureaucratic ranks to become Railways Commissioner, purchased four acres in Railway Street (The Avenue). James Bellenger acquired two acres in Jamieson Street, while Thomas Carson and William Merrett also bought blocks. In November 1876, 182 housing allotments in Louis Castner’s subdivision of part of the Drainwell Estate were sold for more than £2,000. Houses were built on many of these allotments, and two years later there were more than 200 school-age children in the area whose parents signed a petition for the construction of a public school at Granville. An education department inspector who investigated their request estimated the local population at 600.³

The manager of the new brickworks company was John Meeks, a 38-year-old Lancastrian who had arrived in Australia in 1862. He worked for the Australian Gaslight Company for eight years and then ventured into tin smelting. In 1874, he formed the Australian Tin Smelting Company in Chowne Street Pyrmont in partnership with Andrew Sutherland Low, a wealthy mining speculator, who had made a fortune on the Gulgong gold diggings. Meeks served as an alderman on the Sydney City Council from 1879 to 1892, on the Glebe Council from 1892 to 1895, and was the Member for Glebe in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly from 1885 to 1887. Andrew Low owned a major part of the Denham Farm Estate at Merrylands (part of the former John Bowman grant) which he had purchased in 1876. Between 1878 and 1881, he built a mansion and palatial estate on his property, between the railway line and the site for Granville Park.⁴

The Junction Brick and Pottery Company was officially registered in June 1878, and purchased 32 acres of land along A’Becketts Creek on the former Denham Farm Estate from Andrew Low for the site of its plant. The major shareholders included some very influential men. The chairman was Russell Barton, M.L.A. for Bourke from 1880 to 1886. He was also a grazier, a director of 15 mining companies and chairman of 11 of them. Apart from Meeks, the others included wealthy Ryde landowner Richard Rouse Terry, successful Sydney stockbroker Josiah Mullens, and George Hardie, a principal of the real estate firm Hardie and Gorman. Hardie’s company had handled some of Andrew Low’s real estate transactions, including inner-city properties. In 1880, Barton, Hardie, Low and Meeks were all members of a delegation that met the New South Wales Works Minister to press for a railway line from Orange to Cobar.⁵

³ *Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)*, 23 October 1875, p. 10; 28 November 1876, p. 6; Granville Public School Centenary History booklet

⁴ Former Members New South Wales Parliamentary Register; *Sydney Evening News*, 2 May 1899, p. 4; *Brisbane Courier*, 15 August 1874, p. 1; *Cumberland Argus*, 8 September 1894, p.2;

⁵ T. Kass, *Historical Analysis of the Junction Brickworks*, in *Heritage Study of Goodlet and Smith Brickworks* (P. Romney) 1989; SMH, 13 August 1878; B. Nairn, 'Barton, Russell (1830–1916)', *Australian Dictionary of*

In August 1878, the Junction Brick Company called tenders for the supply of a clay crushing machine and other equipment and for labour to erect brick kilns. A bricklayer named Isaac Paton, who reputedly drank a bottle of brandy each morning before starting work, erected the plant's landmark chimney stack 150 feet (45.72 metres) high that still stands, although the height was reduced in 2002 for safety reasons. The bricks used came from Bergan's brickyard in the Bergan's Mill paddocks, now the site of the Granville Swimming Pool. Fowlie says the Junction brick company was the first in the district to produce machine-made bricks instead of the manual method of making them in wooden moulds. He also wrote that it purchased the right to use the latest in brick-making technology, the Hoffnung Kiln from John Hay Goodlet of Goodlet and Smith.⁶

The chimney was completed in the first week in November 1878 and brick production began soon after. But the business failed in 1880. The company was liquidated in 1882 and a new company, the Junction Brick Coy Ltd, was formed. Terry Kass says the reason appears to be a need for more finance. In March 1883 it moved to sell off half its land for home-building. Hardie and Gorman advertised the sale of 100 building lots in a subdivision of the elevated half of the company's property adjoining the brickworks. Then in October 1884 the brickworks and '32 acres of valuable brick earth' was advertised for sale. The successful buyer was Henry Gurney of Willoughby, but his ownership lasted only a year. The plant was then bought by John Goodlet, owner of timber merchant and brick manufacturer Goodlet and Smith.⁷

Goodlet upgraded and expanded the works. He diversified into the manufacture of cement and the production of terra cotta Marseilles roof tiles, becoming one of the first companies in Australia to make these pattern tiles. But complaints about dust forced the closure of the cement plant in 1919. In October 1924, fire caused extensive damage to the tile works, halting tile production for some years. Kass says Goodlet and Smith played a major role in the early development of building materials manufacture in New South Wales and was the first to venture into several areas of new processes. Twenty-four years after the brick and tile plant ceased functioning, the former brick pit at Merrylands has been turned into parkland and what remains of the brickworks is now a workplace memorial in the midst of a number of low-rise apartment blocks.⁸

Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/barton-russell-75/text4281>; *SMH*, 7 February 1880, p. 6

⁶ *SMH*, 13 August 1878; Fowlie, pp. 60-64

⁷ *SMH*, 14 November 1878, p. 4; 17 March 1885, p. 18, 8 October 1884, p. 18; Kass, pp. 96-10

⁸ Fowlie, p. 65; Kass, p. 12; *Cumberland Argus*, 2 December 1924, p. 4; Kass, p. 6