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# 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 27<sup>th</sup> April 2013

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

**Guest Speaker**

**Terry Kass**

**Topic "Goldfields Doctor"**

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

## **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**

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Granville Historical Society

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

The Society has had a busy month; the main problem is the issues with the Department of Planning and the White Paper which has been released. We have until June to comment; we have circulated it to all our members and I suggest you read it carefully. You need to really understand this proposed legislation, as it will affect everyone in the community and decide what laws will govern the development in your area. The next two months are the only time you can make a comment; after that a blank cheque is issued to the developer. If the building is compliant with those rules, it can be pushed through in 25 days and you will not be able to stop it, nor will your local council - they will be obliged to pass the development, one size fits all, or they will lose any planning powers and it will be taken over by a Planning Committee set up by the Planning Department.

These are the places to comment.

On The Fifth Estate (online publication):

<http://www.thefifthestate.com.au/archives/47707/> and  
<http://www.thefifthestate.com.au/archives/47877/#more-47877>

Scroll down to leave your comments.

In Government News (online publication):

<http://www.governmentnews.com.au/2013/04/18/article/Positions-splinter-on-NSW-planning-overhaul/FORCJXPOSA.html>

Scroll down to leave your comments.

In The Australian:

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/property/state-planning-reform-backed/story-fn9656lz-1226622965795>

Send your letters to [letters@theaustralian.com.au](mailto:letters@theaustralian.com.au) .

There are also ongoing articles across local newspapers- make sure you respond!

June and I attended the Westmead Rehabilitation again this month; we spoke on WW2 and how Australia coped during the war years. It was very well received and people were very interested. Next month, due to the demand, we will present *Parramatta the Cradle City*, a PowerPoint which illustrates the beginnings of Parramatta, some rare and exciting images that will show how the city evolved and who was responsible. The following month will be *The Story of David Lennox*, which had its debut at our March meeting.

We also held another photographic display on David Lennox at Linnwood Hall, as part of the Holroyd City Fest celebrations, and we shared the day with the Triumph car club. There were many visitors, we made many new contacts and gave out numerous brochures showing the alternatives to destroying the heritage-listed David Lennox Bridge on Church Street, Parramatta. Thank you to the Friends of Linnwood, the venue is a credit to you.

The Greater Western Sydney Heritage Action Group GWSHAG has been invited by the Shadow Minister for Heritage Barbara Perry to have an input into Heritage Issues in NSW for Local Communities; the workshop will design a list of strategies for handling heritage issues in your area. This will result in a publication for circulation to community groups. This group, as part of the Better Planning Network, has been active in working on planning issues with over 360 other heritage, planning, conservation, activists and green groups to address the lack of community input to the decisions on planning and the lack of interest in retaining our important heritage items in Parramatta. All NSW members of Parliament and Parramatta City Council were sent a publication showing the alternatives to destroying the Lennox Bridge heritage value. GWSHAG has also contacted the NSW Ombudsman to lodge a complaint about the lack of response to correspondence addressed to the Chair, Lawrence Neild. This was to ask for answers about the Heritage Council NSW, how they are to protect our history, how that due process was not followed and the fact the committee did not have a historian and a National Trust representative. This decision was made to destroy the Lennox Bridge, and this was done with no report from a heritage engineer to say what impact the development would have. A response has not been forthcoming even though it was part of the requirements by the Heritage Council of NSW. It has been nine weeks, we followed up with a phone call last week, and were promised an answer on Monday last, but this did not happen; watch this space. Our online petition has now 672 signatures.

A bit of news regarding the Parramatta Heritage Centre: this important community facility has had a major restructure in the past few months. All the old staff have been retrenched and their positions are being replaced. The top display space has also been dismantled and the administration is not planning any further projects; this space will be taken over by administration. This is a great shame, as there is nowhere in Parramatta for exhibitions to be held. We have had three successful displays over the past few years and to lose this venue is a great loss to the community. There are plans for a "Discovery" centre on the old Lennox Car Park, but when and if this is to be is quite unsure. This is being pushed by Urban Growth NSW and will probably be financed by a developer who wants more high rise in Parramatta.

We have been asked to participate in a meeting with Council to discuss ideas for Foundation Day this year. We have already had a meeting to discuss a "Parramatta Open" which is based on Sydney Open, a day when visitors are able to inspect heritage buildings that are not normally open to the community for viewing. This attracts a lot of people not normally interested in heritage. It has been very successful in Sydney and we hope that transfers to Parramatta. We suggested that we might be able to see the inside of Lennox Bridge - that did not meet with approval.

We had a Photo Shoot at the Parramatta Gaol in response to the White Paper on Planning on Monday 22nd April, thank you to all members and supporters who attended.

Barry G Bullivant OAM  
President

### VALE BETTY HOLLAND

Betty Holland, a Granville Historical Society member, Liberal Party supporter, and a volunteer community worker in the Holroyd-Wentworthville area for many years, passed away earlier this month, aged 87.



Ted and Betty Holland outside their shop in Sydney Road

Betty was born in Railway Parade Granville to Elsie Amelia Sams (née Hedges) and her husband, Ernest George, better known as Murphy, Sams. Her mother wanted to call her Betty, but was told that if she did, the baby would have to be christened Elizabeth. She didn't want to do this, so she named her Beryl Joyce (after a Miss Australia, Beryl Mills), and called her Betty. Betty went to Rosehill Public School, and then Homebush Girls High, but left in September 1940 when she was offered a job at the Whittings' mixed business on Sydney Road, just around the corner from her home. Later her father, who worked at the Columbia Gramophone Company at Homebush, helped her to get a job in the company's despatch department.

She was working at the record company when she met her future husband, Walter Edward (Ted) Holland, an army sergeant based at workshops at Auburn. They married in January 1946 when Ted was still in the army. After the war, they moved to Queensland to be near Ted's family, but returned to Sydney several months later and purchased the Whittings' mixed business at 76 Sydney Road, near the Clyde level

crossing. Three years later they purchased the freehold of a mixed business at Belfield, but this venture was not a great success, so they sold out and bought a home at Merrylands.

Over the next several years, the Hollands operated a dry cleaners at Auburn, a mixed business in Blaxcell Street Granville, and a mixed business in Railway Parade Westmead. They also became involved in community work at the Wentworthville Pensioners Welfare Association, and later with Legacy. Betty came from a Labor family, but joined the Liberal Party in the Menzies era, and was a strong supporter for almost 20 years.

When Betty began losing her sight, the Society in her honour created a talking book version of the *History of Granville* by Thomas Fowlie, working with Vision Australia. It was then distributed to local libraries and 75 families in the area. Ted Holland died in 1999, and in 2001 Betty was awarded the Centenary Medal for service to Australian society and the community.

## GALLIPOLI – THE WAR OF OFFICIAL SILENCE



**Picture this scenario: the Australian Government raises a new army to be part of an allied force in a new conflict overseas. Seven months later, the Australians take part in their first military action and suffer major losses. The military authorities here and overseas clamp a news blackout on the operation, and four days pass before any statement is issued. Even then there is no confirmation that Australian troops are involved and no information on casualties. No democratic government could get away with news censorship on such a scale today, but it happened with the Gallipoli expedition in the First World War.**

**When the Anzac force landed at Gallipoli at dawn on 25 April 1915, the news was kept secret. Twenty-three thousand Australian and New Zealand army personnel came ashore at Anzac Beach**

**in the seven days between 25 April and 1 May. Eight thousand were killed or wounded; on the first day alone it was estimated that 800 were killed and at least 1,200 wounded. But the folk at home knew nothing of this.**<sup>1</sup>

**Monday 26 April:** Newspapers state unofficial reports say “a decisive action” has commenced in the Dardanelles [Gallipoli Peninsula] with a bombardment.<sup>2</sup>

**Tuesday 27 April:** The Press report that the bombardment continued.

**Wednesday 28 April:** The War Office in London issues a statement on the “completely successful landing of an Allied force at Gallipoli”, and said a large force had been established ashore. The statement contains no details of the operation.<sup>3</sup>

**Thursday 29 April:** Newspapers report a War Office statement that the troops have gained a good footing after a hard day’s fighting. No details are given on the composition of the Allied force. Later, the British Government cables the Australian Government with “warmest congratulations on the splendid gallantry and magnificent achievement of your contingent in the successful progress of the operations at the Dardanelles”. Prime Minister Andrew Fisher confirms that Australian units landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula “several days ago”. The government has not been told what units were involved. The War Office says the troops at Gallipoli are steadily advancing, but Turkey claims the Allies have lost 400 dead and 200 have been taken prisoner.<sup>4</sup>

**Friday 30 April:** King George V congratulates Australian troops on their “splendid conduct and bravery” and in Parliament a senator criticises the withholding of news, saying this has caused a great deal of anxiety to the families at home.<sup>5</sup>



**Sunday 2 May:** The Admiralty in London praises Australian troops for “a brilliant and memorable achievement”. While newspapers report heavy casualties, the first list of casualties released by the Australian Defence Department contains just 55 names – 18 dead and 37 wounded. [The true figure for Anzac casualties at this stage of the conflict was 8,100, including about 2,000 dead].<sup>6</sup>

**Sunday 2 May:** Details of the Gallipoli landing are revealed for the first time in an official statement released in London. It said the Anzacs landed on the Sari Bair slopes on the 25th, and pushed on with the utmost boldness, being constantly engaged with the enemy whose strong and repeated counter-attacks were invariably repulsed. The statement did not mention casualties.<sup>7</sup>

**As unofficial reports of heavy losses continued towards the end of the second week of fighting, the *Sydney Morning Herald* described the Gallipoli conflict as a war of official silence and urged an**

<sup>1</sup> C.E.W. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, Volume I, *The Story of Anzac*, Chapter XII, p. 281, Preface to 3rd Edition pp. xxii-xxiii, Chapter XXV, p. 566

<sup>2</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)*, 26 April 1915, p. 9

<sup>3</sup> *SMH*, 27 April 1915, p. 9, 28 April 1915, p. 9

<sup>4</sup> *SMH*, 29 April 1915, p. 9, 30 April 1915, p. 7

<sup>5</sup> *SMH*, 1 May 1915, p. 13

<sup>6</sup> *SMH*, 3 May 1915, p. 9

<sup>7</sup> *SMH*, 3 May 1915, p. 9

anxious public, waiting for news from the battlefield, to be patient. Reports filed by the war correspondents of newspapers were heavily censored. The censor would allow no criticism of the conduct of the operation, no indication of set-backs or delays, and no mention of casualty figures. Newspapers continued to publish the daily casualty list, compiled by the Defence Department, but these did not reflect the full extent of the grievous loss of young lives. Though to be fair to the military authorities, it must be said that this was due, at least in part, to the procedure followed; the names of the dead and wounded were not released until their families had been informed.<sup>8</sup>

At the end of May, the number had reached 4,915, including 619 killed, and by the end of June it had soared to 11,380, including 2,221 who had lost their lives. When the evacuation was carried out six months later, the total number of Australian casualties stood at 26,000, including 7,600 killed. New Zealand forces lost 7,571 men, of whom 2,431 were killed; British losses totalled 120,000, and the French 27,000. Turkish losses were estimated to be about 218,000, including 66,000 killed.<sup>9</sup>

At home, the army also came in for criticism from families of dead soldiers who were unhappy with the official response to their letters seeking more information on the fate of their loved ones.

Correspondence in the World War I file of Private Douglas McPherson of Granville indicate the frustration and anger felt by his wife in her attempts to find out what happened to him at Gallipoli. Twenty-two-year-old Private McPherson of the 3rd Battalion probably died on the day of the landing. He was listed as missing in action on 29 April 1915, but this was changed three-and-a-half weeks later to 'wounded'. His wife, 20-year-old Mary Ellen Cartan, didn't find out he was missing until June 1915, and a month later received the report that he'd been wounded. Over the next two months Mary Ellen McPherson made several visits to Victoria Barracks at Paddington in Sydney, seeking further details, without success.

On 18 August 1915 she wrote to the army saying she 'would be very thankful' if they could provide any information. Base records in Melbourne wrote back advising that although previously listed as missing, he was now reported as having 'been wounded on the 20th of June'. It said no other details were available but suggested that Private McPherson was 'no doubt making good progress'.

In October, with still no news of her husband, and not having heard from him for six months, Mrs McPherson sent off another letter. The army replied that it had cabled Egypt, inquiring about his condition. Then on 11 November it reported that the Australian authorities in Egypt had nothing new to report, but were making further investigations, and Mrs McPherson was assured she would be informed of the outcome of these inquiries.

Three weeks passed without any further word from the army, so on 6 December she wrote to ask if there was any result from this investigation. She mentioned having had a chance encounter with a wounded soldier from the 3rd Battalion who told her that her husband was dead. Army Base Records responded on 13 December with a request for the name, rank, regimental number and unit of her informant, together with a signed statement, so that his report could be investigated. On 16 December Mrs McPherson replied she couldn't provide this information because the informant was a man she had met in the street, whom she spoke to because she noticed he was from her husband's battalion. And she asked: '*Why is it that my letters [written in March] have been returned to me from Egypt, [marked] on the envelope that my husband has been killed?*' On 22 December, Base Records asked her to forward the marked envelopes to assist the investigation.

<sup>8</sup> SMH, 7 May 1915, p. 10; P. Knightley, *Beating the Censor*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York and London, 1975, pp. 100–103.

<sup>9</sup> SMH, 1 June 1915, p. 9, 1 July 1915, p. 9; Bean, *The Story of Anzac*, p. 909

There was a break in the correspondence over Christmas and January 1916, and on 9 February Mary Ellen McPherson wrote:

*'I suppose you are tired of reading letters from me, and I tell you I am just about sick of receiving letters from you. Every one is the same, not a scrap of satisfaction...I want you to tell me straight if [my husband] is in hospital, killed, or where he is, as I have been left in suspense quite long enough. If you can't give me any satisfactory news do not write at all, as it only wastes my time reading the letters.'*

The army's response came in a telegram five days later advising that 'Private D. McPherson is wounded and missing'. Mrs McPherson was outraged. On 14 February she wrote:

*'The truth is you don't know where he is and you think you can fill a person up with any news. And I tell you straight, I am just about full up with the military authorities, and I don't suppose I am the only one that is being humbugged about. As I said in my last letter, if you could not give me any satisfactory news, not to write at all.'*

On 17 February 1916, the army wrote confirming that 'this soldier is now reported wounded and missing on 29th April last'. There was no further correspondence, but on 4 April 1916 she was granted a widow's pension. On 5 June 1916 a Court of Inquiry in France found that Private McPherson was killed in action on the Gallipoli Peninsula on 29 April 1915.

Mary Ellen McPherson died on 15 July 1919. The cause of death is not known but it occurred during the 1919 influenza pandemic. The only child of the marriage also died that year.<sup>10</sup>

The difficulties that people experienced in seeking information about soldiers wounded or killed at Gallipoli led to the formation of the Australian Red Cross Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau in October 1915. It was headed by Vera Deakin, the youngest daughter of Australia's second Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin. She at times found the army difficult to deal with, and later wrote 'we were often met with suspicion and eventually jealousy, as we had made ourselves felt as a court of appeal for relatives who were unsuccessful in obtaining satisfaction from the military authorities.' Some 32,000 individual case files were created by the Bureau during the First World War.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> NAA: B2455, McPherson D 302; NSW Births Deaths and Marriages, *SMH*, 22 July 1919 p. 6

<sup>11</sup> J. Rickard, 'White, Vera Deakin (1891–1978)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/white-vera-deakin-12014/text21547>, accessed 18 April 2013.