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The next general meeting of the Granville Historical Society will be held at 2.00 pm on Saturday 22nd June 2013

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

Speaker
Barry G Bullivant OAM
Topic "Parramatta
the Cradle City"

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

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Granville Historical Society

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

I don't believe that we are half way through the year. It is time to make members aware that the AGM will be held on 27th July at 2.00 pm; if you would like to nominate for office, please see Secretary June Bullivant. She will give you the nomination form to fill in.

We spoke to Westmead Rehabilitation again this month, and showed the David Lennox Story. They could not understand that anyone would want to destroy one of the three remaining Lennox bridges.

We also attended a meeting of the Friends of Mays Hill Cemetery. Geoff Lee State member for Parramatta reported on the NSW State Government's Heritage Plan for the Parramatta Precinct, saying that the Old Catholic Orphanage that had a fire earlier this year was covered by the State Insurance and would be rebuilt. He also mentioned writing to the Minister for Heritage Robyn Parker, re having the decision to put portals in the original Lennox Bridge changed to have them placed in the fake part of the bridge. All to no avail, of course, Minister Parker said the Parramatta City Council had made the decision and it was her position that she would not interfere with that. A typical answer from her office which has always claimed no responsibility for the Heritage Council of NSW deciding it was okay to do so. The fight is still going on to have this very bad decision to destroy the 1836 bridge built by David Lennox reversed. To this end the Society was successful in obtaining a grant from the Federal Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities; the Federal Heritage Act classes Heritage as the "Built Environment". The money was granted to mount a photographic display for Foundation Day 2nd November 2013 in the Parramatta Heritage Centre and we are working

with Justine O'Dowd to leave it there over the Christmas holidays. It will contain the Story of Lennox the first Master Bridge Builder of Australia and his accomplishments in building 53 bridges. Only three of his bridges remain in the Sydney Basin; they are the one at Lapstone (1834), Lansdowne (1834), and the Lennox at Parramatta built in 1836. It depends on the space left after administration offices are built how much more we can mount in the display. Meanwhile the PowerPoint presentation "The Lennox Story" is ready to take into the community. We will be speaking to groups like Macquarie Seniors, who have a membership of 150 plus, and the Parramatta Historical Society in October.

I would like to take this opportunity in thanking artist Colina Grant, who is a member of the Parramatta Art Society, for her permission to use her painting, which is her interpretation of the "Redcoats landing at Queens Wharf" which Lennox designed and built. She has given us permission to use them in our PowerPoint presentation and also the Photographic Display. Thank you Colina Grant.



We spoke to Mays Hill on the Funeral Industry of Parramatta and Beyond, we were successful in obtaining a grant from Parramatta City Council to tell the story; we are in partnership with the Friends, they will be responsible for publishing the story, part of the grant was for a \$1,000 donation to assist with that task. We were also made a further grant from Parramatta City Council to fulfil our desire to increase our knowledge of the cultures in our area, and set Granville Society up as one that

"Is a Place where heritage & culture are valued & celebrated."

This will take many forms from research, PowerPoints, talking to schools and community groups, guest speakers, and we had a very good illustration last meeting when two women from the Australian Chinese Association spoke to us about Chinese history going back 5,000 years and Chinese Performing Arts.

The society was asked by a number of residents to make a submission about the Catholic Rectory in Randall Street. Despite our best efforts and other submissions the decision to demolish was carried by Parramatta City Council on the casting vote of the Deputy Lord

Mayor Steven Issa after a tied vote, six votes for and six against. Residents of Granville will witness a sad day that will see a building opened in 1919 reduced to a patch of grass.

Barry G Bullivant OAM, President

THOMAS HOWIESON

When Lucy Godiva Woodcock [see profile in *The Granville Guardian*, Volume 20 Issue 4, May 2013) began her career in the teaching profession in 1906, she was following in the footsteps of her uncle, Frederick Bridges, who had died 18 months earlier. In 1852 he was the first male pupil teacher in the New South Wales education service, and rose through the ranks to become Under Secretary for Public Instruction (Head of the Education Department) in October 1903. In 1890, as Superintendent of Technical Education, he had intervened to ensure the expansion of classes at the Granville Technical College. His action enabled the college founder, James Brown, who had been teaching part-time two nights a week, to become a full-time teacher. Frederick Bridges was more familiar with Granville than the average teaching administrator. His sister, Mary, and her husband, Thomas Howieson, had been residents of Granville for a decade, and his step-brother, William Cox, was headmaster at the Pitt Row School (now known as Parramatta West Public School) in the neighbouring suburb.¹

Bridges's father, Frederick Bridges (Senior), was a Scottish mason brought to Sydney by Doctor John Dunmore Lang. Doctor Lang had arrived in the colony in 1823 and was the first Presbyterian minister in Sydney. He believed that poverty in England might be relieved by emigration, and that New South Wales would benefit as well from the migration of 'well-chosen migrants', who would assist in a moral reformation. In 1831, he brought out 140 people, mainly Scottish tradesmen and their families, to work on the construction of a high school, the Australian College, in Sydney. This was the first of several schemes he promoted to bring thousands of free settlers to Australia.²

Frederick Bridges (Senior) and his wife Harriet (née Fuggle) arrived in Sydney in the mid to late 1830s, and settled first at Windsor, where young Frederick was born in 1840, and later Sydney. Four more children were born over the next eight years, before Harriet was widowed by the death of her 34-year-old husband in 1848. The only published report concerning his death appears to be a funeral notice on 17 November 1848, asking members of the Wandering Minstrels Lodge to assemble at the Lodge rooms and 'proceed from there to Kent Street to attend the funeral of their late brother Frederick Bridges'.³

Harriet didn't remain a widow for too long. In 1854, she married a former ship's captain, William Cox, in the Pitt Street Congregational Church in Sydney. The couple subsequently lived in Balmain for 40 years and raised five children. Cox became a

¹ R. J. Burns, 'Bridges, Frederick (1840–1904)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bridges-frederick-3053/text4493>, accessed 16 June 2013; *Forest to Factory*, p. 43, Granville Historical Society, 1991

² Bridges family history; D. Baker, 'Lang, John Dunmore (1799–1878)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lang-john-dunmore-2326/text2953>, accessed 16 June 2013.

³ NSW Birth and Death Registration Indexes; *Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)*, 17 November 1848, p. 1

successful land speculator and at his death, aged 82, in 1909 was one of the largest holders of freehold property in Balmain. Harriet had died seven years earlier at the age of 83.⁴

At 10 years of age, young Frederick enrolled at Fort Street Public School after it opened in April 1850. It was a school that he would serve in later years as pupil teacher, assistant teacher, and for 18 years from 1866 as headmaster. He began his training as a pupil teacher in 1852 when he was only 12. His first appointment as a headmaster was to Balmain school in 1861. He became a school inspector in 1876, Superintendent of Technical Education in 1889, and Under Secretary for Public Instruction in October 1903. He died of diabetes on 16 November 1904, not long before he was due to retire.⁵

In about 1858, Frederick's 17-year-old sister, Mary, married Thomas Howieson, a man almost twice her age. This was about 12 months after her mother had given birth to the first of five children fathered by her second husband, Cox. Howieson was born in 1826 at Coatbridge in Scotland, which at that time was a major iron works and coal mining centre near Glasgow. He arrived in Australia in the mid-1850s after several years in China. The Howiesons' first child, Thomas Nathan, was born in 1860. A second baby, a girl was still-born at the couple's home in Clarence Street Sydney in January 1863. Nine more children were born over the next 21 years at Botany, Newcastle and Granville.⁶

In 1859, Howieson was working as second engineer on the New Zealand Royal Mail Steamship Company's 1,000 tonne steamship, *Prince Alfred*, which had been sailing from Australian ports since about 1856. The ship began a regular service to and from New Zealand in February 1859, after winning a contract to carry mail between Sydney and Auckland. Twelve months later Thomas had a shore job as an engineer at the new Botany Water Pumping Station, part of Sydney's third water supply, after the Tank Stream and Busby's Bore. It was built in 1858, on a site that is now within the boundaries of Sydney Airport, to pump water from the Botany/Lachlan Swamps to the Crown Street reservoir. Botany supplied Sydney's water until the late 1880s, when it was replaced by the Nepean scheme. All that remains of the pumping station today is part of a chimney stack just inside the gates of Sydney Airport.⁷

At the end of 1874, Thomas Howieson moved his family from Botany to a new job at the Minmi Colliery, 12 kilometres northwest of Newcastle. Mining at Minmi had begun in 1853, and the mine had been acquired in 1859 by J. and A. Brown who had established the first coal mine in the Hunter region near Maitland in 1843. The Brown brothers would become the dominant coal producers in the area. Howieson arrived at Minmi as the mine was resuming production after being idle for some time. In June 1875, the colonial government appointed him chairman of the Minmi Public School Board. The local school's enrolment had fluctuated as employment at the mine rose and fell. At their lowest point, school numbers had dropped to around 30 in 1873, but in the next ten years as more miners were employed, the average number of pupils increased to

⁴ NSW Marriage Registration Index; Obituaries, *SMH*, 30 December 1909, p. 6, 31 July 19021, p. 8

⁵ Obituary, *SMH*, 17 November 1904, p. 6

⁶ *SMH*, 30 December 1878, p. 32; NSW Birth Registrations; *Empire* newspaper, 23 January 1863, p. 1

⁷ *SMH*, 21 January 1859, p.1; State Records NSW, Unassisted Immigrant Passenger Lists 1826-1922; Dictionary of Sydney, Water, <http://www.dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/water>;

about 150. As local board chairman, Howieson supervised the construction of a new school on land purchased from the mine manager, John Brown.⁸

In Newcastle in 1878, Howieson took a leading role in a mining industry protest against a move by the Australian Steam Navigation Company (ASN) to employ cheap Chinese labour on its ships. A mass meeting of two thousand miners and labourers voted in favour of his resolution deploring the shipping company's action. In his speech to the rally, Howieson revealed he had been a resident of China for some years in the late 1850s. He said he believed, from his experiences, if ASN was allowed to go ahead with its plan, it wouldn't be long before Chinese were taking coal miners' jobs.⁹

Howieson left Minmi in 1880 to take up the position of manager of the Junction Brickworks in Granville. The brickworks were established in 1878 on 35 acres of land adjacent to a'Becketts Creek, that is now Holroyd Gardens Park Merrylands. One of its early contracts was the supply of sandstock bricks for the Granville Public School in 1880. But brick production declined in the early 1880s because of falling demand and increased competition, and the plant closed. The site and plant was bought by Goodlet and Smith, re-opened in 1886, and became one of the largest brickworks in Sydney.¹⁰

Howieson had taken up residence in William Street after purchasing a block of land in the Bent subdivision sale in 1880. He left Junction Brickworks and became a partner in an engineering firm, and worked on various engineering contracts. He became involved in local affairs, and in 1882 he and others began agitating to have a new municipality declared. In 1884 he was in a seven-man deputation to the Colonial Secretary on the issue. He was the first president of the Granville Ratepayers Association in 1885, and stood in the first municipal elections in Granville the same year, but just missed out after a keenly-contested poll. He stood again in 1886 and served as an alderman until 1889. He was active in the Granville Presbyterian Church in its formative years, including as a member of its six-man committee in 1885, and as a trustee for the building of the church in Hutchinson Street. He died in 1890 at his William Street home, aged 63. His widow Mary died at her son Charles's home in Spring Garden Street in 1923 at the age of 85. Family members remained in Granville, Harris Park and Parramatta for many years.¹¹

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⁸NSW Minerals Council, *Mining in NSW*, <http://www.nswmin.com.au/Mining-in-NSW/History-of-Mining/Hunter-Region/Hunter-Region-Mining-History/default.asp> ; *SMH*, 5 June 1875, p. 8; Minmi school centenary publication *A Centenary of Education in Minmi 1861-1961*

⁹ *SMH*, 30 December 1878, p. 3

¹⁰ *140 Years of Holroyd History*, Granville Public School 1880-1890, Centenary publication; Holroyd council website; *Cumberland Mercury*, 16 January 1886, p. 1

¹¹ T. Fowlie, *The History of Granville 1919*, pp. 127-128, Granville Historical Society, 2001; *SMH*, 25 June 1885, p.14; *Cumberland Mercury*, 1 October 1884, p. 2, 3 February 1886, p. 2; *SMH*, 10 February 1890, p. 1; *SMH*, 10 July 1923, p. 8