

Founded 1960

# BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC

NEWSLETTER  
No 459 March 2014

PO Box 131 Mittagong NSW 2575 Telephone / Fax 0248 722 169  
Website: [www.berrimadistricthistoricalsociety.org.au](http://www.berrimadistricthistoricalsociety.org.au)  
Email: [bdhsarchives@gmail.com](mailto:bdhsarchives@gmail.com)

ABN 29 362 616 937

**PATRON:** Mayor of Wingecarribee Shire: Councillor Juliet Arkwright

**President:** Mr Bruce MOORE 4872 3762 [actmoore@bigpond.net.au](mailto:actmoore@bigpond.net.au)

**Snr Vice President:** Mrs Linda EMERY 4883 4271 [lemery75@southernphone.com.au](mailto:lemery75@southernphone.com.au)

**Jnr Vice President:** Mrs Leonie KNAPMAN 4871 1804

**Hon Secretary:** Mr Philip MORTON 4883 7862 [flipmort@bigpond.com](mailto:flipmort@bigpond.com)

**Hon Treasurer:** Mrs Patricia DORIS 4872 3313

**Archivist:** Mrs Linda EMERY 4883 4271

**Curator - Museum:** Mr Bob WILLIAMS 4889 4405

**Membership Secretary:** Mrs Peg HARVEY 4861

**Newsletter Editor:** Ms Lavinia FORD 4869 4038 [lavinias@dodo.com.au](mailto:lavinias@dodo.com.au)

**Research Officer:** Mr Max ROGERS 4861 3526 [robert.rogers2@bigpond.com](mailto:robert.rogers2@bigpond.com)



**ARCHIVES:** Cnr Old Hume Highway and Bowral Road, MITTAGONG.

OPEN: Mondays, Tuesdays 10am-4pm and Saturdays 10am-1pm. Closed Public Holidays.  
Library collection contains reference books, journals and newsletters of other societies.

**MUSEUM:** Market Place, BERRIMA. Tel: 02 4877 1130 Email: [berrimamuseum@bigpond.com](mailto:berrimamuseum@bigpond.com) OPEN: Saturdays, Sundays, NSW Public and School Holidays (except Good Friday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day) 10.00 am to 4.00 pm.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Any person wanting to join the Society may do so at any stage during the year by completing a form and paying the appropriate fee. Joining Fee \$10.00 - Single \$20.00 - Family \$33.00.

**AFFILIATIONS:** Royal Australian Historical Society, NSW Association of Family History Societies, Museums Australia Inc & Regional Chapter.

## GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

**MARCH MEETING:** Thursday 27 March 2014 at 2pm

**VENUE:** Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers Building,  
Bowral Road, Mittagong

**GUEST SPEAKER:** Keith McMenomy  
Keith will present a casual review of his book *Picturing Penrose* that was published in 2013

**AFTERNOON TEA:** To be served following the speaker - Members - please bring a plate or a donation.

Inside this month ...

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And more ...

**APRIL MEETING:** Thursday 24 April 2014 at 2pm

**VENUE:** Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers Building,  
Bowral Road, Mittagong



## Diary dates

### MARCH

- 13 Management Committee Meeting
- 27 General Monthly Meeting

### APRIL

- 10 Management Committee Meeting
- 12 School holidays commence
- 24 General Monthly Meeting
- 28 School holidays conclude

### MAY

- 8 Management Committee Meeting
- 11 Mother's Day
- 22 General Monthly Meeting

## From the President's Desk *Bruce Moore*

Listening to the radio, we're reminded that we have only 42 weeks until Christmas. Perish the thought! Who's giving us this information....David Jones? Santa's Little Helpers? Woollies?

I don't think we need to be reminded of the future. Nor the past (unless you're a member of the BDHS). As most of us seniors realise, there's never enough time to do everything you've planned each day. By writing a list of 6 items on the 'to do' list, I'm lucky to achieve half of them. Then I've forgotten where I put the list! What list?

I've since given up making lists.

Speaking of which leads me to one priority that I've given myself, after attending a couple of funerals lately. That is, as our family's unofficial record-keeper, I believe it's my responsibility to assess the excess clutter accumulated over seven and a half decades of saving notes, letters, photos, albums, medals etc. Naming and numbering worthy collections and if they're no longer precious to the family, then they will be donated to the appropriate Societies. Who knows, they will be better looked after than in the attic or cellar or even worse...the dreaded tip!!

Linda, our archivist, recently received an old family photo album, neatly presented for posterity. Alas, there

were no names, except a photo of a headstone and a couple of hints from the family. However with the aid of modern photo recognition, Ancestry and clues from background objects, slowly the pictures and stories are coming to life.

So all our old black & white photos of importance are now emerging from their life in the shoebox to relive the rest of their days in a relevant archive. Names and approximate dates are duly pencilled on their backs.

You may like to consider doing the same, especially of any Southern Highland snaps?

Here's something we can perhaps identify with:

*A young boy was looking through the family album and asked his mother, "Who's this fellow with you on the beach showing off his muscles and wavy hair?"*

*"That's your father."*

*"Then who's the old, fat, bald-headed man who lives with us now?"*

## Worner family heirloom



**These scissors were used to open Mittagong Swimming Baths - twice!**

They were first used by the Mayor of Mittagong, Alderman William G Worner, at the opening of the town municipal baths in 1931.

When the facility was renovated to become an Olympic Pool in 1959, they were used again by his son Clarence F Worner at the opening.

The scissors have remained with the Worner family. Roger Worner, son of Clarence, brought them in to us so we could take this photo. He had read our BDH&FHS history column in Monday issues of the *Southern Highland News* that featured the history of the Baths. The Baths are now known as Mittagong Swimming Pool.

## An invitation to all

### Exeter Rail Disaster Centenary Commemoration

Thursday 13 March 2014, 10:00am

All are cordially invited to attend a Church Service of commemoration at St Aidan's Anglican Church Exeter to mark the centenary of the Exeter Rail disaster of 13 March 1914. This will be followed by the unveiling of a memorial plaque at Exeter Railway station and morning tea in Exeter Village Hall.

Danielle Tonks JP, Parish Administrator - on behalf of Rev. Jeremy Tonks, Alice Miller, Tony Molyneux and Linda Emery.

For more information, please contact the Anglican Parish of Sutton Forest on 4883 6019.

## New members

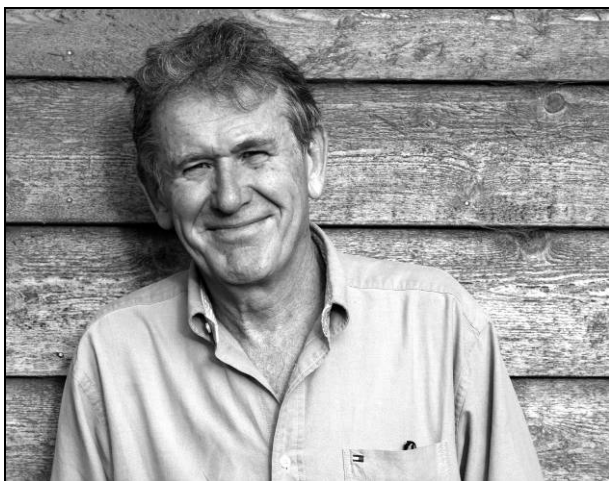
Welcome to all new members. Those who have joined in the past six months are listed here:

Mrs Gail **Benington**, Bowral  
Ms Lynn **Bower**, Centennial Park  
Mrs Jill **Braddock**, Bowral  
Mrs Judith **Clark**, Bowral  
Mr Martyn **Coldridge**, Moss Vale  
Ms Judy **Coverdale**, Bundanoon  
Ms Susie **Crick**, Bowral  
Mr John **Culley**, Bowral  
Dr Patrick **Farrell**, Albury  
Mrs Denise **Mackenzie** Bundanoon  
Mrs Dorothy **Marshall**, Bowral  
Mr Dennis **McManus**, Kangaloon  
Mr Frank **Mitchell**, Mittagong  
Ms Kate **Mitchell**, Berrima  
Ms Margaret **Muntz**, Moss Vale  
Ms Jan **Murray**, Mittagong  
Mr Robert **Reko**, Mittagong  
Trish **Scott-Wandmaker**, Mittagong  
Ms Majellia **Smith**  
Mrs Patricia **Surace**, Coomba Bay  
Ms Penelope **Symes**, Casey ACT  
Dennis **Wilmot**, Toddington, UK  
Greg **Wilmot**, Adelaide  
Mr John **Wilson**, Bowral  
Ms Anne **Woods**, Panania  
Ms Michele **Woods**, Bowral  
Mrs Sonja **Worthington**, Moss Vale  
Mr Glen & Mrs Chris **Vandine**, Mittagong

## March meeting guest speaker

### Keith McMenemy author of *Picturing Penrose*

At the 27 March General Meeting, Keith McMenemy will present a casual review of his book *Picturing Penrose* that was published in 2013.



Keith will speak on how the project came about, and discuss his approach to research, writing and book design, the opportunities, limitations and pitfalls to self-publishing, and the small but successful outcome. A selection of historic images from the book will accompany the talk.

Keith studied graphic design/illustration at Swinburne Art School in Melbourne. For three decades as a Graphic designer and Art Director he produced visual communication for Advertising agencies, Design firms and Music publishers. While specialising in visual arts he informally developed interests in literature and writing.

In 1985, returning from working in Cambridge UK, he took on part-time study for an MA from University of Technology Sydney where he taught in the Master's program (Faculty of Design, Architecture & Building). He retired from the business in 1995, enrolled in Fine Arts at the University of Sydney, continued research and gained his PhD. Following another lifelong interest in 1999 he and wife Kay purchased land at Penrose, building on and improving a small grazing enterprise. Since 1970 they have established and lived on two country acreages.

He has contributed to publications on design and several histories on early settler families but his most substantial work was on the outlaw: *Ned Kelly, the authentic Illustrated History* published by Currey O'Neil 1984, Hardie Grant 2001 & 2004, three print runs having sold out. His latest small book, *Picturing Penrose*, sold out in September 2013.

Since retirement Keith has contributed a regular 'Country Living' column in the Bundanoon-based JCG magazine and film reviews for 'FISH' films in the Southern Highlands.

## Tour to old Joadja town, 28 March

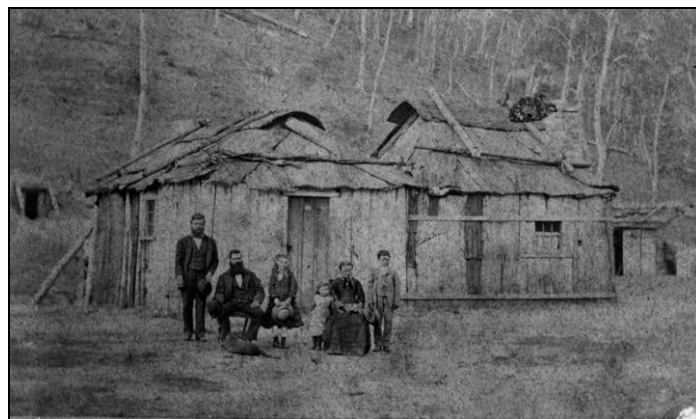
This self-drive tour is booked for Friday 28 March. We are to arrive on site at 10.30am. Those wishing to car share should meet at the Archives between 9 - 9:30.

The tour cost is \$30 per person. Make sure to book and pay well ahead by contacting the archives.

After a morning tea, tour guides will take us on an approximately two-hour tour of Joadja town and its surroundings. We will be riding on specially made tractor trolleys, with the opportunity to get out and explore along the way. The tour will be followed by a delicious barbecue lunch - with gluten free sausages, fresh bread rolls and a light garden salad.

Also available will be a tasting session of the wines and sherry made at Joadja.

This tour includes the stories of the people that lived, worked and perished in the valley - tales of their daily hardships and some of the extraordinary events that took place during Joadja's heyday.



Joadja valley and town is a region of significant cultural heritage. It was founded on a shale seam and Scottish workers were brought out to mine it. The mine closed early in the 20th century, and the town was abandoned. The ruins that remain tell the story of those that lived, worked and perished there.

Joadja is a gem of world heritage significance and an intriguing part of Australia's industrial history. Come and enjoy the beauty of this stunning valley, hear the stories and feel the history behind it all!

### DIRECTIONS:

From Mittagong, head south on Old Hume Highway and turn right at Wombeyan Caves Road.

Follow it for about 5kms to the first intersection and turn left onto Handleys Lane. Follow the lane to the end and turn right onto Joadja Road.

Follow Joadja Road for about 11kms to the very end. Turn right over the cattle grid onto a dirt road. Follow the dirt and tar road for about 4.5kms to the end where you will find the entrance to Joadja town.



# Berrima District Museum news

*Contributed by museum sub-committee*

Visitor attendance at the museum through the January school holidays and including Australia Day was most heartening, with the grand total being 344 visitors.

Volunteer Gloria Williams provided extensive coverage in January with five lengthy on-air interviews/announcements on radio ABC Illawarra. Excellent coverage was provided by two Saturday state-wide broadcasts with Melinda James, as well as several weekday spots and on the eve of Australia Day. The museum sub-committee has conveyed its appreciation to Gloria for her dedicated efforts.

This year a dozen members, dressed in period costumes, took part in the Australia Day street parade. In the morning small coloured invitations to visit the museum were distributed to the crowd prior to the start of the parade by those dressed up and this seemed to bring in more visitors than in previous years. 59 adults and 15 children attended.

Promotional packages have been posted to Senior Citizen Associations encouraging them to do a bus trip to Berrima with our museum the highlight. As well, volunteer Michele Woods has helped the team by compiling a list of the current contact person at clubs and organisations to better facilitate our on-going postal and email publicity efforts.

What a difference a new volunteer can make! Michele is a lady with many excellent attributes. She is also making a significant contribution as one of those assisting Lyn Hall with the museum's ongoing project to photograph all the museum's objects.

Michele (pictured) is not an 'oldie' and therefore does not have 'senior' moments which, Lyn Hall says, has saved the day on several 'shoots'; for instance, by ensuring the accession numbers with each image match the Mosaic data base.



However two heads can be better: it was Lyn who thought of using a \$10 metal splatter screen as a light diffuser to soften the flare on some shiny objects.

## Fresh faces are needed to welcome museum visitors.

April holidays means a busy time for the museum and we would dearly appreciate some new volunteers. Try it, you might like it! Never fear you are always "buddied up" with an old hand. Sylvia Carless manages the roster and she is full of expectation you will call. Phone 4861 2728

The collection the museum holds is fascinating and varied. Presented here are some objects recently photographed as part of the on-going project.



Scales for weighing beef or lamb carcasses. Donated by M Moulder.

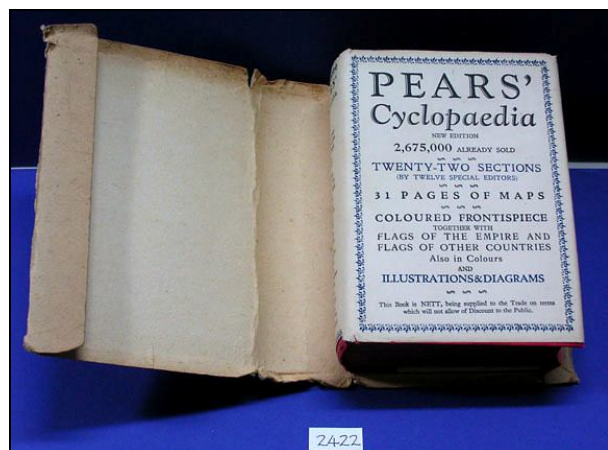


Silver Christening Mug, engraved, "Ernest E. Powell 9.6.1858".

Ether bottle manufactured by British Oxygen Co Ltd. Donated by Bowral District Hospital.



Railway Timetable for Country services November 1938. Donated by Audrey Jackson.



Pears' Cyclopaedia 1929. Donated by Audrey Jackson.

## Arthur Upfield mystery novelist

**Aged in his late sixties, Arthur Upfield, famed author of Australian crime mystery novels, moved to Bowral in 1957 with his beloved partner Jessica Hawke.**

Upfield died on 12 February 1964 at his Bowral home. As last month was the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, this article is in tribute to him.

He became world-famous for his Detective-Inspector Napoleon 'Bony' Bonaparte stories. For those who are unfamiliar with his enigmatic life story, a brief overview is presented here along with a glimpse of his last years in Bowral.

Named William Arthur, he was born in 1888 or 1890 at Gosport in Hampshire, England. Not showing an interest in passing exams or the family drapery business, he was shipped off by his father to Adelaide in 1910. Full of visions of the great outback, he landed a boundary rider job at Wilcannia and went on to spend more than 20 years as a wandering bush worker who drove cattle, trapped rabbits, gouged opal and cooked for shearers. He was a typical hard working, hard drinking, hard swearing Australian bushman - except he was an Englishman with a passion for literature.

He joined the AIF after the outbreak of WWI and, before heading off to the Middle East in late 1915, married Anne Douglas in Melbourne. During the war he wrote and sold short stories set in the Australian outback to English magazines.

After his return to Australia, with his marriage a failure although they had a son, Arthur went back to wandering the bush, training camels and for a time patrolling the rabbit-proof fence in WA. He took up writing again, turning to the popular genre of crime fiction.

His first novel was *The Barrakee Mystery* (London, 1929) which introduced the character 'Bony', a part-Aboriginal sleuth. Arthur claimed that 'Bony' was based on a real person and good friend who had graduated from Queensland University, a wise man and a skilled tracker.

Further novels followed and, all told, he wrote 28 books in the 'Bony' series that were published in Britain and America and other countries, where the mystery novel was an established form of literature, including translations for Germany, South America, Spain, Holland, Denmark and Japan. He also wrote six published novels without Bony, two non-fiction books and about 250 short stories. The Bony novels were serialised in magazines and on radio, yet it



ranked him that Australian literary circles did not acknowledge him as a creative artist.

In 1939 he suspended writing to serve with military intelligence in Australia as a censor during World War II, to resume again in 1944, averaging one Bony novel a year.

When Doubleday (New York) republished *The Mystery of Swordfish Reef* in 1943, it sold 22,000 copies and Arthur became a major figure in international crime fiction, the first foreigner to be a full member of the Mystery Writers of America.

His Australian Dictionary of Biography entry describes him as a crusty man who appeared slight, wiry, buttoned up and outwardly irascible, with hazel eyes, weather-beaten face, grizzled hair, ears like jug handles and a glass of whisky in his hand.

He became familiar with Aboriginal lore and acquired considerable insight into the mystical spirit of nature. His plots are interwoven with such themes. Presenting himself as 'a story teller first and last', he claimed 'I'm not a literary figure and don't want to be'.

In November 1957 Arthur Upfield moved to Bowral with his beloved companion, the widow Jessica Hawke (nee Uren). He had lived with her and her son Donald since 1946.

Arthur bought a three-bedroomed brick house in Jasmine Street, Bowral and there he wrote *Bony and the Mouse* and *Bony and the Kelly Gang*. These included local settings - one of the characters goes shopping in Bowral and reference is made to the lights of Wollongong and Kiama.

Arthur was described by a local newspaper in 1961 as youthful-looking, 'tall and straight, with lively hazel eyes snared in a web of laughter lines', who claimed that he 'drinks six cups of tea and smokes ten cigarettes before breakfast'. He also admitted to 'crummy spelling', a legacy of his neglected English school studies, but once Jessica took on the correcting he was no longer tied to a dictionary.

An influenza epidemic during the winter of 1962 laid low Arthur, Jessica, two of Bowral's three doctors and half the town's population. The hospital was full and no nurse could call on Arthur and Jessica so for six days they survived on Scotch Whisky and water, until a medico was able to come to their bedside.

Arthur revived enough to commence another 'Bony' book and still gave interviews and attended celebrity events in Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne. While he kept a low profile locally, he did occasionally venture out to the Bowral Golf Club at five of an evening for drinks with friends and was also a member of Bowral

Rotary Club. He gave an address to Rotary on 'The Art of Taking Criticism'. His own notes record some of his words: "There is one critic I cannot side-step. This critic is Miss Jessica Hawke, the author of a biography and other works. It often happens that I place before her a piece with which I am particularly pleased and I wait for her cheers. Instead of a cheer, she says 'I don't like it. It's too flat.' I ask what is wrong with it. I don't want negative criticism. When she repeats her comment I grow angry. When she persists I become furious and take the damn thing back to my room and rewrite it. I present it again to this immovable, granite-like critic and she says 'Now it's perfect. Why didn't you do it the first time?'"

Unfortunately Jessica's health deteriorated and she had to be placed into a nearby nursing home but was still able to visit Arthur at home every few days.

In a letter he wrote that: "I have met several 'great men', and was disillusioned when I found they had feet of clay. My feet are not even of hardened clay. I am, of course, mentally unbalanced. I so detest the Jones that I will not keep up with them . . . the postman, the butcher and the baker all call me Arthur and it is a standing deal that when Arthur makes a pile from a film deal he is going way out to Broken Hill and spend the dough on an everlasting pub crawl, and will want a mate."

Arthur also described how he sometimes set back the local Bowral socialites, one being the wife of a knight: "Said this Lady Thingamabob 'Oh, I must call on you one afternoon. Where do you live exactly?' 'I live in the slum behind the gasworks' was my answer, and it was repeated when she doubted it. Sometimes I lose my temper . . ."

Arthur Upfield was admitted to Bowral Hospital on New Year's Day 1964 suffering from malnutrition. Once home again he engaged a woman to cook for him and started another 'Bony' book. Not long after, on 12 February, he died. While Australian and international presses set obituaries, his body was taken to Sydney for a private cremation.

His beloved Jessica died on 29 May, 1965.

Jessica  
Hawke  
and  
Arthur  
Upfield



Article  
compiled  
by Phillip  
Morton

## Extract from local early newspaper

### *The Goulburn Herald & Argyle Advertiser*

23 September 1848

#### **BERRIMA**

*POLICE COURT, Sep 13 — Before J Throsby Esq JP, Messrs. Nicholson JP, and Dr Bransby JP*

*Mrs. Barton, a pretty widow-bewiched, appeared to answer the summons issued against her for the sum of £9, for the cartage of a certain quantity of fencing materials. It appeared, that the plaintiff was indebted the like sum to Mr. Joseph Levy, of the "Victoria," who being present at this Jew-dicial enquiry, had no objection to take a specimen (in a legal form) of the fair lady's caligraphy for the amount, if such would be agreeable to all parties, upon condition that " a leetle interest was added, just as a matter of form."*

*Their worships could not oblige Mo as a matter of form, or in any other way, but gave a verdict against the lovely Christian for the amount sued for.*

*BLACK INGRATITUDE — Berrima appears to be blessed with the presence of beautiful widows, but Mrs. Barton, the defendant in the last case, was not "a patch" as (Sam Weller says) upon the next who presented herself in court. Mrs. Munro, of the "Queen's Arms" appeared to answer a charge exhibited against her by the chief constable, on the information of Thomas Steel, a man of sooty complexion, and, we are led to believe of a dark heart, for allowing card-playing in her house, to which she pleaded not guilty.*

*It appeared in evidence that the informer had been taken in by Mrs. Munro out of charity, and now he thought the time had arrived to take her in. He had played on one occasion with a servant of his benefactress of the name of Mary Anne Parker, at the popular game of "all-fours," and now came into court to give Mrs. Munro a "rub."*

*The first witness called to rebut the charge, was a winking, blinking, modest damsel, who was on the eve of a matrimonial alliance. She expressed herself in the becoming modesty of a lady who has one half of her face turned towards the Church and the other half towards "Old Tom." Her evidence was of that nature that admits of no doubt, and leaves no opening for a cross-examination. She swore positively that the whole was false, and that her modesty had received a shock from the black-fellow's impudence she would not soon get over.*

*The case being dismissed; Dr. Bransby's face was found absent from the row of magisterial blocks, it having disappeared into the handsome widow's bonnet.*

Contributed by Ros Dale and sourced from Trove

## The Great Southern Rail saga

*Part Two of a series compiled by Philip Morton*

### Great celebrations at Mittagong Station for railway opening in early 1867

The Campbelltown to Picton section of the southern railway opened in 1863 and a village grew around the Picton railway terminus. Contractors had already started on sections southward to Nattai, so the long-hoped for Great Southern Railway to Goulburn was on its way to the Wingecarribee, then known as the Berrima District.

At the time, Bowral and Moss Vale did not exist and Mittagong, then known as Nattai, was a scattering of villages. One of these, New Sheffield, was located near the Fitz Roy Iron Works that was in full swing supplying rails and other products to the railways.

Further down the road were two major settlements: Berrima, a staging post on the Southern Road, and Sutton Forest, one of the district's first villages with prosperous landowners and a thriving social hub.

As early as 1850 the regular 'Berrima Correspondent' column in the *Sydney Morning Herald* anticipated the railway, saying:

"We are happy in being able to state that the feeling which at one time obtained as to the impracticability of the railway, is fast losing ground in this district, and several who were at first doubtful, have now become shareholders. There are various articles of commerce lying idle in the district, entirely owing to the expense of carriage. Neither are the advantages which must result to the farmers of this district to be forgotten."

The *Herald* reported in 1861 that Chief Engineer John Whitton had indicated no grades steeper than 1 in 30 were required for the southern line and that the existing gauge of 4 feet 8½ inches would be adopted.

For the Picton to Nattai section he selected the least expensive route that traversed the ridge on the western side of the Bargo River flanked by deep gullies. He thus avoided the more direct ridge carrying the Great Southern Road (now Hume Highway) that would have required bridges and tunnels beyond the means of the colony.

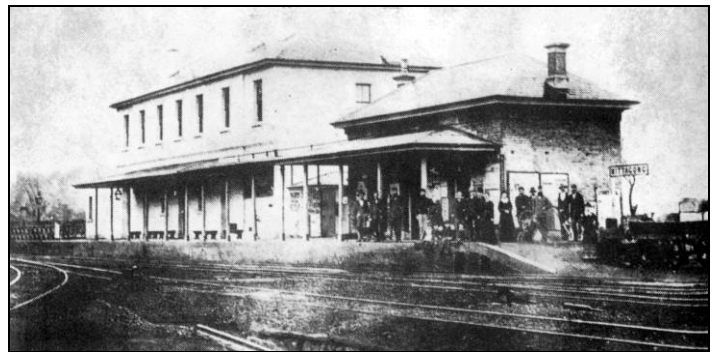
The route through this rugged, undeveloped country soon became dotted with the tents of navvies' encampments and with tracks and cart roads. Work stopped for a time on the difficult Big Hill Cutting through solid rock at Saddleback Range near Hill Top. Originally planned as a tunnel on a gradient of 1 in 33, it instead became a cutting, as a tunnel would have suffocated train crews and passengers on the upward climb. With broken sandstone obtained along the route for ballast, earthworks were completed by October 1865.

The rails used were rolled at the Fitz Roy Iron Works.

The *Herald* of 13 June 1866 described the route: "It may be safely said that the rocks, hills, mountains, gullies and precipitous watercourses which border the line between Picton and the Gibraltar Rock - a distance of more than 30 miles - are for the most part appalling. The country stands remote, full of rugged grandeur and unpromising desolation."

The completion of the line through such rugged country was a proud day for Whitton who, with the Minister for Works, inspected it in January 1867.

On 28 February at 10am a special 15-carriage train departed Sydney conveying members of parliament and distinguished visitors to the official opening at Nattai. Along the way, more people boarded at Picton and the carriages were divided between two engines to cope with the steep grades ahead.



The opening ceremony was held at the new station, named Mittagong, an Aboriginal word meaning 'little mountain' that was the local parish name.

The first train arrived at 1:30pm to an event described as being like a fair with refreshment booths and sundry amusements. The senior member for the district, John Morrice MLA, took the chair and many speeches and toasts were made. A luncheon was attended by 160 paying guests and, in tents nearby, Larkin & Wakeford, the company that built the line, provided food and ale for its 200 navvies and their families.

On 1 March 1867 the single line was handed over to the government and opened to traffic. Loop lines had been provided at intervals so trains could pass. It would be 50 years before a duplicated line was built.

Braemar, known as Rush's Platform, was the only intermediate stopping place until the 1880s, when other platforms opened along the route, including at Buxton, Thirlmere, Hill Top and Colo Vale.

The original platform at Mittagong station faced a loop instead of the main line and a two-storey refreshment room came into use there in August 1870. Toilet facilities were also provided - until the 1890s there were no 'lavatory' carriages on long-distance trains.

By December 1867 the line was completed to Sutton Forest station (later renamed Moss Vale) that became the new temporary terminus.

*To be continued next issue*

## DIARY DATES

THURSDAY	13	MAR	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	27	MAR	Monthly General Meeting	<b>2:00pm</b> at the Historical Society
THURSDAY	10	APR	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	24	APR	Monthly General Meeting	<b>2:00pm</b> at the Historical Society
THURSDAY	8	MAY	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	22	MAY	Monthly General Meeting	<b>2:00pm</b> at the Historical Society

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## THE BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL AND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

is proudly supported by the following organizations that encourage the work of our Society in collecting, preserving and maintaining the history of the Southern Highlands.

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