

Founded 1960

BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC

NEWSLETTER
No 460 April 2014

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ABN 29 362 616 937

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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 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

APRIL MEETING: Thursday 24 April 2014 at 2pm

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

GUEST SPEAKER: Several members will display the toolbox that belonged to the two Alf Stephens of Bowral along with an overview of their lives

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

MAY MEETING: Thursday 22 May 2014 at 2pm

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

GUEST SPEAKER: *Leonie Knapman*

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

Inside this month ...

Diary Dates	2
Exeter Centenary Commemoration	4
Bowral Hospital Photos	5
Newspaper Extracts	5
The Great Southern Rail Saga	7

And more ...



Diary dates

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

JUNE

- 12 Management Committee Meeting
- 26 General Monthly Meeting
- 28 School holidays commence

From the President's Desk

Bruce Moore

The 1st April is traditionally April Fools' day...you know, 'a pinch and a punch-first day of the month'. In Europe a harmless prank is often played out in the morning before 12 noon, i.e. in the office, a sticky note on the back of a suspect saying 'hit me', or a telephone call from the 'boss' to see him in his office about a redundancy.

In England this traditionally dates back to the medieval days, when a prank is played, a good belly laugh is said to be good for the soul. Agreed!!

The Persians take a holiday, called Sizdah Berdar on the 13th day of their New Year, which is usually 1st or 2nd April. Sizdah Berdar is reported to have been celebrated by the Iranians living on the Iranian Plateau as far back as 536 BC. This day of picnicking, feasting, jollity and often playing jokes on one another is still associated with April Fools' Day.

One classic documentary shown on the BBC in 1957 was The Famous Swiss Spaghetti Tree, showing folk picking 'fresh' spaghetti from a new species of tree especially grown to produce even lengths of spaghetti. We all *know* that spaghetti doesn't grow on trees in Switzerland! It grows on *Italian* trees!!

I remember whilst at Sydney Uni in the 50s, workmen were digging up the tramlines along Parramatta Road.

Students rang the police and stated that Uni students were dressed up as workmen and digging up tramlines. When the police appeared, they then rang the (then) Main Roads Dept. and complained that some students dressed up as policemen were trying to arrest their workmen. You could imagine the chaos that followed!

So April is truly here!

We begin building the Museum extension this month, ready for the opening next year, which will be 100 years since Gallipoli. We look forward to this occasion.

All around Australia there will be celebrations/commemorations/reflections for those who volunteered for an adventure of a lifetime and who returned damaged for the rest of their lifetime.

As a tradition on the 25th, our Society will be represented at Anzac Day commemoration ceremonies all around the Highlands by various members. The Museum will be open for a hot cuppa and a bite to eat after the Berrima Dawn Service.

Lest We Forget.

Boer War book launch

Members are advised that the BDH&FHS will be holding a book launch next month for a new book it has published.

Titled "Forgotten Soldiers: Men and Women from the Southern Highlands who served in the Boer War 1899-1902" it is an updated and expanded version by Janet Black, of the work of the late Colin Sproule. About 16,000 Australians served during the Boer War and, of these, 99 men and 1 woman have been identified as coming from the Southern Highlands. This book outlines their family histories and their activities during war service, through their letters home printed in local newspapers.



The book will be officially launched on Saturday, 31 May, in the Henrietta Rose Room, Old Bowral Town Hall at the Wingecarribee Library precinct.

The event commences at 2:00pm. Afternoon tea will be served and members are invited to attend. More information will be provided in the next newsletter.

Copies of the book are available at the Archives for purchase at \$20.

Newsletter

Newsletter Deadline is **25th** of every month. It may be necessary to hold submissions after this date till the following month.

Research fees

Research fees for non-members:

\$20.00 per hour or part thereof for telephone and postal enquiries.

\$5.00 per hour or part thereof for enquirers who attend the archives and carry out their own research.

Archives opening hours

Opening hours are as follows:

Monday	10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Tuesday	10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Saturday	10:00 am - 1:00 pm

BERRIMA DISTRICT MUSEUM

Market Place, Berrima
Near the bridge

OPENING HOURS

10 am - 4 pm.

Weekends, Public Holidays and NSW Public School Holidays.

Closed Good Friday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

Groups also welcome at other times by arrangement. Please telephone Bob or Gloria on 4889 4405.

Alf Stephens' toolbox at April meeting

At our April General Meeting, there will be a showing and discussion of the toolbox and tools, some dating from the 1890s, that belonged to the two Alf Stephens (father and son) who lived and worked in Bowral.

Last year the brothers John & Tony Springett donated the large solid-timber toolbox containing many tools and implements to the Society, as Alfred Stephens junior was their grandfather. BDHS members Denise and Ian Mackey cleaned and identified most of the tools. These and the toolbox will be on display and we will show some photos with a brief overview of the life in Bowral of the two Alfred Stephens. Tony Springett has been invited to attend and speak.

If you are interested in viewing the toolbox and its tools and hearing of the history of the Alf Stephens, then come along on Thursday 24 April at 2:00pm.

Alfred Stephens senior came to Australia from Middlesex, England in 1885 with his mother and five brothers. He settled in Bowral and his wife-to-be Elizabeth Riley followed a year later. After working for two years to gain local building trade experience in Bowral, Alf established in business and was joined in 1903 by his son, also Alfred, who was born at Bowral in 1887 and attended Bowral Superior Public School. Alf junior married Agnes Peel in 1915; one of their two daughters, Joan, married Ted Springett of Bowral and they had two sons, John and Tony, mentioned above.



The many building projects undertaken by father and son locally and further afield include the Court House at Bowral, Superintendent's House at Berrima Gaol, Ranelagh House, Canberra Girls Grammar and the Empire Theatre, Bowral. Both served terms as mayor of Bowral and lengthy periods as Council aldermen.

The toolbox, a timber shipping trunk, has sliding inner tool and saw-holder compartments. Its thirty-three tools and implements include planes, saws, blades, files, squares, gauges, axes, chisels, bolts and pliers.

2014 RAHS annual conference at Mittagong

Our Society is pleased to inform members that this year the Royal Australian Historical Society will hold its annual State History Conference at Mittagong, to take place over the weekend of 25-26 October.

The venue is the Mittagong RSL Club. Delegates can also attend a pre-conference event hosted by the BDH&FHS on the Friday evening, 24 October.

The theme for the Conference is 'Moving History' and details regarding topics and speakers will soon be made available by the RAHS.

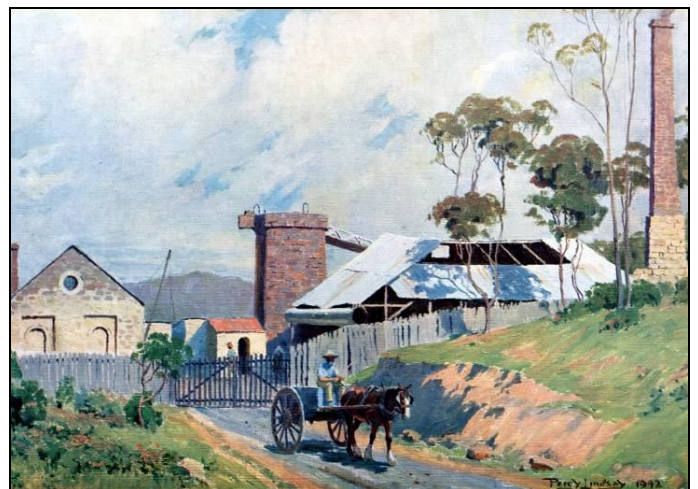
In the March edition of the RAHS's *History* magazine is an article by Linda Emery that provides historical insights into the impact of European settlement in the Southern Highlands.

Linda begins the article by stating that the BDH&FHS is delighted the RAHS State Conference is making a return visit to Mittagong this year. "It is 11 years since the Society last hosted the Conference, an event that forged strong links among many delegates that endure to this day. These links reflected the 2003 theme of 'Partnerships'".

The article provides insight into the establishment and growth of Berrima and its surrounding townships, the significance of Mittagong and the ghost town of Joadja to the development of Australian industry, and the importance of the area in regards to Australian regional history and heritage.

Linda also highlights the evolution of the BDH&FHS' archival collections and the Society's long established association with the RAHS.

To read this article in full, it is available on the RAHS website, or from our BDH&FHS Secretary who will post or email it at a member's request. Please phone, email to bdhsarchives@gmail.com, or send a letter.



The first iron smelting works in Australia opened in 1848 at Mittagong, known as the Fitz Roy Iron Works. This painting by Percy Lindsay in 1942 was referenced from a photo in the RAHS collection at History House.

Exeter centenary commemoration

P Morton, Publicity Officer

A centenary memorial service took place at Exeter village last month to commemorate the tragic train smash that occurred there on Friday 13 March, 1914.

More than 200 people gathered in the village that is situated on the southern railway line midway between Moss Vale and Bundanoon.

The collision that happened just before midnight near the station involved the south-bound Temora Mail and the engine of a goods train that was reversing into a refuge siding. Of the Mail's 134 passengers, 14 were killed and 28 injured. Local people and railway workers were quickly on hand to render assistance.

Descendants of victims and residents joined together at the solemn commemoration to reflect and pay their respects. The occasion was organised by Reverend Jeremy and Danielle Tonks of the Anglican Parish of Sutton Forest, with Exeter residents Alice Miller, Tony Molyneux and historian Linda Emery.

The centenary commemoration began at St Aidan's Anglican Church with a memorial service conducted by Rev Tonks. On the church organ, Don McGill of Bundanoon accompanied the assembly in the packed church with the singing of several traditional hymns, including 'Praise my Soul the King of Heaven' and 'Abide with me'. Our BDH&FHS archivist Linda Emery addressed the assembly with a poignant overview of the fatality and its consequences. Rev Tonks then gave a homily and a brief bible reading followed.

After the service, the assembly made its way to Exeter Station platform for the unveiling there of a memorial plaque. Mounted on a fine block of sandstone, the plaque includes the names of all those who died in the 1914 disaster. Bundanoon Sandstone Company gave and installed the stone block. On behalf of members, our Society made a financial contribution towards the cost of the plaque.

About 20 grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the tragedy victims attended the service, including Lorna Yeend who unveiled the plaque. Ms Yeend's grandmother Louisa Parker, who had 10 children, died in the ill-fated crash. "I feel so sorry for the people who had such a sad time when that train crashed, even those who survived," Ms Yeend told the *Southern Highland News*. "This has been a very touching ceremony. It's such a privilege to be here today, it's such a thrill to see so many people here."

Among the attendees also were Ronda Breu of Bargo and Susan Wykes of Quirindi, descendants of John, Alice and Annie Heaver, three siblings who died in the disaster. They were on the Temora Mail that night transporting their deceased mother from Sydney to Cootamundra.

The unveiling ceremony was followed by morning tea in the Village Hall, where a photo display depicting scenes of the tragedy was mounted along one wall. Refreshments were provided by members of several Exeter community groups who amply catered for the 200 people. Around tables laden with sandwiches, slices and cakes, those attending reflected on the solemn occasion and relaxed in good company.



Gathering in St Aidan's church before the service.



Lorna Yeend unveils the plaque at Exeter station with help from Rev Tonks; Mayor Arkwright and State member Pru Goward amongst the crowd looking on. (G Morgan photo)



A view of the crowd after unveiling ceremony. (G Morgan)

Bowral & District Hospital photos

To celebrate Bowral & District Hospital's 125 years, a display of historic hospital photographs was mounted by the Bowral Hospital Auxiliary at the CWA Rooms in Corbett Gardens, Bowral over a recent weekend.

The photos were from our Society's collection and chosen by member Nancy Reynolds, who served as matron at the hospital for many years. A selection of these historic hospital photos is provided here for the interest of members.



Berrima District Hospital, circa 1906



The operating theatre, 1898



Graduate nurses of 1977. At front centre are Sister Win Smith (left) and Matron Reynolds.

Extracts from district newspapers

From *The Mittagong Star*, selected by Carol Nolan

14 May 1957

Fortunately, at the right moment, a lorry loaded with about 200 gallons of skimmed milk and pigs, arrived at the bush fire which threatened Aylmerton public school last week. Volunteers filled their knap-sack sprays with milk which saved the building.

31 October 1958

In 1947 there were 2542 professional rabbit trappers in Australia. To-day there are only 795.

24 June 1960

SCEGGS Moss Vale: Guttled by Fire

Fire gutted Howard House which contained a dormitory, a kindergarten and teachers' quarters. The fire started soon after 6am on Sunday and the girls in night attire were marched from the upper floor.

Fire brigades raced from Moss Vale and Bowral and pumped water from a dam. Afterwards the fire engines had to be hauled from the dam by tractor.

The teachers and 40 of the girls lost all their possessions valued at £6000. The damage to building is estimated at £16,000. It is believed the fire commenced in the boiler room. The girls were billeted to private homes and a hostel. Despite the shock the girls attended their usual Sunday morning service in Bong Bong Church.

From *The Four Mails*, selected by Philip Morton

19 February 1959

Lord Mayor visits Bundanoon

Swimming Pool begun

Using a gleaming nickel-plated spade, engraved specially for the occasion, the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Alderman H F Jensen, turned the first sod of earth in the construction of Bundanoon's Swimming Pool on the slopes overlooking the Sports Ground, last Sunday afternoon.

The President of the Bundanoon Community Development Association, Mr R Barton, extended a warm welcome to the Lord Mayor, and also to Mr Gerathy, President of Randwick's Lion's Club, to Councillor H T Ellsmore, President of Wingecarribee Shire Council and to the 150 people gathered to see this great occasion.

Explaining how this historical occasion arose, Mr Barton said that the association first saw the need for a swimming pool only three years ago. Bundanoon had all the amenities for tourists and residents except a modern swimming pool. Being short of finance they tried to gain assistance; however this was not easy.

Wingecarribee Shire Council informed the Association that it could not help, as a grant from the State Government was not available. Money for swimming pools would not be available for some years, evidently, because it would be needed for more urgent work on water supplies and roads.

However the Association members were undaunted because they saw that a pool was essential, not only for tourists but also for the children of the whole area. They were particularly keen because Bundanoon children have to go to Mittagong pool (over twenty miles away) to swim. Fifteen local people offered to lend £100 each as an interest free loan and in this way £1,500 was handed to the Shire Council.

With the wonderful help of the townspeople and people of the surrounding district another £2,500 was raised which gave a total of £4,000 towards the project. This was sufficient for the Shire Council to call for tenders, that of Mr Adolfo Pittolo of Moss Vale being accepted.

Mr Pittolo intends to start work in about three weeks and hopes to complete the large pool (30ft x 80ft) and the children's pool (about 30ft x 15ft) and the cement concourses in two months with favourable weather. Mr Barton thanked all those who had helped so far, and explained that there was still considerable hard work to be done. The filtration plant, many amenities and fencing had yet to be financed and erected. When completed Mr Barton said the pool would be one of the best outside of the bigger towns in NSW.

Official Welcome

Mr Barton introduced Cr H T Elsmore, the Wingecarribee Shire President, who welcomed Alderman Jensen. Cr Elsmore said he was very proud to have the privilege and honour to welcome the Lord Mayor on behalf of the Shire Council and the people of the Shire. That Ald Jensen had come over 100 miles from Sydney to Bundanoon when he was a very busy man showed his very sincere belief that swimming pools are essential and all who followed Ald Jensen's record know that he had spared no effort to see more swimming pools built.

Saying how pleased he was to welcome the members of the Lion's Club of Randwick, who tried to alleviate the misfortune of unfortunate members of the community, Cr Elsmore added that the people of Bundanoon all remembered Ald Jensen's Lions Club for its wonderful work in attempting to establish another worthy movement in this district. It was not the fault of the Lion's Club, nor the local people, that this movement failed.

The project referred to above was that undertaken at *Sylvan Glen*, a ten bed-roomed building at Penrose.

First bought by Randwick Lion's Club as a country farm for subnormal children, this large, partly furnished house was further developed by the assistance of the people of Penrose, who bought furnishings, materials, poultry and a house cow, and who donated two pigs.

The project was abandoned owing to insufficient children to work the farm, and it was offered to Legacy. When Legacy declined, the Lion's Club abandoned the project completely and sold the property to Mr Chris Kermeen who will use the property as a guest house and holiday flats.



Ald Jensen was asked to officially begin construction of the pool by turning the first sod. He first thanked the people for this opportunity to visit Bundanoon again and the Shire President for his welcome. He recollected the heartening reaction of the people of the Bundanoon district when he came previously as a member of the Lion's Club. It was unfortunate that the project did not proceed, but he was pleased to know some money would be returned to the Bundanoon people. A swimming pool was an amenity which returned no financial dividends to those who erected it but it did return dividends of healthier children with the facilities to develop their physique and the ability to swim and save the lives of others, he said.

The Lord Mayor then turned the first sod of earth for the pool with a nickel-plated spade presented to him by the Bundanoon Association. Cr D Mackay of Exeter moved a vote of thanks to Ald Jensen and stated that the ceremony was indeed memorable as there were 400 children between Exeter and Wingello and he expected others to come from all parts of the district to use the pool. After praising Dr Cuthbert and R Barton and J O'Brien especially for their efforts to build a swimming pool, Cr Mackay said that it was good to see city people like the Lord Mayor coming to help country people.

Mr Gerathy, President of Randwick Lion's Club, then explained how the club was formed some three years ago by a group of city residents, spearheaded by the now Lord Mayor. One of their first projects was the farm at Penrose, which was bought in the names of three trustees. It was significant that one of these was Ald Jensen and that the deeds were in his name until *Sylvan Glen* was sold. After this it was decided by the Lion's Club to return some of the money to the people of the Bundanoon district.

Mr Gerathy then presented a cheque on behalf of the Lion's Club towards the pool. Mr R Barton announced that the cheque was for £300 and thanked the Lion's Club on behalf of the community for their generous donation. At 'The Knoll,' Bundanoon, official guests were entertained at afternoon tea prepared by ladies of the Development Association.

The Great Southern Rail saga

Part Three of a series compiled by Philip Morton

Railway opened to Bowral & Moss Vale in 1867

In December 1867 the single-line Great Southern Railway from Sydney opened as far as the rail-head at Moss Vale with construction underway towards Goulburn.

Between Picton and Mittagong, trains had to cope with heavy grades and, by the early 1890s with increasing traffic, these had become problematic. The use of assistant engines provided some relief but real improvement was achieved only after two major deviations opened between Hill Top and Braemar in 1897 enabling the grade of 1 in 33 against up trains to be reduced to 1 in 66.

Later, as part of the duplication of the southern line, the entire Picton-Mittagong section was replaced by a new main line deviation that opened in 1919. It crossed the Southern Road by viaduct at Bargo and had four tunnels: at Picton, Tahmoor and at Yerrinbool and Aylmerton for the climb to Mittagong.

The old main line section was retained as the Picton-Mittagong Loop Line. In a Railway Historical Society bulletin of 1967, it is recounted that a mixed train ran daily and a rail motor extended to Bowral on three days a week for residents along the line to shop. Also a Sunday evening up passenger train ran from Moss Vale to Sydney via the Loop Line.

From 1867 until 1919 however, this 'loop' was the main line to Mittagong. From there, having attained an elevation of 2180 feet above sea level, the line entered a tunnel under Mount Gibraltar and emerged into a landscape "as beautiful and fertile as that before traversed is rugged and barren" (*Sydney Morning Herald*).

The tunnel contract, the heaviest work on the original line, was undertaken by the firm of Wolf & Humphreys who commenced in 1863 and had it ready when the line opened to Mittagong in early 1867.

Hewn through hard shale and sandstone, the tunnel is over half a kilometre in length and up to 70 metres below ground level. Shafts were sunk at different depths in the shale and stone raised to the surface in skips. Fresh air was pumped into the workings. The excavation work occupied more than two years and another year was required to line the tunnel before it could be used. Hundreds of men engaged in these tasks lived nearby in tents.

This tunnel served until 1919 when a double-line tunnel, excavated alongside, opened; the old tunnel became a munitions dump during World War II and is now used to cultivate gourmet mushrooms.

Earth works from the original tunnel's southern side were commenced in 1865 and, once a viaduct over the Wingecarribee River was completed, rails were laid to the new Sutton Forest station that became the rail-head in December 1867. In anticipation of the station, a township had been gazetted in 1863 and it soon flourished, adopting the name Moss Vale which became the station's official name in 1877.

It had been a railway workers' camp, one of many that sprung up where stores opened and hotels catered for the thirsty. As sections were finished the camps moved on but the nucleus of villages remained and, at these, the rush was on to buy up town allotments for future financial gain.

Another such camp existed from 1863 at the south exit of the Gib tunnel. From here the line was being built through Wingecarribee Flats, land granted to the widow and two sons of explorer John Oxley as a gift in consideration of his services as Surveyor-General.

The Oxleys set about surveying a township and subdivided the surrounding country, naming it Burradoo and then Bowral. Railway planners had not envisaged a station there. However the *Herald* reported in June 1865 that a deputation, consisting of R H Roberts, MLA, J & H Oxley and others, presented the Minister for Works with a memorial from upwards of 300 Kangaloon and Yarrowa landholders requesting that a station be placed at Bowral.

Also requested was a road from Kangaloon to Bowral to provide access to the railway. To add weight, it was pointed out that, for Berrima residents, Bowral would be a closer station than Moss Vale. A station opened at Bowral in December 1867 and a platform at nearby Burradoo in 1869.

Moss Vale station became important as the terminus for NSW Governors taking a break from city life and in 1890 was enlarged with a vice-regal carriage shed and waiting room; public refreshment rooms also opened there with upstairs accommodation.

Rail contractors Larkin & Wakeford extended the line southwards and in August 1868 it opened to Marulan.



Train at Moss Vale station c1880, a decade before the refreshment rooms were built.

To be continued next issue

DIARY DATES

THURSDAY	10	APR	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	24	APR	Monthly General Meeting	2:00pm at the Historical Society
THURSDAY	8	MAY	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	22	MAY	Monthly General Meeting	2:00pm at the Historical Society
THURSDAY	12	JUN	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	26	JUN	Monthly General Luncheon Meeting	12:00 noon <i>to be announced</i>

If undelivered return to:
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THE BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL AND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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