

Founded 1960

# BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC

NEWSLETTER  
No 462 June 2014

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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](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

**JUNE LUNCHEON MEETING: Thursday 26 June 2014 at 12 noon**

**VENUE:** Mittagong Uniting Church Hall, Albert Street, Mittagong

**GUEST SPEAKER:** *Marilyn Horton*

A talk on the history of the church and the hall.

**JULY MEETING: Thursday 24 July 2014 at 2:00 pm**

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

**GUEST SPEAKER:** Robert Irving, Noel Irving and Ron Powell  
A slideshow titled **Bowral's Hard Rock Story** will be presented by architectural historians Robert Irving, his son Noel, and Ron Powell whose recently released book *Sydney's Hard Rock Story* is a comprehensive look at the history and significance of Bowral trachyte.

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And more ...



## Diary dates

### JUNE

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

### JULY

- 10 Management Committee Meeting
- 14 School holidays conclude
- 24 General Monthly Meeting

## From the President's Desk

*Bruce Moore*

Wow, what a month it has been! High on a windy hill...we set up a bookstall outside Throsby Park homestead. When I say set up...I mean hold down, peg down and hang on. The Rotary marquee was literally anchored by one of their weightier members, the pole strapped to his body. Oh, how we laughed! Until we heard a Bundanoon lady bowler was blown out to sea.

Then, blow me down, came my wardrobe malfunction. My all-time favourite black shoes gradually fell apart. The heel of one separated from the upper and the other shoe went out in sympathy by turning into a pedo-crocodile, gathering rocks and sticks along the way. Someone remarked I looked like a cross between a stumbling Quasimodo and a hobbling Donald Duck.

Like my dear old frugal Dad, I tried to repair the shoes (they never *last*) and alas, I was discovered by my bride who immediately suggested a couple of things I should do with them....not to be repeated here. Her final words were:".....toss the..... things out!!" Which I did.

The Society hired the Henrietta Rose room for a function at the end of May. It was the launching of Janet Black's updated book "The Forgotten Soldiers" which tells the stories of Southern Highlanders joining up for the Boer War in 1899. Janet has painstakingly researched this history of these 100 odd men who gave their lives (in some cases) and duty to King and Country. Apparently Australia

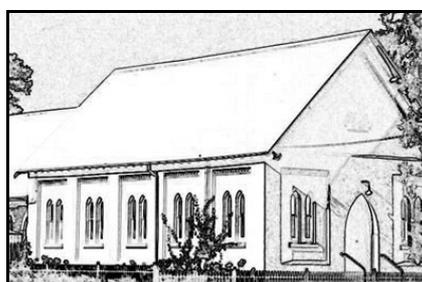
sent some 16,000 troops to South Africa mostly from the Eastern States. Bravo, Janet!

This month we hold our June luncheon, instead of our monthly meeting.

I believe the 3-course meal catered for by the ladies of the Mittagong Uniting Church at \$25 a head, will be something to look forward to. Then generously followed by a talk by Marilyn Horton, who will give a talk on the history of the Church and Hall.

## June Luncheon details

Our lunch will be held at  
**Mittagong Uniting Church Hall**  
on 26 June at 12:00 for 12:30



The foundation stone of Mittagong Methodist Church was laid by the Fitzroy Iron Company's Chairman and it opened in 1865. Its roof trusses are significant as one of the few remaining Iron Works artefacts. In 1977 it became the Uniting Church.

The Church Group ladies will cater and Marilyn Horton, a member of our Society, will give us a talk on the history of the Church and Hall.

A 3-course lunch will be provided and the cost is \$25 per head.

Members and friends welcome to attend. Bookings and payment to the archives by 20 June please.

## Advance notice: Membership Fee increase

The Management Committee has decided that the Society's annual Membership Fee needs to rise. It is to increase from \$20 to \$25 for a single membership and from \$33 to \$35 for a family membership and will apply from our Financial Year starting on 1 October 2014.

The increase is due to rising costs and it is hoped that members will

understand that the new fee is moderate in comparison to similar community organisations and other historical societies.

## Apology

We apologise to all the members who received their print copy of last month's newsletter with the front and back pages in reverse order. Circumstances prevented us from rectifying the mix-up and we hope it did not cause any difficulty.

## Old Memory Awards

*Linda Emery*

Society members will remember former secretary Chrissie Fletcher who moved to Queensland some years ago.



We were delighted to hear that she has just received a prestigious award for Community History at the John Oxley Library. The annual Queensland Memory Awards recognise valuable contributions to the preservation and celebration of Queensland's memory, past and present, and are given by the Library Board of Queensland and the Queensland Library for distinction and innovation in the recording of Queensland history.

Chrissie has developed an inter-active website, Adopt a Digger, which has involved her Sunshine Coast community in researching the local men and women who enlisted and served in World War I. As the founder and coordinator, Chrissie has broken new ground in presentation and set a standard for the future. See the Adopt a Digger website at

[www.adoptadigger.org](http://www.adoptadigger.org)

Professor Jan Thomas, Chair of the Qld Library Board presented the award in the presence of the Governor Ms Penelope Wensley.

Congratulations Chrissie!

## Boer War book launch at Bowral

A gathering of around 40 people comfortably filled the Henrietta Rose Room at Bowral Library on Saturday 31 May for the launch of the Society's latest book:

***Forgotten Soldiers: men & women from the Southern Highlands who served in the Boer War 1899 - 1902***

Updated and expanded by Janet Black of our Society, the book builds on work by the late Colin Sproule who researched the local participants in the Boer War.

Dr Craig Wilcox, a military historian based in Sydney, honoured us with his presence to launch the book. He currently contracts to the National Library of Australia and has worked for the Australian War Memorial; he held a fellowship at the Menzies Centre for Australian Studies in London. Among his published books are a study of the British army and colonial Australia called *Red Coat Dreaming while Australia's Boer War* (2002) became and has remained the definitive work on the subject. His current projects include a history of Australian uniforms and *A Kind of Victory: Captain Charles Cox and his Australian Cavalrymen* a book soon to be published by the National Library.

In his address at the book launch, Craig said how the book reminds us all that Australian military history does not start with WW I. He complimented Janet for the manner in which she portrayed the complicated lives and military arrangements of the Boer years. Further, the book clearly defines region, explains the war and, by providing excellent biographical details, reveals the human stories behind the statistics. This makes it a deeply moving and poignant account.

The book also reveals a positive side of the war by detailing the benefits obtained by participants, such as the new frontiers discovered and, for some, it was a step up to professional soldiering.

Janet thanked Craig for his comments and then paid tribute to the work of the late Colin Sproule. She was pleased to acknowledge his widow Norma who was present. Janet also thanked Gordon Hopkins whose uncle's Queen's medal from the Boer War appears on the book's front cover, and Ross Brown of the Royal NSW Lancers for his help with photographs.



Janet Black, Craig Wilcox and Gordon Hopkins



Craig Wilcox, Norma Sproule, Janet Black & Bruce Moore

## Award for *A Light in the Window*

A prestigious NSW Heritage Award has recently been awarded to a book published about Harper's Mansion in the Southern Highlands.

Eric Savage, Chair of Harper's Mansion Management Committee, said he and fellow committee members were delighted that historian Ann Beaumont was the winner of the Education & Interpretation Community and Individual category for her book *A Light in the Window, Harper's Mansion Berrima - the place and its people*. There were nine nominations for the award.



Ann Beaumont with National Trust Australia (NSW) President, Ian Carroll, at the Awards

We congratulate Ann, who is a member of our Society and of the National Trust. The award was made at the 20th National Trust Heritage Awards in Sydney. The new NSW Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Rob Stokes, was guest speaker at the function.

Dr Savage said the publication was a lively narrative that brings to life the Harpers who built the house, as well as the priests and nuns who had lived and worked at the property when it was owned by the Catholic Church.

## State Heritage listing for The Gib

As noted in the last newsletter, the cultural heritage of Bowral trachyte is portrayed in a fine new publication: *Sydney's Hard Rock Story*. A copy of this book is now available in our reference library.

This book is timely in that its release comes shortly after the heritage listing of Mount Gibraltar Quarries. Source of the trachyte stone used for many landmark buildings, it was placed on NSW's State Heritage Register in November 2013. Mt Gibraltar was formed from a 180 million year old volcanic intrusion that cooled in such a way as to form this special rock.

The listing was announced by Robyn Parker MP, Minister for Heritage, and Goulburn MP Pru Goward.

Ms Parker said that "the site was quarried for 100 years (1886-1986) and the extraction of the stone was fraught with danger, not only for the workers, but for the residents of Bowral who got used to the daily blasting. Some of the stone was used locally, but the bulk of it was exported to Sydney for major city buildings such as Challis House, Commonwealth Bank and National Mutual Building, all in Martin Place. At least 16 state significant buildings listed on the State Heritage Register have been constructed using Bowral Trachyte. It was also used for many commemorative stones for Federation and for the foundation of Canberra and many war memorials".

Ms Goward said Bowral trachyte has the unique properties of great strength, durability and decorative potential when polished. "The quarries demonstrate the extraordinary engineering techniques of the early industrial era in NSW."

As a follow-up to the listing, a press release issued by Wingecarribee Shire Council outlined how it played a leading role in this development. Council's Acting General Manager Ann Prendergast said the State listing validated Council's preservation of its local history. The quarries were first listed as heritage items of local significance in the 1989 Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan, only three years after the quarries ceased operations.

In 2010 the Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan further recognised The Gib's unique landscape and geology. "Having the Trachyte Quarries recognised by the State Government vindicates Council's foresight in having this local site preserved," Ms Prendergast said. "It also recognises the significance and heritage value Bowral Trachyte has had across the State, throughout Australia and internationally."

Ms Prendergast also acknowledged the continuing volunteer preservation works being carried out on The Gib. "The heritage listing of these quarries is largely the result of the wonderful volunteer work undertaken by the Mt Gibraltar Landcare & Bushcare

Group," she said. "Their ongoing research provided much of the impetus for this heritage listing."

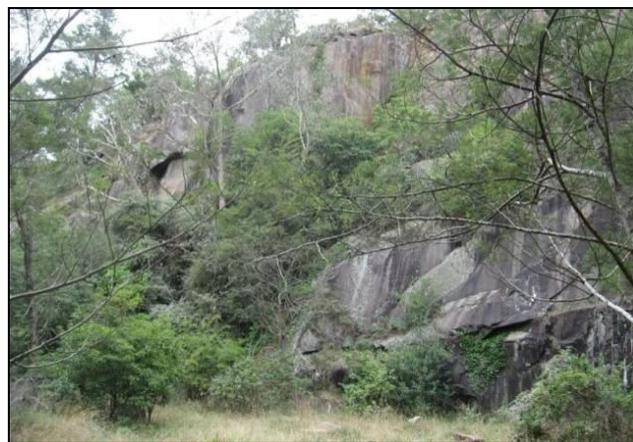
Inclusion on the State Heritage Register ensures that the future management or development of Mount Gibraltar Quarries will be supported with advice from the state's leading heritage organisation, the Heritage Council of NSW.

The reasons for the listing, as posted on the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage website, include:

- The Mount Gibraltar Quarries are state significant as purpose built quarries used consistently for 100 years of quarrying, from 1886 to 1986;
- Listing will enable the identification and registration of this item of state heritage significance; and
- Listing will encourage the conservation of this item of the state's heritage.

A summary of significance is also provided stating, in part, that for 100 years the Mount Gibraltar Trachyte Quarries Complex provided the rare stone used to build everything from landmarks like the Queen Victoria Building and Martin Place banks to stone kerbs in the city of Sydney.

The strength and beauty of this trachyte made it ideal for the construction of the buildings and places that are now symbols of the growth of our State. Today there are six distinct quarrying locations within the complex regarded as being of state significance.



**Quarry D**



**Joshua Stokes Memorial**

*compiled by P Morton*

## The Great Southern Rail saga: a tribute to John Whitton

Part Five of a series compiled by Philip Morton

**John Whitton, appointed in 1856 as chief engineer for the colony's fledgling railway, is remembered as the 'Father of NSW Railways', a term coined by Sir Henry Parkes.**

Whitton often visited Mittagong and a plaque commemorating him was unveiled in 1998 at Mittagong's Sturt Gallery by railway historian David Burke and Dr John Simons, then archivist of the BDHS.



During his working years, Whitton often spent holidays at a guest house in Mittagong known as 'Marchmont' and continued to do so after his retirement in 1890. Feeling unwell in Sydney's humidity in February 1898, he came up with his wife, hoping the cooler air would revive him. As usual they stayed at Marchmont and he rallied briefly but died a few days later on 20 February, aged 79. His body was taken back to Sydney by train next morning.



Marchmont, destroyed in the 1939 bushfires, was on the site where the Sturt Gallery Cafe is now located.

In an address prior to unveiling the plaque, Dr Simons outlined Whitton's achievements: "His training on the railways of England accustomed him to tracks that, for the most part, kept to level grounds or climbed gentle grades. I like to think of him, when he arrived in NSW in 1857 and had studied the diverse nature of the country through which he was required to construct an extensive railway system, squaring his Yorkshire shoulders and saying 'Aye, laads, 'ere's a bit of a do, but reckon we'll manage an all'.

And so he did, designing and completing spectacular works of engineering, such as his viaducts and tunnels, and the Lithgow Zig-Zag, that are still regarded with wonder and admiration by railway men the world over. He was certainly a remarkable man and a great engineer. The *Sydney Morning Herald* opined in its 2-column obituary and valediction at his

passing, that 'the Colony has a great deal to thank Mr Whitton for in laying the basis of its railways'.

But geophysical difficulties were not the only kind he encountered. The Colony's Government had no sooner appointed the man to do the job, telling him he was in sole charge, when politicians began interfering and arguing. Whitton had to fight strenuously against moves to break the gauge of the lines at Bathurst and Goulburn, his opponents arguing that narrow-gauge lines or - preposterous thought - horse tramways, could service the more remote areas. Fortunately he eventually won the battle, only to find he had another to fight, and win, in getting the lines extended to Albury and the Queensland border.

His ability to persuade was due to his being 'a man of professional training, great rectitude of character, independence and foresight' - again from the *Herald*.

Naturally, his success soured the losers who probably felt some spiteful glee when, on the occasion of his retirement, they managed to have the amount he had been promised as his pension cut by half."

Dr Simons continued his address by asking:

"Why did Whitton choose to stay at Mittagong? Was it sentiment? A very plausible reason since the station with its refreshment rooms was one of his larger designs - plausible, perhaps, but not convincing.

So why Mittagong rather than nearby Bowral, a town developing rapidly? He may have thought of it but not, I imagine, for long. The speed of Bowral's growth was due to it becoming fashionable and desirable. The city 'gentry', appreciating the climate and taking advantage of Whitton's conveniently placed railway, saw it as the perfect place for a summer retreat that provided escape from the humid summers of Sydney.

By 1890, country houses and retreats about Bowral and Burradoo were being erected at a great rate as their owners appeared to pursue a collective ambition to make Bowral the Point Piper of the Highlands. The town and the pervading social pretensions would not have appealed to Whitton, particularly as some of the individuals involved would have been the critics, or outright opponents, of his ideas and aims for railways.

Mittagong was a much different town. In the 1880s and 90s it still held an optimistic view of its industrial future. The Iron Works continued to be regarded as promising, the Joadja Shale Oil production was in full swing, and so was the Box Vale Coal mine.

However this general belief in the town's economic future based on technology would be dashed in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

But while that belief held, the spirit of the town would have been just what John Whitton understood and appreciated.

That is why I believe he chose Mittagong."

## Census 'snapshot' of Berrima 1841

'Berrima 1841' is an on-going project coordinated by Chris Thompson, a Harper's Mansion volunteer who is also a member of our Society. It explores living and working in Berrima as portrayed in the 1841 Census, at the time when James and Mary Harper were living in the Berrima community.

The 1841 Census was not the first held in the colony (that had occurred in 1828), but was a more thorough record of the population by police districts, counties and towns requiring the full name and address of each Head of Household. Every householder, employer of servants and proprietor and occupier of land had to complete the Census on 2 March 1841 'or on the days immediately subsequent thereto'.

All but five of the 36 Heads of Household in Berrima have been traced with some degree of certainty but less is known about the other members of each household, as individual records no longer exist. By the 1840s Berrima was established as the major town of the district, succeeding the original settlement at Bong Bong. Berrima township was positioned along Surveyor-General Thomas Mitchell's new line of road that linked Sydney with the colony's south-western settlements. Thus Berrima was to become a major overnight stop on the new road (later to be known as the Hume Highway), a day's coach journey from Goulburn and from Liverpool and Sydney.

After Robert Hoddle had done a survey of the town, speculators began to buy land. An early map has names against most of the half-acre plots. But on the ground things did not move that fast. The new road might have a bridge but many travellers continued to use the Old South Road stopping at the inns they had always frequented.

Thus Berrima's growth was relatively slow and by 1841 there were less than 200 permanent residents. The 1841 Census lists 249 individuals but this includes 25 people in the military barracks, 39 people in the gaol of whom only the gaoler, his wife and some warders would be permanent, and travellers staying at the inns overnight. A realistic estimate of the resident population is probably around 180.

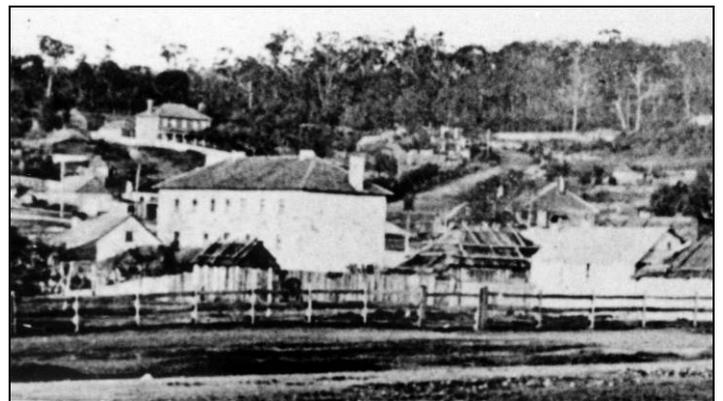
The 32 private residences, 12 built of brick or stone and the rest of wood, were mainly erected around the Market Place (including Jellore Street) and along the dirt road to the north known as Argyle St. Two houses were along Wingecarribee St, most likely on the western side of the main road, and another four were south of the river, along Bong Bong Road, near the present Oldbury Road. In addition to these domestic dwellings were the barracks, at the eastern end of the Market Place overlooking the river, and the gaol, lock-up and courthouse all on Argyle St.

As would be expected in a newly established colonial township, ex-convicts figured significantly. Thirty-five of the 76 adult men were convicts or ex-convicts, and eleven of the 49 women. Single males predominated, with four times as many men as women being over twenty-one. Not surprisingly almost all the adult women were married whereas only one-third of the men had wives. It was also a young community with three out of five inhabitants being under twenty-one, many of them born in the new colony. Only ten people were over sixty.

Chris has placed all the information she has on the 36 households onto the Harper's Mansion website and updates it as more information comes to light. Already four families who are descendants of these 1841 residents have made contact and provided additional information.

If this historic project stimulates your interest, you can view the 'Berrima 1841' project on Harper's website. Several descendents of those listed still live locally and anyone who can add information to the project is encouraged to do so.

Contact Chris on [info@harpersmansion.com.au](mailto:info@harpersmansion.com.au)



**Early view of Berrima showing Harper's Mansion overlooking the town with Surveyor-General Inn in foreground.**



**Travellers in Berrima at the Surveyor-General Inn.**

- compiled by C Thompson and P Morton

## Mittagong Star newspaper extracts

selected by Carol Nolan

**Friday June 12 1931**

### Dole Notes

The "Hotel Ranlegh" Braemar which was for some time abused by travellers, has been cleaned up and two of the winter boarders have taken charge, and are enforcing a strict discipline regarding cleanliness. Sergt. W H Dudley is the officer of the day.

The soup kitchen, organized by the Mittagong Toc H is now located in a building kindly loaned by Mr H E Stevenson in Main Street.

The organizers are assured of a plentiful supply of ingredients for soup. Miss West, of Frensham, has promised to supply all the bread and firewood and occasionally vegetables required.

The local butchers, Messrs R L Webb, Walter Cupitt and P K Cupitt & Sons have donated sufficient meat bones for soup, on each of the three days, (Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays).

The free soup depot, under the supervision of Mr George Dennis, a qualified chef, and one of the unemployed, began operations on Monday June 8th.

Donations are acknowledged from the following: Horton Bros, bag potatoes; K Solah, Mrs Meredith, vegetables; anonymous 10 shillings, ton of carrots; Os Cunynghame, salt and onions; F Beaumont, load of wood.

Donations of onions would be appreciated.

The hours for distribution of soup are from 4.30 to 5.30 pm. The soup is issued in rations of 1 pint each. On Monday 12 issues were made; on Tuesday 41; and Wednesday 76.

On Tuesday 36 pints of soup were sent to Colo Vale.

**June 5, 1931**

### Opossums

The State Cabinet has now decided that there shall not be a general open season for taking opossums.

Licenses will be granted only to unemployed; senior officers of police will be authorized to issue licenses to unemployed who are bona fide residents of NSW to capture opossums on Crown Lands only

To enable the identification of skins a scheme has been adopted which will be a special method of skinning. No person to whom a license is issued would be permitted to draw food relief until a period of 14 days has elapsed from the date of issue of license, which will be issued from June 6th. The whole of the Wollondilly electorate will still be a closed area.

**June 5 1931**

### Unemployed of Mittagong

Mr C W Ison, Secretary Toc.H Group informs us that soup will be available to the unemployed of Mittagong every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday commencing Monday 8th June from 4.30 to 5.30 pm. See notice board at Helson's Newsagency. Donations of soup vegetables, meat and other ingredients and firewood will be thankfully received. All donations to be left at Helsons.

**Friday 19 December 1930**

Tooth & Co's Maltings started a system of rationing their employees from the 8th inst., the men going off in batches of eight, one week in three.

Alan Fitzgerald was charged with stealing cherries valued at 2 shillings, the property of Fred Hambridge, at Yerrinbool on 17 November. Accused pleaded guilty and was fined £1 or 14 days.

Geo I Cooper was charged with stealing cherries valued at 2 shillings, the property of Fred Hambridge, at Yerrinbool on 17 November. Defendant pleaded guilty and was fined £1 or 14 days.

### Frensham School, Ltd.

During the week appears the following amongst the new registrations of companies:-

Frensham School, Ltd. Nominal Capital, £100,000 in £1 shares. To carry on a school for girls and for boys at Frensham, Mittagong, or elsewhere in NSW. First members of the council of management, Winifred Mary West, Dorothy P Kennedy, Phyllis A H Clubbe, Arthur Topp, Mary Nicholson, Kate Ogilvie, Susie Jane Williams, Mary T Thompson. Head Office, Sydney.

**Friday 26 December 1930**

On Saturday afternoon next, 27 December, commencing at 1.30 o'clock, Mr W H Jones will auction all the household furniture and effects on account of Mrs Chalker, at her residence "Willow Vale" Braemar. Owing to ill health Mrs Chalker has to relinquish her boarding house and everything is for absolute sale.

**January 16, 1931**

### Photo Competition: Mittagong Baths

The photographic competition for a picture of the Mittagong Swimming Pool for reproduction purposes, resulted in the entry by Mr L Gotting being declared the winner of the 10/6 prize kindly donated by Mr W Hilton Mitchell.

The winning photo will be used as a block for advertising the swimming pool. Only four entries were received.

## DIARY DATES

THURSDAY	12 JUN	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	26 JUN	Monthly General Luncheon Meeting	<b>12:00 noon</b> at Mittagong Uniting Church Hall, Albert Street, Mittagong
THURSDAY	10 JUL	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	24 JUL	Monthly General Meeting	<b>2:00pm</b> at the Historical Society
THURSDAY	14 AUG	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	28 AUG	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.

*Springetts Arcade*