

Founded 1960

# BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC

NEWSLETTER  
No 463 July 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](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

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

**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.

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

**AUGUST MEETING:** Thursday 28 August 2014 at 2pm

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

**GUEST SPEAKER:** John Wylie

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## Diary dates

### JULY

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

### AUGUST

14 Management Committee Meeting  
28 General Monthly Meeting

### SEPTEMBER

7 Father's Day  
11 Management Committee Meeting  
20 School holidays commence  
25 General Monthly Meeting

## Museum gains frock coat



Museum volunteer John Schweers models a frock coat donated by member Desmond Kennard. The outfit was tailored in the 1970s for Desmond at Ballarat's Sovereign Hill museum. It received a Federal grant for a costume factory to tailor clothes of the 1850s Gold Rush period for the staff of 100 men and women to provide visitors with a living history experience.

As Executive Director at the time, Desmond received the first outfit!

## Membership details

Please note that all membership enquiries and changes of address details should be addressed to the Membership Secretary, c/- the Society's postal address or email to [bdhsarchives@gmail.com](mailto:bdhsarchives@gmail.com)

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

What! July already, I hear you cry.

It's now Tax time, time to rattle the piggy bank & fossick through old receipts looking for a massive deduction, hidden in the shoebox. Any deduction will do!

We have lots of shoeboxes at home; containing no shoes now, only lots of duplicate 1980 photos. Some now looking their age suffering an overdose of chemical processing.

What a long way we've travelled with photography! I was brought up 'looking for the elusive dicky bird' while Dad pointed a bellows-shaped folding camera at us. We squinted into the sun then waited a week for 8 tiny black & white prints to magically come out of a Chemist's dispensary.

Most of the photos were of the sky, trouser legs or the tops of relatives' heads.

Nowadays we can choose 10 shots of the one subject, instantly, off our phone.

The June Luncheon. Held in the old Methodist church hall in Mittagong ... adequately fed with a 3-course meal by the Ladies Fellowship Volunteers, I thank them for their sterling effort. We were delivered a fascinating address by Marilyn Horton who gave us some insight, quoted from delicate 19<sup>th</sup> century correspondence, into what life was really like in Mittagong in 1865.

No designer furnishings in those days, I'm afraid.

Some sad news of two members. Firstly the passing of Ken Brown, (Shylie's husband) after a long illness. Then Arnold Berry, who was a long-time volunteer, early member and valuable asset for us at the Archives, suddenly died. His daughter, Linda has been following the family tradition by giving up her precious time in the research department.

Please, both families accept our condolences.

Our July general meeting will feature authors of the book "Sydney's Hard Rock Story" and we will be amazed what Mt. Gibraltar's precious bits and

pieces have ended up across the globe. After tripping over a curbstone on the way to the airport, we can find ourselves marvelling the foundations of Australia House on the Strand in London.

## Queen's Birthday honours

The Queen's Birthday Honours List for 2014 was released on 9 June. The Society wishes to congratulate the following recipients of an OAM medal in the General Division:

Janet Ann Reid

The late Kenneth Graeme Reid (awarded with effect from 5-12-2012) who each received an award for community service through the preservation and promotion of history and heritage.

## New members

Welcome to new members who have joined in the past months:

Dr Kathie **Blunt**, Bowral  
Ms Andrea **Brownlow**, Mittagong  
Mrs Yvonne **Chapman**, Bowral  
Ms Jennifer **Devlin**, Hilltop  
Mr Graham **Ferguson**, Bowral  
Mrs Narelle **Harwood**, Bowral  
Mrs Margaret-Ann **Mann**, Bowral  
Mr Darcy **Moore**, Kiama  
Mr Chris **Mundy**, Ngunnawal  
Mr Allan **Simpson**, Alexandria  
Mrs Jann **Sinfield**, Bowral  
Mr David **Stewart-Wright**, Mittagong  
Ms Roberta **Stove**, Hilltop  
Mr David **Thomas**, Kangaloon  
Mrs Lyn **Wright**, Bundanoon

## 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

## 'Hard Rock Story' authors to be speakers at our July meeting

The authors will present trachyte's cultural heritage from a local perspective under the title:

### **Bowral's Hard Rock Story**

The presentation will be profusely illustrated and draw on the authors' recently released book *Sydney's Hard Rock Story* that provides a history of locally quarried trachyte and how it became Sydney's and the State's most important building stone after sandstone.

The book, a self-funded and self-published effort, was launched at Gleebooks, Sydney in May this year by John McInerney, former Sydney Deputy Lord Mayor and former Melbourne City Planner.

The subject of the book is microsyenite, an igneous stone obtained at Mount Gibraltar from the 1880s and marketed as Bowral trachyte. The stone's extensive architectural uses, its geology and the local dramas of The Gib and its quarrymen are thoroughly detailed and illustrated in the new book.

Our meeting on Thursday 24 July is an opportunity to meet the authors and to hear about the book and the local perspective of the trachyte story.

After the talk, copies of the *Hard Rock* book will be available for sale and signing.

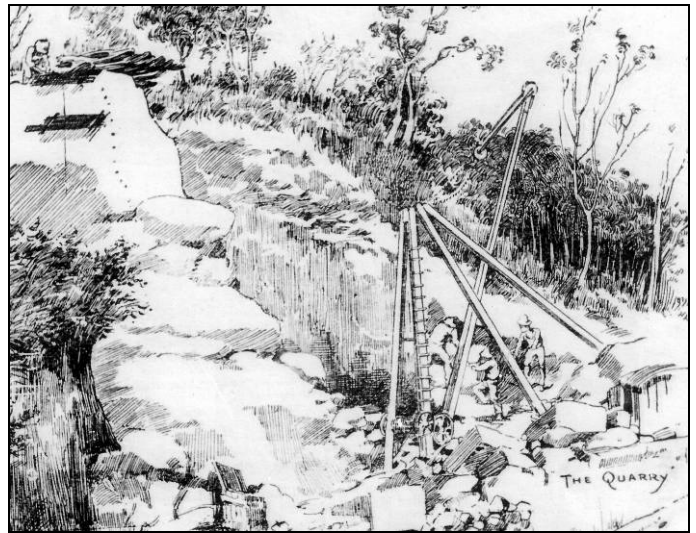
#### **The authors:**

**Robert Irving** is an architectural historian, Fellow and former President of the RAHS, and was a senior lecturer in Architecture at UNSW. He was co-author of *Identifying Australian Architecture*, published in 1989, as well as several other works including *First Views of Australia 1788-1825* (1987), *The History and Design of the Australian House* (1985) and *Fine Houses of Sydney* (1982).

**Ron Powell** is an architect, landscape architect and stone consultant. For a decade, until recently, he was manager of the NSW Centenary Stonework Program, which provides a strategic approach to the 'catch-up' maintenance of state-owned heritage stone buildings and monuments; he was also Landscape Director for Darling Harbour, and Public Domain Co-ordinator for the Pymont/Ultimo Redevelopment.

**Noel Irving**, a research assistant and picture researcher, has worked on publications including *Paradise Purgatory Hell Hole* (2007) and *Twentieth Century Architecture in Wollongong* (2001). He was co-author of *Donald Thomas Esplin, Sydney Architect: His Life and Work* (2008). Noel, like Ron, has served as a member of Sydney City Council's Sandstone and Trachyte Committee.

**The meeting will commence at 2:00pm.**



**Early sketch of a sheer-leg crane at a quarry on The Gib**

As many readers will know, the trachyte story begins about 180 million years ago when Mt Gibraltar was formed from a volcanic intrusion that cooled in such a way as to form the special igneous rock. The only other source of similar quality trachyte is in Russia.

Although very hard to work, trachyte was found to have strength, a very fine grain and took a beautiful polish, being dark olive green or grey, occasionally streaked with narrow veins of glassy quartz. It was without cracks or flaws and blocks of almost any size could be obtained.

From the 1880s this stone began appearing in local kerbs and gutters and along Sydney streets. Soon it was adopted by builders and architects and can still be seen overhead in the keystones of great buildings as well as underfoot in myriad small and large scale projects throughout NSW and beyond.

Trachyte figures prominently in Sydney's streetscape and thus the new book is titled *Sydney's Hard Rock Story*. The book also illustrates its use in monuments, foundation stones and plaques, such as the 1901 Commonwealth Stone in Centennial Park, Sydney.

The local district is by no means overlooked in the book, as it presents a detailed history of the extraction of trachyte from its pioneers and quarrymen through to heritage and conservation issues of recent times.



**A group of Gib masons near the mast of a derrick crane.**

Compiled by Philip Morton



## Mittagong historic church luncheon

Our June luncheon this year was held in the historic Mittagong Uniting Church hall and, despite the wintry weather, was a warm and congenial occasion for the 30 members and friends who participated.

The Church ladies served a most enjoyable 3-course meal. Plunger coffee and soft drinks were provided by the Society and as usual there was a lucky door prize and raffle. Thanks in particular to members Patricia Doris and Carolyn Hutton for organising the event.

After lunch Marilyn Horton, a member of our Society and of the Uniting Church, ushered the group into the church proper and gave a most informative talk on the history of the building and the parish. Marilyn related that the church and adjoining parish hall were built for the Wesleyan Parish on land donated by the Fitz Roy Iron Works Company with the foundation stone being laid by then company chairman, Ebenezer Vickery, on 24 May 1865. The iron trowel used was made by the Iron Works.

The church was opened in February 1866 and also served as a school until a new public school building opened nearby in 1878.

The delicate iron roof trusses of the church, made at the Iron Works, are one of the historic works' few remaining artefacts. Other small iron pieces were on display for the occasion along with wooden chairs and benches dating to the early days of the church.

Next year the church will celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> year and celebrations are planned for Sunday 24 May, 2015.



Marilyn at lectern with member Marie Chalker nearby



President Moore (right) jokes with Leonie Knapman



Society members and friends enjoy the June luncheon

## 2014 RAHS State Conference

Mittagong, 25-26 October

The Royal Australian Historical Society's Conference theme this year – "Moving History" – is described in the current RAHS magazine.

In brief: History is about the past, it has all happened and can't be changed. It is immovable. WRONG! History is about change over time and is always moving as we respond to new information that changes our understanding of the past. Each generation asks new questions of the past. In history, we see how people adapted to change as they moved geographically and socially within and beyond their communities. We are emotionally moved by their fears, struggles and achievements.

At Mittagong there will be opportunities for delegates to network with people committed to promoting local and community history and who enjoy sharing their successes and challenges with others. One such opportunity will be a pre-conference event hosted by the BDH&FHS on Friday 24 October.

The RAHS is still finalising the Conference's agenda of speakers who will explore "Moving History" from various angles. Those listed on the RAHS website as confirmed (as at 4 July) so far include:

- Bill Gammage AM - Lesley Muir Address
- Leonie Knapman - Mittagong Boys' Home
- Richard White - 1st AIF in Egypt
- Vince Taranto & Denis Gojak RMS - Hume H'way
- Ken McNally - Remembrance Drive, Hume H'way
- Carol Liston - Road Research
- Kate Mackaness - Advocacy advice.

Bookings for the Conference will open in mid-July. For those living locally it is a rare opportunity to participate in a RAHS Conference without having to arrange away-from-home accommodation. You may book to attend on one or both days.

There will be regular updates about the Conference on the RAHS website [history@rahs.org.au](http://history@rahs.org.au)

## Fitz Roy Iron Works furnace date

Mittagong resident Helen Erskine recently emailed us about the cairn and signage at Ironmines Oval. On a walk through the reserve she had noticed the sign saying it was the site of the first blast furnace that operated there from 1864. She asked if anything was being done to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the blast furnace at the Fitz Roy Iron Works.



While the year 1864 is significant, it has to be viewed in a wider context of the Iron Works history.

At the site, a large cold-blast furnace with ancillary plant and equipment was fired up on 30 July, 1864 but did not function to expectations as its inner linings collapsed and it soon had to be shut down.

The following year, having been rebuilt as a hot-blast furnace, it was blown-in again and then operated for 13 years. Further problems and setbacks occurred; it failed to produce significant tonnage of pig iron, and was finally shut down in 1877. Demolition of the blast furnace stack eventually took place in June 1922.

In 1848, well before the erection of the blast furnace, the Iron Works had actually begun on a smaller scale at an earlier site to the west. Four ambitious men formed a syndicate and purchased the land where a deposit of iron ore had been discovered, with the intention of smelting the ore. The Fitz Roy Iron Works Company was formed and it began smelting the ore using a cupola furnace and associated workings that were extended over following years. After 1865, once the new furnace complex was in operation, this earlier site became neglected and forgotten.

In 1948 when the Centenary of the Iron Works was commemorated, the second stage was the only site that was remembered. To mark the Centenary there, a trachyte cairn was erected by the RAHS and BHP management unveiled it on 2 October 1948. The cairn is located on the rock foundation of the blast furnace's engine-room, overlooking Mittagong Ironmines Oval.

Remains of the earlier smelting site were uncovered unexpectedly during excavations that started in 2001 for Woolworths' Highlands Marketplace complex. Local historians and archaeological heritage experts were brought in and, due to their efforts, extensive remnants of the original works were preserved.

These early remains are now on permanent display with story-boards in a 40 x 45 metre area within the car-park under the Highlands Marketplace.

Thus today two sites commemorate the Fitz Roy Iron Works that heralded the beginning of the Australian Iron Industry: Ironmines Oval and the Marketplace, each highlighting different stages of the Iron Works.

In regard to the blast furnace, while 1864 is when it first operated, perhaps next year is more appropriate to celebrate it becoming hot blast (1865). This will tie in with Mittagong celebrations planned for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of several other proceedings connected with the Iron Works.

## 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries next year

### Celebrations at Mittagong

Society member Dr Leah Day, whose separate history group specialises in Mittagong history, has advised us of the following events being planned for 2015 to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of proceedings connected to the Fitz Roy Iron Works in Mittagong.

A Fitz Roy Iron Works Heritage Trail will be launched in April/May 2015 in conjunction with Wingecarribee Shire Council, to celebrate the significance of the ironworks to the town of Mittagong.

The New Sheffield subdivision, as designed around Alexandra Square and promised to the people of Mittagong in 1864, was released in 1865.

Mittagong Uniting Church foundation stone for a church/school was laid on 24 May 1865. Celebrations are planned for Sunday 24 May 2015.

Mittagong Public School was gazetted in May 1865. Celebrations are planned by the school for the weekend of 16-17 May 2015.

The Mittagong RSL Club will be incorporating the branding *Ironstone* into its planned extensions of the club premises, due for completion around May 2015.



A function to launch these events will be held at the Mittagong RSL Club on Wednesday 30 July 2014, which is by invitation only due to limited numbers.

Leah Day is currently compiling a book on the history of the Fitz Roy Iron Works; she may be contacted on 4872 1609 or by email: leah.day1@bigpond.com

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Our Society looks forward to the development of the heritage trail and encourages members to participate in the Mittagong celebrations next year.

## Census 'snapshot' of Berrima 1841

### Part two

'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 Berrima. 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 have made contact and provided additional information.

Some of the families featured are provided here.

**Bryan and Winifred McMahon.** Bryan had had a colourful life, joining the army at the age of fourteen from his home in Limerick, Ireland, and serving in the Napoleonic wars as well as the American Wars. In 1815 he was found guilty of desertion and transported from Canada to NSW. But he served his time, married twice, and eventually settled and built Berrima's first inn. He and Winifred had four children. The oldest stayed in Berrima and at the advanced age of 35 was summoned for furiously riding around Berrima - presumably on a horse - in 1869.

**John and Charlotte Jenkins.** One of the more successful of Berrima's convicts was John Jenkins. He arrived in the colony in 1821 having been found guilty of 'feloniously and burglariously' stealing four beds, 17 blankets, six counterpanes, eight pillows, four bolsters, one pair of snuffers and a pin cushion, all valued at 43 pounds two shillings and sixpence.

He was fortunate in being assigned to John Atkinson of Oldbury, Sutton Forest, as Atkinson helped him to petition for his wife and family to join him and then to get John's assignment transferred to his wife Charlotte. Arriving as a free person, she was granted 60 acres of land in Sutton Forest and by 1828 they had five acres under cultivation and owned 30 head of cattle. In 1832 John extended his family holdings south into the Murrumbidgee area sending his sons, aged only 12 and 15, to run a station there. Why did he have to send his sons? John only had his Ticket-of-Leave at this time and was therefore forbidden to leave the Berrima District.

In 1834 John was employed to build one of the first houses in Berrima, the stone building at the western end of the Market Place now known as Berrima House. John and Charlotte were finally able to purchase this property in 1842 with their descendants living there for many years.

**Joseph and Rebecca Levy.** Another highly successful ex-convict was Joseph Levy, owner of the Victoria Inn. Levy became a leading figure in the community with businesses in Berrima and Sydney. It was he who established the brewery in Berrima in 1838.

Each year on the Queen's Birthday he hosted a party for local Aborigines, the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 1847 recording the colourful event which featured the emu dance and fireworks.

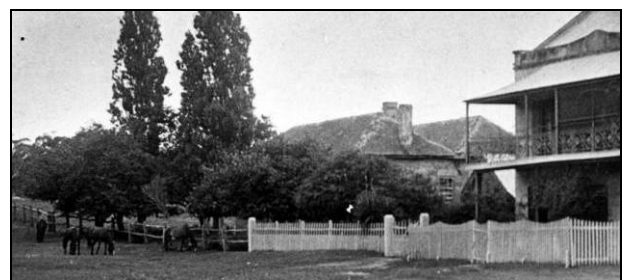
**James Jerome and Mary Higgins.** There were successful free settlers, too. James Jerome Higgins had bought land in various parts of the Colony, operated a store in Sutton Forest and finally settled in Berrima, building the lovely stone cottage we now know as the Magistrate's House in 1834. John was a merchant and auctioneer and, for many years, the village Postmaster. His standing in the township is confirmed by him being one of three persons holding land in trust for the building of the Anglican Church: his fellow trustees being the local landed worthies Henry Molesworth Oxley and William Cordeaux. In 1841 John and Mary had five children but were ultimately to have seven more.

**The Bureaucracy.** Among the bureaucracy were many well-travelled ex-military men. **George Meares Countess Bowen**, Chief Magistrate, lent his name to two streets south of the river. **Francis Walsh Small**, the Clerk of Petty Sessions, was originally an Irish merchant who, after being shipwrecked, enlisted in the American army before returning to Ireland and enlisting in the British army. He was one of only three men in the village over 60 years old; **Henry Forster**, gaoler, had left the local militia only a year before and was another man who would work well beyond his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. Outside the bureaucracy, merchants and inn-keepers predominated. But there were also wheelwrights, blacksmiths, and bakers.

Anyone who can add to the research is requested to do so. Contact Chris: [infor@harpersmansion.com.au](mailto:infor@harpersmansion.com.au)



**BERRIMA INN:** Opened by Bryan McMahon in 1836, it was the town's first inn, facing onto the Market Place.



**STONE COTTAGE:** Built by James Higgins in 1834, it later became the Magistrate's House. On right is the Mail Coach Inn, built in 1839 (later White Horse Inn).

- compiled by C Thompson and P Morton



## From the early newspapers

by Carol Nolan

### Mittagong Express

6 January, 1899:

At the Mittagong police court on Tuesday, renewal of licenses were granted to ten Assyrian hawkers.

The vigil eye of the Inspector of Nuisances is sadly lacking at Mittagong. Vehicles are allowed to be driven without lights, and cattle and horses stray at random on the streets of a night. No doubt there are some people who will not thank us for making a note of this, but then public interests must be protected

17 February, 1899: **The Federal Capital**

A public meeting was held at the Grand Hotel, Bowral on Monday last, convened by the Mayor of Moss Vale (Ald. E Goodridge) and at which the mayors of Bowral and Mittagong were invited to attend. The object was to consider the best means of advancing the claim of the district as the site for the Federal city.

Ald. Goodridge occupied the chair and explained that with the wishes of an impromptu meeting held at Moss Vale by representative people, he had taken these steps and, as it was for the benefit of all concerned, he was only too glad to accede to the request. He was confident that the representation of the other municipalities, by their prompt attendance that day, were in accord with the movement.

It was resolved, on the mention of mayor Murray (Bowral) and Acting Mayor White (Mittagong) that a public meeting of the residents of the Police District of Berrima be called at the School of Arts, Bowral on Wednesday March 1 at 3:30pm with due notice to be given in the local press and by circulars of such meeting. The member for the electorate (Mr W McCourt) will be invited to attend the meeting.

### Bowral Water Supply

Last week Bowral was visited by Mr Wade OE, who came to further test the capacity of the water flow at Mansfield's Creek. Mr Wade estimates that there is an overflow at the present time of 30,000 gallons per day, and it must be remembered that just now the springs are giving out less water than they have for the past 30 years.

A reservoir to hold 10,000 gallons, according to Mr Wade's estimate, could be built for 1,000 pounds, and with the constant inflow is considered to be sufficient to supply Bowral for the next 30 years. The question of the resumption of four acres of land, together with certain riparian rights, are now under consideration. In the meantime the continued drought has caused the supply of water to be extremely short in many instances even for domestic purposes, and Mr A P

Duprez has generously offered to supply ratepayers with water from his well, the council erecting the necessary pump, besides cleaning out the well and boring some six feet deeper

24 February 1899: **Fire at Mittagong**

Workshop and stables in flames: An unusual stir and good deal of excitement was caused in Mittagong on Tuesday night by a fire, which was located at the rear and a short distance from the residence of Mr J W Loseby. A fair-sized building which had acted the purpose of a stable and workshop, was burnt to the ground. One of the first to notice the fire was Mr T Allan and he immediately gave the alarm. It was also noticed from various points of the town, and as the cry of "fire!" was echoed and re-echoed along the principal streets, there was a general stampede of residents and in a short time a large crowd had congregated on the scene, notwithstanding that the hour was close upon ten o'clock.

A first sight the fire had the appearance of being confined to the scrub which is in the vicinity of the residence named, but on closer inspection it could be seen to be of a more serious nature.

When our representative arrived on the scene, shortly after the alarm was given, the building was nothing but a mass of flames, which leaped high into the air and licked and spread along the paling fencing. The residence of Mr Loseby, a fine, comfortable looking cottage, was in danger, owing to the fencing leading from the burning building to it catching alight, while the outhouses were close, and inflammable material was lying about. The workshop and stable was built of slabs and galvanised iron sheeting with a roof of galvanised iron, and considering the recent dry weather it burnt like a match box.

The danger which threatened the residence some 20 yards away was averted by the prompt action being taken by townspeople, including some of the leading residents, which is worthy of special comment. The grounds had the appearance of a working beehive on account of the number of willing hands engaged, who 'buckled in' like [word obscured], cutting down and reefing up the fencing, and removing everything that was likely to be a harvest to the flames. In a very short time the residence was pronounced 'out of danger', and the workers who were all, to use an expressive term, fairly 'pumped out', contented themselves with watching the fire burn away, keeping a careful look out that it did not make a fresh start.

5 May 1899: **Moss Vale-Sydney Telephone**

At the meeting of the Moss Vale Council on Monday night, a letter was read from the deputy Postmaster-General, stating that the matter of the connection of Moss Vale and Sydney by telephone was under consideration, and that a further communication would be sent when a decision was arrived at.

## DIARY DATES

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
THURSDAY	11	SEP	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	25	SEP	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*