







BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY Inc.

Founded 1960

Located in the Wingecarribee Shire, Southern Highlands of NSW

NEWSLETTER

No 486 August 2016

Guest columnist: Warren Musgrave, Archives volunteer

In the absence overseas of President Bruce, I have been invited to fill the resulting empty space in our monthly newsletter. As a recent volunteer to the Society, I found this invitation startling, but gratifying.

Startling, because I had only recently been accepted as a volunteer and felt very much a new boy on the block, with little to contribute because he was still not certain WHAT WAS GOING ON!

Gratifying, because of the sense of acceptance it provided. This positive response is, however, somewhat dampened by my presently limited overview of Society achievements and activities. This limitation is less in regard to the Archive section of the Society, but greater when it comes to the Museum, a significant void! And my even more limited contact with the wider membership. That being said, the recent monthly meeting at the Museum, and the later contact with members, and others, at the Open Day helped reduce this limitation. The museum is clearly an incredible achievement of the Society. But, for the moment, please tolerate my focus on the Archives.



Bruce Moore, President

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GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

AUGUST MEETING: Thursday 25 August at 2:00pm

VENUE: Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers

Building, Bowral Road, Mittagong

GUEST SPEAKER: David Baxter

David will give a presentation on Moss Vale.

AFTERNOON TEA: To be served following the speaker. Members please

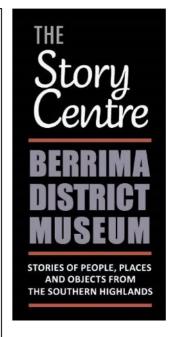
bring a plate or a donation.

SEPTEMBER MEETING: Thursday 22 September at 2:00pm

VENUE: Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers

Building, Bowral Road, Mittagong

GUEST SPEAKER: To be announced



Guest columnist continued

On my first day as a volunteer, Linda Emery took me on a tour of the establishment, which I thought magnificent in terms of the space available, and of the wooden panelling in the main room. My past experience of regional historical societies, while not great, had led me to expect a cramped space, full of clutter and with evidence of use by other, and competing, possibly local community bodies. I am neither an archivist nor an historian, but I can say with confidence that, since becoming a volunteer, I find I have joined a team which works with dedication and enthusiasm to pursue the objectives of the Society. They have made me welcome and encourage me in what I am doing.

My task is to sort through the 3,500 biography files and prepare said files for digital scanning. The archives team are very helpful with the problems I encounter and overall are a delight to work with. I have enjoyed an almost immediate involvement in their sense of community, collegiality and professionalism.

My reading of the biography documents has allowed me to learn a considerable amount about the early settlement of the Southern Highlands.

Those familiar with these files will appreciate that they are held in a substantial number of four-draw filing cabinets. It has already taken me about five months to do my bit with the contents of only one drawer of files. At this rate it will take me the best part of a year to prepare the contents of a cabinet.

But what is the cause of this inefficiency? The answer is simple: my snail-like progress is due to me actually reading the files, to the extent that I wanted to. And that extent is substantial. The result is that, while I am happy to have learnt something about the history of the Southern Highlands, I am sorry I delayed progress in scanning the biographic files.

This may all sound rather tedious, but I do not find the wrestling with

paper clips, staples and attending to the cries for help from colleagues, boring. Though I do occasionally confess, towards the end of a working day, to a sense of ennui and of eye strain.

A further reason for not being overcome by tedium is the realisation that the majority (or perhaps all) of my colleagues spend significant time on similar activity; be it electoral rolls, births deaths and marriages, cemetery transcriptions, rate books etc.

I am coming to realise that, from these activities arises inspiration for further research and, ultimately, to write about what these records reveal.

This helps me appreciate the oftenheard exclamation around here "I love history!"

From the Secretary: an overview of Warren Musgrave's career and academic qualifications

Warren was born in Wollongong in 1935. After attending Wollongong High School, he enrolled in the Agricultural Science degree program at Sydney University in 1952.

He was awarded a Bachelor of Science (Agriculture) Degree, majoring in Agricultural Economics and Soil Science, in 1956. This was followed by a Masters Degree in 1959. He was awarded a PhD by the University of New England (UNE) in 1969.

Warren was Professor of Agricultural Economics at UNE from 1971 to 1995. He was also Dean of the Faculty of Economics, Business and Law, of that University from 1990 to 1995.

From 1995 to 2000 he was Special Adviser to the NSW Premier's Department on natural resources. Since 2000, he has been a consulting economist. Since 2011 he has been in virtual fulltime retirement.

Warren is an Emeritus Professor of UNE and is an Honorary Doctor of Economics from that institution. He is a Distinguished Fellow of the Australian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society, of which he has been President and Editor of its Journal.

Archives opening hours

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

Berrima District Museum

THE STORY CENTRE

Please note that the museum is now open at least 5 days a week

MUSEUM OPEN: 10am to 4pm WEDNESDAY TO SUNDAY

and every day during NSW school holidays and on public holidays.

Groups welcome at other times by arrangement. Please phone John on 4872 1660.

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

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.

Would you consider . . .

As we all know Australia Post has significantly increased their postal charges and, as we have a sizable membership, the cost for postage each month is quite substantial.

Therefore it would help immensely if you would agree to receive the newsletter by email.

We thank the numerous members who have already responded to this appeal. For those of you who prefer receiving the newsletter by post, we assure you the printed version will continue to be issued.

Bundanoon Oral History

An **Oral History Morning Tea** will be held on Wednesday 17 August at the Bundanoon Club, starting at 10:00. All are most welcome.

Our speaker at August meeting

At the Society's General Meeting on 25 August, our speaker will be David Baxter of Moss Vale.

For most of his life David has had an interest in local and family history. He has been visiting the Society's archives ever since the 1980s, but only became a member in 1997.

David has represented the Society at Anzac Day services in Moss Vale for the past several years. He is pictured here laying a sheaf of flowers at the mid-morning service in 2015.

David has had an interest in Moss Vale's history for many years - his



He has accumulated files on everything and anything to do with the town's history. His talk will consist of a collage of photographs of Moss Vale buildings and their heritage.

This will be followed by a 1957 documentary film of the Moss Vale area titled "This is our Town". It shows the opening of when Cinemascope came to the Theatre Royal on Monday 8 July 1957.

It also shows many local identities as well as Moss Vale greyhounds, rugby league, bowls, golf, schools, Throsby Park, Berrima scenes, cement works, hotel, gaol, court house and Fitzroy Falls.

If time permits, David will then recite a poem of his memories of Moss Vale.



The former McCleery home, Rosebank, on Valetta St, Moss Vale in the 1940s. Photo: D Baxter collection.

Tour to Hill Top in October

The Society is planning a day tour by bus to Hill Top and Balmoral Village on Sunday 23 October.

The itinerary is yet to be confirmed but should include a stop at Hill Top, a walk through part of the Big Hill railway cutting and a tour of old Balmoral village. We are letting members know well in advance so you can mark the day in your diary if you wish to join in. We plan to use a small bus, limited to about 30 people.

Located in the northern part of Wingecarribee Shire, the section of Wilson Drive from Colo Vale to Hill Top, along which we will travel, was the original line of the Great Southern Railway, built in 1867. The section was replaced in 1897 by a deviation which provided a better grade for south-bound trains. It became a dirt vehicle track which was widened and sealed in 1994. In some parts, rock cuttings are still seen and there are culverts underneath. We will stop to view these.





After a morning tea stop at Hill Top, we will proceed to the Big Hill railway cutting. This can be viewed from the bridge above or, for those able, we will conduct a walk along the railway line through the cutting itself.

We will also visit the large sculpture near the cutting. This was erected in 1980, created by German-born Joseph Enfield as a tribute to the human endeavour of the men who in the 1860s excavated what was for many years Australia's deepest railway cutting.

Sculptor Joe Enfield retired to Balmoral in the 1970s. He has an interesting life story which Linda Emery is currently researching and will provide on the day.

At Balmoral Village we will explore the locality of the original village around the railway station. We have been invited to visit the third Balmoral school, a brick building opened in 1893. The current owners have retained the original building, with additions to make it a family home. We hope also to be invited to visit one of Balmoral's most treasured early estate residences which also operated as a popular boarding house.

More information will be provided in next newsletter.

Archives report

Linda Emery, Archivist

I returned in early July from an eight week leave of absence to find the archives humming as usual. In the last newsletter, Philip listed all the activities that are going on and it is indeed an impressive list.

Our first activity was the Open Day at the archives on 16 July which was a great success. We had some good publicity in the paper and on radio which helped bring in people. We also had a sale of pre-loved books and our own publications which raised about \$200. We had a lot of visitors come in, several new members signed up and we were able to help a number of people with their family and local history enquiries. Thanks to all our archives volunteers who came to help. It was a very pleasant and jolly day and something I think that we should do every year.

At our last General Meeting some women's clothing were exhibited. These had been recently brought in to the archives by a local person whose great-grand mother had worn the beautiful dresses and capes.

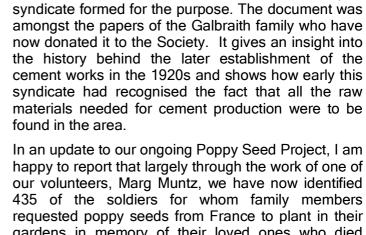
We are now working on the history of the garments before passing them on to the museum.

They most likely date from around mid-1890s to 1900, very Gibson Girl in style.

Thanks to

Roberta Stove, our conservation volunteer, for putting them on display.





Another interesting document came into the archives

just last week. It is a report dated 1913 on a proposal to establish a cement mill near Moss Vale by a

happy to report that largely through the work of one of our volunteers, Marg Muntz, we have now identified 435 of the soldiers for whom family members requested poppy seeds from France to plant in their gardens in memory of their loved ones who died during the First World War. We have a total of 1079 names on our database so are edging towards the halfway mark, many more than we might have expected to find. The current list of soldiers is on our website on the 'Poppy Seed from France' tab: www.berrimadistricthistoricalsociety.org.au/poppy-seed-from-france/

If you haven't already done so, have a read about this interesting and moving story.

Feedback from a member

I am 92 years old, and was born in Argyle St, Moss Vale, next door to the telephone building at the corner of Hawkins St. which was not there then.

I read in a recent issue of our magazine that someone was compiling the history of the streets of Moss Vale. So, from memory:

- I first lived in Lackey Rd at the corner with Parkes Rd. In 1929 we moved out so a railway turntable could be built. hence the "kink" in the road.
- We moved to the corner of Elizabeth St and Moss's Lane, which had a gate at the Elizabeth St end which was closed and locked on Christmas days to prevent it being a public road and so taken from Moss' ownership.
- After a few months, still 1929, we moved to 26 Kirkham St, but about 1951 we were moved out to make room for the swimming pool, but only paid the price nominated about 4 years earlier, a period of high inflation. At that time from Argyle St to Elizabeth St, was White St, there was no Mack St, and Chapman St was a fenced bush.
- My brother Frank, at 27A Kirkham St, may be able to help you.

Sincerely, George Waters

Thanks for the useful information George. It will be followed up by our street names researchers.

McCleery & Sons, Moss Vale

Part 2: From 1911 to 1920 and the end of an era

The McCleery family's second son Frederick, credited with inventing the McCleery Patent Harness, left Moss Vale for Sydney around 1911. Whether this was for personal or career reasons is unknown but he never patented further inventions. He died in 1942 and his occupation was listed as vehicle bodybuilder.

Edgar Percy Everard (known as Everard), born in 1893, was the youngest of the McCleery sons. He joined the family business in 1912. This was after he passed the qualifying exams in 1910 at Moss Vale post office and was posted to Araluen as a Postal Assistant, where he stayed just a short while.

The 1912 NSW Register of Firms listed John and Everard McCleery as carrying on the business along with William Thomson and A C Howard. The William listed would most likely be the boys' uncle. William and his brother Robert had for many years operated the Nowra-Moss Vale mail run, initially with pack horses, then with coaches. Both eventually settled in Moss Vale. Whether William was directly involved in running the McCleery business or just helped his nephews is not known.

The fourth person mentioned in the 1912 Register was Arthur Clifford Howard. Known as Cliff, he was born in 1893 at Crookwell, NSW. At age 3, following the death of his mother, he was taken to Moss Vale to live with aunts. He commenced an apprenticeship at McCleery's works around 1910, while doing an engineering course by correspondence.

When on holiday back at his father's farm, the idea for a power tillage machine dawned on Cliff. After various experiments at the farm, he teamed up with young Everard at the McCleery works. Together they tinkered with the rotary hoe cultivator. Later perfected by Howard, it revolutionised ploughing globally.

In 1912, then, it was the third son, John Edward, who was running the McCleery family business assisted by an uncle and two youngsters, Everard and Cliff. An enterprising man, John purchased additional blocks of land for housing on Valetta St beyond Rosebank, their two-storey family home.

By this time his three younger sisters were reaching marriageable age. Their mother Euphemia, widow of James McCleery senior, along with her family now ranked among the district's prosperous and 'social'. The wedding of Eva was described in the *Scrutineer* of 30 August 1913: "The Presbyterian Church, Moss Vale, was the scene of a very pretty wedding when, in the presence of a large number of friends, Eva Amelia Blanche, third daughter of the late James McCleery, and Mrs McCleery of Rosebank, Moss Vale, was united in the holy bonds of matrimony to Frederick, youngest son of Mr and Mrs McLelland, of Alexandria.

An adjournment was made at the conclusion of the ceremony to Rosebank, where an excellent repast was partaken of."

Regarding the business, the *Scrutineer* reported in October 1914 that McCleery & Sons were expanding into sawmilling, having acquired



1600 acres of timber land in the Tugalong district, about 22 miles from Moss Vale by a good road. "The land is well timbered with the most valuable local hardwoods and will be very easily worked in the matter of getting the timber to the mill, which is to be erected on the property fronting the Tugalong Road."

As transport was key to this venture's success, the ever inventive McCleery's developed and patented iron tyres for motor lorries, designed with springs to reduce jarring. The *Scrutineer*'s article continued that "compared with using bullock teams, this method of haulage significantly reduced cost. It would not, however, mean knocking out the 'bullocky', as there would still be plenty of work for him getting the logs to the mill".

In December 1914, a Prospectus was issued under the Companies' Act for the launch of a new company, to be known as McCleery's Limited. It offered 13,000 shares for purchase at one pound each.

This company was formed to acquire the McCleery & Sons coachbuilding business, lease, and the option of 1600 acres freehold of timber lands; and in addition to undertake numerous allied industries - sawmilling, engineering, agricultural machinery manufactures, wood-bending, machine-made houses, joinery works, brickmaking, electroplating, iron and metal foundry, and railway rolling stock.

John E McCleery was Managing Director; Provisional Directors were Dr Stevenson and Thomas Sherwin; and E P E McCleery was the Secretary.

The Prospectus stated that, besides locally, the firm was competing successfully in Sydney and in country NSW, as well as in SA and Queensland. A large order for tool carts for the military had just been executed to the satisfaction of the Federal Government. It was also pointed out that the factory was advantageously situated close to the town, fronting the main road and adjoining the railway yard, so that a railway siding could be carried right into the factory. Gaining the support it required from local people, the Company was successfully inaugurated.

In May 1915 the *Scrutineer* described an interesting demonstration of sulky building at McCleery's Ltd. This resulted from an offer by John McCleery to build a sulky from the raw material (wheels, axle and springs excepted) 'while you wait,' and then present it to the Moss Vale War Fund. "At a quarter to three

sharp the mayor (Ald E Moon) rang the workshop bell, and instantly men and machinery sprang into activity. Everyone worked with a will, yet there was no appearance of bustle or confusion, every man and boy seemed to know exactly what to do, and better still how to do it."

"In a short time wood and iron began to take some shape, men bending to their work as though they were making munitions for comrades at the front. Here and there throughout the works could be seen the various parts taking form and finish, until at last it was wheeled into the yard, a horse in the shafts, and the mayor and Mr McCleery sitting in it ready for a drive, exactly one hour and forty minutes after the raw material had been tackled - surely a record in sulky building, at least in this part of the world!"

The *Scrutineer* also remarked that the works were well worth a visit to see the military tool carts. "This is the second contract this firm has secured from the Commonwealth and, as the work has to be carried out under the most exacting specifications, it must be gratifying to the firm to know their work has always successfully passed the minutest examinations by the military authorities."



The McCleerys were the only coachbuilders in the Commonwealth authorised to supply the tool carts to the war campaign. A total of 160 carts were built at the factory to a pattern from England. An interesting feature was that every part was interchangeable with any similar vehicles in use in the Imperial Army. The McCleerys installed at least 35 separate machines to carry out the work. With more than 15 men employed, the McCleery firm was doing its bit both for the war effort and the local economy.

Nine McCleery staff members enlisted for war

The first statutory meeting of McCleery's Ltd was held in the School of Arts, Moss Vale, on 6 September 1915. The *Scrutineer* provided a report, stating that "the firm needs to be congratulated on the fine representative body of shareholders that were present, which speaks volumes for the confidence that the leading citizens have in the company. A large contract for military vehicles had been entered upon and completed to the satisfaction of the military authorities, 60 of which had now been completed by the firm. Most of these vehicles are reported as having gone to the front, and some of which it is

believed have been used in the first engagement with the Turks on the Suez Canal. The firm in busily engaged in making a large number of stretchers for carrying the wounded on the battlefield."

It was also reported that the firm had the sawmill proposition well in hand and a start had been made with the engineering and motor repairs businesses. Several motor cars had been in for repairs and repainting, to the complete satisfaction of customers. A start had been made in house building and also a rabbit freezing and ice works structure was being built by the firm.

By this time two daughters of widow Euphemia had already married. Another daughter, Ethel Florence, married Joseph Shaefer in October 1915 and from 1918 they lived in Valetta St.

Euphemia must have felt great sadness when her youngest son Everard enlisted in August 1916. She had already lost her husband and four of their 12 children.

He was the eighth staff member of McCleery's to enlist. As an engineer, he was taken in to the Australian Flying Corps after enlistment and left Australia for training



in England in early 1917. He qualified as a pilot in October 1917 and was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant. After further training in aerial fighting he was sent to France in July 1918 as a member of No 4 Squadron of the Australian Flying Corps, serving under Flight Commander Edgar McCloughry, an air ace who had shot down at least nineteen enemy planes.

Everard was killed during a bombing raid on the Somme aerodrome near Lille on 17 August 1918.

Captain McCloughry had a high opinion of him and wrote to Euphemia afterwards that Everard had been flying only about 100 feet from the ground, attacking a machine gun post when he was hit by the guns. His plane rolled and crashed behind enemy lines. McCloughry wrote of Everard that "he was always so bright and cheery and really was doing most awfully well. I had expected great things from him".

His loss was a personal tragedy for the family and deprived the district of a smart business innovator who had just begun to show his potential.

As mentioned earlier, one of Everard's work-mates at the McCleery factory had been Cliff Howard who had commenced there as an apprentice around 1910.

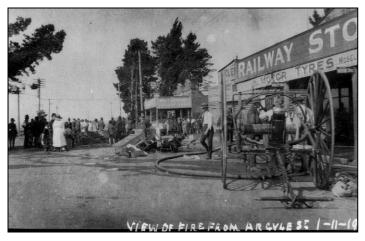
The two of them tinkered with the powered rotary hoe cultivator that had been Cliff's inspiration.

Cliff, who was ineligible for active war duty, decided in 1917 to contribute by assisting at munition works in England. He was the ninth to enlist from McCleery's Ltd. The manager, John McCleery, expressed regret "at having to part with him as assistant manager even for a short time, having had a happy, unbroken association for over seven years, but felt that on occasions like the present no sacrifice was too great."

When Howard returned after war ended, it was to find the McCleery factory had been damaged by fire.

McCleery factory damaged by fire in 1919, then revived by Cliff Howard

An account of the fire was provided in the Scrutineer of 5 November 1919: "On arrival at the conflagration it was found that the factory of McCleery's Ltd had a good start, and the immediate attention of the fire brigade, who turned out smartly in full force, and whose efforts were greatly strengthened by large numbers of the general public, was directed in trying to save the nearby general store of Messrs Browne, Smith and Co, and the residence attached at the rear. In this they were wholly successful, although the water pressure could have been better."



"Water was also played upon where the fire appeared to have originated, but the hold it had on the building, an old structure which burned like matchwood, was too great, and tons of water poured on the roaring furnace at first failed to check its spread.

Every length of hose in the possession of the brigade was brought into use. A garden hose was also used to prevent the fire lighting some old vehicles in the yard, the fencing and a number of pine trees, which separated the McCleery's two-storied residence, 'Rosebank', from the workshops, which was in grave danger had the trees ignited. Fortunately wind carried the flames towards vacant allotments, otherwise more serious results would have happened." The losses were estimated at close upon 2000 pounds. Much of McCleery's valuable machinery had been twisted and mis-shaped, but it was hoped that a good quantity of it and the tools could still be fit for use.

By the end of 1920, Cliff Howard had the McCleery engineering works up and running again. In mid-1921 he took the works over after forming a syndicate to

finance production of his powered rotary hoe which he had been perfecting since 1912.



With his brother Albert he built a steam-powered hoe that ploughed an unprecedented 3.5 acres per hour. In 1927 he expanded to include tractor driven hoes, and established a production plant at Northmead.

Based in England from 1938, Cliff Howard continued to design new models. By revolutionising ploughing, he provided enormous economic benefit to the world.

* * *

Rosebank, located behind the McCleery factory, continued to be the home of widow Euphemia McCleery and her extended family.

Euphemia died there in July 1928, aged 83 years. The *Scrutineer* described her as "an old identity of the district, always highly respected and held in high esteem by a wide circle of friends. She came to this district over half a century ago with her husband".

She was buried alongside him and several deceased children in the Presbyterian portion of Bong Bong cemetery.

Her son John Edward, who had been in charge of the McCleery coach-building business from the early 1900s to 1920, continued running the saw-milling operation until his death at age 65 in 1942. Due apparently to a fatal seizure, he fell from a tree-fork near Fitzroy Falls while setting up a flying-fox.

The *Scrutineer* provided an appreciation of his life: "He stood out prominently as a clever mechanic, coachbuilder, and in fact anything he undertook to do. As a young man he had one of the most up-to-date factories outside the city, and during the days of horse-drawn vehicles was a most successful exhibitor at the Royal Show, Sydney, securing first prizes and gold medals for his exhibits. During WWI he and his staff arranged a sulky building exhibition in his factory, then generously donated it to war funds."

John Edward's death also marked the end of the highly successful business started in 1883 by James McCleery, his blacksmith father.

This series compiled by Philip Morton with the research assistance of Marg Muntz and David Baxter

Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc

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

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OPEN: 10.00am to 4.00pm, Wednesdays to Sundays, and during school and public holidays. **Museum Committee:** John Schweers (Manager, Tour Bookings), Harlan Hall (Project Manager), Lyn Hall (Graphics, Exhibitions), Sylvia Carless (Roster), Chris Moore (Artist, Children's programs), Judith Green (Procedures), Michele Woods (Exhibition content), Harold Wall (Human Resources).

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 \$25.00 - Family \$35.00.

AFFILIATIONS: Royal Australian Historical Society, NSW Association of Family History Societies,

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