



BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY Inc.

Founded 1960

Located in the Wingecarribee Shire,
Southern Highlands of NSW

NEWSLETTER

No 497 August 2017

From the President's Desk

The attentive crowd really appreciated the talk given to us by Joy Murrin, a family history agent, who gave us lots of hints relating to accessing the NSW BDM index on July 27th. She gave examples finding simple names like Ann that can be and has been misspelt eg. Anne, Anna, Annette, Annie, Annabelle.

If that's bad enough then imagine what a nightmare one like Wilhelmina Schicklgruber would be. I can only envisage what Aussies would call her.

Why do we Aussies love nicknames? Sometimes it suits the situation plus it's our kinky sense of humour. Remember the old school book titles: *The Tom Cat's Revenge* by Claudia Faceoff, *Who Killed Cock Robin* by Howard I. Know, *Songs from 'South Pacific'* by Sam and Janet Evening?

Years ago, I worked with a very quiet lass called Megan. We called her Megan Mild. Another assistant arrived called Barbara Dwyer. An aggressive girl, so she got Barb Dwyer.



**Bruce Moore,
President**

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GENERAL MONTHLY MEETINGS

- AUGUST MEETING:** Thursday 24 August at 2:00pm
- VENUE:** Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers Building, Bowral Road, Mittagong
- GUEST SPEAKER:** Tina Allen, medical author living near Berrima, will speak about her biography of Professor Bill Gibson, bionic ear surgeon
- AFTERNOON TEA:** To be served following the speaker. Members please bring a plate or a donation.

- SEPTEMBER MEETING:** Thursday 28 September at 2:00pm
- VENUE:** Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers Building, Bowral Road, Mittagong
- GUEST SPEAKER:** David Blair of the Australian National Placenames Survey Project



President's Report

Continued from front page

After work I would enjoy a little exercise with either Dennis Whackett or Jim Boot. When a couple of mates who were always delayed, Lleyton Nough and Justin Thyme turned up, we could all have a game. If there were enough of us we would ask Lois Price for a discount. Neither Lois or Emma Chiset were there.

'That's Lars Thyme' I said to a policewoman friend of mine, Laura Norder.

She directed me to my favourite hairstylist, Madame Doomiere who has been working for Hedda Haire for years. 'I detect a French accent' I said to her inquiringly, 'did you work for Max Headroom in Paris?'

'No, Francis Crowded' she replied, 'afterwards I worked in Spain for a Barbara Seville'.

A plumber friend of mine, Rufus Leakin introduced me to a lovely girl with bad breath. Her name was Ginger Vitus who had just broken up with a rotter named Phil Anders.

I did have an awkward time with girls, leaving school as a qualified social misfit. I was taking out a Lorraine France, a close friend of Lucinda Head, who was quite a flibbertigibbet, really.

Not long afterwards Claire-Lee Innerscent came on the scene.

Smitten with both girls I had to make up my mind quickly, Lorraine or Claire-Lee?

Lorraine loved the beach and water, so we went surfing quite often. One day we were both caught in a rip and I was lucky enough to be rescued by a lifeguard called Cliff Hanger.

Poor Lorraine was swept out to sea, never to be seen again.

Afterwards I told Lucinda, 'I can see Claire-Lee now; Lorraine has gone!'

(with apologies to Johnny Nash.)

Vale member John McColgan

The Society extends its sympathy to the family of John Ronald McColgan who passed away on 15 July 2017 at Port Macquarie, aged 88 years.

John joined our Society in 1990, becoming member No. 100. He had a passionate interest in the history of the local area, being a fourth generation resident of the district. James McColgan and Catherine Gannon were his ancestors. They lived at Bong Bong in the 1840s and were married in Berrima in 1850.

John, born around 1930 in Bowral, described himself as "a child of the district" in that he spent his first five years in Moss Vale and then his family moved to Mittagong, where he attended St Michael's School. He said in a press interview that growing up and working locally enabled him to meet people and learn much about the community.

He worked for a time with the Forestry Commission, was a Mittagong petrol agent for Golden Fleece and had a welding business in Lyell St. From the 1950s John and his wife Astra lived in Leopold St where they raised five children. He was a member of the Mittagong Town Band, Jaycees and Lions Club.



John is remembered by family and friends for his interesting and often quirky stories of earlier days. For 20 years his hobby was to collect historical information. This became an obsession when he learnt to use a computer. The result was two books, *The Southern Highlands Story* (1995) and *In Search of the Southern Highlands* (1999) which he wrote and

published so that the area's history would not be lost.

In 1997 John and Astra moved to be with family members near Port Macquarie. He never lost his love for the Highlands, and kept in touch with locals. He continued to supply the Society with stocks of his two books for sale and corresponded with Max Rogers.

He also provided 16 local history articles to the Society, which were published in the *Southern Highland News* history column during 2010.

John never regarded himself as a great historian, but was pleased that people liked to read his books and appreciated his stories.

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. Ph John 4872 1660.

Archives opening hours

Monday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Tuesday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Saturday 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Research Fees

Research fees for non-members:

\$25.00 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.

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: bdhsarchives@gmail.com

Guest Speaker in August: Tina Allen

At our general meeting on Thursday 24 August, the guest speaker will be Tina Allen, a medical author who lives with her family on a farm near Berrima.

Tina worked as a medical scientist at several Sydney teaching hospitals for ten years before becoming a freelance medical writer and editor in 1996.

During the past twenty years she has written feature articles for GP magazines, such as *Australian Doctor*, reports for government on disability and about mental health for a division of Ramsay Health Care. While president of the Australasian Medical Writers Association from 2005 to 2009, she judged many media awards for excellence in medical journalism.

In March this year Tina published her first book, **Bill Gibson: Pioneering bionic ear surgeon.**

She was commissioned to write the biography by committee



members of the Cochlear Implant Club and Advisory Association (CICADA) who were looking for a medical writer with the requisite experience to tell Bill's story and to be able to explain in lay terms how a cochlear implant works.

Bill Gibson became a professor at the University of Sydney after emigrating from England in 1983. Tina describes the book as conveying his dedication and sense of humour, and his love of dressing up, traits not normally associated with a medical specialist. It also recounts the difficulties he faced. He received harsh criticism from the Deaf community and from his own colleagues for performing the operation on children, particularly those born deaf.

Between 1984 and 2014, he performed the bionic ear operation more than 2000 times, making him one of the most prolific surgeons in his field. Hear about Bill's childhood adventures in Devon with his identical twin brother, his search for a cure to Menière's disease and much more about his life as told by Tina.

Come along and be inspired by this story.

Family History Seminar for Members

On Wednesday 30 August we are holding a family history seminar led by Linda Emery at the Research Centre in Mittagong.

This will be an opportunity for both beginners and experienced family historians to add to their skills through presentations and collaboration with other researchers.

Among the topics we will cover will be:

- Resources held by BDHS
- Getting the best out of Ancestry and Find My Past
- Online resources
- Irish records
- Recording family history and family history programs
- Verifying research
- Crashing through 'brick walls'.

This will be an all-day seminar from 10am to 4 pm. We anticipate the morning sessions will be in the form of presentations with Q&A after each presentation. The afternoon sessions will be more hands on and 'problem-solving'.

Morning and afternoon tea will be provided at a cost of \$8 for the day (bottomless tea and coffee) but you will need to provide your own lunch.

Registration is essential as numbers will be limited so please make your booking at the archives as soon as possible. Telephone 02 4872 2169.

New books in the Library

Carolyn Dougherty

As many of our long-standing members will know, a great number of the books held in our Library were donated by the late Max Rogers during his many years with us, originally as Librarian then later as Research Officer.

Following his passing earlier this year we have been extremely grateful to receive from his family his extensive book collection to sort through, keep what would be relevant for inclusion in our library collection, the remainder to be sold.

On the next page is a selection of Max's books now catalogued and included in our collection along with a number of other new book acquisitions.

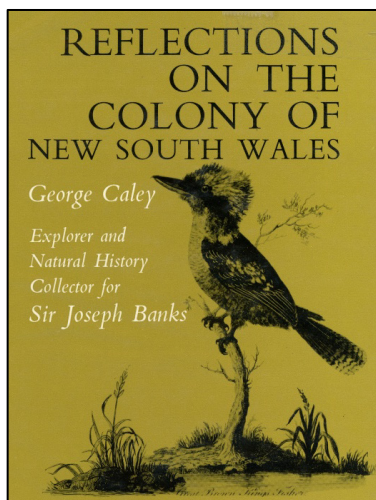
Max's collection in BDH&FHS Library

Convict Discipline 1833: A facsimile of the rare Colonial Circular No.-33-48 and other related documents. REF. 07/90

Convicts & Currencies: The Family of James Hanks by Anthony Laffan. Held in Library General Collection.

Convicts and Colonial Society 1788-1853. Edited by Lloyd Evans & Paul Nicholls. 1976. REF. 07/91.

Reflections on the Colony of NSW: George Caley. Edited by J.E.B. Currey. Published 1966. REF. 04/93



Burials in County of Argyle NSW 1856 – 1918. Compiled by The Goulburn District Family History Society Inc. REF. 10/76.

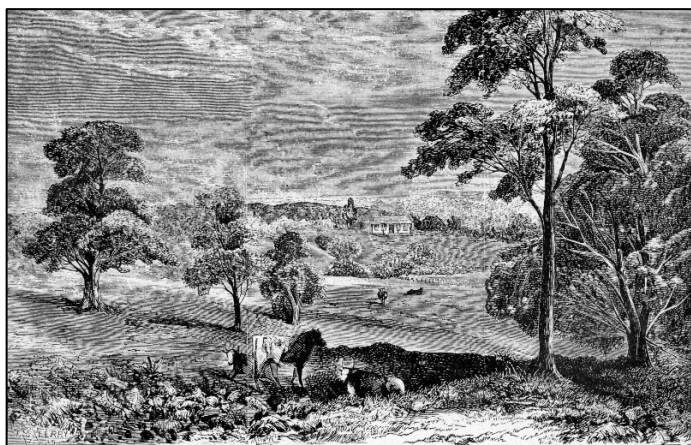
The Last Word: Two Centuries of Australian Epitaphs by Lionel Gilbert. Published 2005. REF. 10/77.

The Kangaroo March by Sherry Morris and Harold Fife. Published 2006. REF. 13/259.

A Goulburn and District Gazetteer: Over 1,000 names of places, past & present, and natural features in the County of Argyle, NSW and adjacent areas. Published by Goulburn & District Historical Society, 1990. REF. 14/73.

The Goulburn Liedertafel: The first 100 years. By John Spicer. Published 1991. REF. 14/74.

Some Southern Homes of New South Wales by G. Nesta Griffiths. Published 1952. 23/80.



Throsby Park when leased as the Governor's Country Residence, 1864.
Courtesy of the Mitchell Library.

Throsby Park 1864 from 'Some Southern Homes of NSW'

The Incomparable Captain Cadell by John Nicholson. 2004. 24/118.

The Remote Garrison: The British Army in Australia by Peter Stanley, 1986. REF. 03/10-16

Transported: In Place of Death. Convicts in Australia by Christopher Sweeney. Pub. 1981. REF. 07/89

Horsemen of the First Frontier (1788 – 1900). By Keith R. Binney. 20/181.

Paradise Purgatory Hell Hole: The story of the Saunders Sandstone Quarries Pymont by Robert Irving. By Robert Irving. Published 2006. 20/182.

H. M. Bark Endeavour by Ray Parkin. Published 2003. REF. 08/33.

Other new acquisitions

Caroline Simpson: A woman of very firm purpose. A Memoir by Louise Dobson. Published 2017. 24/116.

Family History for Beginners & Beyond. 15th Edition. Published by Heraldry & Genealogy Society of Canberra. Donated by Frank Mitchell. REF. 03/192.

A History of Joadja by Ralph Faulkner. REF. 13/260

Land Boomers by Michael Cannon. This edition published 1976. 20/180.

A Century of Central: Sydney's Central Railway Station 1906 to 2006. By Robert McKillop, Donald Ellsmore and John Oakes. Published by the Australian Railway Historical Society. 20/179.

Caves and Karst of Wombeyan. Sydney Speleological Society Occasional Paper No. 13. Editor Ross Ellis. Published by The Sydney Speleological Society Inc. Sydney, 2004. REF. 13/261.

Duelling Surgeon, Colonial Patriot. The remarkable life of William Bland. By Robert Lehane. Published 2011. 24/117.

Freshwater to Broughton Creek: A biography of Andrew Waddell & Victoria Reid. By Dorothy C. Waddell. Published 1995. REF. 01/111.

Land of a Thousand Sorrows: The Australian Prison Journal, 1840-1842, of the Exiled Canadian Patriote, Francois-Maurice Lepailleur. Translated and edited by F. Murray Greenwood. 1980. REF. 07/88.

Two Rivers: The Pioneering Life and Times of Sarah Bowen 1838-1928 by Ian Tonking. 2017. REF. 01/212.

The Natural Art of Louisa Atkinson by Elizabeth Lawson. 1995 Ed. REF. 13/175A.

The Clayfield Family: From Gloucestershire to the Colony of New South Wales. By Joan Howard and Diana Paul. REF. 01/213.

Museum display of Throsby items

Items of local historical significance held at Throsby Park House were donated to our Society last year by Sydney Living Museums (formerly known as Historic Houses Trust) for ongoing preservation.

Our museum now proudly displays a variety of these historic items in the Klein Room, including a woman's summer dress, an infant's nightdress and christening gown and a French porcelain doll. There are personal accoutrements such as ladies shoes and mittens, and a man's cigar box, pen knife and smoking pipe.

Also on show is a video screening images associated with Throsby Park's history. Definitely worth a visit!



Throsby Park House was built in 1834 overlooking the Wingecarribee River at Bong Bong, situated on 1500 acres granted to Dr Charles Throsby by Governor Macquarie in 1818. As many of our members know, the 27-room, Georgian colonial-style building was home to five generations of Throsbys until 1972 when the house, cottage, brick barn and remaining 75 acres were purchased by the NSW Government.

In 1975 it handed responsibility to the National Parks & Wildlife Service. Public Open Days were held each year. In 2010 the property was handed to Historic Houses Trust. After extensive renovations were completed, a private tenant was sought and the property is now under the stewardship of a Throsby descendant, who holds a 40-year lease.

When Throsby Park came into public ownership in the 1970s, local people donated appropriate period items of a personal nature, some of which had belonged to members of the Throsby family, and which dated back to the 19th century. These were displayed at the house along with other family heirlooms, and now form the basis of the display in the museum's Klein Room.

Display of 19th century medical items

An interesting, if somewhat gruesome, collection of medical equipment is also on display at the museum, sharing a display cabinet with the Throsby items.

A local retired medical practitioner, Dr John Roche, has recently donated a collection of 19th century medical equipment, once used at the Berrima District Cottage Hospital which opened in 1889 at Bowral. In 1968 its name was changed to Bowral and District Hospital. When Dr Roche practised there, the old equipment, no longer in use, was passed on to him.



On display is a hypodermic syringe in aluminum case containing two needles, a range of anaesthetics and glass phials of hypodermic tablets. Such syringes were and are still used to deliver medical treatments under the skin. The syringe and drugs were made by Parke, Davis and Company Inc. USA 1885-1910.

The display also features a surgical hammer, saw and knife used in orthopaedic operations. The hammer is quite heavy and appears well used. On display as well are folding lancets in a case, used for blood-letting, a medical treatment gradually phased out in the 1800s.

Another acquisition on display is a WWII gas mask along with its canvas bag and bag contents. As the eye pieces of the mask would fog up when it was worn, an anti-dimming compound was provided to be rubbed on the inside of the glass. The bag also contains a thick bandage pad to hold in place against a shell wound.



- details and photos provided by volunteers Lyn Hall, Gloria Williams and Michele Woods

Mittagong during the 1930s

Reminiscences by historian John McColgan, author of “Southern Highland Story” and “In Search of the Southern Highlands” who recently passed away.

The great depression of 1929 to 1932 meant that the early years of the 1930s were ones of financial hardship and unemployment, which, although improving slowly, lasted up to the outbreak of World War II in 1939. In spite of this, people lived, worked, socialised, and even made their own enjoyment.

There was little motorised traffic on the roads because only a small number of people owned motor vehicles. A few bicycles were used, but it was generally found that most people going out socially, shopping, or visiting, usually walked to their destination. On the credit side, there was more communication between people and concern for their neighbours. If someone was sick, a neighbour usually called in with some cooked food or helped with the housework. (I have often wondered why, as people become more mobile, they seem to become more insular and mean-spirited.)

During the warmer months it was common for families to sit on their front verandahs in the evening until dark, chatting together, or greeting people passing by. Children would play in the yard or in the street. It was a time when neighbours talked with each other by “over the fence” chats and even from front verandahs on opposite sides of the street. The local grapevine could tell them who was sick, engaged to be married, lost their job etc. Courting couples out walking together knew they had to “run the gauntlet” of public inspection and comment.

Around the general area of the town there were many relics from earlier endeavours by way of old buildings, deep shafts, tramway embankments and bridges etc., not to mention a small louvre-van used on the Joadja tramway, which stood, minus wheels in the back yard of the house on the Bessemer St corner.

Another item deserves mention was the number of square 4 gallon kerosene tins stamped with “Australian Kerosene Oil & Mineral Company” which were still in circulation and use around Mittagong during the 1930s. They were used in many ways. Some were refilled with bulk kerosene, others were cut open and used for picking blackberries, boiling dog’s meat in the back yard, washing clothes, storing liquids, making a bucket etc.

The majority of families had the evaporative water drip-safe or an ice-box to keep their food fresh, and the small number of people who owned an early refrigerator were regarded as being quite privileged or “posh.” An ice-man who delivered blocks of ice to homes was a familiar sight, (even up to the 1950s.) Bread and milk were usually delivered by horse and cart, and stock feed from the stores was delivered with a horse and dray.

The only police road patrol vehicle in Mittagong was a motor cycle and sidecar. The senior constable rode the motor cycle and the sergeant sat in the sidecar, but it was only used for transport on police business. There didn’t seem to be any speeding cars in those days. The majority of vehicles were four-cylinder cars of the late 1920s which were not built for speed. Neither were the roads made for it.



Contemporaries of young John McColgan in the 1930s crossing Oaklands bridge with a wheelbarrow.

The local police regularly “walked the beat around the town” several times a day talking with residents, so they had a good knowledge of who was doing what, or who was planning any mischief, which meant they often broke up trouble before it happened with a quiet warning. They were not averse, when dealing with defiant young blokes, to giving them a swift kick in the backside.

Because of the presence of the State Farm Homes for Boys at Mittagong, most young boys were deterred from mischief or minor crime by the threat of being “sent to the farm homes.” This implied threat was always in the background for disciplining children and helped many a young man on the way to become a law-abiding citizen.

In the days before television, entertainment was mainly provided by the picture show, (Saturday afternoon matinees and serials were children's favourites) dances, concerts, and community singing, where people packed the School of Arts Hall (now renamed the Memorial Hall) and a programme arranged by the compere and a pianist, interspersed short comedy acts and soloist singers, in between popular songs sung with gusto by all members of the audience. The words of the songs were projected on to a screen provided. People really enjoyed their night out and the hall was usually crowded.

Most homes had a radio of some sort, and the family gathered in the room to listen to the news and other programmes. For the children earlier in the evening was "The Search for the Golden Boomerang," "First-light Frazer" etc., and after the news were regular radio shows such as "Dad and Dave" "Martin's Corner" "Mrs Harris and Mrs Higgs" "Dr. Mack" "The Jack Davey Show" and Bob Dyer's "Pick a Box". When he first came to Australia from America, Bob Dyer did a half-hour show called "Bob Dyer. The last of the Hillbillies". Other comedy shows were recorded English and Australian comedy routines.

Even though the 1930s was a grey time of struggle and unemployment, there were other things to lift the spirit. People followed Don Bradman's achievements on the cricket field with pride (wasn't he a local resident from Bowral?). The mighty Phar Lap was earning his racing reputation in the heart of Australians, and already his name was becoming part of the language when applied to speed, winning, or any other demonstration of excellence.

In many homes there was an old piano of some sort, which at least one member of the family had learned to play reasonably well. Many a pleasant evening was spent with family and friends gathered around the piano either singing or listening. Afterwards, a cup of tea and some home-made scones followed by friendly chatter among those present completed a happy and inexpensive social gathering.

On the subject of inexpensive outings, children were very adept at organising their own entertainment. They knew their parents had little money to spare so going to a picture show meant collecting and selling bottles, bones, or scrap metal until you had the money.

During the hot weather, swimming at the pool was popular. There was the usual outdoor games of hopscotch, skipping, marbles, rounders, football, cricket, basketball etc.

But what child of the 1930s cannot remember taking a couple of sausages up the bush to cook over a twig fire and eating between bread and butter slices? Maybe it was only half cooked, but because you did it yourself, it was DELICIOUS. We also used the red ashes of a fire to cook a potato. While black on the outside, the cooked potato was peeled and eaten after cooking with great enthusiasm.

School holidays were eagerly looked forward to, because there were a thousand things to do. Cubby-houses or caves to build, secret pass-words to invent, and most importantly, being one of the gang involved. The many discussions among kids on the best way to build or improve on the billy-cart, being constructed, were an object lesson on how to get along with a group.

Every cowboy picture watched was played out again as each member of the group played a character, and who cares if the plot was changed around.

The year 1937 saw King Edward VIII ascend the English throne. To celebrate the event, a special five shilling coin was minted, and one was offered by Mittagong Council as a lucky prize during the celebrations at Mittagong Swimming Pool. It was won by my sister Roma McColgan (later Mrs C. Sinclair) who retains it to this day. It seems the five shilling coin was more durable than King Edward VIII, who abdicated the throne shortly after ascending to it, seemingly for the more important task of pursuing an American divorcee. Later they became the Duke and Duchess of Windsor.

The Great Bushfire of January 1939 destroyed most of the old trestle bridges from the Joadja and Box Vale tramways and many of the old buildings remaining.

The late 1930s also saw some local government activity in the kerbing and guttering of Bowral Road and of course during 1939 was the construction of a sewerage treatment works, and the excavation of tunnels and trenches for the sewer pipes all over Mittagong. This provided some much-needed jobs for many, and a steady improvement in the town and the standard-of-living for residents.

It is a pity that during this year, storm clouds of war were gathering in Europe and became a reality in September 1939, not only for Mittagong, but for all Australia.

One of life's puzzles is why there is no money to employ people during peace time, but there is plenty of money when war breaks out.

Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc

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email: bdhsarchives@gmail.com ☎ web: www.berrimadistricthistoricalsociety.org.au

- 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: bdmuseum@bigpond.com
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), 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,
Museums Australia Inc & Regional Chapter.

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Denyse Barker, Denise Mackey, Carolyn Dougherty and Jenny Frost