

BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY Inc.

Founded 1960

Located in the Wingecarribee Shire,
Southern Highlands of NSW

ABN 29 362 616 937

NEWSLETTER

No 515 April 2019



From the President's Desk

Our Society has trod a tenuous path to procure the renewal of our lease with the Wingecarribee Shire Council for our Archives at 114 Main Street, Mittagong.

The journey began in November 2018 when we first met with Council staff to discuss the proposed new lease. We were advised at the time that a 21 year lease would be offered but would need to be put on public exhibition until 30 January 2019. At Council's open meeting on 13 March 2019 our lease came up for approval with the recommendation that the 21 year lease be approved. There were nine submissions received objecting to our Society being granted a lease with two from us in support of the renewal.

An amendment was moved during the meeting to change the duration of the lease to 12 months and seek alternate premises during that period. The amendment was put to the meeting and was lost. The decision then reverted to the original 21 year lease recommendation which was passed unanimously.

At Council's meeting of 27 March a notice of rescission of motion was put to Council to overturn the decision

of the previous meeting and replace it with a 12 month lease. The rescission motion was put to the vote and was lost with the result being 6/3. The outcome was a reversion to the original 21 year lease as previously approved. An additional motion was moved and passed for Council officers to investigate the needs of both the Historical Society and the various theatre groups that use the building, confer with all groups and prepare a report on the options to meet the future needs of the organisations for the period 2020 - 2025

We now have a copy of the lease from Council for signature. Once it is signed and stamped it will give the Society the security of tenure that we need.

At our general meeting on 28 March our Archivist, Linda Emery presented number 12 in her series "Captured in the Light" where she selects photographs from our image library and tells the fascinating stories behind the photos. Early transport in our district was the theme of Linda's presentation. The talk was thoroughly entertaining and greatly appreciated by the captivated audience.

Ian Mackey

GENERAL MONTHLY MEETINGS

APRIL 2019:

Thursday 28 April at 2:00pm

SPEAKER:

No meeting due to it being ANZAC Day

MAY 2019:

Thursday 23 May at 2:00pm

SPEAKER:

Stephen Gard about his book "Once Upon a Hume, Vol II"

AFTERNOON TEA is served following the speaker.

Members please bring a plate or a donation.

NOTE: on the first Wednesday each month, at 1pm
the **Family History Interest Group** meets at the Mittagong Archives



Senior Vice-President's Column



Bruce Moore

We humans are very good at comparing ourselves and situations with the animal kingdom.

Here are a few examples:

What a cow of a week it's been, raining cats and dogs and I haven't seen that for donkey's years. Next week, I'm told will be brass-monkey climate. Talk about going the whole hog, the weatherman said.

Boy did I ruffle a few feathers wearing a rat's tail hairdo to work.

I've had a lion's share of fun in my life. Looking at my dog-eared photo album gave me a bird's-eye view of life. My father always emphasised, 'son, the world's your oyster!'

Today I was up at sparrow's fart then pussyfooted back to work by Shanks' Pony. Without making a mountain out of a molehill, my hairstyle wasn't a success; in fact I was called among other things, a 'great Galah.' However the party had already started, so not to miss out, I beetled along.

You should never look a gift horse in the mouth because the early bird will surely get the worm. The banquet was laid out before me and I thought I was the bees' knees pigging out before the crowd arrived. Some old chook was badgering me to leave some prawns for others to enjoy. What a bitch!

I went as quiet as a mouse and slowed down to a snail's pace helping myself to the food.

Eleanor, who's quite a bird, said she's been horsing about and didn't come within a bull's roar of work. She headed straight for the bar. Mind you she drinks like a fish and always has a whale of a time. Showing off her suntan and a few drinks later she became as red as a lobster.

Some rooster tried to pick her up but soon found out she's as cold as a frog.

Maybe I've let the cat out of the bag and should have left sleeping dogs lie.

As a tiger for punishment, with my tail between my legs, maybe I'll ask for a raise.

Maybe pigs might fly!

Berrima District Museum

THE STORY CENTRE

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: Museum 4877 1130

After hours 4862 1626

Managed and operated by members of our Society, who volunteer their time and expertise.

Research Fees

Research fees for non-members:

\$30.00 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

Upcoming Speakers and Events

Our general meetings are normally held monthly on the fourth Thursday. As that falls on Anzac Day this month, no meeting will be held.

Our Society will be represented by members at Anzac commemoration services being held in Mittagong, Berrima, Bowral and Moss Vale.

At our May meeting the speaker will be Stephen Gard, author and history writer of BlueDawe Books, Thirlmere, who gave us a most entertaining talk last year about his book, "Once Upon a Hume, the traveller's companion Vol 1". He has now published a second volume of this early Hume Highway history that traverses the Mittagong to Marulan segment and briefly enters the outskirts of Goulburn. Stephen's talk will bring the book vividly to life.

Galong Conference reminder

Whole Histories: Keeping the Stories Alive

The Yass & District Historical Society's annual conference is being held from 10 to 12 May at St Clement's Retreat & Conference Centre, Galong. It is a value-packed weekend with all talks, meals and accommodation modestly priced. Further details and booking form are available on its website.



Berrima District Museum's new digital exhibition in the Williams Gallery.
Well worth a visit! Photo courtesy Ashley Mackevicius

The mystery of 'A Man Killed Here'

Linda Emery

On the northern approach to Berrima, on the eastern side of the road, is a large rock with an intriguing inscription – A MAN KILLED HERE 1837.



The rock formed part of a cutting almost certainly made when convict road gangs were working on the New Line of Road to the south. The identity of the man killed remains a mystery, despite several theories being put forward over the years, none of which stand up to critical examination. But the more recent history of the stone is something that IS documented in the archives and, in itself, it is an interesting story, demonstrating the vital role our historical society has played in preserving the history and heritage of the Southern Highlands since its foundation in 1960.

In March 1961, when BDHS was less than a year old, one of our members, Deborah Winchcombe (later Foster) brought to the attention of the Society the fact that the stone and its inscription, which she had known all her life, was weathering badly and it was her hope that it could be re-cut. Member and well-known Town Clerk of Mittagong Shire Council, Claude Lee, agreed to take on the task and in early June he spent an afternoon with a hammer and chisel touching up the lettering etched in the crumbly sandstone. Claude thought his job "should last another hundred years".

Claude was also known as quite a poet and as he sat chiselling in the rain, his thoughts naturally drifted to 'the man killed here' prompting him to tell the story in verse. We have a file in the archives on 'A Man Killed Here' which contains the original letter from Deborah Winchcombe and the response from Claude Lee, including his handwritten original poem. But the story doesn't end there. In 1963, road widening on the approaches to Berrima by the Department of Main Roads threatened to destroy the stone.

With the assistance and advice of Berrima District Historical Society, the Department relocated the rock to a site a little further down the hill and so it survives, almost intact, to this day. One corner of the stone and part of the inscription has broken off but we do hold a photograph in our collection, probably taken after Claude Lee recut the inscription, but before the stone was moved and later damaged.

Among the stories of who the man was who died is a story told in 1963, by Mrs Winifred Throsby-Bridges, who grew up in the Southern Highlands and visited Berrima regularly in the 1890s. She said he was yet another victim of the infamous serial killer, John Lynch, who was hung in Berrima in 1842 for the murders of ten people. In Mrs Throsby-Bridges version, the 'man killed here' was not alone, with Lynch not only murdering his wife too, but "to add further horror to the dastardly deeds, Lynch staked their baby, still alive, on an ant-bed". Embellishing the story even further, she attributed 22 murders to the notorious Lynch.

Claude Lee later related a story told to him by another man, whose grandparents had told him that the dead man was very tall with bright red hair and a beard. He had ridden to Berrima to fetch Dr Lambert to attend to his sick wife. His horse fell and he was killed. The problem with this story is that Dr Lambert was just 10 years old and still living in England in 1837 when our man was killed!

In a 1985 newspaper article, "Pop" Wrightson of Berrima wrote that the man killed was called Fairbrother and died after a fall from his horse, and John McColgan in his book 'Southern Highlands History' thought that the wording, and because there was a cross carved in the stone, indicated the person who carved the epitaph was Irish, a Catholic and very probably a convict. The fact is there is no evidence to suggest that any of these stories are true.

This is something of a cautionary tale. Check your sources and be very aware of oral history's pitfalls.

The first and last two verses of Claude's poem:

Near Berrima, a half-mile from the town
And just above the School as you go down
On rock beside the road is faintly shown
'A man killed here'.

...

The man who here was killed we'll never know
Nor he or she who wrote the words to show
A record of their loss, and graved a rugged cross
With 1837 plain below 'A man killed here'.

And now I'm sitting here alone,
Renewing all the letters on the stone.
I hope he'll like the way it's done
The man killed here.

Bradman Oval and the famous Don

Bowral's most famous son is undoubtedly cricket legend Sir Donald Bradman, the greatest batsman ever to play the game. Following here is an account of the years he spent locally and of the Bradman Oval precinct in Bowral that perpetuates his fame.

The Bradman Foundation's website provides a history of the man and of Bradman Oval, including that the Oval is located on land that formed part of Governor Thomas Brisbane's original land grant in June 1823 of 2,400 acres to John Oxley, Surveyor General of the Colony, explorer, author and businessman. This was the first land granted in Bowral.

Oxley's son, John Norton Oxley conducted the first survey for the township of Bowral in 1859. At this time a portion of land comprising about 43 acres was granted to the Bishop of Sydney for the use of The United Church of England and Ireland. This area, being church land, was noted as 'a Glebe'. It was first associated with cricket on 26 September 1891, when, as advised in the *Bowral Free Press*, "a match will be played on the Association wicket in the Glebe paddock." The Bowral team would play Marulan.



In 1909 Bowral Council leased 24 acres from the Church for sport and recreation with the Mayor of Bowral officially declaring the Glebe Park open in February of that year (pictured above). The northern part of this land was developed into two cricket fields with the playing surfaces made from clay of ant beds and coir matting. This was reduced to one playing field in the early 1920s when a residential subdivision was approved. The young Don Bradman lived nearby.

Donald Bradman was born in Cootamundra in 1908, the youngest son of George and Emily Bradman, who raised two sons and three daughters. Don was just 2½ years old when, in 1911, his parents moved from their farm near Cootamundra to Bowral, taking up residence in a neat weatherboard cottage at 52 Shepherd Street, just one street from the Glebe Oval.

In her book 'Pictorial History Southern Highlands', Linda Emery writes that Don's father worked as a carpenter and fencing contractor for the foremost builder in the Southern Highlands, Alf Stephens, who was also Captain of the Bowral Cricket Club. George Bradman soon became a member of the team. Don's older brother Victor and two uncles also played in the team, so the young Don was immersed in the game from an early age.

Don attended Bowral Public school, just a short walk away from the family home. At the age of twelve he was chosen to play in the senior school cricket team. A natural sportsman, as a teenager Don played rugby, tennis, and cricket and participated in competition athletics. It was at this time that he met Jessie Menzies who had come to board with the Bradmans so she could attend school. Don apparently decided that this was the girl for him and ten years later they were married. In 1924 the family moved to a new brick house built by George in Glebe Street, directly across the road from the Glebe cricket field.



Photo taken at Berrima Gaol of group outing in 1931. Emily & George Bradman and son Donald are standing (4th, 5th & 8th from right); Alf Stephens is at front left.

In the BDHS archives are several newspaper articles and personal writings that include the recollections of residents who lived near Glebe Park at the time. From these the following anecdotes are taken.

One states that the young Don learnt to play cricket on a vacant block behind the family's Shepherd Street home and played with other youngsters on the paths that crossed the Glebe paddock. As Centennial Oval was the home ground for matches played by the Bowral school's senior cricket team, Don would have known it well.

In a letter written in 1988, a St Jude Street resident recalls that the Glebe paddock was heavily wooded and stumpy until the early 1920s when it was cleared by voluntary labour, partly drained, and football was then played there in winter. A shed was built near the intersection of St Jude and Boolwey Streets and in 1927 a cricket pitch was put in and a rail fence built around the boundary of the oval.

Towards the end of his life Alf Stephens provided some recollections, including that from 1920 Don was sent in to bat when the Bowral Cricket Club was short a player. A bat was cut down in the Stephens' joinery shop to suit the 12-year old's size. Alf had a concrete cricket pitch laid down at his home Grantham for team practice and Don was included until he left for Sydney to play with the St George Club.

According to scoresheets documented in 2004 by Alf James, Don Bradman's first match in local men's competitive cricket took place on 23 and 30 October 1920. Don was a member of the Bowral 'A' team up against Moss Vale, the game played on Lackey Park, Moss Vale and Glebe Oval. Bowral won by 166 runs, having scored 10/288. Don hit 5 fours in his first innings, was not bowled out and tallied 66 runs.

In a memorable game on Glebe Oval in 1925, Don Bradman scored 234 against the Wingello team that included Bill O'Reilly, who became a great Australian bowler. In 1926 Bradman was invited to a cricket trial at the Sydney Cricket Ground and the following year made his first class debut for NSW. The rest is history.

Bradman Oval named in 1938

Local newspapers available digitally on the Trove website are a great source of previously difficult to track down information. A recent search has revealed that suggestions were made in the 1930s to name the cricket oval in Glebe Park after Don Bradman.

On 22 August 1930 the *Southern Mail* published a letter calling for the renaming of Glebe Oval: "To the Editor. Our Don Bradman has covered himself with glory and proved himself the world's best bat. I would like to make a suggestion that the cricket oval at the Glebe should be called the Don Bradman Oval. This, I believe, is where Don started his cricket career. It is only a small tribute to one who has so ably upheld the honour of cricket and put Bowral on the map. Signed, Frank Dale." The paper's editor supported the idea: "The suggestion that the cricket oval at Bowral should be re-named Don Bradman Oval has much to commend it. Though Don needs no such monument to keep his memory green in his home town the name would be an inspiration to the youth of the district for all the years to come."

There was, however, no immediate change. At the end of 1934, after a lengthy period of negotiation, Bowral Council received agreement from the Archbishop of Sydney for the purchase of Glebe Park, which Council had been leasing since 1909. Following that, a suggestion was put to Bowral Council in 1938 by the Bowral Cricket Club that the name be changed to Bradman Oval.

The *Southern Mail* reported on 11 October 1938 that Bowral Council "decided on the motion of Alderman Crabtree that the cricket oval in Glebe Park be named Bradman Oval." On 13 October the *Referee* (Sydney) noted: "Bradman Oval as name of the Bowral ground made famous by Don Bradman is very appropriate. There he slammed up his first 300 Score."

From then on, the name was adopted in general usage. In July 1939 the *Southern Mail* reported that at Bowral Council, Alderman Crabtree asked if the lavatories on Bradman Oval had been attended to. The Inspector said they should be pulled down as they were in a very bad condition. The Inspector was instructed to draw up plans and specifications for lavatories and a shed with connections to the sewer.

Further improvements, most likely delayed due to World War Two, were not made until 1946. The concrete wicket was replaced with turf, sightscreens were installed and in 1947 signage was erected that formally named the ground as Bradman Oval (the entrance gate seen here in 1960s – Photo: Bradman Museum).



Bowral Council built a dressing shed in 1954 and, after being lobbied by Gordon Whatman (then President of the Moss Vale and Southern Districts Cricket Association and distant relative of Bradman), made extensive upgrades in 1975 including earthworks to provide a uniform slope away from the wicket, a steel pipe and mesh fence around the boundary, improved drainage and better seating.

It was a grand day in 1976 when Sir Donald Bradman himself in the company of Bill O'Reilly performed the reopening of a rehabilitated Bradman Oval.

Overlooking the Oval today is the Pavilion that opened in 1989. It houses the Player's Club Room, change rooms and meeting room. Adjacent to it is the Museum that was opened by The Hon John Howard, then Prime Minister of Australia, on 27 August 1996, Bradman's 88th Birthday. Sir Donald passed away on 25 February 2001 in South Australia.

The Bradman Museum & International Cricket Hall of Fame is a permanent cultural exhibition housing an outstanding collection of cricketing memorabilia, including many items from Bradman's personal collection. It attracts visitors from all over the world.

-- compiled by Philip Morton with the assistance of David Wells, Museum Curator, Bradman Foundation

Vice-regal visit to local area in 1864

In June 1864 the Governor of NSW, Sir John Young, and some members of the government undertook a trip from Sydney to Wingello. They travelled by train to Picton, where the Southern Line then terminated, and thence by the Great Southern Road.

The party made a stop at Nattai (now Mittagong) and visited the Fitzroy Iron Works. Next day they proceeded to Berrima, inspecting the gaol and court house. Travelling on to Wingello, they stayed overnight and next day attended a sale of alpacas. The Governor and Colonial Secretary then made an excursion to the Shoalhaven gullies near Bungonia, and returned to Picton via the old south road.

This vice-regal trip was extensively covered in the Sydney and Goulburn papers. The story is of local historical interest in that it evokes the period prior to the railway opening through the district in 1867, and details an early attempt to acclimatise and breed alpacas, smuggled from Peru, for wool and meat.

Sir John Young, NSW Governor 1861-1867, was born in 1807 in Bombay, India. The Australian Dictionary of Biography notes that he was the eldest son of Sir William Young, 1st baronet and East India Company director, and his wife Lucy. He was educated at Eton and Oxford, and called to the Bar in 1834. He married Adelaide Dalton at Dublin in 1835. He represented County Cavan in the House of Commons in 1831-55, generally supporting Sir Robert Peel. He was chief secretary for a united Ireland in 1852-55. With his wife, he arrived in Sydney in March 1861; because of intercolonial jealousy he was not given the title governor-general, borne by his two predecessors.

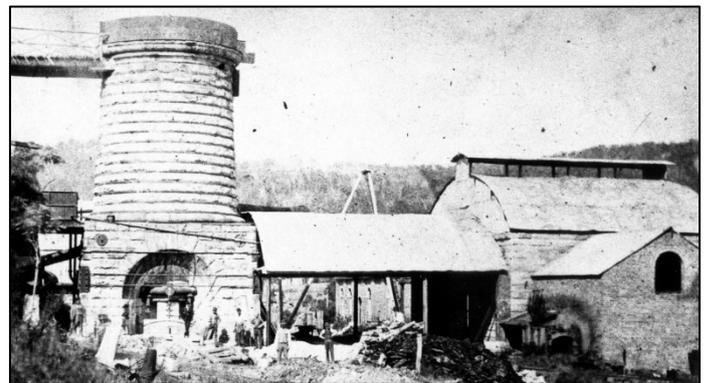


Regarding His Excellency's visit in June 1864, the *Goulburn Herald* of 29 June noted that "a rumour prevailed on Monday last, from a message received by telegram by the sub-inspector of police in Berrima, that the Governor, to be accompanied by some members of the ministry, would attend the sale of alpacas at Wingello on 24 June, and for that purpose would leave Sydney by special train for Picton early on Tuesday, 21 June; but as nothing further was heard, few, if any, in the district were aware of the Governor's intentions; and as it was furthermore not ascertained whether His Excellency would proceed

through Berrima, or, as was reported, down the line of railway now in course of construction, little or no preparations were made to receive him. The weather here, moreover, was so sadly unpropitious that no one dreamt His Excellency would carry his project into execution."

The Governor did, however, undertake the journey attended by Lord John Taylour and accompanied by the Hon James Martin, Colonial Secretary, and the Hon J B Wilson, Minister for Lands, and a detachment of mounted police. Having breakfasted at Picton, the party proceeded to Nattai, arriving at Rush's hotel for lunch. In the afternoon they visited the Fitzroy Iron Works, and returned to Rush's for dinner.

On arriving at the Iron Works, the party was met by the chairman and directors of the company. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that "the day was very unpropitious for affording a full opportunity to inspect the whole works, especially the coal shafts and adits; nevertheless, his Excellency and suite visited the rolling-mills that were producing merchant bar-iron. They were next shown the foundry, and were present at the casting of the heavy channel for running the liquid metal from the top of the blast-furnace, thence to the pattern department and the fire-brick manufactory."



Fitzroy Iron Works blast furnace, 1860s (Mitchell Library)

"The visitors then inspected the blast-furnace, which is a lofty building of ashlar stones, braced together with bands of iron; these, with the machinery attached, having been manufactured at the works. His Excellency manifested deep interest in this important part of the works, as being the first blast-furnace erected in the Australian colonies, and many questions were put to the managing engineer. The anthracite coal and rich calcined ore also excited admiration."

"After partaking of some refreshment at the hotel in course of erection on the works, during which his Excellency wished the enterprise every success, the visitors left highly satisfied with the advanced progress of the Iron Works."

This was 15 years after Sir Charles Augustus FitzRoy (Governor-General 1846-1855), had visited the local area in 1849 and after whom the fledgling iron works was named. Many readers will be aware that the Fitzroy Iron Works operated with varying degrees of success from 1848 until the 1880s, being the nation's first iron smelting venture. Very briefly, its history is that a deposit of iron ore was discovered during excavations for the Southern Road through the district in 1833. A syndicate was formed in 1848 by four enterprising businessmen who set about extracting the ore at a site near the location of the present-day Mittagong RSL Club. With smelting works established nearby, the venture had great possibilities as, at the time, the colony's iron was supplied from Europe.

A heritage trail installed by Wingecarribee Shire Council at Mittagong in 2015 provides a history of the works and links its two major sites. One of these, established in 2007, is in the carpark under Woolworths' Highlands Marketplace, where extensive remnants of the early works are on permanent display with interpretative story-boards. The other main site is a cairn erected in 1948 at Ironmines Oval, being the site of the work's second stage, where the blast furnace, workshops and foundry were erected in the early 1860s.

Despite much jubilation at the firing up of the blast furnace, it did not function to expectations and was shut down in 1877, the iron and steel industry then becoming established at Lithgow. When the blast furnace was inspected on 21 June 1864 by the vice-regal party, it was being converted to hot-blast and success seemed assured.

The following day His Excellency and entourage departed Mittagong on the Great Southern Road. The *Goulburn Herald* described how the Governor "was met two miles out of Berrima by a number of magistrates, the clergy and several of the residents who escorted him into the town. Notwithstanding the shortness of the notice, several flags and banners were displayed at the public buildings, at one or two of the hotels, at the post office, telegraph office, and at the town's entrance, where a display of bunting stretched across the road, with a large banner containing the word 'welcome'. An address, hastily got up, was intended to be presented, but it was understood that His Excellency, intending his tour only to be a private one of pleasure, preferred that no demonstration of the sort should be made."

"Arrived at Berrima, His Excellency paid rather a lengthened visit to the gaol, and was understood to have expressed himself pleased with its well-kept and

cleanly condition, although he was heard to remark that he considered certain further arrangements and additions to the building were necessary."



An inside view of Berrima Gaol, late 1800s, after the additions referred to by the Governor had been made.

"From the gaol His Excellency proceeded to the court house, which he inspected, and then proceeded, with his party, to remount their horses on their journey onwards. However, he suddenly changed his mind and went into Breen's hotel to lunch, on which occasion His Excellency was pleased, through his ministers, to invite the clergy and magistrates, and a few other gentlemen who had gone out to meet him, to join him. After partaking of luncheon, at three o'clock His Excellency and suite proceeded on their journey to Wingello."

The paper also noted that Mr Moore, manager of the Botanical Gardens, who also formed one of the party, would attend the sale of alpacas as agent for the Acclimatisation Society. The intriguing story of the animals and the circumstances that led to them being sold is a little known tale from the past.

Englishman Charles Ledger smuggled llamas and alpacas out of Peru in 1859, travelling with shepherds hundreds of miles over the Andes to Chile and then by sea to Sydney. In 1860 he de-pastured the flock near Wingello at the Arthursleigh property owned then by Thomas Holt MLA. It was hoped the animals would provide a good return.

To be continued in the next newsletter.



One of several sketches by Ledger's shepherd, Santiago Savage, of the flock en route to NSW. (Mitchell Library)

- compiled by Philip Morton

Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc

PO Box 131 Mittagong NSW 2575 ☎ Telephone (02) 4872 2169

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 a general collection.
- 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: Harlan Hall (Project Manager), Lyn Hall (Graphics, Exhibitions), Sylvia Carless (Roster), Harold Wall (Human Resources) and John Schweers.
- 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, Museums Australia Inc and NSW Association of Family History Societies.

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