



Bowral



Mittagong



Berrima



Moss Vale

# 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 516 May 2019



### From the President's Desk

Anzac services were again very well attended throughout the Highlands. Our Society laid wreaths at Mittagong, Bowral, Moss Vale and Berrima to commemorate this important event.

The opportunity to sail on a 19<sup>th</sup> century barque in this day and age is not common. Recently I and my family enjoyed a day sailing outside Sydney Harbour. Our good fortune came about due to the vision of people who wanted to preserve our maritime history. The ship is the "James Craig" of the Australian Heritage Fleet.

This ship began life in 1873 when Scottish ship owner Thomas Dunlop placed an order for a square rigged iron barque which was built at the Sunderland Dockyard in England. It was originally called the "Clan Macleod" and was laden with coal for her maiden voyage in 1874. The "Clan Macleod" was one of the world's maritime traders, sailing across almost all seas and carrying almost every type of cargo. In 1900 she was sold to a new owner, J.J. Craig of Auckland and renamed the "James Craig".

She was always well maintained and plied her trade between New Zealand, Australia and Papua & New Guinea. In 1911 she was converted into a storage hulk in Port Moresby. Towards the end of World War 1 ships were needed as supply vessels and "James Craig" was again put into service. After the war she was purchased by Henry Jones & Co. and plied her trade between Australia and New Zealand.

She was finally retired in 1922 after being damaged by heavy seas and overtaken by the more efficient and faster steam powered vessels. Her watery grave was Recherche Bay in southern Tasmania where she was used as a coal hulk before being scuttled in shallow waters to prevent the salt-laden air from corroding the hull. In 1972 the hulk of the "James Craig" without any superstructure and partly filled with coal was purchased by the Sydney Museum. Fund raising and volunteer salvage and restoration teams were assembled and after many years and the expenditure of \$17 million "James Craig" set sail in 2001 for the first time in over 80 years.

*Continued overleaf*

### GENERAL MONTHLY MEETINGS

**MAY 2019:**

**Thursday 23 May at 2:00pm**

**SPEAKER:**

Stephen Gard on his book "Once Upon a Hume Vol. 2"

**AFTERNOON TEA** is served following the speaker.

Members please bring a plate or a donation.

**JUNE 2019:**

**Thursday 27 June at 12:00 for 12:30pm**

**JUNE LUNCH** at Bowral Golf Club

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**

### Exercise Your Rights (and your Lefts)

I've been thinking of joining a gym these days. The old body just *ain't what it used to was*.

My poor old exercise bike just sits in the spare bedroom begging for someone to ride it. 'Come on, please hop on and pedal me!' it moans. I'm beginning to feel sorry for the poor thing.

But no, I needed more motivation than the odd gardening session and chasing my bride around the kitchen table. Bungee jumping, pole dancing and abseiling were definitely out. So instead of the gym option, where all the beautiful bodies are on display, I decided to try a seniors Aqua-aerobics class in an indoor and warmed pool.

That was more like *drowning* lessons because the instructress, who I'm sure was trained by the SAS, had me out of my depth most of the time and out of breath all of the time. Luckily there was a baby pool alternative where one can stand, feet firmly planted on the tiles and still able to breathe.

Our coach was a gentle, smiling wisp of a girl who played 60's music overlaid with a heavy thumping beat. What a scene we created! There were about a dozen of us elders all churning, pumping, swirling, jumping up and down in perfect rhythm with the music. To any outsiders it looked like we had created a giant washing machine.

Whirling Dervishes, eat your heart out!

After a session of this frivolity, I almost had forgotten about my dicky knee. However, pulling myself out of the water felt as if there were two bags of concrete attached to each leg. I now realise why Olympic athletes, after a lengthy swim in a pool, when out of the water always look awkward, as if they are just learning to walk.

Meanwhile I'll just keep dusting the exercise bike to make it feel at home.

## From the President's Desk

*Continued from page 1 . . .*

The magnificently restored ship (see pictured below) is now used as a training vessel for would-be sailors and carries paying passengers on their fortnightly excursions to help with the maintenance of the vessel.

Being a passenger on board is an interactive experience where anyone can join in to man-the-ropes, ring the bell or help navigate the vessel.

It was a truly enjoyable experience.

Ian Mackey

## Berrima District Museum

### THE STORY CENTRE

**OPEN WEDNESDAY to SUNDAY**  
and **EVERY DAY** during NSW School  
Holidays and on Public Holidays

#### HOURS

June, July and August: 10am to 3pm;  
September to May: 10am to 4pm

Groups welcome at other times by  
arrangement. Ph: Lyn 02 4862 1626  
or John 0434 623 402.

Museum: Phone 4877 1130 or  
email [bdmuseum@bigpond.com](mailto:bdmuseum@bigpond.com)

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

## June Lunch at Bowral Golf Club

Our June Luncheon this year will be in June – unlike last year when we had a special Christmas in July.

The venue is once again the popular Bowral Golf Club, Kangaloon Road, Bowral. The date is Thursday 27 June, starting at 12:00 for 12:30pm.

The cost is \$45 per person. A two-course meal with tea/coffee will be served and there will be the usual ticket prizes and raffle.

Nick Rheinberger of ABC Illawarra will be our guest speaker. He presents the Morning Show heard weekdays on 97.3FM from 8:30am and available online. The program keeps listeners up to date with happenings in the Illawarra and Southern Highlands.

Nick has worked as a blues singer, children's entertainer, songwriter and cook, but the one consistent thing in his CV is his work in radio. He will talk about his radio experience, about growing up in a regional area and about his Mittagong connections, where he lives with his wife and family. Nick says he enjoys cooking, mucking about with his kids, and playing his collection of big and small stringed instruments.

We invite members and their friends to attend. As numbers are limited, please book and pre-pay as soon as possible at the Archives.



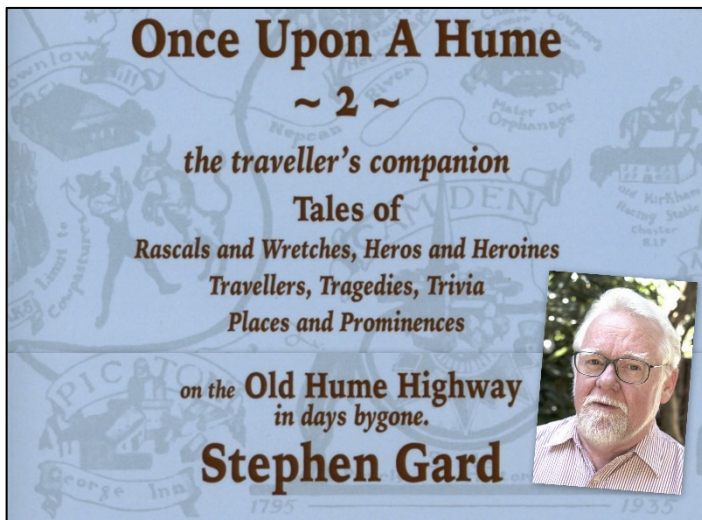
The "James Craig" on Sydney Harbour. Photo: Ian Mackey

## May Meeting Speaker on Old Hume

**Stephen Gard**

Stephen Gard, author and history writer of BlueDawe Books, Thirlmere, gave us a most entertaining talk last year about the first volume of his book, "Once Upon a Hume, the traveller's companion". It covered the stretch from Camden to Mittagong.

Stephen 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. His talk on 23 May will bring the book vividly to life, so come along if you can.



Our member Frank Michell provided a review of the book in the February newsletter. While he had some criticisms of the content, he found the book most entertaining, watching out for the hazards not only of motorists versus Hanging Rocks, Black Bob's Creek and Paddy's River obstacles but Berrima pedestrians and enthusiastic Billy Cart Derby participants. Frank found no shortage of the Ruffians and Ratbags we met in the first volume. An interesting aside was the chapter on Arthursleigh with murder and intrigue described there, as well as the importation of Alpacas smuggled out of Chile by 'Duffer' Duffield's agent.

Stephen has been writing professionally since 1986. His works have been published by Jacaranda-Wiley, Rigby-Heinemann, and the Kangaroo Press. Video production, photography, woodwork, radio and electronics absorb whatever time he has spare.

Six years ago, Stephen launched his self-publishing venture, Bluedawe Books. In July 2017 *Once Upon a Hume: a traveller's companion* was published, the first of a projected three or perhaps four-volume work about the colourful characters who in earlier times lived in, or on, or near to, or by means of, The Great South Road.

## 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Rail to Goulburn

**Saturday 25 May 2019 to Sunday 26 May 2019**

Although the southern railway arrived into Goulburn on 27 May 1869, the town will be celebrating the 150th anniversary on the weekend of 25/26 May.



**Goulburn Station in 1870s**

Events will include the arrival of a steam-locomotive hauled train from Sydney, official speeches by visiting dignitaries, a display of photos and memorabilia, plus a tree planting by the Governor of NSW in Belmore Park near the railway station.

The entire station will be open to the public over the weekend as will Goulburn's Locomotive Roundhouse, the largest heritage-based operating roundhouse in NSW, which displays the historic transition from steam to diesel operation. A range of locomotives and items of rolling stock will also be on display. Additionally, there are other items of heritage machinery and equipment relevant to the Centre's history. A significant part of the town's history, the 42 road circular shed with its 90-foot turntable was built in 1918 and continues to operate today. The Roundhouse comprises a fascinating workshop complete with a large wheel lathe, machine shop, sheet metal shop, and blacksmiths forge where numerous machines have been returned to working order. They look forward to welcoming you to a weekend of history! A gold coin donation will be requested of visitors.

After travelling into the Southern Highlands, the special express service from Sydney to Goulburn (which is fully booked) will be met at Moss Vale around 10:30am by the recently restored 102-year-old steam loco 3526 for the onward journey.

The stream train will arrive Goulburn at 12:30pm, and depart at 3:00pm for the trip back to Moss Vale. These times are a guide for those interested in seeing the restored steam loco pass through the southern villages and Marulan area. Happy train spotting!

## Anzac Day Commemorations

Our Society was represented at Anzac Day services held locally this year, as is the custom.



At Mittagong memorial clock-tower, the parade terminated for the mid-morning service where tributes were paid to all those who served in war. Member Carolyn Dougherty laid a sheaf of flowers.



Member David Baxter attended at Moss Vale on behalf of the Society.



At Bowral, President Ian Mackey and his wife Denise were the Society's representatives.

The Museum's John Schweers represented at Berrima's dawn service and Lyn and Harlan Hall at the mid-morning service.

## Archives Report, April 2019

Linda Emery

The archives remains a busy place, with a large number of researchers, visitors and volunteers beavering away at least three days a week. Archives duty includes assisting the public with research and other enquiries as well as the basic chores like dusting and vacuuming. We miss you Roberta! General care of our resources also takes time with things like tidying the hundreds of well-used maps in our map drawers and refiling out of alpha order biography files.

An increasingly large part of our research work relates to helping people trace the history of their houses.

An archives team meeting was held on 12 April 2019. It was an informal get-together so the volunteers who worked at the archives on either Mondays, Tuesdays and Saturdays could meet, share their experiences and concerns, and help prepare a listing of current projects. It is always an inspiration to see how much work is being done by our volunteers.

### Current Projects

Ancestry/Family Tree research/advice: Linda Berry

Biography Files digitisation: Diane McAllery Jenny Frost, Marg Muntz

Cemetery transcription updates, Bong Bong Street research: Shylie Brown

Research team handling enquiries: Frank Mitchell, Carolyn Dougherty, Janet Black

Local placenames research: Ros Dale, Narelle Bower

Reorganizing newspaper collection and Kevin Herring collection indexing: Denise Mackey

Photographic collection cataloguing and uploading: Linda Emery, Denyse Barker, Veronica Rickard, Jenny Cox, Rhonda Brown, Janet Black (plus Philip Morton, Ian Mackey to be trained)

Ryerson Index, digitising early Accession Registers: Peg Harvey

Street Names project: Mittagong (Sandy McKenzie, Linda Emery), Moss Vale (Narelle Bower, Linda Emery), Bowral (Ian Mackey, Linda Emery), Robertson (Anne Downey) and Berrima (Ros Dale).

Valuation Books: Sandy McKenzie, Carolyn Dougherty

Indexing Projects: Veronica Rickard

Updating Asset Register: Ian Mackey

## Meryla Road/Pass/Falls: a history

A recent inquiry to the BDHS archives asked about Meryla – how it was named, and requested historical information about the construction and use of Meryla Road and Meryla Pass. Despite investigation by our research team, the origins of the name remain a mystery. Information about the history of the area has been obtained from the internet, from digitised newspapers on Trove, from the BDHS archives, from Bundanoon History Group's book 'A Place of Deep Gullies' and from a Kangaroo Valley tourism website.

Meryla (pronounced Mer-rye-la) is a locality in Wingecarribee Shire, east of Moss Vale and Exeter. Meryla State Forest now covers much of the locality, bordering Morton National Park to its south and east. Meryla Road, built in 1896, extends for 15km from Nowra Road to locked gates where a walking trail begins, winding down Meryla Pass to Gales Flat and extending on to Lake Yarrunga in Kangaroo Valley.

Meryla Pass is described, but not named, in the 1818 journal of explorer Dr Charles Throsby, who was led by Aborigines, including one named Timelong, down the steep track into Kangaroo Valley and on to Jervis Bay, as part of an extended expedition to find an inland route to the coast. The Meryla Pass track was not suitable as a road for wheeled vehicles, but became a stock route. From the early 1820s Sutton Forest settlers James Atkinson and Benjamin Crew moved cattle down the track to graze on the fertile flats in the western half of Kangaroo Valley and most likely improved the track and positioned the solid rock retaining walls that are still in place today. The track remained a stock route for over a century.

In 1830 Robert Hoddle, working for the Surveyor-General Major Mitchell, surveyed eastward from Berrima through the thick brush to the escarpment and down to Kiama, and in July the next year he surveyed Kangaroo Valley. Hoddle's map of 1831, extending from the Wingecarribee Swamp to Kiama, names the area's various ranges, including Meryla Mountain, and shows the Kangaroo River with its branches including Yarrunga Creek (at the head of which is Fitzroy Falls) and Meryla Creek. Hoddle visited Atkinson at Oldbury in July 1831, no doubt gaining information about Meryla/Kangaroo Valley.

Hoddle's 1831 map contains the earliest use of the name Meryla that our research has so far discovered, and no other use pre-dating it has been found. Could it possibly be derived from an Aboriginal word? The BDHS Research Team would appreciate hearing from anyone who can shed light on the name's origins.

Once the road from Moss Vale opened in 1896, the Meryla locality became more densely settled with farms, some owned by families with connections to nearby Bundanoon, including the Garbutts. A busy sawmill operated there for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The nearest rail siding was at Werai, on the main southern line, first mentioned as Meryla Siding in the timetable of 1 September 1880 but, as that name conflicted with Meryula Railway Station elsewhere in NSW, the siding was renamed Werai in 1901.

A Trove search on 'Meryla' turned up an article in the *Town and Country Journal* of November 1895:

"The extensive region lying between Picton and Marulan, on the southern main line, and the fairy-like Illawarra district is rich in picturesque localities, but of these none surpass in natural loveliness the vicinity of the Meryla Falls, which are destined to become, at no very remote period, included among the most popular of our numerous pleasure resorts".

"The falls are situated in the wild, romantic country lying south-east of Sutton Forest; portions of which, by reason of their inaccessible character, remain unexplored to this day. Here, at the entrance to the immense ravine, at the head of which are the famous Fitzroy Falls, rises a large, table shaped



mountain, called Mount Meryla, forming the southern extremity of the huge line of cliff on the western slide of the glen, through which the water of the falls descends, to join that of the Kangaroo River, one of the principal tributaries of the Shoalhaven".

"To the west of Mount Meryla the creek of the same name takes its rise, its waters dashing over a deep and precipitous wall of rock, forming the beautiful cascade appropriately designated the Meryla Falls. Although less easy of access than are the Fitzroy or Belmore Falls, the Meryla Falls will amply repay the trouble of a visit, for the route thither, no matter where the starting point may be, lies through country abounding with scenery of the loveliest and most enchanting description".

The whereabouts today of the falls described above is uncertain. They may have been on Ritters or Gun Rock Creeks but the terrain changed when the dam was built on Bundanoon Creek for water storage.

The Meryla Pass trail, now known as Griffins Firetrail, may be walked by those active and fit enough.

## Vice-regal visit to local area in 1864

### Pt.2: Governor Young attends Wingello alpaca sale

A journey from Sydney to Wingello was undertaken on 21 June 1864 by the NSW Governor, Sir John Young, and some members of the government.

As told in the previous month's article, the party visited the Fitzroy Ironworks and stayed overnight at Mittagong. The next day they stopped at Berrima. After lunch the party proceeded down the Great Southern Road to Wingello, where on the following day a sale of alpacas would be held.

It was reported that the Governor intended, on the morning after the sale, to proceed, via Marulan and Bungonia, to visit the Shoalhaven gullies, from whence he would return to the latter place that evening to remain for the night, and then return to Sydney along the old South Road, thus not passing through Berrima again. This was more a private excursion of the Governor than a public one.

### The story of the alpacas

The animals had arrived in the Wingello area in 1860, depastured by Englishman Charles Ledger at the Arthursleigh property, then owned by the Hon Thomas Holt MLA, a wealthy Sydney wool merchant.

Ledger and his South American shepherds had smuggled a flock of about 250 llamas and alpacas out of Peru in 1859. To avoid capture by the Peruvian authorities who prohibited the export of the animals in large numbers, they travelled hundreds of miles over the Andes to Chile and then by sea to Sydney.

Ledger's incredible journey and the intrigues involved form a fascinating chapter in the book 'Arthursleigh, a history of the property 1819 to 1979' by Chrissy Fletcher, 2004 [ISBN 0-9580497-0-X]. A copy of the book is held in the BDHS library general collection.

In the chapter 'That magnificent flock of alpacas' it is noted that in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the acclimatisation of exotic flora and fauna was an issue of growing interest in the colony and Thomas Holt was a strong supporter. In 1850 he was part of a group that raised funds to import 200 alpacas into the colony from Peru, but the mission failed due to the Peruvian prohibition on exporting alpacas.

Meanwhile Ledger had been in Peru since 1836 and started his own business as a dealer, trading in chincona bark and alpaca wool, and then exporting small batches of alpacas to European countries. He made a verbal agreement with British authorities to arrange the delivery of a flock to NSW and this he

accomplished, after the arduous trek through Chile and the voyage by sea, landing at Port Jackson in November 1859. The NSW government purchased the entire herd and duly appointed Ledger as Superintendent of Alpacas.

The flock was moved to Arthursleigh, Thomas Holt's property at Wingello for depasturing. Holt had become a council member of the Acclimatisation Society of NSW when it was established in 1861. (This movement folded in the 1870s when quarantine controls were introduced by the Government to curb the importation of alien species.)

In 1863 relations between the government and Ledger became strained. He was accused of deceit and his appointment was suspended. The alpacas were placed under the superintendence of Edward Payten who began moving them from Arthursleigh to the nearby Wingello Park property.



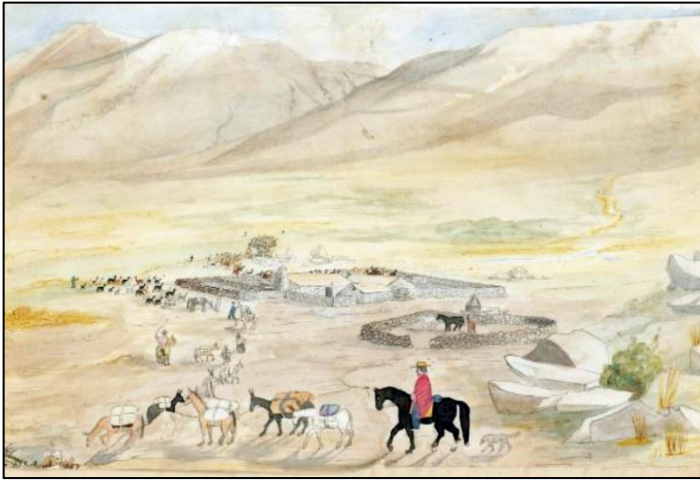
Wingello Park homestead, built 1840s

Despite Ledger continuing to insist that the entire flock be re-sold to him, on 15 June 1864 a report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* stated:

"It is generally known that the Legislative Assembly determined that the alpacas should be sold by auction, and that the government have placed the sale in the hands of Messrs Richardson and Wrench".

"From the statements of those who have recently seen the alpacas, the animals are in splendid condition, and the difficulties in the way of their acclimatisation, that resulted from their removal from their native pastures, their exposure on the long land journey and the sea voyage, and the cross-breeding of the llama and the alpaca, have been surmounted.

No fewer than 187 of the females are with young. The object is not now to possess some interesting pets, but to engage in an occupation that promises a good return. Our alpacas are known to be desired by public associations in the other colonies; some of the provincial governments of New Zealand are intending buyers; and enquiries have been made on behalf of Melbourne capitalists."



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

### The sale day and what happened afterwards

According to the *Goulburn Herald*, the weather on the day of the sale was fine "and the neighbours from the surrounding country mustered in force, with about 150 persons present". The paper continued that the Governor had arrived the previous evening, staying at Mr Brown's Inn, Wingello, accompanied by the Hon J Martin, Colonial Secretary, and the Hon J B Wilson, Minister for Lands, and escorted by a detachment of mounted police.

In the morning His Excellency walked over to Wingello Park, the place of sale. The alpacas, 307 in number, were divided according to catalogue into 51 lots. The sale was to be at 12 o'clock, but some delay occurred and it was resolved that luncheon should take place before the sale.

The company adjourned to Mr Payten's barn, where luncheon had been provided by order of the Government for 200 persons.

At its conclusion, the Governor proposed 'Success to the Auction', coupling with the toast the name of Mr Holt. His Excellency expressed his approval of the course the Government had taken in bringing the alpacas to sale. They would be dispersed amongst a variety of breeders, and there would be thus a fairer opportunity for their being properly cared for than if they were retained by the Government. The company then proceeded to the pens.

The arrangements for the sale did not altogether give satisfaction to intending buyers. It was of particular objection that a wether was included in each lot, and it was soon apparent that there were but two or three buyers present. The first lot, consisting of purebred alpacas only, was knocked down to Mr Morrice, MP, at 30 pounds per head, and only one other first-class lot was sold.

Mr Holt bought one second-class lot exclusive of the wether, which he refused to take; and Mr Moore, of the Botanical Gardens, bought one lot for the Acclimatisation Society. Mr Wrench then announced the closure of the sale as the Government were much disappointed at the result and did not feel justified in continuing the sale.

It transpired that offers of £25 per head for pure alpacas were made by parties interested for New Zealand; but it was considered that less than £30 ought not to be accepted.

After the alpaca auction in 1864, a broken-hearted Charles Ledger left Sydney for South America, still protesting against what he saw as the injustice and cruelty dealt him.

Ledger eventually returned to NSW, where he lived at Goulburn for a time, and then moved to Leichhardt in Sydney, where he died a pauper in May 1905.

Prior to his bringing the alpacas to NSW, Ledger had been involved for nearly twenty years in the cinchona industry in South America. His epitaph reads "He gave Quinine to the world" yet for all his efforts, Ledger left an estate valued at only two pounds.

After the 1864 alpaca sale at Wingello Park, those purchased by the Acclimatisation Society (one pure bred, four females with young and one wether) were put to graze at Parramatta Park. The entire park was provided for them by the trustees but the animals did not thrive and by 1868 there were only two left.

Some other of the alpacas remained on Holt's Arthursleigh property. He also gave several to his friend Henry Parkes for grazing on his new property near the Georges River, and others were given to various lunatic asylums "to amuse the patients".

Holt continued to breed alpacas at Arthursleigh and in August 1871 he exhibited nine at the Intercolonial Exhibition, prompting the *Town & Country Journal* to comment that they were "in fine condition, and attracted much attention and admiration".

It was Australia's sheep, however, that continued to thrive, providing a wool and meat industry. Alpacas here have only recently made a come-back.

- compiled by Philip Morton

## 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 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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