

Founded 1960

# BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC

## NEWSLETTER

No 410 September 2009

PO Box 131 Mittagong NSW 2575 Telephone / Fax 0248 722 169

Website: [www.berrimadistricthistoricalsociety.org.au](http://www.berrimadistricthistoricalsociety.org.au)

Email: [bdhsarchives@acenet.com.au](mailto:bdhsarchives@acenet.com.au)

ABN 29 362 616 937

### PATRON:

**Mayor of Wingecarribee Shire Council:** Councillor Duncan Gair

### President:

Mr Ken REID 4871 3391 [reidken@bigpond.com](mailto:reidken@bigpond.com)

### Snr Vice President:

Miss Judith GREEN 4861 1926

### Jnr Vice President:

Mrs Leonie KNAPMAN 4871 1804

### Hon Secretary:

Mrs Glenda MISKELLY 4872 3031

### Hon Treasurer:

Mrs Jan REID 4871 3391 [reidken@bigpond.com](mailto:reidken@bigpond.com)

### Archivist:

Mrs Linda EMERY 4883 4271

### Curator – Museum:

Mr Bob WILLIAMS 4889 4405

### Editor

Ms Lavinia FORD 4869 4038 [lavinias@aapt.net.au](mailto:lavinias@aapt.net.au)

### Research Officer

Mr Max ROGERS 4861 3526 [robert.rogers2@bigpond.com](mailto:robert.rogers2@bigpond.com)



### 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. OPEN: Saturdays, Sundays, NSW Public and School Holidays (except Good Friday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day) 10.00 am to 4.00 pm.

### MEMBERSHIP:

Any person wanting to join the Society may do so at any stage during the year by completing a form and paying the appropriate fee. Joining Fee \$5.00 – Single \$20.00 – Family \$33.00.

### AFFILIATIONS:

Royal Australian Historical Society, NSW Association of Family History Societies, Museums Australia Inc & Regional Chapter.

## GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

**SEPTEMBER MEETING: Thursday, 24 September 2009 at 5:00pm**

### VENUE:

Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers Building,  
Bowral Road, Mittagong

### NOTE SUMMER MEETING TIME OF 5PM

### GUEST SPEAKER:

Judith Dunn, Author and Fellow of the Parramatta &  
District Historical Society

### TOPIC:

**Colonial Ladies - Lovely, Lively and Lamentably Loose:**

A humorous but thought provoking talk describing some of the exploits of convict women in early New South Wales.

See page 3 for a description of Judith's book "Colonial Ladies - Lovely, Lively and Lamentably Loose".

### SUPPER:

To be served after the meeting - Members - please bring a plate or a donation

### Inside this month ...

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**OCTOBER MEETING: Thursday, 22 October 2009 at 5:00pm**



## EVENTS CALENDER 2009

### SEPTEMBER

- 10 Management Committee Meeting
- 24 Monthly General Meeting - Talk on *Colonial Ladies - Lovely, Lively and Lamentably Loose* by Judith Dunn

### OCTOBER

- Tulip Time
- 1 **MEMBERSHIP FEES DUE**
- 3 School holidays commence
- 8 Management Committee Meeting
- 17 Hollands Family Picnic
- 18 School holidays conclude
- 22 Monthly General Meeting

### NOVEMBER

- 1 Office bearer nominations due
- 1 Notices of motion due
- 12 Management Committee Meeting
- 26 **Monthly & AGM Meeting**

## POWERHOUSE DISCOVERY TOUR

Unfortunately the Powerhouse Discovery Centre tour, which was to be conducted in September, has had to be cancelled due to insufficient bookings to make the tour viable to run.

## SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Membership renewals are due by October 1 and a renewal form is enclosed in this month's newsletter.

## ANNUAL REPORTS

A reminder to Officers - its almost that time again - annual reports for inclusion in the November newsletter will be due at the end of next month. Thank you.

## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE NEWS

**Memorial for Dr John Simons:** A Claret Ash has been planted behind our museum at Berrima in memory of Berrima German Internee historian and our archivist, Dr John Simons.

**Model Rules:** Are available at our archives for members to inspect.

**Naming of a Shire Road:** The Society received correspondence from Wingecarribee Shire Council regarding the proposed naming of a new public road; which our Society has no objection. It has been proposed that a new public road off Ardross Avenue at Bundanoon be named *Tobin Place*, after a longstanding postmistress in the area.

**New Secretary:** The management committee wishes to extend a very warm welcome to Mrs Glenda Miskelly, who has kindly given some of her time to take on the position of Secretary for our society, effective as of our August management committee meeting. Thank you, Glenda. We trust you will enjoy your time with us.

**Newsletters:** Our newsletters are now available on our website.

**Photographs:** Members have been scanning our photograph collection which is going well and we are half way through.

**Record Found:** A researcher to our archives was very happy following the finding of a birth record that supposedly did not exist. An excellent outcome.

## NEW MEMBERS

Mr Stephen **Chalker**, Hill Top  
Mr John **Durbin**, Mittagong  
Dr Paul **Johnson**, Bowral

Here's to a long and happy association.

## RESEARCH FEES

The research fee for non-members:

\$15.00 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.

## ARCHIVES OPENING HOURS

Opening hours are as follows:

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

## BERRIMA DISTRICT MUSEUM

Market Place, Berrima  
Near the bridge

### OPENING HOURS

10 am - 4 pm.  
Weekends, Public Holidays and NSW School Holidays.  
Closed Good Friday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.  
Groups also welcome at other times by arrangement.  
Please telephone Bob or Gloria on 4889 4405

## NEWSLETTER

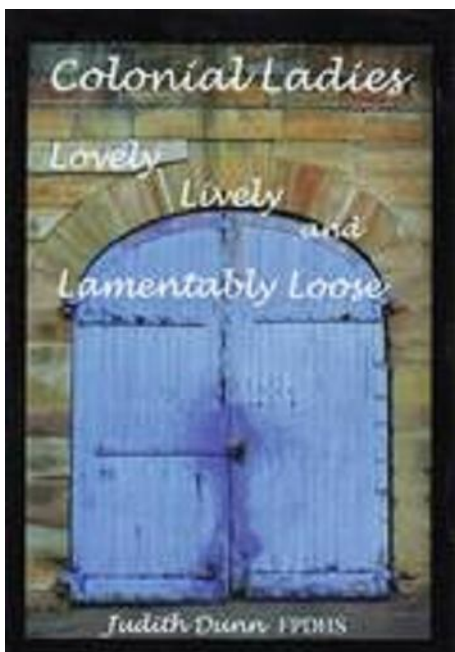
Newsletter Deadline is **1st** of every month. It may be necessary to hold submissions after this date till the following month.

## Guest Speaker at our September Meeting

### Judith Dunn

Judith Dunn is a migrant with a passion for Australian history, holding a Fellowship of the Parramatta & District Historical Society of which she is past president and served on the Society Council for 23 years. Judith initiated the Historic Graves Committee over twenty years ago and is co-author of one book in the Parramatta Cemetery Series and author of another three.

Her most recent publication, shown below, was written while she was in England, and attracted an individual grant from the Heritage Branch of the NSW Department for Planning.



**Colonial Ladies: Lovely, Lively and Lamentably Loose: Crime Reports from the Sydney Herald relating to the Female Factory, Parramatta, 1831-1835 by Judith Dunn**

Judith's presentation at the Society's September meeting will be based on this book. It will be a lively and interesting talk revealing the feisty nature of convict pioneer women, noted in the official records as, "these most licentious women, the very dregs of society".

She will draw on individual crime reports from the Sydney Herald that illustrate the larrikinism and inner strength which allowed the convict women to survive.

Far from just stealing a loaf of bread, these feisty women were up to all sorts of mischief, amorous adventures with men, drunkenness, absconding, violent and riotous behaviour and much more. All stories relate to crimes committed in the colony.

Although humorous, this is also a thought provoking talk describing the transport and gaol system endured by these women.

### Display of domestic artefacts

There will also be a display featuring many artefacts from the 1860s to 1930s. This is mainly a collection of domestic appliances to assist with work in the home although there will be some early beauty aids.

From kitchen and bedroom articles to craft and domestic science aids, a woman's work was never done. Maybe you can guess the use of some of the intriguing objects.

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Judith has received a number of awards including the Australian Bi-Centenary Medal, NSW State Government Award for services to History and Heritage and, in her capacity as teacher, achieved a NSW State Government Quality Teaching Award.

She teaches Tourism at TAFE and conducts her own tour business, Past Times Tours.



**The original Parramatta female factory building which became the Parramatta lunatic asylum**

Unknown artist, Parramatta, New South Wales, c. 1872  
Photograph: SAG



## SOCIETY BOOK STALL

### Highlands Marketplace, Mittagong

The Society held a book stall and photo display at Highlands Marketplace in Mittagong for Fathers' Day.

From Thursday until the Saturday afternoon before Fathers' Day on 6 September, Society volunteers set up a stall to display the large range of books on local history that are available to purchase.

To highlight history and attract the attention of shoppers, on several large panels a display was mounted that told the story of the building of the Wombeyan Caves Road back at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The large selection of fascinating photographs from the time drew the interest of the passing crowd. Aspects of High Range and the Wollondilly River were also featured.

One visitor recognized her grandfather in a photo on display; her mother came along later to give us information about the time the photo was taken.

As well as raising money for the Society, the book stall proved to be a most suitable way to reach out to local people and bring to their attention just what a useful purpose the Historical Society serves.

Also, several enthusiastic new members signed up.

Over the three days, a large variety of books on local history were sold. The money raised will help towards the cost of replacing the much used printer-reader in the Society Archives.

A successful raffle was also held and the prizes were selected with Dads in mind for Fathers' Day. Some of the raffle prizes were donated by local businesses, namely: Magnet Mart in Bowral, The Good Guys at Mittagong, and Bunnings Warehouse in Mittagong. Our grateful thanks go to these businesses for their support.

Leonie Knapman and Linda Emery, Society members and authors, were on hand to answer the questions of local people interested in aspects of their family history or of the area generally.

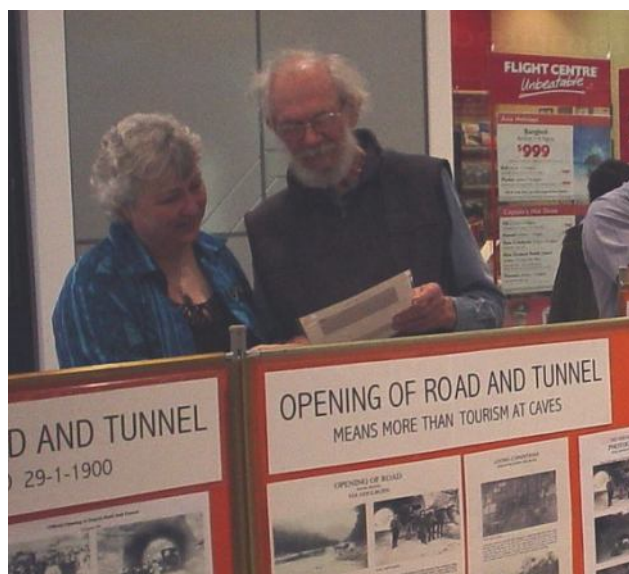
The Society is very grateful to the management of Highlands Marketplace for their support of this initiative. Our thanks also must go to all the many people who supported our book sale and raffle.

And we hope all the Dads out there enjoyed their day with family and friends.



**One of the many photos on display at the Society's Fathers' Day stall. From the feature on Wombeyan Caves Road, this shows Tony Mangold and Graham Goodfellow with a traveller and his donkey wagon, c1960s.**

**Photo: Geoff Goodfellow**



**Leonie Knapman chats with Ken McCracken, local man who advises NASA on scientific matters.**

**Photo: BDH&FHS**



**Society Treasurer Jan Reid with Anthony from West Pennant Hills.**

**Photo: BDH&FHS**

# Down Memory Lane

Part one in a series of three articles

**A collection of memories, people, times, and some tales as told to John McColgan**

John is a historian who resided for many years in the Highlands and was an active member of our Society. He published several local history books and contributed many articles to this newsletter and to the local press. John is retired now and lives on the Central Coast.

## Early days in Moss Vale

Some of the early happenings in Moss Vale in the years 1932 and 1933 were related to me by my older brother because I was too young to remember them.

Tom Mack had the local picture theatre in Moss Vale, but in those days reliability was a problem with film projection equipment having occasional breakdowns. This usually led to catcalls from the audience until the film started again, but one night the breakdown couldn't be fixed, so Tom Mack put the lights on and apologised to everyone, then he stood on the stage to tell the audience how the film ended. He spoke of how the hero DID return from the war, the villain WAS caught by the police, and they lived happily ever after etc. etc.

Around this time there was a musician in Moss Vale called "Dusty" Booth who used to play for Saturday afternoon dances as a "one man band".

"Dusty" Booth used to play a pianola (player piano with music rolls) which he pumped with one foot, a trumpet hooked around his neck, and a set of drums, of which the bass drum was mechanically played with a foot pedal.

It was no mean feat of concentration. While he played the music rolls on the pianola, he could intersperse with bursts on the trumpet or snare drums as he went along. Tickets for the Saturday dances, which were held in the afternoon, were one shilling (10 cents).

My parents ran a small grocery shop in Moss Vale opposite the town clock in the early 1930s, so that most news in the town seemed to arrive there sooner or later. I remember my father telling us about the "Bunyip" scare during the construction of the South Coast railway line.

Apparently, during this construction a group of railways workers were camped near the Burrawang Swamp, but were terrified one night by the loud noises, sucking, grunting or roaring that emanated from the swamp. Believing it to be a "Bunyip" the frightened men walked to Moss Vale rather than spend another night in the area. The camp had to be shifted before things returned to normal.

The Burrawang Swamp is still somewhat of a mystery. Situated in volcanic soil, some believe it could be the core of an ancient volcano of which Mt. Gibraltar is only the outer edge, in which case, for general purposes, it could be described as "bottomless". We need more information from those who live in the area. Even discounting the "Bunyip" story as superstition or imagination, there is some interesting study to pursue for those interested.

In 1933 Wirths Circus used to travel by train when touring. The day it came to Moss Vale, they unloaded the animals and tents at the rail yard, but to create some interest, no doubt with a view to filling seats, they had the elephants pull all the wagons and caravans through the main street of the town to the circus area.

As a small child looking out the upstairs window where we lived above the shop, I can still remember the excitement of seeing an elephant for the first time.

I also had the excitement of seeing a horse bolt for the first time. The local greengrocer used to deliver vegetables and fruit from door-to-door with a horse and cart. By a stroke of bad luck he happened to be around the back of a house at the top of the main street serving a customer when the elephants came along.

Terrified by the elephants, his horse took off down the street, dragging the spring cart, with one wheel locked. Turning into the circle near the old Post Office, it dragged the cart across the footpath scattering fruit and vegetables all over the road.

Finally several men caught and held the frightened animal, kicking and thrashing, near the railway fence before it smashed the cart to pieces or injured itself. General confusion reigned as circus staff had to decide whether to go forward or go back.

For this little boy (myself) it was pretty exciting stuff to watch from a top window.

## From child to teenager in Mittagong

As with many other small business concerns during the depression years, the small grocery shop in Moss Vale eventually failed, and went broke. My parents decided to move back to Mittagong.

At the time (1934), Colin, one of the Duff Bros, local butchers, became engaged and bought a house at 90 Bowral Road, Mittagong (two doors east of the Caltex Depot).

Colin Duff decided to rent the house until such time as he married and needed it himself, so that was the first house we lived in when we first returned to Mittagong. It was only a short stay of about three months, because Colin Duff suddenly decided to get married and needed the house. We were a bit unlucky, because in those days engagements usually lasted 12 months to two years.



As a five-year-old, I can still remember the trench from the old Joadja siding running through the back yard at Number 90 even though the rails had been removed some years before.



**Fig.1: 54 Bowral Road, Mittagong (2009)**

From 90 Bowral Road we moved to "Melrose," the old brick house on the south side of Bowral Road between Pioneer and Bessemer Streets, which belonged to old Mr. Farrar, who had lived in Mittagong for years, but as his family grew up and left home, he had gone to live in Sydney, leaving the house for rent.



**Fig.2: 52 Bowral Road, Mittagong (2009)**

I spent the formative period of my life over the next ten years, from a child to teenager, living at Melrose.

I suppose a description of the section of Bowral Road between Bessemer Street towards Mittagong as far as Princes Street in 1934, would be in order because as I write this in 1993, nearly 60 years later, there has been a considerable amount of change. It would be hard for today's resident to imagine things as they were then. The town was far more sparsely settled, and the bush was a lot closer to town.



**Fig.3: 50 Bowral Road, Mittagong (2009)**

Starting at Bessemer Street, there was old Frank Beaumont's house on the corner. [see Fig.1] Towards town there was a vacant block [see Fig.2] (part of

Melrose), the next house was Melrose [see Fig. 3],



**Fig.3: 50 Bowral Road, Mittagong (2009)**



**Fig.4: 48 Bowral Road, Mittagong (2009)**



**Fig.5: Bowral Road, Mittagong (2009)**

and next door to Melrose was John Ryan's weatherboard home [see Fig. 4]. After more vacant land, [see Fig. 5] there was the large semi-detached weatherboard house of Bill Worner's [see Fig. 6] and



**Fig.6: Bowral Road, Mittagong (2009)**

wood yard opposite Pioneer Street. Then there were several vacant blocks of land.

Next towards town was the weatherboard house beside *Home Hardware* where the two Chant brothers





**Fig. 7: Bowral Road, Mittagong (2008)**

lived. They tended to keep to themselves. For some reason locals referred to them as "the Bing Boys".



**Fig. 8: Home Hardware, Bowral Road, Mittagong**

The Home Hardware site was only a vacant paddock, but the block on the corner of Princess Street (now Home hardware parking lot) was Hubert Carlon's house.



**Fig. 9: Regent Street, from Bessemer Street, Mittagong**

Behind Melrose, on the Regent Street side, from Bessemer Street eastwards, it was only open paddocks [See Fig. 9] with two old brick semi-detached houses [See Fig. 10] further away and a swamp filled the hollow where an old brick pit was situated beside the semi-detached houses.



**Fig. 10: Regent Street, from Bessemer Street, Mittagong**

The swamp was caused by the spring that surfaces beside the railway line before draining across the road. No doubt the spring was made use of in brick-making days. Bowral Road itself was sealed, but had no kerb and guttering.

**To be continued in the next issue . . .**

## FROM THE NEWSPAPERS

*Contributed by Carol Nolan*

Scrutineer Saturday 3 August 1895 page 2 col 3

### HILLTOP

An unusual accident occurred here on Saturday last. Mr. And Mrs. Alt and three children, who were out walking, came across a waterhole with a coating of ice. The children, delighted at the novel opportunity for amusement, at once ventured on a slide, but the ice broke, and two of the little ones—a boy and a girl—fell in. Mr. Alt, however, at once dived in and rescued them. The hole was 20ft. deep.

Scrutineer Wednesday 13 June 1894 page 2 col 3

### SHEEP STEALING.

Mr. Wyatt De Little, manager of the Temora station, caught a Chinaman stealing a sheep, and holding him whilst the police were being brought from Temora, three miles distant, the Chinaman drew a knife and lashed at De Little's throat, which fortunately, was only slightly wounded. The Chinaman, who is a gardener on the Barmedman-road, escaped, but Constable Hunt arrested him soon after.

Scrutineer Wednesday 30 September 1896 page 2 col 5

### DIVE FROM NOWRA BRIDGE

Fitzgerald Bros., have evidently secured another candidate for the vacancy caused by the death of Diver Peart at Sydney while diving into a tank of water. On Thursday a young man accompanying the circus went over to Nowra bridge with a crowd of people, and took a dive from the bridge railing at the end of the first span. Then he swam ashore and ascended to the highest point of the bridge and again dived into the water below. He did the feats very neatly, and £1 was collected for him. It may be mentioned that he is a mere lad and a cripple.

Scrutineer Wednesday 30 September 1896 page 2 col 5

### THE CIRCUS

Fitzgerald Brothers circus showed here on Saturday night, and scooped about one hundred pounds for less than two-and-a-half hours entertainment. Not bad considering the present hard times, scarcity of money, and, the expenditure has no profitable results. But it was change, and people seemed determined to have their amusements. In the matter of horsemanship many were disappointed, it was not what one might expect, the riding was inferior to that seen here in much smaller concerns. The clowns were a bit off colour.

## DIARY DATES

|          |      |     |                              |                                          |
|----------|------|-----|------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| THURSDAY | 10   | SEP | Management Committee Meeting | 9:30 pm at the Historical Society        |
| THURSDAY | 24   | SEP | Monthly General Meeting      | <b>5:00 pm</b> at the Historical Society |
|          | 3-18 | OCT | School holidays              |                                          |
| THURSDAY | 8    | OCT | Management Committee Meeting | 9:30 pm at the Historical Society        |
| THURSDAY | 22   | OCT | Monthly General Meeting      | <b>5:00 pm</b> at the Historical Society |
| THURSDAY | 12   | NOV | Management Committee Meeting | 9:30 pm at the Historical Society        |
| THURSDAY | 26   | NOV | Monthly General Meeting      | 7:30 pm at the Historical Society        |

If undelivered return to:

Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc  
PO Box 131

MITTAGONG NSW 2575

Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc  
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## THE BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL AND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

is proudly supported by the following organizations that encourage the work of our Society in collecting,  
preserving and maintaining the history of the Southern Highlands.

*Brewsters Coffee House  
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Mittagong Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
Springetts Arcade*