

Founded 1960

# BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC

NEWSLETTER  
No 423 November 2010

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**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.

## ANNUAL GENERAL AND MONTHLY MEETING

**NOVEMBER MEETING: Thursday 25 November 2010 at 7:30pm**

**VENUE:** Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers Building,  
Bowral Road, Mittagong

**TOPIC:** **AGM and General Meeting**

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

**JANUARY MEETING: Thursday 27 January 2011 at 7:30pm**

**VENUE:** Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers Building,  
Bowral Road, Mittagong

**Our guest speaker will precede the general meeting.**

**TOPIC:** **General Meeting**

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

Inside this month ...

Diary Dates	2
BDH&FHS Launch	
50th Anniversary Book	4
Tag-along Tour report	5
Ambulance Service	6
Lorae Desmond <i>Talking Heads</i> interview	11

And more ...





# Merry Christmas Happy New Year



This is our last newsletter for 2010. The next newsletter will arrive in your letterbox in January 2011, and the January general meeting is on **27 January 2011**. The Berrima District Historical and Family History Society wishes to take this opportunity to extend to all our members, a merry Christmas, and a very safe and happy New Year. We look forward to welcoming you back - renewed, relaxed, and ready for 2011.

## AGM

WHEN:  
**25 November 2010**  
**Following General Meeting**  
**at 7:30 pm**

WHERE:  
**Historical Society, Mittagong**

Its time for our Annual General Meeting in November. As is the case every year, some people will not be nominating for positions. Please consider nominating for a position that may interest you.

## Christmas Closing Dates

**Historical Society Archives**  
Closed Dec 14, 2010  
Open Jan 10, 2011

**Berrima District Museum**  
Market Place, Berrima  
Open 10:00 am to 4:00 pm 7 days a week during school holidays, commencing on December 27, concluding on Australia Day.

## Books for Christmas

This year there were some newly published books, so drop into the society and have a look or visit our website. We also have an extensive selection of books available to keep members of your family amused.

## Diary Dates 2010

### NOVEMBER

- 11 Management Committee Meeting
- 25 **AGM & Monthly Meeting**

### DECEMBER

- 9 Management Committee Meeting
- 10 **Christmas Dinner**
- 14 **Archives close** at 4:00 pm for Christmas break.
- 20 School holidays commence
- 23 **NO** General Monthly Meeting
- 27 Society Museum Open Daily 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

### JANUARY

- 10 **Archives reopen after Christmas**
- 13 Management Committee Meeting
- 26 Society Museum open Weekends and Holidays
- 27 Monthly General Meeting  
School holidays conclude

## Errata

Bob Williams has advised that in the article on page 5 of the October 2010 Newsletter featuring recently donated museum objects, the rotary canister cabinet and the Glacier refrigerator were donated to the museum by Rosalind (not Rosiland) Badgery.



## 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 Public 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

## New Members

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members.

Sharon **Honnery**, Narellan  
Philip **Walker**, Bundanoon

Here's to a long and happy association.

# Christmas Function

## Friday 10 December 2010

Our Christmas function this year will be held at the  
Scottish Arms, Boardman Road, East Bowral  
from 6:30pm for 7:00pm.

Cost will be **\$35 per person**

Includes Tea, Coffee and Orange Juice

**Bookings and Payment are essential by Tuesday 30 November 2010**

to the Archives 4872 2169

Could each person please bring a unisex gift to the value of \$5.00

There will be a Raffle and lucky door prizes.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Bong Bong Street, Bowral

## Launch of 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary book

Members of the society gathered in the Moss Vale CWA Rooms on October 13, 2010 to celebrate the launch of our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary book.

In attendance was special guest Owen Edwards, who was instrumental in the formation of the society and became the inaugural President.

The book was officially launched by Dr Lesley Muir OAM of the Canterbury Historical Society and Vice-President of the Royal Australian Historical Society as well as Chairperson of the Affiliated Societies.

The audience was then treated to a photo slideshow compiled by President Ken Reid that told the history of the society through images from the past. It was so well received that copies of it were requested.

Below are extracts from Dr Muir's speech.

"For a group of volunteers to remain together for fifty years is pretty remarkable; it is even more remarkable that a flourishing historical society takes the time to write its own history. So this book is a great achievement, both for the society and for its compiler, Leonie Knapman, and the researchers, and the designer Ken Reid. It is not only a very interesting record of the history of the Southern Highlands, but it also is significant in the wider historical society movement in NSW.

Why were so many of the historical societies of NSW, like Berrima, formed in the 1960s? What motivated people to think it was so important to preserve their history at that time?

In the 1950s and early 1960s, car ownership became more widespread. Berrima was within reach of Sydney as somewhere to take the kids for the day - but what if Berrima was changed by the upsurge in tourism? What if it became just a truck stop? It is interesting that the initial idea was to start a Folk Museum, to preserve and explain the history of the Southern Highlands, while also attracting tourists to the area. It is no surprise that the local Council were most encouraging.

The threat to our heritage is, I think, one of the great reasons for the growth of historical societies in the 1960s. The sixties was, when you think about it, one of the most destructive periods in our history. The historical and heritage society movement was one of the few ways that ordinary people tried to combat this wholesale destruction, and to preserve a record of what once existed so that future generations might understand their past.

Congratulations on your first 50 years and I wish the Society well for the next 50. It is with great admiration that I launch this book."



Dr Lesley Muir OAM



President Reid & George Schofield



Jan Alcock and Marie Chalker (front middle) catch up



Inaugural President Edwards with current President Reid



Dr Lesley Muir and Leonie Knapman

Photos: Leonie Knapman, Denyse Barker & Philip Morton

**The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Book and Photo History CD are available from the society for \$10 each**



## Tag-along Tour of Berrima report

Linda Emery was the tour guide for a "tag-along with the leader" car tour of Berrima in September. Our members were joined by a group of Metz family descendants who came especially for the day.



The tour began at Holy Trinity, Berrima with an inspection of the church and a short talk on its history.



Two views of *The Gunyah* slab cottage's front porch

Then to *The Gunyah* on the south side of Berrima to inspect the wonderful old slab cottage brought back from the brink of demolition. Built in the 1880s, it was the first home of German immigrants Adolph and Sophia Barth. The current owner spoke on the history, restoration and additions to the house.

Next was the National Trust historic property, *Harper's Mansion*, where we had a picnic lunch in the grounds, followed by an inspection of the house and a talk on its history by Ann Beaumont.

After that it was off to *Greenstead* on the Mandemar Road to inspect a cottage built in the 1870s by stonemason Robert Metz, brother of Sophia Barth of *The Gunyah*. We were able to inspect the house and grounds before extensive conservation and restoration works are carried out.



In the grounds of *The Gunyah*



Enjoying lunch at *Harper's Mansion*



The cottage at *Greenstead*



The group pictured with new owner of *Greenstead* (right)

- Photos by Jan Reid and Philip Morton

## A glimpse into Highlands History

### Community spirit kept ambulance service on the move locally

The Ambulance Service in New South Wales commenced in April 1895 and was known as the Civil Ambulance and Transport Brigade.

A service in the Berrima District commenced in the 1920s. The first means of transport was the Oxford Lee hand lifter, a horse-drawn stretcher wagon that was kept in a shed at the Bowral Railway Station.

In 1929 a small band of community minded individuals joined together to improve the lot of the sick and injured in the Highlands. At a meeting in the Bowral Town Hall, a provisional committee of the Berrima District Ambulance Service (BDAS) was elected.

A shop on Venables Corner fronting Bong Bong and Boolwey Streets, Bowral was leased for use as an ambulance station and residence. Mr C. Collin was appointed as the first Superintendent-Secretary in August 1929 and an old ambulance was obtained on loan from the Western Suburbs District until the first purchased vehicle, a 1929 Studebaker, commenced its 15 years of service.

The Committee remained active and the ambulance service was a focal point for community fundraising, with the ambulance officers and their wives, board members and many local people being actively involved in raising funds.

On land purchased at the south end of Bong Bong Street a new Ambulance Station was built and officially opened in July 1933 by Sir Philip Game, the Governor of NSW.

A further £20,000 was spent in following years enlarging it to meet the growing demand for ambulance and casualty services. It was always manned and minor procedures were carried out, as the hospital did not then have a casualty department.

In 1935 a Vauxhall ambulance was added to the fleet, remaining in service until 1952. Three more ambulances were purchased between 1944 and 1948 to replace ageing vehicles and in 1949 a work-shop, built by Mr H. Savell, was added to the station.

Mr George Crossley became Superintendent in 1936. The *Southern Mail* on 28 January 1936 reported the following:

"Mr Geoffrey Curthoys of Mosman fell about 70 feet over the lower fall at Fitzroy Falls. The Ambulance was summoned and Bearer George Crossley was faced with the difficult task of bringing the man out of the deep gully to the roadway."

Mr Arthur Napper, appointed to the Berrima District Service honorary staff in 1935, became permanent

Bearer Driver in 1940 and was Superintendent from 1948 to 1979.

The BDAS was one of the best equipped in NSW and served the people well. For an annual subscription of £5 (\$10), in 1966, a household could join the Ambulance Scheme and be entitled to free ambulance transport anywhere in NSW. Ambulance staff would visit every household to collect the subscription and thereby got to know people and their situation.

Christmas raffles, chocolate wheels at Robertson and Moss Vale shows, and weekly housie nights at the Station (the ambulances were moved out) were all popular fundraisers.

There was a small group of very dedicated Moss Vale ladies, called the Goodwill Ladies, who were exceptional fundraisers. They ran the canteen at Moss Vale Saleyards every week. At one stage they made enough to purchase an ambulance.

An Austin Sheerline was purchased in 1952 and another in 1955. These were the first ambulances in NSW to carry patients and rescue equipment.

Fundraising activities ceased in 1975 when the local service amalgamated with the Illawarra region under the control of the Health Commission of NSW and then the NSW Department of Health from 1982.

In 2004 the Ambulance Service relocated to the grounds of the Bowral & District Hospital and, after 70 years of service, the ambulance station building in Bong Bong Street became home to the Berrima District Credit Union.

**A Studebaker** ambulance was the first of the fleet at the inaugural station on Venables Cnr, Bowral about 1929.



**Bong Bong Street station** in 1936 - shows newly appointed Superintendent Crossley (left) with two other staff, between a Studebaker (left) and a Nash (right) ambulance.



Compiled by Philip Morton  
Photos: BDH&FHS.



## Lorrae Desmond



**Lorrae Desmond was born Beryl Hunt in 1932 at Mittagong and is a descendant of Mittagong's Bunter family. Lorrae's mother Alice Bunter was the daughter of John Bunter and Eiry Edna Roberts. Alice married Desmond Eric Hunt. And are all buried in the Anglican portion of Welby General Cemetery, including Lorrae's sister Norma Williams.**

The following is a shortened version of a transcript from the ABC's *Talking Heads* which screened in 2008 when Peter Thompson interviewed Lorrae.

PETER: Lorrae Desmond is fondly remembered for her long-term role as Shirley Gilroy in 'A Country Practice'. She sang and performed for decades around the globe.

Despite being the first woman to win a Gold Logie, her proudest accolade is one Australian soldiers gave her, the title Mother of all Vietnam Veterans. You won't meet a woman of more steely determination.

Fresh from a hairdressing apprenticeship, Lorrae Desmond went to London and began banging on doors until she was working with Tony Hancock and Morecambe and Wise. She ended up with her own TV shows in the UK and Australia simultaneously.

PETER: How did Beryl Hunt become Lorrae?

LORRAE: Well, can you see Beryl Hunt in lights? No, you can't, can you? What a rotten name. I didn't even have a Beryl Janet, a Beryl something else. It was just plain Beryl Hunt. Plainest name in the world.

PETER: And, of course, to many you're Shirley Gilroy. In fact, 'A Country Practice' has been off for a while but it's now back on cable 20 hours a week.

LORRAE: If you wanted to escape, you couldn't. And also, it was on in 37 countries around the world, you know, at one stage. And I was in Portugal and this

couple came up and said, "Hello, Shirli." I went, "Oh, crikey." In Ireland, people would ask me in for a... "Come in and have a cup of tea. I've loved you, Shirley." You know. So there you go.

PETER: Now, this life of yours on the stage performing, doing cabaret, performing before the troops, running your own TV show. Your mother would have been horrified with you.

LORRAE: Ah, shocked.

PETER: People in showbiz were often seen as one step up from prostitutes, weren't they?

LORRAE: Yeah, absolutely. It was...flaunting yourself, you know.

PETER: And were they some of the vibes you got from home too?

LORRAE: Oh, yes, yes. Don't make a show of yourself.

PETER: Well, Shirli, or maybe I should say Lorrae. Let's see how you learnt to defy your mother and become an all-round entertainer.

LORRAE: I was born at home in Pioneer Street, Mittagong. My mother was the most straight-laced person in the world. The whole family were quite religious. Dad played in the town band but he had that Irish thing. Where one side of the family was very serious, you had the insanity of the Irish on the other side. I think, I think I really got the insanity.

With my hair in rags for the long curls, if I heard there were people, you know, visiting, I'd get out of bed, grab a little stool, put it in front of them, leap on the stool and start singing. I'd be very properly dragged back to bed again.

It was a very Spartan childhood. It did make me different to other kids but I didn't mind 'cause I'd live in my head.

I used to love putting on ballet music and instead of dancing to it, to me, music was pictures. So I'd put on 'Swan Lake' and I'd make up a lyric to them. Always had to rhyme, of course.

I left school, by the way, at 13 years and 9 months. I had already been doing a little bit of cleaning up on a Saturday morning at the local hairdresser's. One of the leading hairdressers picked me to go to his salon. The day they said, "Right, now you are a fully-fledged hairdresser", I thought, "That's it. I'll give it up now. I'll become a singer." So I became a singing cigarette girl.

PETER: What does a singing cigarette girl do?

LORRAE: Well, you know those trays that you have ice-creams in in the cinema? This had cigarettes on it. And usually singing cigarette girls in Vegas and other places wore shirt dresses. But I wouldn't do that, no. Had to have the long frock. I

had to be ladylike. So I wore my long frock which meant I could also jump up and sing with the band. Which meant I sold a lot of cigarettes and you got tips for selling a packet of cigarettes.

PETER: That photograph we saw of you with a golliwog is the only individual photograph taken of you as a child, isn't it?

LORRAE: And that photograph was taken by my teacher at school. The golliwog wasn't even mine.

LORRAE: I didn't have any dolls. Ah, because it was against Mum's religion. So there were no dolls, no paintings in the house. No floral print dresses.

PETER: And floral prints were all the rage.

LORRAE: Yeah, they probably were but anyway. And you couldn't wear black. It was only brown. So it was only just lately that I started wearing brown. It's taken me all this time to get into brown again. And I love black.

PETER: But there was... Singing was allowed, right?

LORRAE: Oh, yes. Yes, because all my family were very musical. Of course, it was the Welsh background. And it was the equivalent of having a choir because there would be six-part harmony going on in my mother's family.

People would pass in the street wondering what choir was rehearsing. So there was music everywhere. But it wasn't sort of jazzy music. It was boring.

PETER: Boring music? Did you dream about make-believe? Did you dream about being on the stage?

LORRAE: Yes. I really wanted to be a stoker on a ship so I could travel around the world for nothing. When I realised that was gonna be a bit hard to do, I thought, "Well, how else could I do it?" I thought, "Being an entertainer, being a singer. Being a Shirley Temple grown-up."

PETER: Seeing Gracie Fields was an important turning point for you.

LORRAE: That was one of the few times that Mum actually took me to see a show. And I was still at school. She took me to the Town Hall in Sydney to see Gracie Fields. I went, "That's it."

PETER: What sort of show was it?

LORRAE: One-woman show with just a pianist. And she covered everything. She had people laughing, she had them thinking, she had them singing along, she... In other words, she was an entertainer. And it was the first time I'd ever seen an entertainer. I said, "That's it. That's what I wanna be. I wanna be one of them."

PETER: There and then? **Cont. page 12**

## President's Report

*Ken Reid*

It is with pleasure that I present my report for the year 2009 - 2010.

2010 is the year of the Society's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and this major milestone was celebrated in June with a luncheon at the Highlands Golf Club, attended by Professor Ian Jack, President of the Royal Australian Historical Society. The Society's Archives and Museum are held in very high regard and this is the result of the efforts of many members over these 50 years. *Celebrating 50 years*, a book detailing the progress of the Society since 1960, was launched at the Moss Vale CWA rooms where the Society held its first meeting. It was a great pleasure to have Mr Owen Edwards, the Society's inaugural President at this function.

Thank you to all the volunteers, at both the Archives and Museum - your invaluable contribution to the Society is very much appreciated.

I also sincerely thank both the Management Committee and Museum Sub-Committee for your dedication, enthusiasm and commitment - this ensures the continuing smooth running of the Society.

Members who filled other positions in the Society again carried out their duties with great expertise, maintaining a very high standard in their respective roles. Thank you all for work well done.

My thanks go to our supporters who have assisted the Society with donations and grants - special acknowledgement must be made of the continuing support given by Wingecarribee Shire Council.

I would also like to thank those organizations who generously support the publication of our newsletter - their support is acknowledged on the back page each month.

This has again been a very busy year for our Archives, with increased family history enquiries and requests for photographs and information. Research Officer, Max Rogers, must be thanked for his attention to these numerous requests and thus contributing to building the Society's reputation as a reliable source of information for the public.

Proposed extension to storage facilities at the Museum will be a major project to be undertaken by future committees - Curator Bob Williams will report on the current position.

Thanks also to the speakers at our monthly General Meetings. A wide range of both interesting and educational topics was again covered.

The Society participated in mounting several photographic displays during the year, including a

Tulip Time display in partnership with Tourism Southern Highlands at the Bradman Museum. I would thank the staff at Bradman Museum for their friendly and helpful assistance. Thanks must go to Leonie and Greg Knapman for mounting and removing the display, assisted by Denyse and Allan Barker. The Society produced a "Brief History of Bowral's Tulip Time" booklet which covered Tulip Time's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - it was widely distributed during the festival. Plans are underway to hold another photographic display at Highlands Market Place Mittagong nearer Christmas.

Other aspects of the Society's activities during the year are covered by reports from those members who have undertaken the various roles necessary for the successful running and growth of the Society and I thank them on your behalf.

It has been an Honour to have served as President and I extend to all members and the Society very best wishes for the coming year and a happy and safe Christmas.

## Secretary's Report

*Philip Morton*

The duty of being secretary can be taxing, but the reward is keeping abreast with what our society is involved in. As well as the regular post-box mail, a steady stream of e-mails arrive. Thanks to Max Rogers for both collecting the post-box mail and for sifting through the e-mails.

Here is a snapshot of the correspondence handled this year.

### Newsletters, journals, bulletins etc. received include:

- *Descent* - Australian Society of Genealogists Journal
- Family History newsletters - Argyle, Armidale, Australind, Ballarat, Burwood, Casino, Cowra, Gold Coast, Lake Macquarie, Murrumburrah, Richmond/Tweed, Tamworth, and Wyong
- *Founders* - First Fleeters magazine and events calendars
- Historic Houses Trust *Insites* magazine and events booklets
- Historical Society newsletters - Canberra, Clarence River, Harden, Hawkesbury, Illawarra, Waverley, Wyalong, and Yass
- *JCG* - Bundanoon magazine
- NSW Assoc of Family History Societies newsletter
- Placenames Australia bulletin
- RAHS monthly magazine and Affiliates newsletter



- *Signals* - Australian National Maritime Museum quarterly magazine
- The 1788 Chronicle - First Fleeters Southern Highlands Chapter newsletter
- The Ancestral Searcher, Canberra Genealogy Society magazine
- Tongarra Heritage Society newsletter

**Other correspondence received include from:**

- Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame newsletter
- National Archives magazine
- Museums Australia magazine
- Southern Highlands and Illawarra M&G Chapter e-news
- Tourism Southern Highlands updates and After Hours Event invitations
- Veolia Mulwaree Trust offer of financial support for community groups (we received \$1,000)
- Wingecarribee Shire Council re several planning proposals and local heritage listings

**Outward mail** included thank-you's to people who assisted the Society, sympathy cards, an invitation to the new WSC Mayor Ken Halstead to be Society Patron (which he accepted) and replies to members who wrote in with requests and comments. It was a learning curve for me.

## Treasurer's Report

*Jan Reid*

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to present the Annual Financial Statements covering the year 1 October 2009 to 30 September 2010, for the information of members.

The accounts again show expenditure which will be an overall benefit to the Society. During the year we commenced an Early Industries exhibition at the Museum which will be partly funded by donations specific to the cost of each panel. We also invested in a new computer and upgraded the Mosaic programme at the Museum while at the Archives we continued with the archival storage of our photographic collection and purchased a trolley suitable to use up to the first floor. For safety reasons we have replaced heaters in all areas of the Archives.

During this year we received a grant through the RAHS of \$200 towards the cost of our *Celebrating 50 Years* publication, and this figure, together with a contribution from another of our supporters, has allowed us to hold the sell price at a reasonable level. From this year's round of Community Grants from Wingecarribee Shire Council we have been advised that we will receive \$5,000 towards the cost of drawing up and submitting plans for the extension to

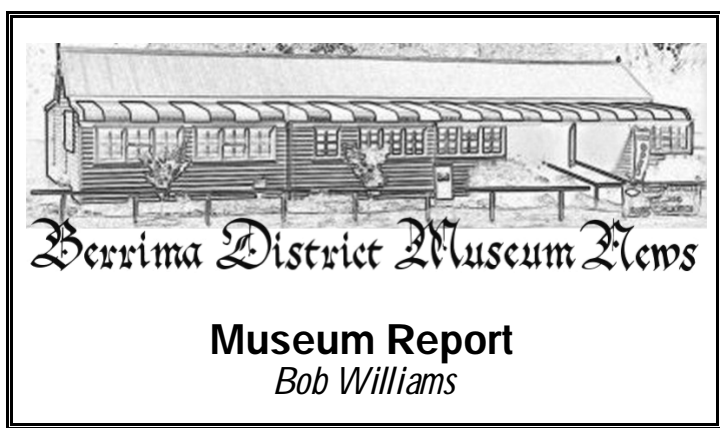
the Museum which we will receive when we spend this amount. Museums & Galleries have again supported a member to attend a conference/ workshop at Galong, with a grant of \$250. We received a Community Heritage Grant from the National Library of \$6,380 to cover the cost of obtaining a Significance Assessment and Preservation Needs Assessment of our collection held at the Archives - this project has not as yet been completed and the funds will be spent during the coming financial year.

The Special Purpose Account grows slowly but steadily as we raise funds for a new microfilm reader/printer for the Archives.

Members will note that we have increased our Term Deposit by a further \$10,000.

My thanks go to our auditors Ross Cowley & Co. who have again agreed to audit our accounts and endeavour to meet our very tight time frame.

My thanks also go to those members who contribute to the successful collection of funds from various sources throughout the Society - their efforts are greatly appreciated.



A sincere 'Thank you' to my fellow volunteers for the time and effort you devote to the museum. I appreciate your support.

The 'Fitzroy Ironworks' exhibition was officially opened in November 2009 in the presence of George Thirkell and his family. George created the scale model of the works. Further stages in 'Early Industries in the Berrima District' have since been completed. After several announcements that it would close soon, 'Childhood Treasures' was so popular that it remained on display for two years. The 'Prisoners in Arcady' exhibition continues to fascinate our visitors.

We are fortunate to have received some interesting objects again this year. These include Aboriginal artefacts from the Badgery property 'Wanganderry'; a silver plated ink well engraved 'TLB' that was a wedding gift to Thomas L Badgery from his bride Enid Hammond in 1919; a bible presented to the Berrima Presbyterian congregation by R L White in 1933; a separator pre 1938 from a former dairy farm at North

Yarrunga; a 1939 tablecloth with embroidered signatures of 209 Bowral YWCA members and a miner's shovel from Medway Colliery.

We had delegates attend all three meetings of the Southern Highland and Illawarra Chapter of Museums Australia. These were hosted by Jumbulla Aboriginal Heritage Centre at Sublime Point, Berry Museum at Berry and Lady Denman Heritage Complex at Huskisson. These are always informative get-togethers with like minded people.

Lyn Hall attended 'Working Spaces 4', a weekend workshop at Galong, hosted by the Lachlan Chapter of Museums Australia. Subjects attended by Lyn were 'Creating and using digital images', 'Putting our museum in the school curriculum' and 'Oral history and community participation'.

Ian Alexander attended a three day workshop for our collection management program 'Mosaic Plus'. This was organised by our chapter which covered the cost of the tuition. Our annual volunteers Thank You Morning Tea had a record attendance.

We hosted the October Tourism Southern Highlands 'After Hours' event. These get-togethers over refreshments enable TSH members to network. We were pleased to accommodate Annabel from Chevalier College and Jack from Oxley College in their Duke of Edinburgh Award participation.

The accessibility of the museum building makes it even more appealing to groups, including those with special mobility requirements. Architectural plans for a new on-site storage and conservation facility have been lodged with Wingecarribee Shire Council. Once approval is granted, fund-raising for this project can commence.

Our thanks go to the local media for its support during the year. ABC Illawarra, Highland FM and Radio 2ST along with Southern Highlands News and Highlands Post enable us to take the museum to the people.

## **Publicity Report**

*Philip Morton*

The role of publicity is to keep the profile of the society in the public eye locally and to ensure that both members and the general public are informed about society activities.

Each month's guest speaker at our general meetings has been promoted with posters in the local libraries, media coverage and articles in the newsletter. When Genealogist Kim Phillips spoke at the May meeting on her project about the men of the AIF who never left Gallipoli's shores, extra promotional effort beforehand was successful in attracting a wider audience.

Bev McClymont's talk in August on the 1810 Macquarie Centenary attracted a large crowd, due to the widespread interest in the topic and the publicity effort.

A weekly history column continues to be provided to the *Southern Highland News* and historical photos are supplied monthly to *Snapshot* magazine for the 'Snaps in Time' page. Each article has acknowledgment of the Society. Thanks to Jan Reid for her invaluable assistance with proof-reading the history articles.

Reports on Society tours, book sales, fund-raising events and special occasions, such as the June luncheon and the recent launch of our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Book, have been supplied to the newsletter Editor. These both keep the membership informed and provide a record of our activities. Thanks to the avid photographers who came to the rescue with good quality snaps.

It has been a busy and interesting year.

## **Publications Report**

*Sally Ross*

Publications have sold well this year with the majority of orders coming via our Web site. A steady flow of enquiries and orders have been received.

*Celebrating 50 Years* has sold very well since the launch.

Prisoners in Arcady is selling well in conjunction with the exhibition at the Museum. (\$810.00 in sales)

The Society will be holding a stall at Marketplace, Mittagong on 18, 19 and 20 November.

## **Newsletter Report**

*Lavinia Ford*

For certain this year has fleetingly sneaked away, more so I feel than previous years.

This year the newsletters have been full of interesting articles and society news, much of which was a flow-on from Philip Morton's publicity of our society. Thank you Philip, for your invaluable assistance.

Thank you to all the members who have assisted in folding and contributed articles towards the newsletter - I cannot thank you all enough.

Thanks also to members for the wonderful feedback I have received throughout the year. I am always

pleased to hear that you enjoy reading your newsletter. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to share with me.

I would like to encourage members to consider contributing to the newsletter with interesting local historical articles or photographs. You can handwrite or email us with your information and we can do the rest and jazz it up with pictures too.

This year the number of newsletters being distributed has increased. We distribute 266 newsletters to our 329 members, and a further 58 to other societies and legal deposits, giving a total of 324 newsletters, an increase of 16 on last year.

At the conclusion of this year we will have posted our newsletter to 172 members and 41 legal deposits and we will have emailed our newsletter to 94 members and 17 legal deposits.

	<b>Members</b>	<b>Newsletters</b>
Honorary Life Members	6	6
Single Members	199	199
Family Members	124	61
	<b>329</b>	<b>*266</b>
Wingecarribee	185	
NSW Country	35	
NSW Metro	36	
ACT	4	
VIC	2	
QLD	4	
	<b>*266</b>	
Legal Deposits	21	
Other Societies	37	
	<b>58</b>	<b>324</b>

Based on figures for 2009, Society membership has decreased by 1. Our single membership has increased by 10 and family membership is unchanged. Of those figures, Wingecarribee unchanged, NSW Country has increased 8, NSW Metro has increased 7, ACT has decreased 1, Victoria has increased 2, and Queensland unchanged.

As a matter of interest, the majority of members reside in the Wingecarribee (185) and is divided as follows: Bowral (58), Mittagong (49), Moss Vale (28), Bundanoon (16), Burradoo (6), Berrima (4), Colo Vale (3), Hill Top (3), Exeter (2), Kangaroo Valley (2), Willow Vale (2), Alpine (1), Avoca (1), Aylmerton (1), Burrawang (1), Canyonleigh (1), High Range (1), Kangaloon (1), Mt Murray (1), New Berrima (1), Sutton Forest (1), Tallong (1), Welby (1).

Don't forget you can find other societies' journals in our library. They provide a vast array of tips and tricks as well as being very informative and an interesting read.

I would like to wish you a wonderful festive season, and a new year filled with peace, joy and satisfaction.

## Conservation Report

*Sally Ross*

Earlier this year I took part in a series of four workshops conducted by Kim Eberhard, a professional archivist and historian, which were held at Mt Kembla Historical Society. They were very intensive and thorough and covered a wide range of subjects.

In October I went to Galong for the Working Spaces 4 workshop conducted by the Lachlan Chapter of Museums & Galleries. This workshop is held for three days every October, and consists of three very intensive sessions over a short period of time.

Throughout the year the group worked on a collection of maps from the Badgery family.

Labels on maps in the Archives have proved to be a problem for some time. After finding a new supplier of archival materials, we now have permanent stick, non-removable labels, which were originally produced for the State Library of Victoria. We are now working through our collection of maps and plans replacing all old labels.

Thank you to those who provided us with sheets and old towels. They will be very useful.

## A Lighthearted Laugh

The Scrutineer 26 August 1893

Railway Official: "Smoking's not allowed in this room, sir. You'll have to leave."

M'Finigan: "I'm not smokin', sir."

Railway Official: "But you have your pipe in your mouth, sir."

M'Finigan: "Yis; an' I have me futin me boot, but I'm not walkin'."

Bowral Free Press Wednesday 7 December 1904

Meant for Sarcasm

"It's hard to be happy, once you've got a reputation for saying sarcastic things," remarked a sad-eyed man.

"What's the trouble?"

"I've lost another friend. I complimented him on being the most cool-headed person I ever saw, and he is totally bald!"

Bowral Free Press Wednesday 7 December 1904

No Accounting for Some Things

"They say old Hucks has died of consumption," said Mrs. Flynn to a neighbour.

"Oh! Never knew they had consumption in the family"

"That doesn't matter," said Mrs. Flynn.

"My sister's 'usband died of gastric fever and there was no gas in the house-they always used paraffin!"



**Continued from page 7.** LORRAE: There and then, yes. It was quite positive.

PETER: What did you do differently after seeing Gracie then? If you had it in mind that that's what you wanted to do.

LORRAE: What I did differently - I started listening a lot. And I realised I had a very broad Australian accent. Very Mittagong and drawly. So I thought, "I'll get rid of that." And also...

PETER: How did you do that?

LORRAE: How did I do it? I went down to a teacher and paid for it myself by shampooing in a hairdressing salon on Saturday mornings. And I went along and had elocution lessons at Concord West.

PETER: And I know where that led. That led to boarding the ship. Not as a stocker but as a paying passenger and going to England.

LORRAE: Well, I wanted my own television show. We didn't have television in Australia.

PETER: You wanted your own television show and Australia didn't have TV.

LORRAE: I'd never seen it. I wanted my own radio show. I wanted to make recordings. I wanted to... I wanted to do cabaret. I wanted to do stage. This list went on.

I read in an English newspaper onboard that they were looking for entertainers to entertain troops and I thought, "Well, that would be good." I went to see the war office and they said, "No, we're only using names." So I thought, "Alright. I have to go away and become a name then."

I'll never forget the very first job I got in England. They wanted a singer at the Blue Bell hotel in Scunthorpe. And in the hotel, there were all these guys with flat caps and huge beers. And in swans your mother with her silver lame dress. And one of them looked up and said, "Hey, you don't come from Scunthorpe, do you?" And that actually was my big break in England.

And somebody suggested from that that I should look at cabaret. From cabaret, somebody suggested pantomime. I discovered also that there's certain times of the year when everybody's out of town. And I thought, "Ah. When everybody's out of town, I'll make sure I'm in town." And that's how come I first got onto television. And from that, I got to meet people like Terry-Thomas.

And the first time I saw a troop audience and to look out and see all these lonely eyes and how they lit up when they saw somebody who came from their home. I just fell in love with soldiers then, I think.

At that time, Terry was the biggest comic in England. And it was a big thrill for me to be in on the writing stakes. First of all,

we became really good friends in a working situation and gradually, it developed. And we became an item for about 10 years. Of course, when I first met him, he was living alone because his wife had left him. And she said, "I'll never divorce you for her." So, uh, that's the way it was. So I did his show and then I was offered the 'Lorrae Desmond Show'. And after that followed 'Swing Along with Lorrae'.

The British war office said would I go to Malaysia with Reg Varney. I said, "On one condition." That I could fly home to Australia.

A friend of mine said to the ABC, "Lorrae Desmond's in town." So they invited me to do a little 15-minute show. It's very special really... And that was done in the newsroom at Gore Hill because they didn't have a studio.

And I said, "Now, tell me about the lighting." They said, "Lighting?" I said, "Just leave them on." Yeah!

PETER: We've seen a dazzling array of successes as a young Lorrae. There must have been times, particularly in the UK, where you were told 'no' just like your mother told you 'no'.

LORRAE: Oh, initially I was, yes. But, I mean, that's... You just don't take any notice of that. That's really a fighting word.

PETER: The people you met there in those days. Pantomime with Danny La Rue for example.

LORRAE: Yeah, well, Danny was an ugly sister when I was doing my very first ever 'Prince Charming'. And he taught me to walk like a bloke.

PETER: I wanted to ask you about what you learned. Terry-Thomas, for example, with his comedy And George Martin who later produced for The Beatles. You're learning from all these people.

LORRAE: Absolutely. You know, I was such a young person. I didn't know any of these people.

I mean, Terry taught me so much by showing me people performing. I mean, he took me to see Edith Piaf. I had never heard of Edith Piaf. And I was sitting there watching her. She did the whole act in French, of course, because it was in the south of France. He said, "What did you think of that?" I said, "Even though I don't speak French, I understood what she was singing about." Because she could portray it to me in actions and in her facial things. He said, "That's right." So, uh, that's how I learnt.

PETER: This was a time too when you first started working with troops.

LORRAE: Well, once I'd worked in the Middle East and I realised that troop

entertaining was a very important thing to do, I went there again, I went there twice.

Then I was asked to go to Kenya during the Mau Mau Uprising. Huge show. There were four of us. I was the only female. Civil wars are always dangerous because you never know who is around the corner and who's gonna try and bump you off. We were doing it one night and suddenly, there was all sorts of gunfire happening just behind this little... Well, just a little cloth area that we were changing behind. And people were being captured right outside, you know. Which was a bit alarming 'cause I thought I might not get to do my next song.

The 'Lorrae Desmond Show' came about in a very strange way. They began flying me home to do 12 television shows, 12 radio shows and then I'd whiz on back to England again. I would sit in England with my pianist and we'd work out routines and tape them. Whole medleys, ideas for songs. The total routine of the song. Then I'd get on the plane to come home. It took forever to fly from England in those days. And on the back of the sick bags, I'd write Show 1, and I'd program it. Work out the whole program for Show 1. Until I had a big pile with 12 sick bags which I would then hand to the director. And it was wonderful fun because it's much more fun putting the shows together than doing them.

Terry was my best friend. The person I was most like in my head. But I knew we were never going to get married.

So one of the trips home to Australia after the show, this rather interesting looking man who didn't know me at all. I said, "What do you do?" He said, "I'm a doctor." I said, "Oh, right." He said, "You're a singer." I said, "Yes." He said... "I'd like to photograph your vocal chords." That being the funniest pick-up line I'd ever heard, I had to go out with him, didn't I?

So that's when I married Alex. I thought if you're a wife... It's always good to do everything as well as you can. So I tried to cook and clean. Fortunately, it didn't have to go on for too long because we went to the States.

JACK BENNY: I have as my guest tonight, one of the most popular singing stars in Australia.

LORRAE: The lucky thing was that I'd worked with Jack Benny in Australia and he said to me, "If ever you come to America, I'd like you to appear on my 'Coast-to-coast Hollywood Show'". So we came back from America and then a really interesting thing happened when the Australian Dance Band asked me if I would go with them to Vietnam. Having entertained troops from other countries, suddenly all those young men are my

babies. And I kept going back and forth until I'd been there five times.

PETER: So you've been in front of troops in the Middle East, Malaysia, Singapore, Kenya. Vietnam - five times? You've made a habit of this.

LORRAE: Yeah, well, whenever I had a few weeks spare, I mean, I didn't sit around. I'd say, "Let's go out to the boys."

PETER: You called them more than boys, you called them your babies.

LORRAE: Well, they were babies in England but I was a baby too then. But then when I got to Vietnam, they were my boys and they still are my boys. They even gave me a plaque saying, "To the mother of all Vietnam veterans" which I love.

PETER: It seems to have affected many performers that way. That those that have gone to these war zones to perform fuelled an incredibly special relationship with those that they performed for.

LORRAE: Do you know, you get letters like about 50 years afterwards saying thank you. I've had that from people, from guys who were in the Middle East. That's very special that you stay in somebody's life for that long.

PETER: The marriage to Alex wasn't a great success.

LORRAE: Ah, I was really coming off a long relationship with Terry. He was a lot older than me. And suddenly, I met this guy who was only a few years older than me who was very, very sexy and chased me like mad. And I thought, so I stopped running.

PETER: Some people would say that's a relationship on the rebound.

LORRAE: I think it could have been. I think it could have been. Because when I think about it, we had nothing to say to one another.

PETER: With Terry, it sounds like you got thwarted on the love of your life.

LORRAE: Yeah, you could say that. Yes, I did. I did.

PETER: So, Terry's married but he's separated from his wife. I mean, were you independent enough by this stage...? 'Cause you're still, you're still young. You're still in your 20s. Are you independent enough to actually stare down your mother's disapproval of a relationship like that?

LORRAE: Oh, well, Mum wasn't there to put up with the relationship. Oh, my goodness. Wouldn't have happened in Australia. I mean... I didn't ever live with Terry. We worked together but I never lived with him because I think there was a bit of Mum's hard upbringing, you know. That would be the wrong thing to do. Crikey.

PETER: Too nice.

LORRAE: Stupid.

PETER: So at the end of the marriage with Alex, you're in a position where not only are you reinventing yourself personally but also professionally.

LORRAE: And also, I needed to earn a quid. I was broke again.

It's around this time I was also dickering around with TV drama. In the meantime, James Davern was writing 'A Country Practice'. Of course, I was hooked because the cast were just terrific. James Davern was the most wonderful boss. Well, we'll just have to wait for common sense to prevail.

I made Shirley more and more like myself to save having to do a lot of hard acting. Shir' couldn't cook. Lorrae can't cook. Shir's an Earth mother to the bulk of her friends who are always 20 years younger than her. That's Shir', that's me.

It was coming up to 10 years and I was still in 'A Country Practice'. By the time she was ready to exit the show, I was already working at my one-woman show of the 'Legends'. You can't work two jobs, not in the showbusiness. And also, high society was on the horizon. So, really, my life changed from the moment I left 'A Country Practice', I never saw it again. Didn't see myself die 'cause I was working at night.

One of the highlights of all times in my life was the Welcome Home march for the Vietnam veterans. As all the battalions went by, they were saying, "G'day, Lorrae." I said, "Hi". So they grabbed me and I moved in the middle of a battalion and that's where I was. Nobody knew I was there but I did.

My life seems to revolve around veterans. For the last, oh, three or four years now, I've been leading the entertainers on Anzac Day. I wouldn't miss it for quids.

PETER: Well, after the Welcome Home march came the Welcome Home concert. That must have been quite an experience performing for the troops again.

LORRAE: Not only the troops but their family and their children were with them. And when I sang the first three notes of the song that I really took as my own but I did my own version of it - 'Leaving on a Jet Plane' - I sang, "My bags are packed" and they went, "Whoa!" and 20,000 people stood and held their arms out. I nearly died with my leg in the air. I don't know how I got on with that song. I just... I nearly choked to death.

PETER: That meant something to you and to them which was a code in a way.

LORRAE: When I first sang the song in Vietnam, they were all emotional. I said, "I'll never sing it again." They said, "Oh,

please, it's our song. You must sing it again." So I did. But it hurt them because... You know, most soldiers wanna be with the people they love most. They weren't. I really enjoyed the fact that I was working with a group. Because I'd not done that. I'd been by myself most of my life. Suddenly, here I had this comfort of having a family all around me and it was really very pleasant.

PETER: What about when it came time to go? When it was time to kill off Shir'.

LORRAE: Well, you know, James wanted to give me a really long, lingering death. I said, "No, I don't wanna do that." Because it upsets children, you see.

Because Shir' was hurt in a car accident in one episode. Well, this poor demented mother rang. She said, "My kid, I can't calm him down because he thinks that Shir's really sick". So I had to ring the child, explain that I wasn't, that we were just playing pretend. So I said, "No, I don't..." So I came up with the really good idea that they just go off on a plane and fall out of the sky and never be seen again. I thought it was a good idea. They went along with it and let me do it.

PETER: You love writing shows.

LORRAE: Oh, yeah. Somebody gave me this book of Bryce Courtenay's called 'Smokey Joe's Cafe'. When I began to read it, I thought, "Oh, my goodness. This would make a play with music." And I became obsessed with it.

So I approached Bryce Courtenay and he gave me permission to do it and he said, "Just call it 'Honey'". And it's been the most extraordinary... Six years we've been working on it.

The story of 'Honey' is about survivors of the battle of Long Tan but after they've come home. I am strictly co-writer with Gael but also, I can write the lyrics. If it hadn't of been for Gael, I think I would have dropped my bundle a couple of years ago because it's been too hard.

Well, I decided to put my money where my mouth was and stage a production of 'Honey' as a co-op. All the vets who have been involved in it, and there have been masses of them, they've all given it a huge thumbs up.

So, Gael Ballantyne and I are now back to the script again, really refining it and being as neat as we can. I really do need to stop, don't I?

PETER: Well, you've ticked a lot of things off.

LORRAE: I have... I've gotta put holiday up there in a minute.

[www.abc.net.au/tv/talkingheads/txt/s2209837.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/tv/talkingheads/txt/s2209837.htm)

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## DIARY DATES

THURSDAY	11 NOV	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	25 NOV	Monthly General Meeting followed by the AGM	7:30 pm at the Historical Society
THURSDAY	9 DEC	Management Committee Meeting	
FRIDAY	10 DEC	Christmas Dinner	6:30 pm at the Scottish Arms, Bowral
TUESDAY	14 DEC	<b>Archives close</b>	4:00 pm for Christmas break.
SATURDAY	20 DEC	School holidays commence	
MONDAY	10 JAN	<b>Archives re-open</b>	10:00 am following Christmas break
THURSDAY	13 JAN	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	27 JAN	Monthly General Meeting	7:30 pm at the Historical Society

If undelivered return to:  
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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.

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