

Founded 1960

BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC

NEWSLETTER
No 430 July 2011

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

Website: www.berrimadistricthistoricalsociety.org.au

Email: bdhsarchives@acenet.com.au

ABN 29 362 616 937

PATRON: Mayor of Wingecarribee Shire: Councillor Ken Halstead
President: Mrs Leonie KNAPMAN 4871 1804 leonieknapman@bigpond.com
Snr Vice President: Mr Ken REID 4622 5028 kandjreid@viceroygilead.com
Jnr Vice President: Miss Judith GREEN 4861 1926
Hon Secretary: Mrs Carolyn HUTTON 4872 4232
Hon Treasurer: Mrs Jan REID 4622 5028
Archivist: Mrs Linda EMERY 4883 4271
Curator - Museum: Mr Bob WILLIAMS 4889 4405
Editor: Ms Lavinia FORD 4869 4038 lavinias@dodo.com.au
Research Officer: Mr Max ROGERS 4861 3526 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 Email: berrimamuseum@bigpond.com 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

JULY MEETING: Thursday 28 July 2011 at 2:00pm
VENUE: Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers Building,
Bowral Road, Mittagong

Our guest speaker will precede the general meeting.

GUEST SPEAKER: Suzanne Voytas
A presentation by Suzanne Voytas based on her book about the voyage to NSW of the female convict ship 'Elizabeth' and the feisty women it transported.

AFTERNOON TEA: To be served following the speaker - Members - please bring a plate or a donation.

AUGUST MEETING: Thursday 25 August 2011 at 2:00pm
VENUE: Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers Building,
Bowral Road, Mittagong

GUEST SPEAKER: Geoff Goodfellow

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Diary Dates

JULY

- 1 - 18 School holidays
- 14 Management Committee Meeting
- 20 Society train trip / tour to Sydney
- 28 Monthly General Meeting - Talk by *Suzanne Voytas on female convict ship 'Elizabeth'*

AUGUST

- 11 Management Committee Meeting
- 25 Monthly General Meeting - Talk by *Geoff Goodfellow*

SEPTEMBER

- 4 Father's Day
- 8 Management Committee Meeting
- 22 Monthly General Meeting
- 23 School holidays commence

A tour of duty

Jump aboard the train for a day out with fellow society members for a tour of duty.

Meet at **Mittagong Station** at **8:15am** (or **8:12am** from Moss Vale) on Wednesday **20 July**.

Train to circular quay by 10:30am and a brief walk to the Museum of Sydney (Bridge & Phillip Streets) for a personal tour of the building and the "Enemy at Home" exhibition.

Tour commences 11am
Entry cost \$5

After 12 noon we can have lunch (bought or BYO) in the Botanical Gardens, and if time permits, our guide can show you around the Police and Justice Museum, almost next door.

Suggested train home is the 3:49 pm from Central, or private transport if arranged.

Further inquiries or **RSVP** to Bruce Moore by Monday **18th July**

Email: actmoore@bigpond.net.au
Phone: 4872 3762

From the President

Ken Reid

Senior Vice President

Here I am - still acting (President that is!)

We have been advised that the Department of Fair Trading no longer accepts separate by-laws used in conjunction with the Model Constitution. Societies and associations must now use the Model Constitution or its own constitution which must comply with legal requirements. To comply with this ruling, a small group of members has been working on combining the Model Constitution with the by-laws previously accepted by members. A new constitution will be presented to members at a future special meeting, or meetings if necessary, and on final acceptance will become the constitution under which we will operate.

Our June Luncheon proved to be a great success - excellent food, good service, great venue and a very informative speaker in Marie Chalker. This event is well covered in a separate article in this newsletter. Marie also won the lucky door prize!

Another very successful, enjoyable and well attended event was the official opening of the Empire Cinema Exhibition at our museum at Berrima. Again this event is covered in this newsletter. Congratulations to Curator Bob Williams and Exhibition Curator Lyn Hall for staging this wonderful event which included a delicious afternoon tea. Also, many thanks to Museum volunteers for their help. I encourage members to visit the museum to see this new exhibition along with others which are changed or expanded regularly.

Many thanks again to Leonie and Greg Knapman for transporting, setting-up and manning our Society's two day stall at the Shoalhaven Book Fair in Nowra. Jan and myself helped on the Saturday. Books to the value of nearly \$300 were sold over the two days.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, Bruce Moore is now our Speakers and Tours coordinator and already has speakers in place for the remainder of the year. Bruce also has several ideas for Society tours - keep your eyes on the newsletter for details.

Research Fees

The basic research fee for non-members is \$15.00 for email, telephone and postal enquiries and this same fee also applies to those attending the archives in person. Additional charges for copying and printing apply.

Scans of photographs may be obtained and can be supplied as quality photo prints (up to A4 size) or as digital images on CD. Price on application.

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.

July Meeting guest presentation

'The Convict Ladies of the Elizabeth 1828'

Suzanne Voytas will give an illustrated presentation on the story of the infamous 'girls' who came out on the convict ship *Elizabeth* along with a Rev John Vincent who was aboard to show these girls the way.

The Highland connection is that the Rev Vincent was the first minister appointed to Sutton Forest in 1831.

The presentation will also lead on to the Female Factory at Parramatta where most of these girls ended up. Suzanne is related to one of the girls, Eliza O'Brien per *Elizabeth 1828*.

Suzanne Voytas has been a compulsive and addicted family history researcher for many years. She has not only worked on her family history but has helped many people to discover theirs. She is married to a patient non-family historian and has three adult children and five grandchildren.



Suzanne has completed the Society of Australian Genealogists' Diploma in Historical Family Studies, was the president of the Blue Mountains Family History Society for five years, as well as holding other committee positions.

Further information is available on her website: http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~elizabeth1828/elizabeth1828_suzannevoytas.htm

The Female Convict Ship

The Female Convict Ship, *Elizabeth*, sailed from Cobh Harbour on 28 August 1827, under the command of Commander Walter Cock and Surgeon Superintendent Joseph Hughes. It arrived in Port Jackson on 12 January 1828.

The female convicts were labelled the worst and most turbulent by the Rev John Vincent. Obviously he classed all the women by his moral and social beliefs, probably no different from the way we would today.

There were four different ships by the name of the *Elizabeth* that carried convicts to the colony between the years 1816 and 1836. In many colonial records there are different classifications for this trip, such as *Elizabeth* (4), *Elizabeth* 2(1) so, for easy

identification, Suzanne refers to this voyage as *Elizabeth 1828*. The ship has been described as a three mast ship of 540 tons built in 1812 in Calcutta for Sanders & Co.

The purpose of Suzanne's *Elizabeth 1828* project is to collect as much information as possible about each of the convict women and their lives in the new colony, to be collated into a biographical register.

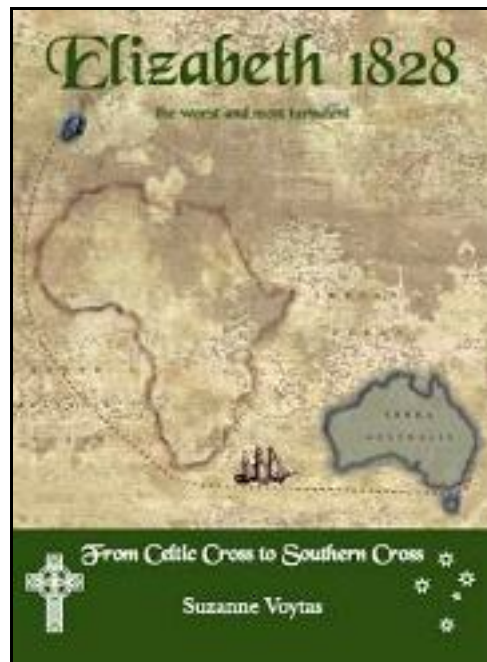
Suzanne says that by remembering these women and acknowledging their contribution to the new colony, whatever the consequence of their actions, we acknowledge that without their being, so neither would we be now. They are our history.

It is not her intention to write a book that might attempt to rationalise, dissect, categorise or stereotype their lives, social or moral behaviours either in Ireland or Australia.

She states that the many publications regarding the convict era which are available, more than adequately and eloquently explain these circumstances and provide in depth opinions better than she ever could do. Some of the publications do reinforce the typical stereotyping that has occurred and others provide more in-depth analyses of the circumstances and situations.

However all publications offer readers the opportunity to expand their opinions and learn so much more about the founding circumstances of our nation.

So even if you are not a descendant of one of the women of the *Elizabeth 1828*, come on board and listen to their story.



**To hear more about this fascinating history,
join us at the Archives Meeting Room
on July 28, starting 2:00pm**

A tale of two memorials

This feature compiled by P Morton from Archives material

1. The Queen Victoria Jubilee Fountain

It was a grand occasion in Moss Vale on June 22, 1897 for the unveiling of a memorial fountain in celebration of the Diamond Jubilee reign (60 years) of Queen Victoria.

The fountain was positioned at the junction of Bay and Argyle Sts. near the Post Office, roughly halfway between the railway station entrance at the end of Bay Street and the Royal Hotel across Argyle St.



The occasion was documented by the local newspaper, *The Scrutineer*, in a souvenir supplement that displayed two photos, brief specifications and a list of the members of the executive committee responsible for the erection of the fountain. The souvenir supplement was headed:

Record Reign Celebrations at Moss Vale to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, June 22, 1897

One photo in the souvenir was of the fountain taken looking up Argyle Street. In the background could be seen a row of shops, people and a horse.



The fountain provided drinking water with four steel cups attached by chains for the use of train travellers and others. Erected by the residents of Moss Vale on a solid concrete foundation surrounded by a rock-faced trachyte kerbing, it was described as follows:

"The bowl or basin is one large stone five feet in diameter and 18 inches in depth, being supported by a massive rock substructure. Rising from the centre of the basin is a polished red granite base with a column about three feet high of polished trachyte, finished with a rough red granite cap. The stonework is surmounted by an iron standard carrying three electric lights of 32 c.p. each.

The fountain is fitted with four taps, a constant supply of water being obtained from the Moss Vale Water Supply. The wires for the electric lighting have been carried underground, and the light supplied by the Moss Vale Electric Lighting Co. Messrs. Loveridge & Hudson, Bowral, were the contractors for the erection of the Fountain."

The unveiling Ceremony was performed by Mrs. Chris. Bennett (Violet) who was described by the *Moss Vale Post* in 1937 as "a generous donor to any movement of a patriotic and royal nature. She is better remembered as the donor of the piece of land on which the Soldiers' Memorial Rooms were built."



The unveiling ceremony around the memorial fountain in 1897

For people today the fountain may not seem all that remarkable, but the town in 1897 was still very young - it had been gazetted in 1863 and only really took shape from 1867 when the railway station opened. Prior to that Sutton Forest was the main village in the area.

The fountain was particularly significant in that it featured the district's unique natural product, Bowral trachyte, obtainable only at Mount Gibraltar which already graced some of Sydney's most elegant buildings, including the Queen Victoria Building.

That it carried electric lights was also highly significant. Moss Vale was the third country town in the state to install an electric light system. In 1889 a scheme to light both streets and private homes with electricity was introduced by the Electric Lighting Company. This private concern was taken over by Moss Vale's council in 1911. After 1924 electricity from Port Kembla was used to supply all the local towns. Thus Moss Vale was ahead in the district by around 35 years in having its own electric lighting.



Forty years after the unveiling, the souvenir supplement mentioned above was unearthed by a reader of the *Moss Vale Post* and it inspired the paper to run an article in January 1937 headed "**Old Moss Vale - Back in 1897 - Interesting Souvenir**".

As the souvenir supplement had listed the names of the executive committee responsible for the Queen Victoria fountain, the paper made inquiries as to their identity, revealing the following particulars: Alderman E Goodridge (Chairman & mayor) was at the time owner of the Royal Hotel; I S Ponder (Hon Treasurer) was manager of the Moss Vale branch of the ES&A Bank; J R Caldwell (Joint Hon Secretary) was accountant at the same bank; and George Gissing (Joint Hon Secretary) was employed in Samuel's store.

Of the other 16 Committee members on the list, R P Richardson was the senior partner in real estate firm Richardson & Wrench and F H Throsby was the sole surviving member of the committee still in local residence.

In 1915 Bay Street was shortened into a turning bay when the railway station was extended due to duplication of the line. Yet the fountain remained an outstanding landmark facing Argyle Street that was greatly admired by passers-by, both pedestrian and motorists.

But its days were numbered as in 1937 plans were already afoot to usurp its position as the town's unique landmark.

2. The Dr John Alcorn Memorial Clock

In 1937 the Returned Soldiers League (Moss Vale branch) proposed that a memorial clock be erected in memory of Dr John M. Alcorn, who had died the previous year.

Dr Alcorn, who had been in practice in Moss Vale since 1919, was held in high regard by the soldiers of World War 1. He was a well respected doctor in both military service and civilian life.

He had been born in Maitland in 1881. His grandfather, Robert Alcorn, an Irish immigrant, was one of the first settlers to take up land at Kangaloon in 1872. Little is known of John Alcorn's life before his war service but he returned with the rank of Major, to become a resident doctor in Moss Vale where he settled with his wife and daughter. He is remembered as being constantly on call and was active in local community organisations



A large crowd gathered at the Alcorn Memorial Clock unveiling ceremony on 6 Feb 1938

It was generally agreed the memorial should be placed where the Queen Victoria fountain stood and tenders were called in October 1937. As the expense of removing the fountain would have been considerable, it was decided to superimpose the Alcorn Memorial over the fountain.

The cost to build the Memorial Clock was £300, raised from local subscriptions and included a £100 donation from Moss Vale's council. About 1,800 people attended the unveiling ceremony, including military personnel, returned soldiers, boy scouts, council members and district bands. The memorial was constructed as a 6 metre high, four-faced clock supported on four fluted pillars with stepped bases, capped by a stepped pyramidal dome and torch-shaped finial and was painted cream, maroon and rust. At the base, the surrounding area was paved with flower gardens at both ends.

Thus the fountain and clock tower became an integrated unit. Over the following years, as Moss Vale grew, increasing vehicular traffic along Argyle St experienced

difficulties at the memorial, with the fountain obscuring the view underneath the clock for turning traffic.

In the 1970s, a prominent resident, Haille H Paine, suggested that Council consider relocating the memorial fountain to the proposed new Council Chambers and Community Centre. In his opinion, the superimposing of the clock over the fountain "partially concealed the fountain which was a thing of beauty and symmetry and a fine example of the stonemason's craft, and established an incongruity of design and materials between the fountain and the clock tower".

It was the opinion of the Shire President, Cr Geoff Larsen, in 1978, that the clock itself was the problem as its mechanism had

become worn and it very seldom kept the right time. It was old fashioned and a traffic hazard. Several councillors agreed that it

would be better to have the clock removed to a park rather than repaired. The clock was also a target for vandals who pulled the exposed hands out of position, damaging the working mechanism.

After much discussion and amendments, the council finally agreed instead to remove the fountain from the base of the clock tower. To further reduce the traffic hazard a traffic island would be built around the clock tower and new clock facings were also added to the 1978 budget.

Thus the fountain was moved out from under the clock tower and repositioned behind the taxi rank in the grassed area that had been Bay Street. The fountain no longer had its wrought iron light fitting nor did it function as a drinking fountain.

However in 2000 community interest in having the fountain restored to its former glory and repositioned closer to its original position gained the support of Wingecarribee Shire Council.

The *Southern Highland News* reported in January 2007 that landscape architects Chris and Charlotte Webb had looked into the history of the fountain in their commission to plan the extension of Leighton Gardens.

They confirmed from old photographs that the fountain was never a reticulated ornamental fountain, but a drinking fountain. The fountain's top lights were reinstated and it was repositioned into Diamond Jubilee Park where a circular landscaped garden with seats provided a suitable setting. The \$170,000 Leighton Gardens extension project also included additional landscaping around the Alcorn Memorial Clock.

It is a tribute to Moss Vale that today the two memorials stand as separate unique eye-catching landmarks.



Museum's Empire Cinema display

A large gathering of around 60 people assembled in the Klein Room at the museum on Sunday 26 June for the official opening of the new Empire Cinema exhibition. Included were society members, owners and friends of the cinema and several descendents of June & Stan Street who, as owners of the theatre from the 1970s, steered it through difficult times.

Local identity Garry Barnsley MC'd the occasion. He spoke of the Empire Cinema's history and community relevance and then provided some background about Jan Kenny ACS, of the Australian Cinematographers Society, who opened the exhibition.

Jan Kenny joined the Commonwealth Film Unit in 1967 and later became the first woman to shoot a feature in Australia with the film *Fran*. In 1986 Jan was the first woman to be accredited by the Australian Cinematographers' Society.

Jan worked on 14 feature films, more than 20 documentaries and 80 commercials where she was loader and focus puller, then as Director of Photography shot approximately 30 hours of film television drama, two feature films, and many documentaries and commercials. In May 2004 Jan was inducted into the Australian Cinematographers' Society Hall of Fame.

After Jan Kenny had declared the exhibition open, Richard Ruhfus, the leading business partner of the consortium that runs the cinema, then addressed the assembly and congratulated Lyn Hall on her wonderful effort in curating the exhibition.

The exhibition showcases the extensive history of the Empire Picture Theatre that first opened in 1915 in a new building on Bong Bong Street Bowral able to seat up to 946 patrons. In 1973 owners June and Stan Street made extensive alterations, creating a cinema in the upstairs space of the old theatre's dress circle with a realistic 350 seats; underneath the street level was remodelled into shops.

However colour television arrived in 1976 and, after a patchy run through to 1979, the Empire Theatre closed. Concerned that this would be permanent, the local community organised a petition to plead for the cinema to continue. The Streets decided to retain the Empire and moved the entrance from the front to the side where it is today. This allowed for the construction of two shops facing Bong Bong Street. They also donated land at the rear of the building plus the laneway to Council.



The Empire holds the record of being Australia's oldest commercial cinema still in operation and was recognised by the Independent Cinema Distributor's National Award as 'Best Independent Regional Cinema' in 2003. Richard Ruhfus has been joined by business partners Gerard Aiken and David Graham to steer the cinema into the future.

Members and friends are encouraged to make a visit to the museum to enjoy this wonderful addition to the museum's early local industries exhibitions.



(from right) Jan Kenny, Richard Ruhfus, Lyn Hall, with Gerard Aiken and Jess Peterson (from the Empire) in the background.



(from left) Jan Kenny, Richard Ruhfus, Garry Barnsley and members of the attentive audience.



Stan and June Street's granddaughter Simone Rossiter with her husband, son and daughter.

Photos: Desmond Kennard, Philip Morton, Jan Reid

June Luncheon at Prince Albert Inn

It was in the historic surrounds of the meticulously restored Prince Albert Inn at Braemar, just north of Mittagong, that members of the Society gathered for the annual luncheon on 23 June.

Many people have fond memories of the place when it was The Poplars Restaurant, a familiar landmark at the entrance to the Southern Highlands from the 1960s when one motored south down the highway.



In his introduction to the lunch, Acting President Ken Reid informed the gathering that The Poplars was the venue in October 1963 for the Society's first meeting held at Mittagong. This was reported as the best attended on record at the time and it included a contingent from the newly formed Picton District Historical Society.

This year around 40 members and guests enjoyed a delicious two-course meal in the warmth of the inn's main dining room, at four tables each seating 10.

Afterwards, Linda Emery introduced Marie Chalker, a long-time member of the Society, who has done considerable research over the years into the history of the Prince Albert Inn establishment and its various owners and uses. Most uses of the building were within the hospitality industry, although it did serve as a holiday resort and private residence for a time, and was also leased out as units before it became the restaurant.

Marie pointed out how she had discovered that the accepted story of its early beginnings had become mixed up and incorrect details were perpetuated. These she has now set right and is working towards the publication of a book on the subject.

Marie displayed several maps, diagrams and photos to illustrate her interesting summary of the building's history that finished with what the present owners have done to restore the original inn. Later we were allowed to view the accommodation suites upstairs.

Linda Emery thanked Marie on behalf of those present for her interesting and informative talk and concluded with further historical items about this important building.

Ken Reid wrapped up the occasion by thanking Marie and extended his thanks to all those who had helped organise the day, especially Carolyn Hutton and Philip Morton.



(from right) Guest of honour Marie Chalker with Margaret Wilson and beyond her is Prim Moss



(from left) Ian & Denise Mackey, Sandra Everett, Linda Emery, Daryl Levy, Carolyn Hutton, Jill McInnes



(from left) Betty & Ron Mumford, Gwenda & Daryl Levy



(front section) on left: Aileen Dillon and Sylvia Carless; on right: Marion & Peter Cruikshank



(from left) Ken Reid, Max Rogers, Carol Nolan, Jan Reid

Photos by P Morton

DIARY DATES

THURSDAY	14 JUL	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	28 JUL	Monthly General Meeting	2:00 pm at the Historical Society
THURSDAY	11 AUG	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	25 AUG	Monthly General Meeting	2:00 pm at the Historical Society
THURSDAY	8 SEP	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	22 SEP	Monthly General Meeting	7:30 pm at the Historical Society

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