

Founded 1960

BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC

NEWSLETTER
No 431 August 2011

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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 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

AUGUST MEETING: Thursday 25 August 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: Geoff Goodfellow
Geoff will provide an account of life on the sheep grazing property 'Oakwood' out past the Bullio Tunnel along the Wombeyan Caves Road covering the period from 1893 to 1970.

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

SEPTEMBER MEETING: Thursday 22 September 2011 at 7:30pm
VENUE: Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers Building,
Bowral Road, Mittagong

Inside this month ...

Diary Dates	2
Jack Hephher	5
Bowral Choral Society	6

And more ...



Diary Dates

AUGUST

- 11 Management Committee Meeting
- 25 Monthly General Meeting - Talk by Geoff Goodfellow on *Beyond here may be Dragons*

SEPTEMBER

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

OCTOBER

- Tulip Time
- 1 **MEMBERSHIP FEES DUE**
- 10 School holidays conclude
- 13 Management Committee Meeting
- 27 Monthly General Meeting

Historical Display Fathers Day Stall

Our society has organised an historic display and Fathers Day stall in the Mittagong Marketplace.

The historic photo display will be near the travelator on the carpark level on **Thursday 1st, Friday 2nd, Saturday 3rd September** and will be in conjunction with the "Volunteers Table" provided in the shopping precinct, on Thursday 1st and Saturday 3rd (this is immediately prior to Fathers Day on Sunday 4th September).

Our aim upstairs is to sell the publications that will be promoted via the historic photo display downstairs and we also intend to have a huge raffle consisting of prizes hopefully donated by the local business houses, there being just one big prize only.

On Thursday 1st September we will require at least 3 volunteers at any one time - 2 for upstairs and 1 for downstairs - the best approach could be by volunteers each doing 3 hour shifts; say 10am to 1pm and the second shift from 1pm to 4pm. On Friday we require only 1 person downstairs. The need for Saturday is similar to Thursday.

From the President

Ken Reid

Senior Vice President

As President Leonie has been granted an additional leave of absence, I am still in the position of Acting President.

The new Society constitution is still being finalised for presentation to a special meeting.

A recording system for research and family history enquiries has been established at the Archives to give us a better understanding of the amount of enquiries dealt with by Research Officer Max, and other volunteers. The figures for June totalled 134, and up until the 26 July the monthly total was 64 with several days to go before the end of the month. Well done to Max and the other volunteers involved.

Following the survey regarding the newsletter, as there were only two responses, it has been decided that the Newsletter will remain in its current format. Thanks to those who replied for your considered and excellent responses.

You will see from other articles in this newsletter that we require volunteers to man our Father's Day Stall at the Market Place, and that a small band of members attended a very educational and enjoyable day at the Museum of Sydney and the Police & Justice museum. Thank you to Bruce Moore for arranging this day and our guide at the Museum of Sydney. Also, we had a near full house to hear our guest speaker, Suzanne Voytas at the July General Meeting, that included a number of visitors which was most gratifying. Two new members were signed up at the meeting.

Following a bit of a false start, we will now be setting up the *Hillview Display* at the *Hillview* open days inside a marquee supplied by Mr Miller during the twelve days of Tulip Time in September/October. Again we will need volunteers to

help man this display and also sell publications. This should prove to be a benefit for the Society.

Separately to requiring volunteers for the display, and subject to the Management Committee's endorsement, I have offered to find out if any of our members are interested in becoming volunteer house guides during this time. There may also be need for guides to help with other activities. Further information will be included in the next newsletter.

It has been rumoured that as part of the State Government's financial cut-backs, Berrima gaol may be among those being considered for closure. Should this happen we will need to keep a watch that the gaol does not fall into disrepair and suffer 'demolition by neglect'.

In closing, may I pose this question - *why does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars, but check when you say the paint is wet?*

New Members

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:

Ms Rosalind **Dale**, Moss Vale NSW
Mrs June **Gardner-Brown**, Bowral NSW
Mrs Michelle **Gibbons**, Moss Vale NSW
Mrs Marilyn **Horton**, Mittagong NSW
Mrs Jean **Mitchell**, Moss Vale NSW
Ms Wendy **Ryan**, Moss Vale NSW
Ms Penn **Short**, Port Macquarie NSW
Mr Alan **Strachan**, Mittagong NSW

Here's to a long and happy association.

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

August General Meeting Speaker

"Beyond Here may be Dragons"

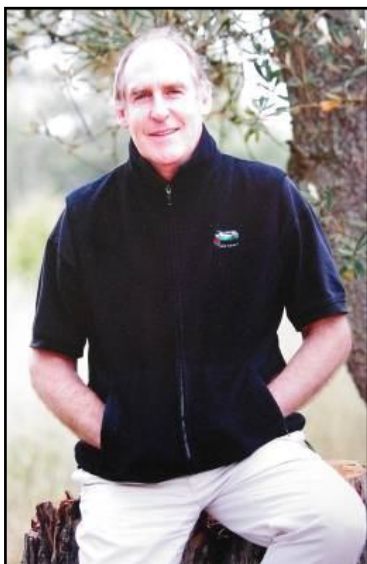
an interesting chat by

Geoff Goodfellow

Geoff will provide an account of life on the sheep grazing property 'Oakwood' out past the Bullio Tunnel along the Wombeyan Caves Road covering the period from 1893 to 1970.

Geoff retired last year as the media manager at Wingecarribee Shire Council, where he had worked for the previous 40 years in various positions, including a couple of stints as Acting Director of Environment and Planning and Director of Operations.

A Southern Highlands local, Geoff was raised on the family sheep grazing property called Oakwood, out along the Wombeyan Caves Road.



He attended Mittagong Public School and then became a boarder at Hurlstone Agricultural High before returning home to the family farm, where he soon discovered that he wasn't compatible with merino wethers and serrated tussock, so moved into local government in 1970.

Geoff became heavily involved in bushwalking, cross country skiing and climbing, which led to being part of an Australian expedition attempting to discover a high pass across the Himalaya from Kashmir to Ladakh in 1978.

In 1983 he married Barbara, who was a health and building surveyor and together they set out on a mission to see the world. Since Geoff retired last year, he and Barbara have travelled to China, then a long trip to Russia, Finland and into the Arctic Circle before returning down the coast of Norway, into Denmark and ending up in Scotland.

This was followed by another trip that took them from Germany down through the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, Croatia, Bosnia, Albania, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Turkey.

Geoff writes the weekly *Across the River* column for the Southern Highland News.

Bundanoon Oral History get-together

Bundanoon History Group will be holding an Oral History Morning Tea on Friday, 12 August, commencing 10:30 at the Bundanoon Club, at a cost of \$5 that includes morning tea.

Listen to excerpts from some recent oral history interviews with Bundanoon residents telling their stories about growing up and living in the village.

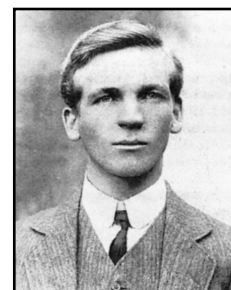
The interviewees featured will include Patricia McLaurin-Smith, whose parents built and ran "Greenways Guesthouse" in Garland Road; John Hartley (first President of the Bundanoon History Group and an early member of the JCG committee); selections from two interviews made with Roger Bell, long-time postman in Bundanoon (?53 years); and some snippets from Joy Philips talking about Bundanoon House (aka The Pill Factory, Gasthof, Highlander, etc).

For further information: Marianne Ward 4883 6082 or email: nedwin@bigpond.net.au

"A Place to Remember" now on sale

A new stock is available from the Society (at a cost of \$6) of the book written by well-known local man Claude Lee on the early days of the Old Burragarang Valley and its people before and up to the building of the Warragamba Dam.

Claude revised and enlarged this 1971 edition with the addition of some verses on our rapidly disappearing feathered friends, together with original Australian verses 'Jackass Time', 'Tales of Woe', 'The Breaking of the Drought' and 'Moss Vale Show'.



Burragarang Valley, which holds Lake Burragarang behind the Warragamba Dam, is part of the Nepean River system. The Dam is fed by the Cox's and the Wollondilly Rivers, into which feed several others including the Nattai, Wingecarribee and Paddy's.

Claude is remembered for the leading part he took in social, public and community activities. He was born in 1884 in a Queen St cottage at Mittagong built by his stonemason father, Joseph. He had a great variety of interests including bushwalking and, as a result, traversed all parts of the Nattai, lower Wollondilly and Warragamba areas. He was also a writer and a poet, as well as an exceptional musician, a sports enthusiast and press reporter for rugby league. Besides all this, he was Shire Clerk for Nattai Shire Council for almost forty years.



Berrima District Museum News

Bob Williams, Museum Curator

Berrima objects in Sydney Exhibition

Three of Berrima District Museum's treasured objects are currently on display in the Museum of Sydney.

They are from our award winning exhibition 'Prisoners in Arcady', German mariners in Berrima, 1915-1919.



One is the DADG banner, sewn and embroidered by internees to designate their mess area within the camp.



Another is a zither owned by Karl Pfingst, an internee who gave music lessons to a diligent pupil. He presented her with the zither and autographed music book prior to his return to Germany.

The third is a large framed memento made by internees and presented to the camp commandant, Captain Stoddart.



This loan is the culmination of several visits to our museum over two years by staff from the Powerhouse Museum's Migration Heritage Centre and the Historic Houses Trust. They wrote statements of significance and condition reports and took photographs.

I, along with several colleagues, was privileged to attend the official opening of the Museum of Sydney's exhibition on 10 May.

'The Enemy at Home', German Internees in World War 1 Australia, at the Museum of Sydney, closes on 11 September 2011.



Bob Williams with Bronwyn McKenzie from Sydney preparing the zither for transport.

"Enemy at Home" German internees exhibition at Museum of Sydney

Bruce Moore

The forecast for Wednesday 20 July included everything the Met bureau could throw at us, excluding earthquakes. That didn't deter five intrepid souls braving a bleak wintry day. We met at Mittagong Station holding on to our winter gear and anxiously awaited the 8.23 to arrive.

It was comforting inside the carriage as coats and scarves were discarded. Right on time, as if by a magic signal, Sydney was lit by brilliant sunshine as we strolled across from the Quay to the Customs House. We sipped our coffee admiring the scale model of the City cleverly displayed under the glass floor.

Our guide Bobby was waiting for us in the Museum of Sydney and told us about the background of the Museum workings. Purpose built above the cellar of Old Government House, this dynamic Museum houses several exhibitions each year. Three years in the making, we were shown The Enemy at Home which included 'our own' Berrima Gaol inmates of WW1. We learnt that Berrima housed only elite prisoners, as did Trial Bay. The bulk (6,000 internees) of prisoners was housed at Holsworthy, where the military base stands today.

Included amongst the internees was an Edmund Resch, the brewer, who had lived in Australia for 50 years. His was one of many fascinating stories on display. Bob Williams, our Berrima Museum curator, was simply drooling, wishing he had unlimited access to the Sydney Museum budget.

After lunch we ambled across Phillip Street and paid a visit to the Justice and Police Museum. In its former glory, this police station and gaol was busy paying attention to Sydney's notorious and unruly waterfront. The desk sergeant had to deal with up to 60 cases daily. Today, their display was focused on Persons of Interest and we watched live movie footage taken by fledgling ASIO staff during the 1950s. Russian spies were afoot during the Cold War and the Petrov affair highlighted that era in Australia.

Outside gale force winds blew and rain followed, but after our visit the sky miraculously cleared, the sun shone and the birds twittered. What a great day!

Who said History was boring??

Jack Hepher lived life in the fast lane

On July 14, Jack Hepher, aged 96, died at the nursing home in Bundanoon where he lived with his wife, Lily.

Jack and Lily Hepher joined the Society in 1999 and were members for nine years. The Society extends its condolences to Lily and to the extended family.

In tribute to the tremendous contribution Jack made to the local communities in which he lived, some aspects of his and Lily's life are recounted here.

Jack and Lily were both born in 1915 and, coincidentally, both their parents moved to Campbelltown in 1919, which then was, according to Jack, a very small place 'where everyone knew everyone'. Jack's father, a World War I veteran, became one of the first poultry farmers in the Soldier Settlement that once existed in the town.

The couple first met at a Scouts dance in 1934. At that time Jack ran a bicycle and radio business in Campbelltown. They married in April 1942 and, as Jack was due to join the Army, they had only a week's honeymoon in Canberra and then Jack went off to army service.

Jack returned home from the war effort in 1946 and resumed running his business which he later sold and then undertook many different jobs. During this time he was the club champion of the Campbelltown Cycle Club six times and rode in 16 open classic races including the Goulburn-to-Sydney classic.

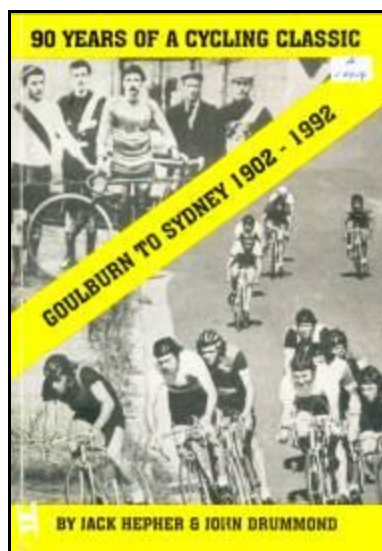
One job took Jack delivering parcels to the Bundanoon area. He called into the Bike Shoppe in Bundanoon where the owners were thinking of selling and he was offered the business at a good price. In 1976 Jack and Lily purchased the shop and in 1980 they moved permanently to Bundanoon, buying a house in Railway Avenue.

It was an ideal business for Jack. He had over 200 bikes for hire – in school holidays all would be out and there would be a list of people waiting. Easter and the October long weekend were the busiest times. There were three big activities in Bundanoon at the time – bikes, horse-riding and golf.

When the annual Brigadoon Highland Festival commenced in 1978, Jack would ride his penny-farthing bike in all the parades. Riding it was not difficult, he said, just the getting on and off!

In 1984, approaching 70 years of age, Jack sold the Bike Shop and together with Lily moved to Mittagong where their daughter and other family members lived.

In 2007 Jack and Lily's reminiscences were recorded by the Bundanoon History Group's Oral History Project, a valuable resource from which portions of this article were drawn.



In the book Jack wrote about the history of the Goulburn to Sydney Cycling Classic on the last page was this photo of him from 1937, the year he did his best time in the race.



Lily was presented with an engraved silver goblet by the Wingecarribee Shire President at a civic reception in Moss Vale in August 1983 having won the World Finals of the Toastmistress Club's Speech Contest in Boston USA. She is pictured here with Jack.

(photo from a *Southern Highland News* article dated 31-08-1983)



Lily and Jack appeared in the Wingecarribee Seniors' Road Safety Calendar of 2003 as part of a promotion that reminded seniors aged over 80 years of the need for medical checkups to retain their licence.



Jack was extremely proud of his collection of pre-1940 bicycles some of which dated back to 1882. He often rode his penny-farthing in civic parades and in the annual Brigadoon Highland Festival parade.

Jack is pictured here outside the Bike Shop in Bundanoon. This photo is courtesy of Bundanoon History Group.

Days of Yore: Bowral Choral Society

Article compiled by P Morton

Entertainments involving music ensembles, voice and drama were staged from the mid 1870s in the Berrima district, by such groups as the Young Men's Association and the Bowral Philharmonic Society.

On December 8, 1920 'The Bong Bong Boys', a particularly successful concert, was staged at the Bowral School of Arts in Merrigang St by the music loving fraternity of the town. This success prompted the general desire to form a choral society and the Bowral Choral Society was inaugurated in November 1921 under the patronage of Sir William Vicars and the first President, Mr T Dunwoodie, chaired a committee of ten members.

The first two performances given in 1921 were a concert at Glenquarry and one at Bowral. The Society's first musical show in costume was 'The Haymakers' and it hit the boards at the School of Arts in 1922, conducted by Mr C Davies.

Local bandmaster and famed composer, George Vincent helped establish the Choral Society and built the choir to a high standard, often stepping in as conductor. He gave assistance at critical periods, such as during the preparation of 'The Haymakers'.

On his death in 1932, the Society expressed its debt of gratitude to Vincent for the pleasure of performing his compositions and his arrangements, particularly of 'The Last Rose of Summer' and his 'Excelsior' for male choir.

In 1924 Mr Geoff Beavan took over the baton as conductor and continued to lead the ensemble of singers successfully until his retirement in 1950.

In 1926 it was thought fitting to honour him with the Society's Gold Badge, the first person to receive it. It was said that his words of encouragement, his interest and assistance never wavered.

A large concert given in the Empire Theatre Bowral in 1925 grossed over £90, a huge figure for those times. Successes were also scored at eisteddfods held at Mittagong in 1924 to 1928 and at Wollongong in 1926.

Sacred programmes were regularly sung in St Jude's Church of England Bowral. Grand musicals and dramatic concerts were performed each November in the School of Arts, and 'The Messiah' was staged in 1928, 1929 and 1930.

From 1930 entertainments were also presented in June of each year, with a grand play in November, and sacred programmes and concerts were regularly given together with Concert Party items in the other town centres.

In 1931 Mr Wesley Thomas came up with the idea of reviving the musical comedy and the success of 'Robin Hood' in 1932 assured the future of such a venture. Succeeding musicals included 'Neryda' in 1933, 'Merrie England' in 1934 'The Rebel Maid' in 1936, 'Geisha' in 1937 and 'The Emerald Isle' in 1938 with Edna Foreman as Lady Rosie Pippin.

'Merrie England' was particularly noted for its lavish costumes in which the cast looked resplendent and for having an orchestra of 14 musicians.

Musicals, of course, required accompanying music and proficient players were essential to the success of a production. One such musician was Miss L Brennan who joined the Society in 1925 and was appointed official Accompaniste in 1930.



THE HAYMAKERS: The cast of the Choral Society's first musical performance in 1922.



ROBIN HOOD: The Bowral Choral Society's 1932 production assured the future of musical comedy.



MERRIE ENGLAND: The 1934 musical was praised for its resplendent costumes and 14-piece orchestra.

In that year she was awarded the Gold Badge but unfortunately she passed away before the year ended. A lengthy appreciation in the local press finished with: "... audiences will ever remember her whimsical 'Danny Boy'."

The records of the Society were destroyed in the infamous bushfire that ravaged the district in January 1939. Luckily, however, some photographs of early productions, sets and cast remain as well as brief historical notes in Show Programmes and in local press clippings.

With the onset of WW II, cast numbers were so depleted that large productions were impossible and the activities of the Society were severely curbed. However it continued to present concerts for patriotic purposes with sufficient enthusiasm to cater for public demand.

In the post-war years the Society flourished

After the war, the Society resumed sacred and popular concerts and eisteddfod performances, but it was some years before musical shows reappeared.

Performances were gradually resumed and the Society then functioned for some time under three sections: the choir, the orchestra and drama.

The drama section was added in 1948 and many a happy hour was enjoyed by its members and many an hilarious hour by the public at their presentations. This section flourished for some 15 years until television brought about its demise. A series of Three One Act Plays were presented through these years, as well as popular concerts.

In the early 1950s drama was so well to the fore that the official name of the Society was changed to the Bowral Choral and Drama Society. However, with the decline in popularity of straight drama by the mid 1960s, the original Society name was resumed.

In 1947 a grand piano was thought to be necessary. Concerts were arranged and all worked hard to raise the required capital. At this time, eisteddfod work was at peak level.

A £700 Bechstein Grand Piano was finally purchased and in 1950 was presented to the citizens of Bowral by Mr E Brake, Society President. At a Celebrity Concert held especially for this purpose, the piano was presented to Bowral Mayor, Alderman H F Venables. Later, in 1951, a Society Gold Medal was awarded to Mr J W Campbell mainly in recognition of his efforts in securing the grand piano.

An orchestral group was formed as an adjunct in 1950, but had rather a chequered existence due mainly to lack of sufficient time to meet for practice. However when an orchestra was needed, someone always stepped forward and arranged to get one together.

Musical shows revived in the 1950s

In 1956 musical shows were revived after a lapse of some 17 years. This required much planning and preparation and Monday nights were the regular get-together time.

Musical comedy in the form of Gilbert & Sullivan was introduced and 'Trial by Jury' and 'HMS Pinafore' were staged together in that year. This was followed by a run of G&S productions and then a succession of more recent musicals, often with high royalties involved, staged for up to four nights.

These included 'The Gondoliers' in 1958, 'The Rebel Maid' in 1961, 'Iolanthe' in 1962, and 'The Boy Friend' in 1970. More productions followed each year and, in 1981, the Society's Diamond Jubilee year, the great musical 'Fiddler on the Roof' was staged for three nights in the Memorial Hall.

It was directed by Stan Henderson with Graeme Coats as musical director. Costumes and scenery were made by members of the Society, with the lead actors being Robert Jones and Kate Parker.

'Kismet' at the Memorial Hall in 1983 was the Society's last full-scale musical production in the Hall.

The choir continued to perform at various locations, but mounting costs and a lack of audience interest in musicals along with casting difficulties meant the Society had to scale back its scope.

In 1984, to reflect the change of format, a Review was put on, called 'Up the Gib without your Sneakers'. In 1986, four performances of 'Ten Little Indians' by Agatha Christie, with a cast of eleven directed by John Sider, were staged at the Memorial Hall. Traditional costumed pantomimes were also presented for several years, including 'Cinderella' and 'Wind in the Willows'.

In 1988, the Society performed G&S's 'Trial by Jury' at Berrima Courthouse and Bowral High School. The fine cast was directed by Greg Ellsmore. Some 'Old Time Music Hall' shows put on in various locations up until 1990 heralded the end of the Society.

Its fine tradition and experience was not lost, however, as in 1994 several members along with members from Mittagong and Moss Vale repertory companies and others formed the Highlands Theatre Group Inc.

This leading amateur theatre group, a "professional" team of volunteers, has operated in the Highlands ever since and recently staged 'Miss Saigon' to great acclaim. Coming up next year will be 'Cat's Cradle'.

So much fine local entertainment has come our way since 'The Bong Bong Boys', the concert in Bowral School of Arts that launched it all in 1920.

Photos from the BDH&FHS Archives

DIARY DATES

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
THURSDAY	13	OCT	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	27	OCT	Monthly General Meeting	7:30 pm at the Historical Society

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THE BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL AND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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