

Founded 1960

# BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC

NEWSLETTER  
No 437 March 2012

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

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ABN 29 362 616 937

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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](mailto: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 \$10.00 - 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

**MARCH MEETING:** Thursday 22 March 2012 at 7:30pm  
**VENUE:** Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers Building, Bowral Road, Mittagong  
**GUEST SPEAKER:** Linda Emery and Max Rogers  
Linda and Max will present another slideshow of their occasional series '**Captured in the Light**'. Showcasing recent additions to the Society's local history photographic collection, some interesting stories connected to the images will be presented.  
**SUPPER:** To be served following the speaker - Members - please bring a plate or a donation.

**APRIL MEETING:** Thursday 26 April 2012 at 7:30pm  
**VENUE:** Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers Building, Bowral Road, Mittagong

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and more ...



## Diary dates

### MARCH

- 8 Management Committee Meeting
- 22 Monthly General Meeting - presentation by **Linda Emery and Max Rogers** with another of their popular series focussing on district photographs.

### APRIL

- 5 School holidays commence
- 12 Management Committee Meeting
- 24 School holidays conclude
- 26 Monthly General Meeting

### MAY

- 10 Management Committee Meeting
- 13 Mother's Day
- 24 Monthly General Meeting

## New email address

Our society has a new email address:

**bdhsarchives@gmail.com**

## From the President's desk

*Ken Reid*

The Management Committee recently decided to change the format of our monthly General Meetings this year, reverting to holding our business meeting first, followed by a Guest Speaker. To assist in keeping the business meetings as short as possible, written reports submitted to the Management Committee are being summarised for presentation to General Meetings. Thank you to all who submitted their written reports-keep up the good work!

As not all members are able to attend our monthly meetings, the summarised reports are presented in this newsletter for your information.

Our February meeting worked very well and it was wonderful to see a large number of members present. Our Guest Speaker, John Vickery

presented a talk and slide show on his ancestor Ebenezer Vickery, who played a significant role at the Fitz Roy Ironworks at Mittagong. John has the Company Seal used at that time from the ironworks and passed it around the meeting for members to see. John's presentation was very informative and well received by all.

The Archives computers and internet systems have undergone system upgrades, which will make life easier for our volunteers. We have changed Internet Providers, and now have ADSL2 which is so much faster than the old system. The new email address is shown in the Society's address details on the front page of this newsletter.

Condolences to George Schofield, who unfortunately recently lost two sisters within a short period.

And to finish: *Did you hear of the person who sent ten different puns to friends, with the hope that at least one of the puns would make them laugh. No pun in ten did.*

## Linda and Max at February meeting

### 'Captured in the Light' Slideshow

At the next General Meeting in March, Max Rogers and Linda Emery will present another slideshow of their occasional series 'Captured in the Light'.

Showcasing recent additions to the Society's local history photographic collection, some interesting stories connected to the images will be presented.

### DON'T FORGET THE DATE:

Thursday, 22 March,  
Archive Research Centre Mittagong  
at 7:30pm

## Newsletter

Newsletter Deadline is **25th** of every month. It may be necessary to hold submissions after this date till the following month.

## 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.

## 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

## February general meeting reports

**The following is a summary of reports received by the management committee as presented to the February general meeting.**

### ARCHIVES

Linda Emery reported that it has been busy at the archives since the re-opening on 9<sup>th</sup> January. Several new volunteers have come on board and are doing an excellent job.

Networking of the archives computers is in the process of being completed. All computers will have internet access and will be able to print directly to the photocopier. As part of the configuration, we will switch to ASDL Broadband, but it will be three times faster. This means we have a change our email address, which will be annoying for a while but will be worth the short term inconvenience to get an improved service.

Linda has submitted an application to the IMB Community Foundation for

\$3,500 in grant funding to Perfect Pictures program which will allow us to put our photographic collection on the internet, thus purchase the next module of the making it accessible world-wide, with the opportunity to increase photo sales. Let's hope the application is successful.

Discussions are taking place with the archives volunteers regarding the idea of relocating the microfilm and fiche readers so that the room currently used for this can become the photograph cataloguing and scanning area. With so much material now available online, very few people now use the readers and the room is under-utilised. This change would be part of a reorganisation of the archives to try and make the most of the space we have,

## MUSEUM

No report received so I have summarised the Museum Sub-Committee minutes from their February meeting. Approval given by the Management Committee for Bob Williams to contact WSC re street frontage safety following several near accidents with cars knocking the current timber rails or driving into the Museum's front yard. A large photograph of the internment camp roll call donated to the Museum by the MOS following their exhibition on Internees during WWI to be mounted on the side wall of the verandah. A report on Australia Day activities was presented with compliments going to John Schweers & Philip Morton dressing up and mingling with the crowd carrying signs to promote the Museum which contributed to 44 adults and 18 children attending the Museum on the day. Bob Williams will be repainting the front verandah floor, while Bob will contact WSC re other external building painting needs. There are currently 26 volunteers working at the Museum.

## MUSEUM EXTENSION SUB-COMMITTEE

Harlan Hall presented an overview to the last meeting, detailing his work on the project and further action needed to progress the funding required to build the facility.

## NEWSLETTER

There was nothing in particular to report regarding the newsletter.

## RESEARCH

Max Rogers reported that he was looking forward to having the new archives computer networking and internet access up and running so that he could continue with his 'detective' researching to find results for the many queries received from the general public. Research and Archival enquiries numbered 85 in January, making the YTD numbers 185 from 1 December 2011.

## CONSERVATION

Sally Ross advised that Malcolm Badgery recently collected two of his photos that the Conservation team had worked on and also that he approved of the work done on his collection of maps.

## PUBLICITY

Philip Morton informed the Committee that on-going Society publicity continues with weekly history articles in the local paper, and with the monthly 'Snaps in Time' photos in Snapshot magazine.

Extra effort was put into promoting the museum through the holiday period - articles appeared in the local press that featured interesting objects displayed at the museum. Also the Australia Day 'dressing up' in period costume that two members undertook at Berrima achieved some success in attracting people to the museum.

The membership and the local public will be kept informed through the newsletter and local press about upcoming guest speakers and other Society events.

## PUBLICATIONS

Carolyn Hutton reported that total publication sales for January amounted to \$973. The following three books have been added to our publications for sale catalogue:

- Echoes of War in Avoca;
- Tallong - A heritage; and
- Pictorial History Hunters Hill (by Linda Emery).

A recent acquisition in our library is 'The Old Razorback Road' a book by Elizabeth Villey of Picton, about life on the Great South Road between Camden and Picton, 1830 to 1930. We were approached by the author to sell the book, but have decided instead to place a sign in our publications display area highlighting the book's availability direct from the author.

## LIBRARIAN

Carolyn Dougherty informed the Committee that at this early stage in the year she has nothing of significance to report regarding library matters.

## TOURS & TALKS

Bruce Moore advised the Management Committee that he has speakers tentatively booked for each month's general meeting throughout this year. The full listing may be viewed on the Society's website.

Next month will be another *Max and Linda* slideshow of recently acquired photographs in the collection. A further highlight to look forward to is Noelene Brown who will be the guest speaker at our June Luncheon. The choice of venue is still under consideration, with the Mittagong RSL a strong contender.

## Restored Sydney drinking fountain carved from Bowral Trachyte

### Historic fountain has Mount Gibraltar link



The Comrie Memorial Fountain, carved by masons from Bowral Trachyte obtained at Mount Gibraltar quarries in the early 1900s, has been restored and re-erected in Federation Way, opposite the Robinson Road gates into Centennial Park in Sydney's east.

It was bequeathed to the citizens of Sydney by Mrs Sophia Louisa Comrie, of Kurrajong Heights, for a drinking fountain. Far from being an ordinary display fountain, it was designed for the use of human, horse and hound. Positioned in 1904 in Queens Square, opposite St James Station, it was installed partly on the footpath in order for man and beast to access the drinking fountains and water troughs.

The fountain proved to be an obstruction to passing traffic and in 1934 was moved to Driver's Road, Moore Park, where it stood for 60 years, falling into disrepair. In 1995 it was demolished and stored.



The Centennial Park & Moore Park Trust and NSW Government Architects recently restored the heritage structure. The restoration work involved:

- acquiring replacement material to restore missing pieces and the repointing of stone joints
- installing new sustainable water features such as manual triggers for the horse and dog water bowls

and sensor driven bowls to empty once the animal has finished keeping water flow hygenic

- lighting to illuminate the architectural structure of the fountain and enhance its features, and
- graphics of footprints of a human, horse hoofs and dog paws inserted into the paving to indicate the part of the fountain most relevant to each.

The hexagonal domed structure of Bowral Trachyte with decorative columns of Gabo Island red granite shows no wear and the drinking fountains and troughs are once again providing for the needs of human, horse and hound in its latest position.

### A brief history: The Gib and trachyte

In the mid 19th century a deposit of microsyenite, a dense igneous stone, was discovered at Mount Gibraltar ('The Gib'), located between Bowral and Mittagong. Known as trachyte, it was quarried for almost 100 years from 1886 until 1986.

Following the opening of the railway in 1867 the area began to develop and stone quarrying opportunities were taken up by several enterprising companies around the mountain.

'Mount Gibraltar Microsyenite' is the technical name for the particular type of trachyte rock that forms the mountain. Marketed as 'Bowral Trachyte' its unique properties soon made it much sought after by architects and builders. Although very hard to work, the trachyte had strength and a very fine grain, which took a beautiful polish. It was without cracks or flaws and blocks of almost any size could be obtained. A really beautiful stone, it may be described as a dark olive green or perhaps dark grey, occasionally streaked with narrow veins containing beautiful sanidine (glassy orthoclase), hornblende, and aegerine crystals.

Many buildings constructed at the turn of the century contained Bowral trachyte. Such was the demand that stone was sent all over Australia and across the world. Mount Gibraltar was the only available source of trachyte of this type and fine quality. The only other trachyte source is in Russia.

Bowral trachyte was used also for kerb and guttering, railway ballast and road aggregate. Its strength made it suitable for foundations supporting great loads, such as the first Hawkesbury River rail bridge, the base courses for the Garden Island sea walls and hard-wearing steps for the Art Gallery of NSW, the State Library and Central Railway Station in Sydney.

It was used rough-cut, sawn and polished in buildings such as the Queen Victoria Markets (now the Queen Victoria Building) and the Equitable Life Building in Sydney and for many war memorials, monuments and headstones throughout New South Wales.





These buildings and monuments were an expression of the spirit of the British Empire and demonstrated the country's prosperity following the gold rushes.

The Gib provided the great Commonwealth Stone in Centennial Park on which Earl Hopetoun stood as he was sworn in as the first Governor-General of the Commonwealth in January 1901.

Trachyte was used for the foundation stone for the Commencement Column in Canberra, laid by the Governor-General, Lord Denman, in 1913, when the states finally agreed on a site for the National Capital and the choice of name for the capital was announced. Further afield, during 1913 Australia House in London was supplied with cut and dressed Bowral trachyte for its foundation stones.

### The story of the quarries

The first company to quarry The Gib was William Charker's NSW Trachyte Stone Quarrying Company in 1885, although a convict road party, the Gibraltar Iron Gang had broken rock on the site in the 1830s during the construction of the Great South Road. In the early years of commercial quarrying, large surface boulders were cut but as expertise and equipment improved, several large quarries were opened, employing as many as 200 men in the early 1890s.

The work was hard and dangerous, and accidents – even deaths – were not uncommon. Stonemasons Thomas Loveridge and Herbert Hudson took over the quarry in 1888 and began using trachyte in the Sydney buildings for which they were contractors.

In 1897, blocks weighing six ton each were taken down the Barrengarry Pass to be used in the construction of the Hampden Suspension Bridge in Kangaroo Valley. A twelve-ton block to be used as the pivot stone for Pymont Bridge took a month to transport from the quarry to Bowral railway yard.

The quarries were operated by a number of people over the years but the Pope family name is the one most often associated with quarrying on The Gib. Three generations of the Pope family worked the stone until 1975.

Local pressure led to the closure of their quarry in 1980 and the land was incorporated into the Mount Gibraltar Reserve.

### End of an era

The decline in stone quarrying came about because building methods and materials changed through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the use of concrete and steel, and stone came to be used for ornamental purposes only, such as veneer facing. Also, the community became more concerned for the beauty of The Gib and the quality of life so close to the quarries. Many residents remembered how the blasting would shake the town prior to the next day's crushing.

The use of Bowral trachyte for the extensions to the National Library in Canberra in the 1970s was the last prominent use of the unique stone.

The National Trust's Industrial Heritage Committee listed the remaining evidence of the quarries in 2008, in recognition of the importance of this industry to the history of Australian building and architecture.

Further quarrying will be carried out as it was agreed in 2009 for the NSW Department of Commerce to obtain blocks of trachyte from the existing quarry for restoration of historic Sydney buildings.

For those interested in viewing the historic quarries site, a Heritage Quarry Walking Circuit is now open,



**Loveridge & Hudson trachyte quarry on The Gib, c1910**

starting from the concrete slab near the reservoir on Oxley Drive. The circuit leads up to the quarries and then back down to Cliff St. It is not yet signposted, but there are information signs in the quarries.

It is with pride that we can view the massive stone buildings standing in Sydney today, and notice the local buildings such as Bowral Court House and the many monuments built of Bowral Trachyte.

### Article compiled by Philip Morton from sources including:

1. Sydney Centennial Parklands website re Cowrie fountain
2. Southern Highland News article on fountain, 3 Feb 2012
3. 'Trachyte Quarries of Mount Gibraltar' by Jane Lemann, Chap. 6 in "The Gib", by Mt Gibraltar Landcare and Bushcare
4. National Trust of Australia (NSW) Magazine Aug-Oct 2009

**Comrie fountain photographs provided by Jane Lemann**

## New members' night well attended

More than 20 new members of the Society recently came along to a "Meet and Greet" event held at the Archives in Mittagong at 5pm on Friday 2nd March. Drinks and nibbles were provided.

It was an opportunity for them to learn more about the Society and meet members of the Management Committee and other new members of the Society.

President Ken Reid introduced archivist Linda Emery who outlined the various collections, mentioning that our library is a valuable resource and that the research facilities and computer systems are being upgraded in line with improvements in technology.

Museum curator Bob Williams spoke of the museum and the valued role of members as volunteers.



President Ken Reid with Linda Emery & Robyn Arrowsmith



New members mingle with Management Committee members, well looked after by 'mine host' Bruce Moore.

Photos: P. Morton

## Management committee member



**John Schweers**

Recently accepted to fill a Management Committee casual vacancy, John Schweers joined the Society in June 2010 when he first undertook volunteer duty at the Society museum in Berrima.

John developed a keen interest in the running of the museum and was accepted as a member of the Museum Subcommittee in December 2011.

Born in Dubbo in NSW, John received his schooling in Swansea and Gosford. He trained as a Radio & Television Technician from 1955 to 1959 and then became branch manager of Dickson Primer Television Service in Wollongong.

From 1965 he was proprietor of several television service companies in the Illawarra and in 2009 was director/consultant to several antenna service and air conditioning companies.

John was president of the Wollongong branch of the Television & Electronic Services Association and the Electronic Services Association. He is a past member of the Corrimall and the Moss Vale Rotary Clubs and currently John is Chairman of the Bowral Hospital Pulmonary Rehabilitation Outreach Program.

Having lived in Mittagong for the past 17 years, John finds the local history of the Highlands interesting and is fascinated hearing it from the locals.

John's Australian family history goes back to his great grandfather who, as a German seaman, jumped ship in Sydney in 1864, after sailing from Hamburg on the *Susanne Godeffray*.

His grandfather served in WW1 at Anzac Cove and was killed in France in 1918. During 2015 John hopes to visit Anzac Cove and his grandfather's grave at Trois-Arbres Cemetery, Steenwerck France.

## Recent additions to the Library

### *Carolyn Dougherty*

- **Goulburn to Sydney: A narrative of 90 years of a cycling classic 1902-1992** by Jack Hephner and John Drummond. 2nd ed. 2007. Ref. 14/19
- **Lucknow: A veritable goldmine** by Kerrin Cook. 30/184
- **First Gold. Ophir N.S.W.** by Robert Bartlett. 30/183
- **1824 Cawdor Bench of Magistrates Population, Land and Stock Book:** A biographical register of the inhabitants residing in the Cowpastures, by Ken Williams. Ref. 03/181
- **The First Fleet: The Real Story** by Alan Frost. Ref. 07/77
- **The Rocks: Life in early Sydney** by Grace Karskens. 29/72
- **Colo Vale Community Centre 1961 - 2011.** Book 3 in the Colo Vale series compiled by Jeanette and Ron Schofield. Ref. 13/210
- **Memorial to a Marine: The story of a First Fleet family William Tunks & Sarah Lyons.** Ref. 01/108

### ➤ SKETCHBOOK SERIES

A number of books belonging to this much loved series have been generously donated by member Paul Johnston and are available for borrowing. Covering regional towns as well as capital cities, should you be about to travel then borrow, browse, and learn about the historic buildings in the towns you may encounter along your way. The collection includes the following places:

<b>Watsons Bay</b> 29/122	<b>Parramatta</b> 29/123
<b>Hawkesbury</b> 30/190	<b>Port Macquarie</b> 30/188
<b>Forbes and Parkes</b> 30/187	<b>New England</b> 30/189
<b>Perth</b> 31/36 and 31/32	<b>WA Goldfields</b> 31/34
<b>Fremantle</b> 31/33	<b>Brisbane</b> 31/24
<b>Toowoomba</b> 31/23	<b>Darling Downs</b> 31/22
<b>Brighton</b> 31/26	<b>Old Melb Hotels</b> 31/28
<b>Historic Melbourne</b> 31/25	<b>Port Adelaide</b> 31/29
<b>Launceston</b> 31/35	<b>Port Arthur</b> 31/30
<b>Hobart</b> 31/31	<b>Canberra</b> 26/27
<b>Melbourne Churches and Schools</b> 31/27	

- **The Birth of Sydney.** Edited and Introduced by Tim Flannery. 29/85
- **Servant & Master: Building and running the grand houses of Sydney 1788-1850** by Barrie Dyster. 20/169

## BOOKS DONATED THIS YEAR

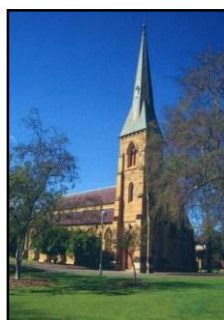
- **About face: a photographic celebration of people living in the Southern Highlands** by Kate Heaslip. Ref. 13/212  
Ann Beaumont, writer/historian and member of the Society, in her preface states "*About face* is not about tall poppies and shrinking violets but folk we see and meet in our daily lives. By digging just below the surface Kate has unearthed a treasure trove of characters who have enriched our community with their many and varied contributions."



### **NANCY REYNOLDS: Society member and former Matron at Bowral & District Hospital - one of many familiar faces in the *About Face* book**

*About face* is a delightful photographic record of familiar faces. Locals will recognize at least one of the subjects featured in this wonderful book. The photography is superb, the cover photo entices you to open the pages and discover more. Well worth a browse.

- **James Houson 1800-1876: Parramatta's Forgotten Architect** by John McClymont.



This book will be a must read for members with an interest in colonial architecture and/or the historic buildings of Parramatta. Available for loan it is to be found in the biography section at 24/110.

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A reminder to members that books that are not part of the Reference Collection are available for borrowing. Please come and browse through the shelves, you are sure to find a number of books that will be of great interest amongst the thousands of books that make up our extensive collection. When borrowing please register your name and book details in the Loans Book located on the desk area in the library. Happy reading.



## DIARY DATES

THURSDAY	8 MAR	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	22 MAR	Monthly General Meeting	7:30 pm at the Historical Society
THURSDAY	12 APR	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	26 APR	Monthly General Meeting	7:30 pm at the Historical Society
THURSDAY	10 MAY	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	24 MAY	Monthly General Meeting	2:00 pm at the Historical Society

If undelivered return to:  
Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc  
PO Box 131  
MITTAGONG NSW 2575  
Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc  
Newsletter  
Print Post Approved  
PP239679/00002

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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.

*Boral  
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Southern Highlands Food & Wine Inc  
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