

Founded 1960

# BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC

NEWSLETTER  
No 442 August 2012

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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

<b>AUGUST MEETING:</b>	<b>Thursday 23 August 2012 at 2:00pm</b>
<b>VENUE:</b>	Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers Building, Bowral Road, Mittagong
<b>GUEST SPEAKER:</b>	Janet Black  August speaker is Janet Black who will talk on Dr Patrick Hill and his early landholdings in the Tallong district.
<b>AFTERNOON TEA:</b>	To be served following the speaker - Members - please bring a plate or a donation.

<b>SEPTEMBER MEETING:</b>	<b>Thursday 27 September 2012 at 2:00pm</b>
<b>VENUE:</b>	Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers Building, Bowral Road, Mittagong

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## Diary Dates

### AUGUST

- 9 Management Committee Meeting  
23 Monthly General Meeting - talk by  
**Janet Black** on the historic  
*Caoura Station at Tallong.*

### SEPTEMBER

- 13 Management Committee Meeting  
27 Monthly General Meeting - talk by  
Brad Argent of Ancestry.com

## From the President's desk *Ken Reid*

A Special Birthday: long time member Marie Chalker celebrated her 80th birthday recently. Happy birthday to you Marie from all of us.

Recently the Society received an historic portrait of Sarah Neale who was the mother of John Thomas Neale, one of the founders of the Fitz Roy Iron Works at Mittagong. Sarah lived for a time at Mandemar, near Berrima, dying there in 1853. Her portrait was donated by Patrick Thomas, one of Australia's most distinguished recent orchestral, choral and opera conductors.

I had the honour of collecting the portrait from Patrick's home at Balgowlah Heights. In this issue Philip Morton presents a history of the portrait's subject, Sarah Neale, and of Patrick Thomas' family connection to her.

With this portrait added to our collection of historic artworks, a suggestion has been made that the Society consider showcasing our artwork collection in public exhibition spaces, such as at the Shire Council Foyer gallery and at other district galleries or libraries.

Shortage of storage for the Museum will be temporarily alleviated by the recent purchase and delivery of a shipping container, which, by kind permission is located at the Moss Vale Showground. Bob Williams and other volunteers will be painting the container in the near future.

Thanks to Harlan and Lyn Hall who photographed all the tools in Bowral Saddler, Mr Oldridge's workshop, and helped select appropriate items for the Museum, and with other volunteers worked on cleaning tools etc. for use in future displays. The builder who will be demolishing Mr Oldridge's work-shop will be keeping a section for our

Museum. The Museum has been asked to mount a display featuring some of Mr Oldridge's saddle making equipment at the 2013 Moss Vale Show.

Thank you to all our Museum volunteers and Bob & Gloria Williams for keeping the Museum open every day during the recent school holidays and to Brian and Sylvia Carless for preparing the garden beds for a colourful spring display. A TV monitor and DVD player have been set-up at the Museum to showcase some of our early district photo images to visitors.

The Museum is undertaking a mail out campaign in an effort to encourage more group visits. Members are reminded that the Museum is a great destination when other groups, in which they may have an interest, are planning tours.

Philip Morton is working on a new publication for the Society, *Early Industries in the Berrima District*, and a grant application has been made to the RAHS for assistance with printing of the publication, which we hope will be successful and enable this project to proceed.

The Archives handled 114 enquiries during June. Attending to these enquiries keeps Max and our other archives volunteers very busy.

Publication sales totalled \$464. This figure includes sales made at the Nowra Book Fair where our stand was manned by Leonie & Greg Knapman and Ros Dale. Thank you for devoting your time to this event.

Two copies of a recently published book on the history of *Lake George* have been purchased and are now held in our Library - one for research and the other for borrowing. I would also remind members that there is an extensive variety of books in the library available for borrowing.

Welcome to new members Mrs Ros Torrent, Ms Gillian Holt, Mr Jim Neal, and Mrs Margaret Chadwick. I trust you will enjoy being society members.

Please note that as our August and September speakers are only available for daytime meetings, the Management Committee has decided that the remaining meetings for this year will commence at 2.00pm, including our November General and AGM meetings.

It was saddening to note that very recently, and within one week, three ex-members passed away. Vale to Barbara Murrell, Barry Norman and Malcolm Guy.

To finish on a lighter note - *Why do people say they 'slept like a baby', when babies wake up every two hours; and why is there a light in the fridge and not in the freezer?*



IMB Bowral Branch Manager Diane Manley with President Ken Reid at the official announcement function for the 2012 IMB Community Grants awards. The Society was a recipient of \$3,300 for progressing the digitisation of our photographic collection.

## Vale Barbara Murrell

It was with sadness that I learned that Barbara Murrell had passed away on 18 July 2012.

Barbara joined the Society in February 1973. Early records show that she was a voluntary typist for the society, she recorded graves in Diamond Fields Road cemetery and she researched and wrote 'History of Yerrinbool'.

From the late 1970s to the late 1990s Barbara donated almost sixty objects previously owned by her parents to the Society's museum at Berrima. She was a museum volunteer. She took her turn on the duty roster; greeting visitors and showing them around the museum. This was in a time when the museum building was smaller than today, had no telephone and there was only one person on duty. She took part in working bees, in which the museum was given a general spruce up. She was probably the first person to type object labels for the museum. This was done on an early manual typewriter.

Barbara served on the museum committee from 1993 to 1998. During this time she was the museum's Secretary, attending to the correspondence and meeting minutes.

She drove a 1971 Holden Torana which she had bought new. She reluctantly ceased driving in her 94<sup>th</sup> year. The following year she moved to The Abbey Nursing Home and passed away peacefully in her 100<sup>th</sup> year.

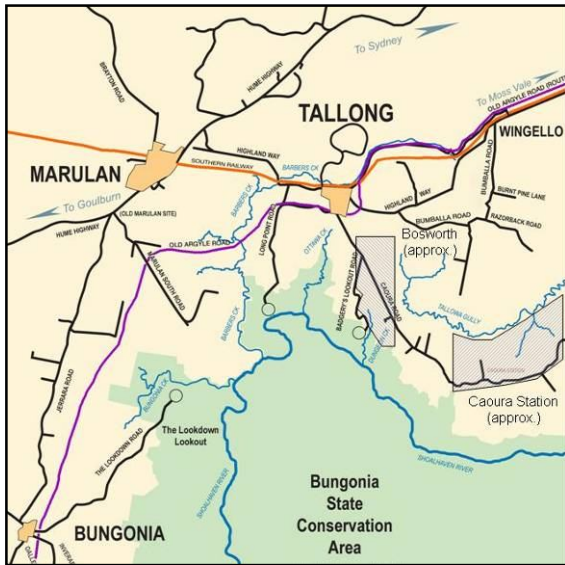
Barbara's achievements are all the more remarkable due to what most would call a disability. Despite only having one hand she lived a very productive life.

Bob Williams

## August General Meeting on Tallong

At the August meeting member Janet Black will talk on Dr Patrick Hill and his landholdings in the Tallong district. Dr Patrick Hill arrived to stay in the colony of New South Wales on 17 August 1820.

Although little remembered today, he contributed a great deal to the development of civic life before his death in 1852. His landholdings in the Tallong district were the properties *Caoura* and *Bosworth*, some of the largest in the district at the time.



**Janet Black** moved fulltime to Tallong with her husband Dugald in 2009, having purchased part of Caoura Station when it was subdivided in 2002.

Trained as a librarian she was just in time to take part in the research for and publication of the book "Tallong: A Heritage" produced by the Tallong Community Focus Group with a grant from the Royal Australian Historical Society in 2010.

Since then she has continued to study the area's local history with a particular interest in Patrick Hill and Caoura; much information is still coming to light about conditions in the region in the early 1800s.



**The barn at Caoura station**

## Berrima District Museum and stamp

*Question:*

What does the museum have in common with a recently released 60 cent Australian postage stamp?

*Answer:*

The Ice Chest shown on one of the 60 cent stamp 'Technology Then and Now' series is the same as the one on display in **our** museum. See photo.



Images depicted on this series of stamps show how much technology has changed our lifestyle over the last 50 to 60 years.

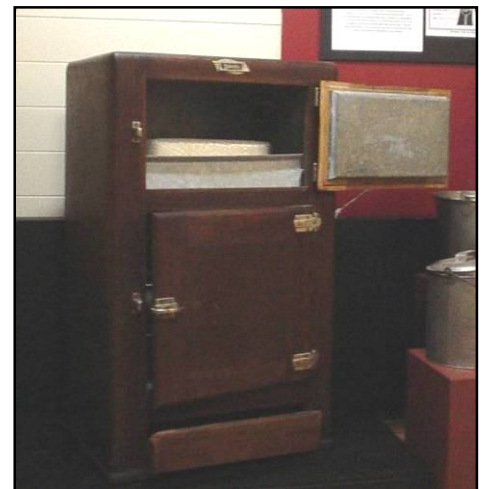


It reinforces how a museum, such as ours, stores and records these changes for future generations.

The museum showcases history to current generations, highlighting objects and images from past times.

Volunteers who give their time at our museum would like to show you and your family the wealth of history we have of the Wingecarribee Shire region.

Visit it now – it's free for Society members.



**John Schweers**



## Society receives donation of portrait

**An historic portrait of Sarah Neale [nee Nicholson] (1799-1853) has been donated to the Society by Patrick Thomas and his family.**



Patrick is one of Australia's most distinguished recent orchestral, choral and opera conductors. He worked extensively with the ABC and served for many years as guest conductor of major orchestras abroad. Patrick is now retired and having to relocate to a smaller residence, so he and his wife Helen needed to find an appropriate home for this portrait of Sarah Nicholson which for them has a lengthy extended family connection.

Sarah was Patrick's great-great-grandmother and the portrait has been a family heirloom for as long as he can remember.

The portrait has direct connections with the Southern Highlands, as Sarah lived at Mandemar near Berrima for a time and died there in 1853.

One of her sons, John Thomas Neale (1823-1897), with three partners in the mid-nineteenth century at Mittagong founded an iron mine at Ironstone Creek and formed the Fitz Roy Iron and Coal Company that commenced the first smelting of iron ore in Australia.

### Portrait of Sarah Neale

Dimensions: 80 by 65 cms. Oil on canvas portrait by an unknown English artist. Back of canvas states (in faded print): "Prepared by Winsor & Newton Limited, 33 Rathbone Place, London W". The portrait was professionally restored and reframed in 2000.

Society Archivist Linda Emery is endeavouring to establish when and where the portrait was painted, whether it was done in Sarah's lifetime or later from an earlier portrait of her.

### Relevant Neale family genealogy (from 1794)

In February 1794, William Neale, a successful baker by trade, sailed from England in the ship *Surprise* as a member of the 103rd Regiment (in what was the second detachment of the Second Fleet). Thus, 1794 was the beginning of the family in Australia. Why William forsook his flourishing bakery business in the UK and opted for life in the Colonies remains a mystery. Maybe adventure as a soldier beckoned?

William became a member of the NSW Rum Corps, and was in charge of convicts on board *Surprise* on the voyage to Sydney. Among these was Sarah Townsend. Having completed its tour of duty, the disgraced Rum Corps was recalled to England, but William elected to stay in Sydney and, as a non-convict, received a grant of land at Emu Plains in the Parramatta district. He later married Sarah Townsend (born Isle of Wight, 1774).

William exchanged his grant at Parramatta for a property named 'Mandemar' situated in an outlying area of the newly settled southern highland country known then as Bong Bong or the Sutton Forest district. The Mandemar grant had been made in 1819 and the first house built there was of hewn stone and erected by convicts under the supervision of a builder named Fox. Exactly when William took possession is not known, nor whether he actually retired there or used it periodically as a country estate. He would have been in his fifties in the 1820s.

Sarah and William Neale's eldest son, John, was born in Australia on 29 October 1797.

On 1 January 1816, John married the subject of the portrait, Sarah Nicholson [aka Nickerson]. She was the daughter of John Lee and Sarah Nickerson (Senior). If, as believed, Sarah was born out of wedlock, this was possibly due to the problem of too few clergymen being available at that time in the colony. It may also explain her taking her mother's name, Nicholson (or Nickerson?).

John Neale was appointed a constable in Sydney in 1825 and in 1834 he bought two allotments in Liverpool Street. He had interests in the carcass (wholesale) butcher trade, was an elected councillor of the first Sydney Municipal Council and an active member of the 'Total Abstinence Society'.

The marriage of John and Sarah produced thirteen children. William Neale, John's father, passed the Mandemar property on to his son who, although still active in business in Sydney, spent time there with his wife Sarah and family during the 1840s/1850s.

By this time the Neale's Mandemar property accrued the good fortune of having the main county town of Berrima established nearby on the new Great Southern Road, so travel to and from Sydney would have become more convenient for the family and it

seems their country estate residence served as a more permanent home for Sarah and the children.

### **John Thomas Neale and the Fitz Roy Iron Works**

Their fourth son, John Thomas Neale (1823-97), took an active interest in the Berrima district while growing up there and at age 25, with the financial assistance of his father, embarked upon an historic undertaking.

A rich deposit of iron ore had been discovered in 1833 by surveyor Jacques while creating a line for the Great Southern Road through the Nattai district (later Mittagong). 15 years later John Thomas Neale, Thomas Holmes, Thomas and William Tipple Smith formed a syndicate. They took up land and started smelting the iron ore in 1848. The mine was known as the FitzRoy Iron Mine and the smelting stimulated much other associated activity.

In 1851 the FitzRoy Iron-mining Company was formed to develop the smelting process and produce steel. With the exception of John Thomas Neale, the other members of the original syndicate became shareholders in the company. As things turned out, the Neales were indeed fortunate, for although the smelting industry at Mittagong achieved some success it was beset with difficulties and eventually folded in the 1880s. The iron ore industry then became successfully established at Lithgow and later at Newcastle and Port Kembla.

However the FitzRoy Iron Works was recognized by BHP in 1948 as the birthplace of the Australian Iron and Steel industry at a special celebration in Mittagong, marking the centenary of iron smelting in Australia. As part of the celebrations, the Royal Australian Historical Society arranged the raising of a memorial cairn situated at the site.

### **After Sarah died, Neale family sold Mandemar**

It is recorded that on 26 October 1853 the subject of our portrait and wife of John Neale, Sarah Nicholson, died at Mandemar and that a few years earlier her daughter Mary had her fifth child, William, there in 1845. The property was sold by John Neale in 1860.

John remained active in the wholesale butchery business in Sydney and was prominent in the move to establish a Municipal Council at Parramatta in 1859. He died in 1875 and by then his son John Thomas had assumed control of the family business.

When John Thomas died in 1897 his estate was valued at almost £900,000. At that time his home was *Lugarno* at 2 Macleay Street, Potts Point – designed by Edmund Blacket and Horbury Hunt, and originally the home of Lebbeus Horden.

Of John and Sarah's other children, the ninth was Sarah Christiana Jane Neale (born: 30 Sept, 1832). She married Henry James Taylor in 1854, and they in turn produced as their sixth child, Rebecca Ellen Taylor who married the Reverend John Thomas.

Their only son was Patrick Thomas' father, Francis John Thomas (1900-1989).



**Patrick and Helen Thomas**



**Patrick Thomas hands the portrait to Ken Reid**



**The Fitz Roy Iron Works at Mittagong**

*Article compiled by P Morton*



## Bill Oldridge's Bowral saddlery

The museum has recently acquired objects from local saddler William (Bill) Oldridge's Bowral home workshop located in Merrigang Street.

Born in 1908, in his early years Bill plied his trade in a horse-drawn cart visiting properties in the area. Once the business was well established, he opened a workshop in downtown Bowral and in his later years continued operating from his home workshop.

Bill passed away in February 1992 at age 84 and his wife Kathleen (nee Yeo) in 1995. Their property was inherited by Noel Nicholson who had resided as a border with them from the age of 14. Noel worked for the GPO, as it was known then, and lived on at the Merrigang house for 66 years. Happily for posterity he left the property virtually untouched.

Recent new owners John and Maria French approached the museum with a generous offer to select whatever was of historical interest. The sewing machines used for saddlery work had been disposed of by Noel Nicholson but the workshop remained as an example of a man's shed workshop from the days when nothing was disposed of in case it would come in handy one day.

Somewhat daunted by the huge volume to choose from, a considered selection was made of objects that would be acquired by the Society's museum and thereby conserved for posterity.

Detailed high resolution photographs were taken of the workshop before it was dismantled. These photos capture all four sides and the exterior of the workshop and could in future be enlarged for use as an exhibition background to recreate the look of the original workshop.

Several of the large benches and shelves have also been acquired and will become part of an exhibition.



Society member Jane Lemann photographed Bill in his workshop in 1982.



General views of the workshop before it was dismantled.



Museum members Brian & Sylvia Carless, John Schweers and Harlan Hall cleaning the collection.

## Historic St Aidan's in Exeter village

**This article is compiled from the book  
*Exploring Exeter* by Linda Emery  
that is available for purchase from the Society**

Of the many historic villages in our Wingecarribee Shire district, one of the most picturesque is Exeter, located between Moss Vale and Bundanoon. Taking pride of place there, St Aidan's Church seems to grow from the earth like its surrounding elms, oaks and gums. Being a most attractive and historic church, it is often chosen as an idyllic setting for weddings.

Settlers began arriving in the district in the early 1820s, encouraged by Governor Macquarie, and Sutton Forest developed as the first village where many small grants were taken up and several major estates established.

Free settlers James and Elizabeth Badgery arrived in Australia in 1799 and prospered in the Hawkesbury region but soon looked further afield and took up a 500 acre grant, Spring Grove, near Sutton Forest in 1821.

Badgery expanded his holdings in conjunction with his sons Henry, William, James and Andrew. As well as taking up grants close to their father, the sons managed family holdings at Braidwood and Bega.

In 1839 Henry Badgery built a substantial brick house on his Vine Lodge property, located eastward of his father's Spring Grove. In 1878 a railway station opened nearby when the Great Southern Railway was put through to Goulburn.

The Badgery family prospered and further expanded their holdings but an economic downturn in the late 1880s forced them to sell off some of their farming land. Vine Lodge was subdivided and lots were offered for sale and thus the village of Exeter took shape, named after the cathedral city in Devonshire, England, where the Badgerys had originated.

By the 1890s the village had most services required by a small community: a railway station, school, post office, general store and bakery - but no church.

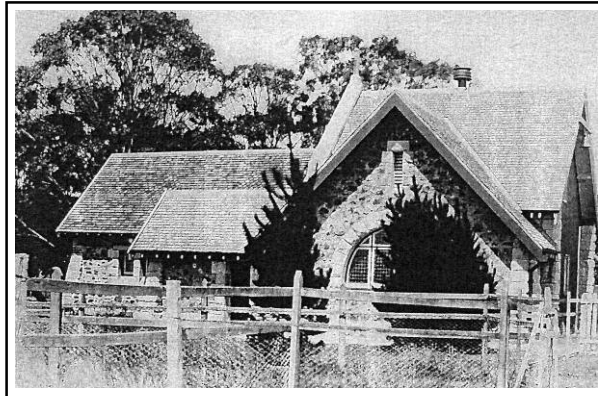
Church of England services were held at Vine Lodge from 1893 then a committee led by Rev AG Stoddart, Frank Badgery, Frank Yarwood and Arthur Yates approved construction of a church in December 1894 and called for subscriptions.

Built of roughly trimmed local basalt and Bundanoon sandstone, the rectangular structure had slanting

buttresses and a large semi-circle window with a Celtic cross atop the gabled, timber-shingled roof.

A ceremony of dedication took place on 11 January, 1896. The church was named St Aidan's after the Irish monk who journeyed from Iona in 645AD to bring Christianity to Northern Ireland and founded a monastery on Lindisfarne, an island off the coast of England. The church's design alludes to his Celtic origins and is surmounted by his traditional cross.

Soon the church was deemed too small for the growing village and its surrounding properties. From dairying, cattle and mixed farming, land use had diversified to include orchards and market gardens.



In the late 1890s Arthur Yates, a successful Sydney seed merchant, purchased a property in the Vine Lodge sub-division. With extremely fertile soil, cool climate and position on the southern railway, he considered Exeter to be an ideal place for a commercial nursery and so established a seed and bulb farm.

In 1902 Yates made a generous donation of £200 to start a subscription list for enlarging the church and submitted plans drawn by a firm of Sydney architects. In November 1903 the foundation stone for a new nave was laid by Miss Elsie Badgery.

The walls of the original building were raised and this area became the chancel with choir stalls, pulpit and lectern. A gable-roofed nave and sanctuary, north and south transepts and a small entrance porch were added. The unfinished west end of the nave was clad with corrugated iron.

The enlarged church was consecrated on 4 February 1911. Its memorial windows and tablets are an Exeter history in themselves. The most striking is the semi-circular stained glass east window, dedicated to James and Elizabeth Badgery, founders of the Badgery dynasty in Australia. A brass plaque in the nave in memory of Arthur and Caroline Yates commemorates the important role they played in the life of St Aidan's.

In the grounds an elegant Georgian-style brick War Memorial Hall was built in 1922 and extended in 1937. The church roof was changed from shingles to slate in 1929. For its centenary in 1995, the church gained a half octagon west end extension plus a new entrance porch and in 2005 the internal east and west ends were turned around with the interior opened up to allow more congregation participation.

The heritage-listed church and hall are both gems that do the district proud.

*Compiled by P Morton*

## DIARY DATES

THURSDAY	9	AUG	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	23	AUG	Monthly General Meeting	<b>2:00</b> pm at the Historical Society
THURSDAY	13	SEP	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	27	SEP	Monthly General Meeting	<b>2:00</b> pm at the Historical Society
THURSDAY	11	OCT	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	25	OCT	Monthly General Meeting	<b>2:00</b> pm at the Historical Society

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## THE BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL AND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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