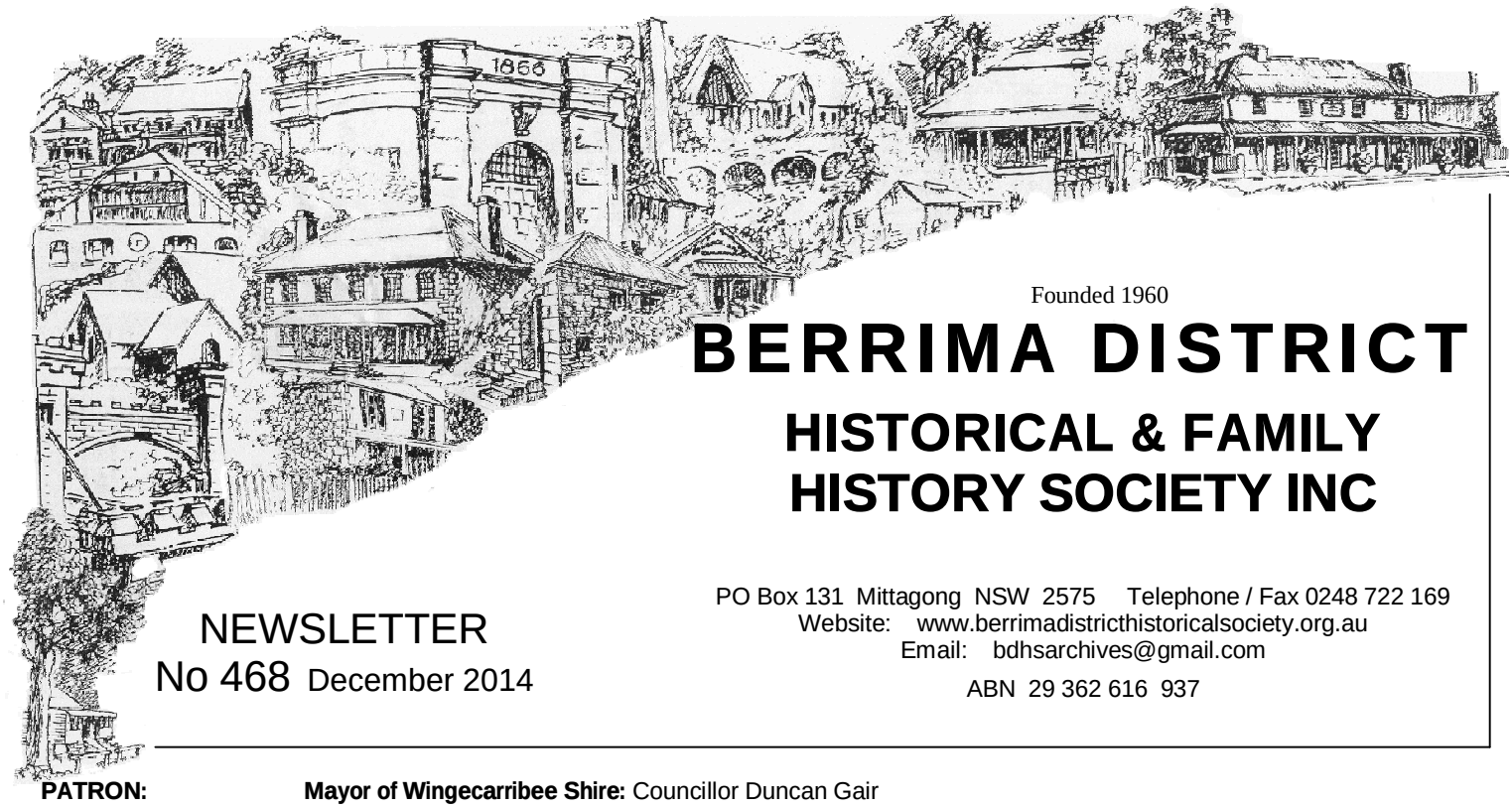


Founded 1960

BERRIMA DISTRICT
HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC

PO Box 131 Mittagong NSW 2575 Telephone / Fax 0248 722 169
Website: www.berrimadistricthistoricalsociety.org.au
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ABN 29 362 616 937

NEWSLETTER
No 468 December 2014

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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 $10.00 - Single $25.00 - Family $35.00.

AFFILIATIONS: Royal Australian Historical Society, NSW Association of Family History Societies, Museums Australia Inc & Regional Chapter.

GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

DECEMBER MEETING: No Monthly Meeting

JANUARY MEETING: No Monthly Meeting

FEBRUARY MEETING: Thursday 26 February 2015 at 2pm
VENUE: Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers Building, Bowral Road, Mittagong

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And more …



Merry Christmas and a happy New Year

This is our last newsletter for 2014. The next newsletter will arrive in your letterbox in **February** 2015. There will be no January general meeting on **22 January 2015**. The Berrima District Historical and Family History Society wishes to take this opportunity to extend to all our members, a merry Christmas, and a very safe and happy New Year. We look forward to welcoming you back - renewed, relaxed, and ready for 2015.

Diary dates

DECEMBER

9 **Archives close** at 4:00 pm for Christmas break.
11 Management Committee Meeting
17 School holidays commence
25 **NO** General Monthly Meeting
27 Society Museum Open Daily 10:00 am - 4:00 pm closed Christmas and Boxing days

JANUARY

Museum open daily during school holidays
5 **Archives reopen after Christmas**
8 Management Committee Meeting
22 **NO** General Monthly Meeting
28 School holidays conclude

From the President's desk

"Once more into the breach, dear friends, once more….."

Goes the famous Shakespeare line…… I thank you for your support and confidence in electing me President for a third term.

Either there is no one out there willing to take on the job, or by the look of our Management Committee, they're happy being in the same squad. We all look forward to 2015.

There will be one more meeting at the Museum and at the Archives before the Christmas break and we will gloat over what was a superb Christmas luncheon at Dormie House on Friday 28th Nov. For those members who simply forgot or could not come, they are more than welcome next year. Perhaps our June luncheon??

Mayor attends Society's lunch at Dormie House



Linda Emery and Bruce Moore with Duncan Gair, Wingecarribee Shire Mayor and Patron of our Society

We were graced by the Mayor's (Duncan Gair) presence as Patron of our Society, who reminded us of our valuable role as volunteers.

Mind you, valued at $30 an hour, I was hoping for some back pay! (Only joking.)

Why I mention a dollar value, he suggested volunteers add $25 million to the Highland's economy.

We 'break up' for a few weeks from December 9 to January 5 and arrive back at the Museum and Archives refreshed and ready to face 2015.

This will be a big year as we can foresee the Australia Day weekend having big celebrations in Berrima and by April 25th, we look forward to joining Australians in commemorating the Centenary of Anzac Day.

That will be the day when we showcase our new Gallery at the Museum.

Until then, have a well-deserved break over the silly season. If you are travelling, stay safe, drive carefully,

Happy Christmas and we look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

One more for the road:

In a train from London to Manchester, an American was berating the Englishman sitting across from him in the compartment.

"The trouble with you English is that you are too stuffy, you set yourselves apart too much. You think your stiff upper lip makes you above the rest of us.

Look at me... I'm me! I have Italian blood, Greek blood, a little Irish blood and some Spanish blood. "What do you say to that?"

The Englishman lowered his newspaper and replied, "How jolly sporting of your mother!"

Christmas Closing Dates

Historical Society Archives

Closed Dec 9, 2014
Open Jan 5, 2015

Berrima District Museum

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

A special afternoon at our museum

A late afternoon barbeque was held at the museum in Berrima on Wednesday 19 October. The shade under the trees at the front of the museum was a perfect setting for an occasion to thank all the tradesmen and volunteer members who contributed their expertise, materials and services to build the extension gallery.

Museum volunteers did a marvellous job in preparing and catering for the barbeque and maestro Harlan Hall filled the role of chief cook with flair.

After the barbeque food and drink had been enjoyed, everyone made their way into the gallery for a special announcement. Harlan welcomed visitors and, in his role as project manager of the gallery building and exhibition space, praised the fantastic contribution of all those who assisted in the building of the gallery, in particular Bruce Stokes and Phil Langley.

Harlan explained that much thought had been given to a name for the gallery extension. It was decided, and kept a closely guarded secret, that a most fitting name would be the 'Williams Gallery'.

The Williams Gallery is so named to honour the contribution to the Society and the museum by Bob and Gloria Williams over the past 17 years. Together they have played a major role at the museum by keeping its on-going functions running like clock-work and helping guide its development, along with other dedicated volunteers, into a community asset that is highly regarded both locally and in wider spheres. Recently Bob decided to step down as the museum's curator, a position he has held since 1997.

At first overwhelmed by their name being adopted for the gallery extension, Bob and Gloria soon rallied to acknowledge the honour and to speak about their part in the life of the museum and its dedicated volunteers.

Afterwards, on the museum verandah, tea and coffee was served and enjoyed, accompanied with a variety of delectable home-baked slices and cake. It was not an occasion to be overly concerned about one's figure or waistline!

Heartfelt thanks to Harlan for organising this never to be forgotten day in the history of the Society and the museum.









The new gallery is now ready for fit out and will soon be open to the public



Harlan Hall and Gloria Williams watch on as Bob displays the name sign for the new Williams Gallery that states "named in appreciation of 17 years dedication by Bob and Gloria Williams to the advancement of the museum".

Schooling history at Sutton Forest

Governor Macquarie visited the district in 1820. Greatly impressed, he wrote that the situation for settlers four miles southwest of Throsby Park was particularly beautiful and rich. At Commissioner Biggs' suggestion, he named the area Sutton Forest in honour of the Speaker in the House of Commons, Sir Charles Sutton.

Even though Bong Bong was established as a government town in the 1820s, the settlement at Sutton Forest formed the nucleus of occupation for the whole area and, where the South Road passed through, a village took shape. This became a stopping-place for travellers and a social hub for families, servants and workers on the surrounding estates. All Saints Church and burial ground came into use in 1829 and, until 1845, was the district's only church.

A public school opened at Sutton Forest in 1880 and has continued to operate there ever since. However, at the end of this year it will close. As a tribute, this article presents an overview of schooling at Sutton Forest. The history is taken mostly from *Silken Whispers*, a booklet providing a general history of Sutton Forest, its schools and church published in 1960 for the 80th anniversary of the public school.



Sutton Forest Public School in its early years

The booklet's section on schools begins by noting that a catechist named John Layton was appointed to the district in 1826 and his wife ran a school. However this would not have been at Sutton Forest, but at Bong Bong.

It is claimed that by 1830 a school had opened at Sutton Forest, under the auspices of the Church of England. A later *Sydney Morning Herald* article, in 1846, described it: "The church at Sutton Forest is a primitive looking building of weatherboard, and alongside it is the school, which consists of two neat little whitened cottages."

In 1857 a Roman Catholic school and residence were built at Sutton Forest. Both the Church of England and Catholic schools were administered under the Denominational Schools Board. The records do not list any official teacher at Sutton Forest until 1830. In that year, John Eyre was in charge of 18 pupils and remained until 1831. There is no more mention of teachers until 1842 when David Watson took charge of the Church of England school, which had 42 pupils. He was replaced by Henry Dicker in 1859.

The Schools Inspector, Isaac Coburn, reported on the school in 1862, stating: "It is at present held in the Church, in consequence of the smallness and inconsequential size of the room in the Teacher's dwelling-house, in which it was kept. The change, as far as size and conditions go, is an advantage to the Teacher." He recommended that a new building be provided, but nothing was done. Dicker was in charge and, with the assistance of his wife, looked after the 66 pupils that were enrolled. In 1863 it was reported that the school had no desks, "a few rough tables being the only substitutes".

The Inspector also remarked that all members of the local school board attended his inspection of the school. The Board was a group of citizens who formed a committee to administer to the local needs of the school. At this time the Roman Catholic school had an enrolment of around 50 pupils who were housed in 'a slab building in good repair'.

The Catholic school closed at the end of 1869; enrolment at the Church of England school rose to 72 pupils. The wardens decided that a more suitable place would have to be provided for school purposes and wrote to the Council of Education. In 1870 the school was relocated to a small wooden building although it was badly furnished for the 68 children attending and was unsuitable as a schoolroom. Dicker resigned his position at the end of 1870.

The chairman of the School Board, the Rev Zillman, wrote in 1870 that "nearly 100 pounds has been collected for the erection of a new school house and in the course of two or three months we hope to have the building completed". In 1871 Joseph Boardman took up as teacher and, in May, a weatherboard building 30ft by 20ft was finished. Charles Crommelin replaced Boardman in 1873 and the enrolment was 58 pupils. The Inspector reported that "the building is a commodious and airy weatherboard structure very fairly fitted up but there are no appointments in the playground". This building still stands; it is now the Church Hall in the grounds at All Saints Church.

In 1875 the enrolment was 81 pupils. An application was made in 1876 for the establishment of a public school. This was in anticipation of the *Public Instruction Act* that would see public schools established throughout the state. A local committee was formed of prominent citizens, namely Henry Badgery, John Antill, Charles Nicholson (graziers), Robert Richardson (auctioneer) and Thomas Cosgrove (store-keeper). There was some disagreement over the proposed school site. The Inspector favoured a site on the main through-road, but later in the year the Council of Education applied for permission to use three half-acre lots adjoining the Police Station in Conflict Street.

Plans were submitted to the Council of Education but matters were delayed and townsfolk grew impatient. It transpired that the Police Station land had been allocated as a run for horses and was therefore unavailable.

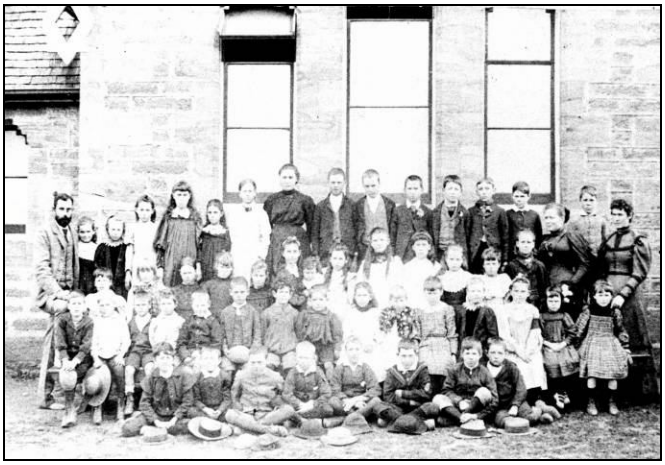
Despite some opposition to erecting a new school in the village itself, a site facing the main road was finally chosen and purchased in November 1878. It consisted of more than four acres, originally part of Nicholson's grant, and was bought from William and Mary Ellsmore and J Alston.

In January 1879 the tender of Messrs Kothe, Murphy and Jones for the erection in stone of a school building that could accommodate 88 pupils was accepted. After delays due to wet weather, the building was completed that December. The Church of England denominational school was closed and its teacher, John Whitehead, was granted his request to be appointed to the new school.

On 12 January 1880, the year of the passing of the *Public Instruction Act*, Sutton Forest Public School opened with

an enrolment of 44 pupils. In March, Miss Julia Fuller was appointed as assistant teacher, as enrolment had risen to 73 pupils. By 1882 the school had gained a weather shed, plus a kitchen and extra room were added to the residence.

In 1885 enrolment reached 80 children. The following year village resentment was aroused because the teacher, Mr Fuller, kept goats which at times ate the children's lunches. In August a petition was presented for his removal and he was replaced in November by George Graham. At the time the school only possessed one small table and one book press, apart from benches, desks and blackboards, but over following years, and into the 20th century, the school became better equipped.



Sutton Forest Public School children, 1895



Sutton Forest Public School children, c1900

Enrolment in 1906 numbered 67 children and teacher in charge, Mr Miller, was assisted by young Bowral-born man Walter Stokes, who later took over his father's business in Bowral. At this time Sutton Forest Public School was highly successful with displays in local agricultural shows.

In March 1916, head teacher Will Carter wrote: "He had the honour to report that this school was not in operation on Friday 17 March owing to the fact that the Governor, Sir Gerald Strickland had, through Her Ladyship, Lady Edeline Strickland, declared it a holiday for the school on that date."

A summer residence for the Governors, *Hillview*, had been established at Sutton Forest in the 1880s and was just up the road from the school. To the report quoted above, the District Inspector added the following note to the Chief Inspector of Education: "For your information, 'The King can do no wrong' and this legal fiction applies, I presume, to His Representative."

By 1917 enrolments at Sutton Forest Public School had risen sharply and three assistants were appointed. By 1924 there were 24 children in the lower division, housed in the weather shed.

In 1928 the pupils of the school won a writing competition conducted by the Commonwealth Trades Alphabet. As a prize, the school received a battery wireless radio set.



Students listening to a radio broadcast with teacher Aaron Phillips



Sutton Forest Public School class in 1929

In 1941 Stanley Taylor was appointed head teacher and is fondly remembered for upgrading equipment and keeping the school in very good condition by supervising repairs and painting. In 1954 long-awaited dual desks arrived and were installed for the second term; in 1957 a film projector was bought by the P&C Association. Taylor remained at the helm until into the 1960s.

Centenary celebrations were held in 1980 at Sutton Forest to mark the public school's opening in 1880. A NSW Government minister, Bill Knott MP, opened proceedings and, as part of an overview of the school's history, stated that "hardworking, dedicated teachers brought to pupils new ideas, studies and equipment combined with a sound grounding in traditional basics. The school encouraged students to take part in community activities long before such trends were seen as desirable or fashionable and the village community in turn has always taken a strong interest in the school".

This partnership of community and school has continued. Sadly, however, due to declining enrolments, Sutton Forest Public School will close at the end of this year.

- compiled by P Morton

New rail line to Southern Highlands given go-ahead 100 years ago

An Act of Parliament, the *Main Southern Railway Deviation (Picton to Mittagong) Act* was assented to by the NSW Government in December 1914, giving the go-ahead for construction via Bargo of a new line of rail between Picton and Mittagong.

Although the deviation did not open until July 1919, this year's centenary of its go-ahead 100 years ago is worth noting as a significant milestone. The decision had a major impact on the local landscape and on settlements in the northern localities of the Highlands.

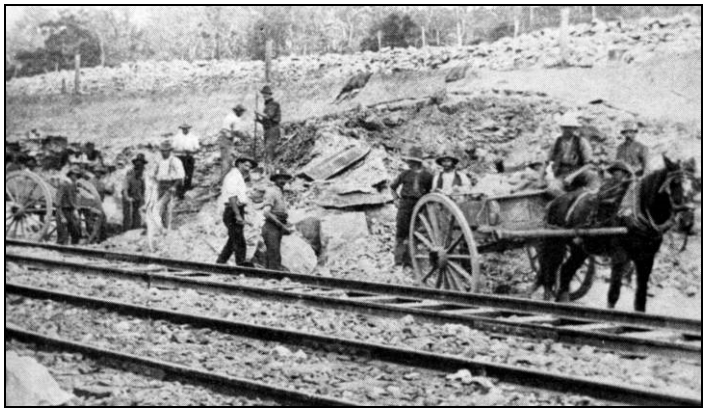
The original Picton to Mittagong section of the Main Southern Railway opened in January 1867. From Picton this single-line track did not follow the obvious, more direct line of the Great Southern Road through Bargo that climbed up Catherine's Hill to the Southern Highlands. Instead it was put through several miles to the west along a rocky, undulating ridge between the Bargo and Nattai Rivers. This was the only feasible option as the more direct route would have required bridges and tunnels beyond the means of the colony.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* described the route: "It may be safely said that the rocks, hills, mountains, gullies and precipitous watercourses which border the line between Picton and the Gibraltar Rock – a distance of more than 30 miles – are for the most part appalling. The country stands remote, full of rugged grandeur and unpromising desolation."

After traversing this rugged terrain, the line reached Mittagong and then proceeded through a tunnel under Mt Gibraltar to head southward across more level and fertile country, where local towns and villages took shape around railway stations at Bowral, Moss Vale, Exeter, Bundanoon and Penrose. The line continued on to Marulan and opened to Goulburn in 1869.

From Goulburn the rail line was extended southward in stages. When it reached the NSW/Victorian border at Albury in 1881, Sydney and Melbourne were at last directly linked by a rail service, although passengers, luggage and freight bound for destinations in Victoria had to change trains there because that state's line was of a different gauge.

The NSW Southern Railway brought improved conditions of travel for passengers and provided a better freight service than had the horse-drawn carts and bullock wagons it replaced. By the 1880s, productive grazing lands extended from Goulburn to the Riverina. Freight such as skins and hides was transferred to the railway. Live sheep and cattle were hauled to the Sydney markets in railway vans. Wheat production in southern districts had expanded significantly by the 1890s and, as exports grew, ever greater loads were carried by rail.



Workers with horses and carts on rail deviation south from Picton, c1915

Because of this growth in traffic, delays became more frequent as up and down trains had to wait to pass each other on the single line. Being the era of steam locomotives, delays also meant wastage of coal and water. Calls began in the 1890s for the entire southern line to be duplicated but, being a huge and expensive undertaking for the NSW Railways, 20 years passed before work commenced.

In the meantime, locomotive traffic bound for Sydney from southern areas had a relatively easy run except that, beyond Mittagong, trains had to be hauled up to Colo Vale and then, after running down again, had to be hauled up to Hill Top before reaching Picton. Even with passing loops provided at every station, the section became a bottleneck. The introduction of assistant engines helped to handle traffic but real improvement was not achieved until 1897 when a deviation opened between Hill Top and Colo Vale. In 1908 the line between Balmoral and Buxton was lowered and re-graded and a balloon-loop to eliminate the steep grade for up trains was inserted between Colo Vale and Braemar.

Yet the viability of the section remained problematic. Figures in the *Herald* revealed that, during May 1912, a total of 241 down trains hauled 84,894 tons of goods, with an average load of 352 tons each. Of these trains, 65 were worked by three engines each, 153 by two engines each, and 23 by one engine each, or a total of 524 engines to draw 241 trains.

Duplication of the existing line between Bowral and Goulburn commenced in 1913 and, the terrain being relatively level, it was completed in 1915.

For the Picton to Mittagong section, however, railway engineers recommended that, as part of duplication plans for the entire Southern line railway and in the interests of safe and economical working for growing traffic, it be entirely replaced. Work commenced in 1915 and, despite shortages of labour and equipment due to World War I, the deviation was ready for traffic in July 1919. It included a major viaduct at Bargo and four tunnels. The old main line section was retained as a local service known as the Loop Line.

- compiled by P Morton

From the early newspapers

Selected by researcher Carol Nolan

The Moss Vale Post

12 July 1929: **Fatal Accident - Men Swept off Lorry**

A remarkable accident, accompanied unfortunately by fatal results, occurred near Bowral during the week. A lorry loaded with workmen from the cement works at Berrima was nearing Bowral and was met by another lorry transporting a long telegraph pole. The latter lorry swerved across the road to avoid a collision, and the end of the pole protruding beyond the rear of the vehicle swept three men off onto the road.

The Bowral police, under Sergeant Beer, were soon on the scene and, assisted by passing motorists, conveyed the injured to the Berrima District Hospital. The unfortunate victims were: Arthur W Pitts (25) of Mittagong, killed; Stanley Groves of Bowral, fractured collarbone and severe shock, and Arthur Walton of Mittagong, injuries to elbow and cuts.

09 August 1929: **Boys' Escapade and Capture**

Two boys from Mittagong Farm Homes engaged in some highwayman tricks on the Nowra Road yesterday. A private postal bag was taken from a box, torn open, and four letters and goods taken from it. Last night the boys entered the home of Mr Coles, of Fitzroy Falls, and were captured by the resident and locked in a room until the arrival of the Farm Home's lorry, when they were taken in charge by an officer and returned to the Home.

20 August 1929:

Runaway Pony - Wild Dash Through Main Street

Careering along the footpath in Argyle St, Moss Vale, an affrighted year-old brown gelding smashed a sulky to pieces and injured its driver, shortly after noon on Friday last. Pedestrians scattered in all directions and several narrow escapes occurred.

The pony was being driven by Mr Ray Hodgins, with whom was Mr Roberts, along the Sutton Forest Road towards Moss Vale, when it displayed signs of restiveness. A strong, gusty, westerly was raging and after sighting a wind-blown scrap of paper, the pony became completely unmanageable and tore along the main street at a furious pace. The sulky and its occupants were left in a tangled heap against a verandah post outside Parry's bakery, but the scared animal, with broken traces flying, continued along the footpath at a mad pace.

Shouts of warning, fortunately, were raised, but nevertheless, a number of people had but scant time to jump out of the track of the crazy animal. Efforts to divert its path proved futile, but finally the pony crashed into a stationery wagonette near Minchin's Astor Cafe, falling beneath the vehicle and breaking its right fetlock. Constable Cooney succeeded in getting the pony to its feet and rendered first aid.

Mr Hodgins sustained an injured hand when the sulky was smashed, but Mr Roberts escaped with a few slight bruises.

10 February 1933: **Used Cars For Sale**

Chevrolet 1-Ton Truck, 1926 model in good order. Well shod. Registered till December 12. Price £70.

Citroen Touring Car, 11 h.p. Well shod, balloon tyres, in good order. Newly painted, very economical. £40.

Hudson 5-Seater Touring Car. Runs well. Good hood and side curtains. Well shod. £20.

Agents for all principal makes of Tyres and Tubes.

Charlesworth & Co. Moss Vale. Phone 30.

22 February 1935: **Coat Alight - A Thrilling Chase**

A fire which might have had serious consequences broke out in Argyle St, Moss Vale, last Wednesday afternoon. There was a humorous side, however.

An old gentleman driving a sulky was travelling up the main street, completely oblivious to the fact that his coat was on fire. Noticing his predicament, Mr Greg Kelly jumped into his super model car and made fast time after the sulky. Evidently the old man was anxious to reach a cool climate, for he was well up the street before Mr Kelly overtook him, and after many frantic signs, aided the man to put out the fire.

"You know I thought it was a bit hot," remarked the 'cool' old gentleman, who proceeded on his way. The origin of the fire has been placed upon the presence of wax matches in the pockets of the coat.

02 June 1935: **When Street Flowed Milk**

Banyette Street, Bowral, flowed with milk last Friday morning when a milk delivery waggon belonging to the Kangaloon Transport Company overturned at the corner of Bong Bong and Banyette Streets. The lorry, which was being driven by Mr T Nedmore, failed to take the sharp bend and it turned over on its side, and eighty odd cans lost their lids, allowing five tons of the precious liquid to flow down Banyette Street.

The lorry driver and a lady passenger were uninjured, but they had to climb out the door of the lorry, which was suspended in the air. A further sensation, and not a little amusement, was caused when helpers commenced to get the lorry back on its four wheels. Three well-known Bowral residents tugged at a rope which failed to take the strain, and deposited the tugging men in the gutter amongst the milk.

The dogs of the neighbourhood enjoyed the time of their lives, and spent most of the day lapping the milk from gutters. The milk was to have been deposited at the Fresh Food and Ice Company factory.

DIARY DATES

TUESDAY	9	DEC	**Archives close** for Christmas Break	4:00 pm
THURSDAY	11	DEC	Management Committee Meeting	
WEDNESDAY	17	DEC	School holidays commence	
THURSDAY	25	DEC	**NO** Monthly General Meeting	
THURSDAY	8	JAN	Management Committee Meeting	
MONDAY	5	JAN	**Archives reopen** following Christmas Break	10:00 am
THURSDAY	22	JAN	**NO** Monthly General Meeting	
WEDNESDAY	28	JAN	School holidays conclude	

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THE BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL AND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

is proudly supported by the following organizations that encourage the work of our Society in collecting, preserving and maintaining the history of the Southern Highlands.

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