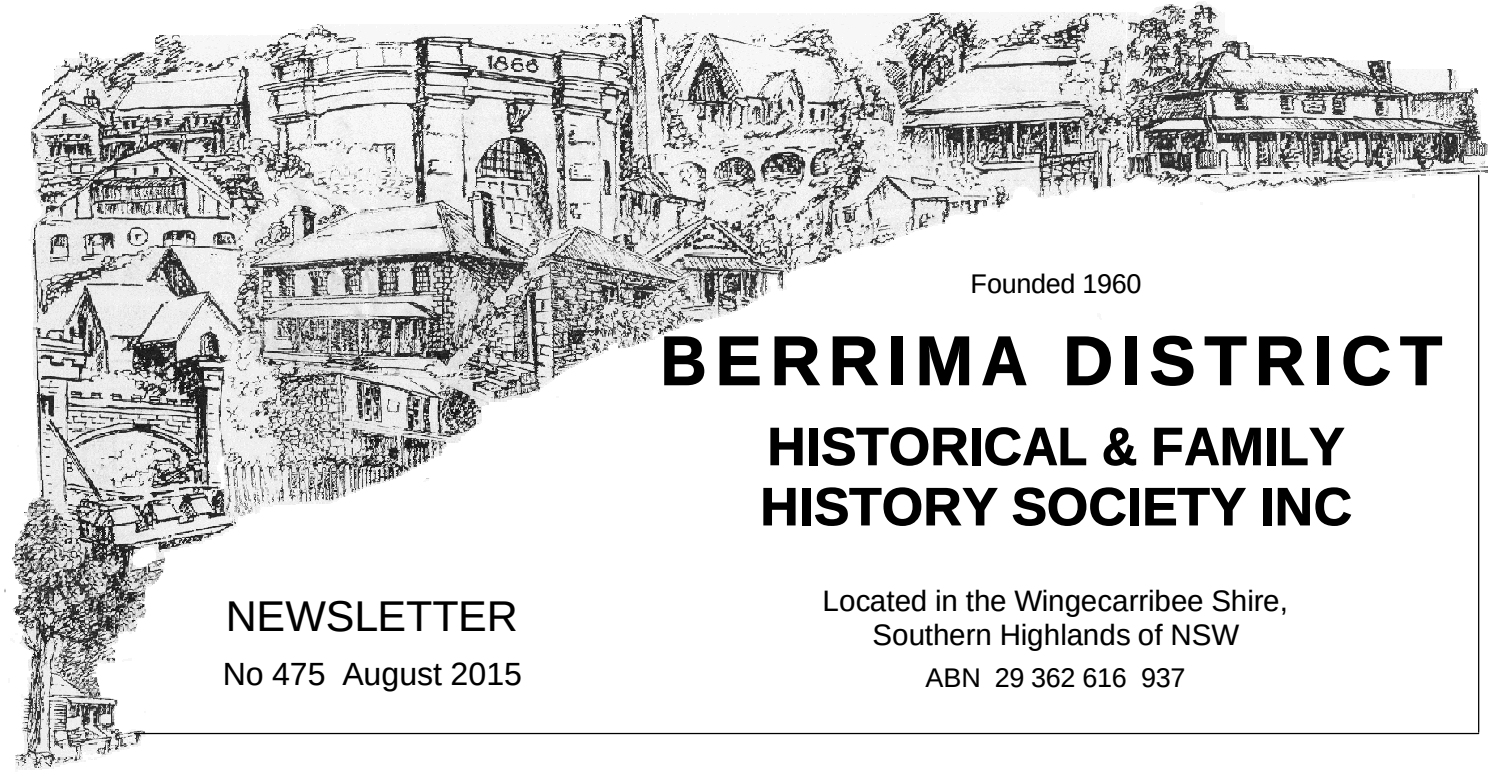


Founded 1960

BERRIMA DISTRICT

HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC

NEWSLETTER

No 475 August 2015

Located in the Wingecarribee Shire,
Southern Highlands of NSW

ABN 29 362 616 937

From the President's Desk

Bruce Moore, President

Things have been very black and white in the Highlands this past month. We're experiencing a gentle nudge encouraging more coal mining in the area. After listening to Leonie Knapman's talk on mining in the Highlands, we are reminded of the plethora of mines, past and present, already established. Depending on your view, we can call this the 'black' side, to use a metaphor.
The white arrived in the early hours of Friday morning the 17th, blanketing the countryside in a cloak of snow. What a sight!

I mean watching my bride enjoying the moment, holding a smoking i-phone capturing a thousand creative photographs, appropriately attired in a beanie, dressing gown and wearing industrial gumboots.
Oh how we laughed!
It hasn't always been black and white here in the Southern Highlands.
Before European settlement one could see the silver green, olives and ochres of the eucalyptus forest giving way to the emerald green of the sub-tropical growth nearer the coast.

Continued on page 2

GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

AUGUST MEETING:	**Thursday 27 August at 2:00pm**
VENUE:	Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers Building, Bowral Road, Mittagong
GUEST SPEAKER:	Keith Brown, Gunning & District Historical Society Author of "The Day Dunkley Died", the story of the murder of Henry Dunkley and the subsequent hanging of his wife.
AFTERNOON TEA:	To be served following the speaker. Members please bring a plate or a donation.
SEPTEMBER MEETING:	**Thursday 22 September at 2:00pm**
VENUE:	Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers Building, Bowral Road, Mittagong
GUEST SPEAKER:	Bruce Stannard of Maritime Heritage Press, Moss Vale A history of the Stannard family's early maritime services company established on Sydney Harbour.

THE Story Centre
BERRIMA DISTRICT MUSEUM
STORIES OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND OBJECTS FROM THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

Museum news on page 5

From the President

Continued from front page

Then came the smoldering from the smoke stacks of the Fitz Roy Iron Works in Mittagong from the 1840s. There were fifty shades of grey with a little blue thrown in.

With the increase of settlement came the land clearing and by the end of the 19th century the Yarrawa Brush was a brown dustbowl for the best past of ten years. After half a century of farming, this event sent most of my family packing from Wildes Meadow, to greener pastures up North.

Well that's history!

We now look forward to welcoming spring and its multi-coloured carpet of flowers, markets and people who are fortunate enough to visit this treasured palate of colour. They should be tickled pink!

Providing they haven't turned blue during these cold snaps of winter.

My doctor told me only yesterday that I was colour-blind.

Wow, that certainly was a bolt out of the yellow!!

Berrima District Museum

THE STORY CENTRE

Please note that the museum is now open at least 5 days a week

MUSEUM OPEN: 10am to 4pm

WEDNESDAY TO SUNDAY

and every day during NSW school holidays and on public holidays.

Groups welcome at other times by arrangement. Please phone John on 4872 1660.

Archives opening hours

Monday 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Tuesday 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Saturday 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Notice of Special General meeting

to be held on
Thursday 24 September 2015
commencing at 2.00 pm

BUSINESS: Proposed changes to the Constitution of the Society as follows:

1. Section 18 (3) - Delete the word "three" and replace with the word "five"

   Section 18 (3) would then read

   "No person is permitted to serve as an office bearer in the same position for a continuous period exceeding five years, except that, in the case of President, Secretary and Treasurer, they may continue in that role for an additional period of twelve months if decided by members at the annual general meeting if no nominations are received at the annual general meeting for their respective positions."

2. Section 21 (1) - add the words "Research Officer" (an omission from current Constitution) and "Museum Manager" (a newly created post)

   Section 21 (1) would then read

   "The posts of archivist, curator of the museum, research officer, minute secretary, membership secretary, newsletter editor, librarian, property officer, publicity officer and museum manager shall be appointed or re-appointed at the annual general meeting."

Membership Details

Please note that all membership enquiries and changes of address details should be addressed to:

The Membership Secretary

c/- the Society's postal address

or email to:

bdhsarchives@gmail.com

Research Fees

Research fees for non-members:

$20.00 per hour or part thereof for telephone and postal enquiries.

$5.00 per hour or part thereof for enquirers who attend the archives and carry out their own research.

New Publication

The following book has recently been added to our 'publications for sale' list and may be purchased at the archives, museum or via our website.

TALES OF TALLONG

Author: John Lombard

Soft cover, 45 pp A5, illustrated

Cost $13.

The author provides a moving account of his travels through the Western Front in search of the last resting places of four young Tallong men.

Notice of a Spring tour

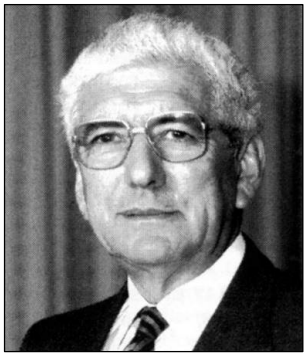
A self-drive tour is being organised for early spring to visit the historic Oldbury and Eccleston Park properties located in the Sutton Forest area. The tour will commence at 10.30am first to Oldlbury and then proceeding to Eccleston Park, where the grounds will be available for a self-catered picnic lunch. Participants are limited to 25/30 and tour is only available to Society members. More detailed information in the next newsletter.

August General Meeting Speaker

On 27 August at 2.00pm

Keith Brown

Gunning & District Historical Society



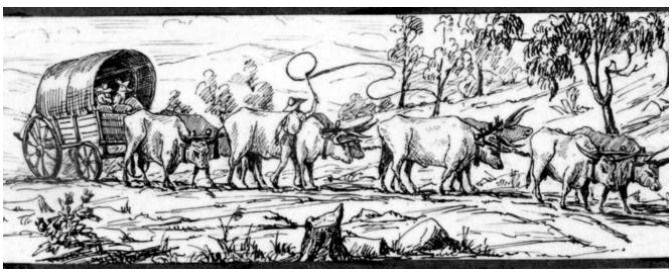
Keith will speak about his recently published book, *The Day Dunkley Died,* which tells of the murder in Gunning of Henry Dunkley and the subsequent hanging of his wife and her lover for the murder.

Keith was born in Bendigo in 1927 but spent his early years in St Arnaud, Victoria. He graduated from the University of Melbourne and in 1955 joined the then Department of External Affairs (now the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade). He served in Melbourne, Canberra, Geneva, Singapore, San Francisco, Washington DC and Tokyo.

In 1979 Keith was appointed as Deputy Official Secretary to the Governor General, Sir Zelman Cowen and, subsequently, to Sir Ninian Stephen. Keith retired in 1987 and since 2008 has resided in Gunning.

Keith and his wife joined the Historical Society on their arrival in Gunning in order to meet some of the locals and to learn something of the history of the area. Keith became the Research Officer for the Society and in this context became involved in the early history of Gunning when the ABC planned a segment for their series "Who's been sleeping in my house?" The research unearthed (in a sense) a lot of myths and misleading stories surrounding the murder of Henry Dunkley, among other incidents, which subsequently led to him writing the book.

He says that this experience and research on behalf of family historians has demonstrated the importance of recording family history as this often provides guidance to more general events of earlier times. These themes, of great relevance to those with an interest in history, will be expanded upon in his talk to our Society on 27 August starting at 2:00pm.



New Publication for Sale

CHANGING FORTUNES

A history of Willow Vale, Southern Highlands, NSW

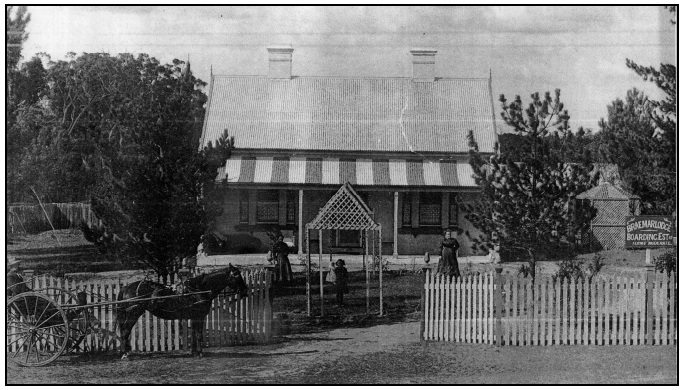
Soft cover, 154 pp A4, illustrated Cost $17.

The author, Carolyn Dougherty, has been a Society volunteer since moving to the Highlands 15 years ago. She has been Librarian for most of this time and was involved in the production of our publication 'Digging up the Past'.

In this new book, she traces the history of land ownership at Willow Vale from 1837.

The village of Willow Vale is situated on the northern outskirts of Mittagong. Carolyn found that there was very little information about its history in our archives and so this book is her attempt to go some way towards filling the gap.

From the 1830s, travellers on the South Road, after ascending the range, rested at this locality. The first land grant was in 1837 and the railway's opening in 1867 brought great promise. The private village of Willow Vale was subdivided and offered for sale in 1882. The changing fortunes of Willow Vale's land owners and settlers are portrayed by Carolyn, a resident of the village.



Braemar Lodge c1913 – Willow Vale

Archives Report July 2015

The big news from the archives this month is the arrival of our new Scan Pro film scanner which we have been saving for over a number of years. It was installed at the beginning of July and is going to make a huge improvement to the quality and ease of reproduction from our microfilms and microfiche. Despite the increasing availability of digitised material, there is still a lot of material which is not currently available electronically, and will probably not be in the foreseeable future. Prime examples of this are the pre-1856 birth death and marriage records and other local church parish registers which we hold on film, and some local newspapers which are not part of the collection which has been digitised on Trove.

We received a wonderful donation of material from Daryl Taylor of Bathurst during the month. Daryl's family, the Taylors of Moss Vale, were prominent storekeepers in the town from its earliest days in the 1860s. Of particular interest is a collection of 32 stereoscopic views of Wombeyan Caves and the surrounding area, including the road to the caves, taken in 1899 when the road from Mittagong was just being completed. Charles Taylor took most of the images - he was a keen photographer who had postcards made from his images to sell in Taylor Bros store. We have applied for a grant to have the images digitally restored so that the originals can be archivally housed, but the images themselves become available widely through our online image library. Whilst images of this type of Jenolan Caves are fairly common, a complete set of images of Wombeyan Caves from this period is extremely rare.

We have also received a further donation of material from Kevin Herring in the form of parish maps of our area. These are particularly interesting as they are copies of maps used by the Lands Department which have a great deal of additional information that does not appear on many of the parish maps that we already hold in our collection. This information can be invaluable in land research for local history.

Volunteers both from the society and from interested researchers have been beavering away on the Poppy Seed from France project. We have now connected about 270 soldiers to the names recorded as receiving seed from the Sydney Botanic Gardens that was collected on the battlefields of France in 1919 and 1920. Great work - thanks to all our contributors, but especially to local member Margaret Muntz and Sydney member Kerry-Ann O'Reilly.

Linda Emery, Archivist

New Exhibition display at Archives

In the miniature exhibition space to the right of the Archives entrance, an historic-themed display is now on view. It features objects and artwork associated with surgeon and explorer Dr Charles Throsby and the house his nephew built on the property that was granted to Dr Throsby and named 'Throsby Park' by Governor Macquarie in 1820. The watercolour painting of Throsby House, dated 1977, is by BDHS volunteer Chris Moore, artist and donor.

The objects include finely wrought timber infant's high chair, a set of scales, and pen and ink stand. Originally donated to the House by Janet Cosh, a former archivist of our Society, they were donated to us by Sydney Living Museums.

An account of the Throsby family in Australia 1802-1940 is provided in 'Throsby Park' a book by Rachel Roxburgh which is for sale at the archives, museum and via our website.

The Archive's new Scan Pro film scanner

Pitts Family 'Peas in a Pod'

by Michele Woods

The old saying of family members being like "peas in a pod", was never more accurate than the Pitts family who are featured in our SH1200 exhibition at the Berrima District Museum.

Lance Corporal Reginald Richard Pitts 3858 20th Battalion

Dick Pitts was born in Mittagong in 1894, one of Agnes and Frederick Pitts' twelve children. He grew up on the Tooth family farm at Mittagong, where his father was caretaker, and attended Mittagong Public School. He was a staunch member of Mittagong School of Arts and served in the Citizen Forces for four years before enlisting in October 1915. As he headed off to war, Private Dick Pitts was given a rousing send-off by the staff at Nichols Brothers store in Mittagong where he was working as a shop assistant. He told his friends at the time he would "make a name for himself".

Dick was an excellent correspondent and wrote regularly to his family and friends. After two months training in Egypt, he sailed with his battalion for France at the end of March 1916. He was severely wounded in July and evacuated to England, but in February 1917 returned to the front and the following month was promoted to Lance Corporal. His courage and bravery in organising a successful assault on enemy trenches and the capture of 48 prisoners at Lagnicourt on 15th April 1917 earned him the Distinguished Conduct Medal. Dick did not live to wear his medal - he was killed in action just 17 days later. General William Birdwood, the popular commander of the Australian forces in France and Belgium, wrote personally to the Pitts family after Dick's death.

I feel for you so much in this great trouble, while I know what a gallant soldier we have lost, who had won the much coveted Distinguished Conduct Medal for his previous good service.

I trust it will always mean something to you and his people to know how gallantly he fought and gave his life for his King and Country.

Dick had indeed made a name for himself.

Over the course of the last few months since the opening of our exhibition, many descendants of our 1200 have visited the museum. Amongst our visitors have been several groups related to Dick Pitts. The likeness is extraordinary. A great niece, has even spent time volunteering at the Museum. It has become routine for Pitt's descendants to be photographed in front of Dick's picture hanging in the entry to the Museum. Seniors, children, men and women all have the distinct features passes down through generations.

One family member who was in her 80's started to weep when she saw the wedding photo of her cousin amidst the personal effects in Dick Pitts exhibition display. display. Upon viewing the iPad information she was able to identify another member of their family unknown until that time. It's very moving to see how proud these locals are of their relatives and brings great joy to those of us involved in putting the exhibition together.

If you know anyone descended from our Southern Highland 1200, bring them along to the Museum. Who knows, they may also have a connection to the Pitts family.

Joseph Wallis family research

A request for information was recently received at the archives from an enquirer who lives in southern NSW. She contacted us hoping to obtain more details about her great aunt Regina Wallis (nee Norette, nee Pittard) who was married to Joseph Wallis of Mittagong from 1910 until his death in 1918. Regina was his third wife; he had been widowed twice before and had several children with both his former wives.

The enquirer provided some details from her own research, including that Joseph Wallis was a prominent businessman in the Southern Highlands and owned a brickworks (at Southwoods), a butchery business (on Main Street, Mittagong) and acted as agent for local growers. He was also one of the town's early aldermen.

On the internet she had discovered the gravestones of Regina and her daughter Ellen Lumsden, buried in Rowe's Hill cemetery. Further, from what she had read in old newspapers, Thomas Pye and Joseph Willis were aldermen together and Joseph was agent for Thomas's produce.

It seemed to our enquirer that Regina left only a very light footprint in her family history and she was keen to find out whether our archives held any material that mentioned Regina and Joseph. Further, not having any photos of them, she wondered whether there were any in our collection showing either of them.

Researcher Officer Max looked through the Wallis biography file but it contained nothing about Regina. He also did a search through other local records and on Trove, but to no avail. However he did photocopy the relevant family material in the file and posted it to the enquirer. She was most grateful and replied: "Dear Max. The big envelope stuffed with Wallis information arrived yesterday. I have been poring over it! Fascinating stuff. Thank you very much for your assistance and the Wallis/Southwood treasures."

The photograph shown below is from the Society's collection. It was taken at the official opening in 1901 of new premises in Regent St for Mittagong Municipal Council. It shows councillors seated in front of a gathering of guests and officials. The mayor, John Mealing, is seated third left. At the time, Council reports in the *Southern Mail* listed the other elected councillors as J Leighton, T Groube, W Parkinson, T Hudspeth, J Moses, W H Cutcliffe and J Merifield.

If any members can identify these or other people in the photo, please let us know at the archives.

Regarding Joseph Wallis, it was not until April 1902 that references to him as a councillor first appear. Not being a councillor in 1901, he may well be among the group standing in the photo. If anyone can recognise him, likewise please let us know.

Rare snapshot

The 1901 photo is a rare and significant snapshot of Mittagong's civic leaders and townspeople at the turn of the 20th century.

The mayor, John Mealing, migrated to NSW in 1860 and established himself as a baker in Bowral feeding workers engaged on the construction of the tunnel under Mount Gibraltar for the southern railway. He moved to Mittagong in 1867, establishing a bakery and shop. In 1879 he branched out into cordials and aerated waters and this business grew to such an extent that he sold the bakery. In 1883 he launched Mealing Steam Cordial Works.

By 1887 he was prospering and the cordial works had increased sufficiently for him to construct a large double-storey building as a factory in Regent Street opposite the Railway Station. When the town was proclaimed a municipality in July 1889 he was elected the first mayor. Councilmeetings for the following 10 years were conducted in St Stephen's schoolroom.

In 1900 Mealing sold his Regent Street factory building to Mittagong Council and he relocated his cordial plant to the corner of Alfred and Alice Streets from where he operated in a smaller capacity for several years.

The Regent Street building was turned into Council Chambers and Town Hall, serving as headquarters for the Municipal Council until 1939 when it and Nattai Shire Council were amalgamated into a new entity.

The building still stands, now serving as a Christian fellowship and child care centre.

Compiled by Philip Morton

From the newspapers

Nowadays some drivers flout the rules of our highways and byways by placing peddle to the metal, however it seems human nature has not altered much throughout the centuries. On *February 15, 1902*, the *The Scrutineer* gives an account of some spirited adventures in Argyle Street, Moss Vale and were subsequently before the magistrate.

FURIOUS RIDING.

Police v. Thos. Wilkie, Jas. Larkin, and Wm. Larkin. – The accused werecharged with furious riding in Argyle street, Moss Vale. Constable Torpy deposed that about 2h. 45m, on the 4th instant he saw the accused racing or furiously riding along Argyle-street. Several people were on the footpaths at the time.

And there was the case of fare evasion.

TRAVELLING WITHOUT A TICKET.

Three men were charged with riding in a railway carriage from Barber's Creek without railway tickets. The accused pleaded guilty and were fined 10s. each, in default 48 hours in Moss Vale lock-up.

Have you ever searched through records and wondered where certain streets were located? The following extracts may be of interest.

MINERAL SPRINGS' SUBDIVISION.

Robertson Advocate Friday 30 August 1918 p2
The roads in this subdivision at Mittagong are now completed. The streets are named as follow :–From Bowral road towards the springs, Henderson Avenue, after a director of the Company. This is the road thirsty folk from Bowral will travel to get a short cut to the springs, making nearly ¾-mile shorter. The road from the Main road circling the spring, joining up with Henderson Avenue, and connecting with the Main road each side of the spring, is called Rainbow road, named After Mr. H. Rainbow, assistant shire engineer, who suggested the curve from Henderson Avenue down on to the Main road. The lots are now for sale from J. Napier, agent, Mittagong.

KIRKHAM HIGHWAY.

Robertson Advocate Friday 23 July 1920 page 2
…name of a new road and an alteration of the name of a road :– Present Name. Railway Crescent. Proposed Name. Kirkham Highway. New road formed by Railway Commissioners as an extension of Railway Crescent. Kirkham Highway. No. 6656, on 8th July, 1920. …

NERRIM STREET and BIRRIGA AVENUE.

The Scrutineer and Berrima District Press Wednesday 11 June 1924 page 2
…the naming and renaming of roads at Bundanoon as follows :-- (a) The name of "Nerrim Street" to be changed to "Birriga Avenue" for the length thereof from Old Wingello Road to the point where it turns due west. (b) The short length of road at present unnamed running alongside Lot 1 of the Station Heights Subdivision to be called "Birriga Avenue." (c) The name of "Birriga Avenue" in the Station Heights Subdivision to be changed to "Nerrim Street," … 6/6/'24.

CHURCH ROAD and KING STREET.

The Scrutineer and Berrima District Press Saturday 11 September 1926 page 2
…For the branching off at Bong Bong Church from Argyle Road and continuing to Robertson Road, to be called "Church Road." For the road branching off Argyle Road at the top of the Bong Bong hill and connecting with "Church Road" to be called "King Street." … September 10th, 1926.

WALKER STREET.

Robertson Mail Friday 13 July 1928 page 3
…alteration of the name of a road:– Present Name Park Street Proposed Name Walker Street. … 11th July, 1928.

CHAPMAN STREET.

The Scrutineer and Berrima District Press Wednesday 9 January 1929 page 3
…alteration to the name of a road :– Present Name : Park Street Proposed Name : Chapman Street. …January 8th, 1929,

LOSEBY STREET.

The Southern Mail Friday 15 November 1929 p3
…name of a new Road, viz: Road between Ascot Road and Park Road, Bowral, along the eastern side of Loseby Park as shown on plan catalogued R.17, 584-1,603 and gazetted on 11th October, 1929 : proposed name, Loseby Street. …13th Nov., 1929.

HOPEWOOD ROAD.

The Southern Mail Friday 14 February 1930 page 5
…name of a new road, viz: – Road in "Hopewood" Subdivision leading from Merilba Road westerly. Proposed name, Hopewood Road. …13th February, 1930.

MOUNT ROAD.

The Southern Mail Friday 6 September 1946 p3
…alteration of name of road: Present Name: Sherwood Avenue. Proposed Name: Mount Road. …5th September, 1946.

Compiled by Lavinia Ford.

Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc

PO Box 131 Mittagong NSW 2575 ~ Telephone / Fax (02) 4872 2169

email: bdhsarchives@gmail.com ~ web: www.berrimadistricthistoricalsociety.org.au

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: bdmuseum@bigpond.com
OPEN**:** 10.00am to 4.00pm, Wednesdays to Sundays, and during school and public holidays.

Museum Committee: John Schweers (Manager, Tour Bookings), Harlan Hall (Project Manager), Lyn Hall (Graphics, Exhibitions), Sylvia Carless (Roster), Chris Moore (Artist, Children's programs), Judith Green (Procedures), Michele Woods (Exhibition content), Harold Wall (Human Resources).

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.

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
PP100001055

SURFACE MAIL

POSTAGE PAID AUSTRALIA

PATRON:	Mayor of Wingecarribee Shire: Councillor Duncan Gair		
President:	Mr Bruce MOORE	4872 3762	actmoore@bigpond.net.au
Snr Vice President:	Mrs Linda EMERY	4883 4271	lemery75@southernphone.com.au
Jnr Vice President:	Mrs Leonie KNAPMAN	4871 1804	
Hon Secretary:	Mr Philip MORTON	4883 7862	flipmort@bigpond.com
Hon Treasurer:	Mrs Patricia DORIS	4872 3313	
Archivist:	Mrs Linda EMERY	4883 4271	
Museum Manager:	Mr John SCHWEERS	4872 1660	schweers@hn.ozemail.com.au
Membership:	Mrs Peg HARVEY	4861 4521	
Newsletter Editor:	Ms Lavinia FORD	4869 4038	
Research Officer:	Mr Max ROGERS	4861 3526	robert.rogers2@bigpond.com

Management Committee: President, Vice Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, Museum Manager, Research Officer, plus members Peg Harvey (Minute Secretary), Carolyn Hutton, Denyse Barker, Robyn Arrowsmith and Ros Dale

Newsletter proudly supported by: **Southern Highland News**

Springetts Arcade