BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY Inc.

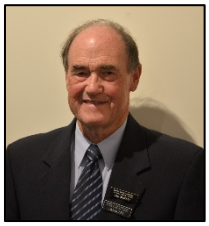
Founded 1960

Located in the Wingecarribee Shire,
Southern Highlands of NSW

ABN 29 362 616 937

NEWSLETTER

No 506 June 2018



From the President's Desk

A thoroughly enjoyable morning was recently held at the Museum in Berrima when a volunteers' morning tea and information meeting was held. There were 22 volunteers in attendance which was pleasing and we all enjoyed a morning tea provided by the ladies.

Harlan Hall provided an interesting power point presentation explaining the plans for the future of the Museum and detailing the grant applications that have been submitted. The Museum was successful with a grant application for the establishment of a Digital Gallery. At the conclusion of the existing Southern Highland's 1200 exhibition in November the Williams Gallery will be converted into a digital gallery with the installation of large screen OLED televisions. This will allow the display of multiple subjects produced locally by volunteers which will showcase our history in a different form to attract a wider audience.

General public visitations remains constant but takings are up since the entry fee was increased last year. With the planned changes to the Museum in the future it is expected that the number of visitors will increase which is crucial to the successful operation of the Museum. One pleasing development has been the much increased visitation of school and tour groups this year.

The flavour of the month in the Southern Highlands is Pie Time. Australia's Home of Pies is celebrating the great Aussie Pie with a month long calendar of events. The Museum is participating with a small display of historical cooking appliances and cookery books. Four cookery books are on display including a copy of The Common Sense Cookery Book published in 1914.

A copy of vintage pie recipes is available on request which highlights such delectable old favourites as Sheep's Head Pie and Rabbit Pie. The Hydropathic Pudding also looks appetizing.

DID YOU KNOW: Fred Allen once said that a committee is a group of people who individually can do nothing, but who, as a group, can meet and decide that nothing can be done.

Ian Mackey

GENERAL MONTHLY MEETINGS

JUNE 2018:	**Thursday 28 June at 2:00pm**
SPEAKER:	Stephen Gard, Thirlmere, author of 'Once Upon a Hume'
	AFTERNOON TEA is served following the speaker.
	Members please bring a plate or a donation.
JULY 2018:	**Thursday 26 July at 12:00 for 12:30pm**
	Winter Luncheon at Bowral Golf Club
GUEST SPEAKER:	Kim Eberhard, Westpac's head of historical services

NOTE: on the first Wednesday each month, at 1pm
the **Family History Interest Group** meets at the Mittagong Archives

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

Senior Vice-President's Column

Bruce Moore

Memories of a Boring slide night

I would classify slide nights somewhere on the Richter scale of mind-numbing moments just below Sunday Afternoon Soirees and perhaps just above a Romanian Undertakers convention.

My parents used to drag me along to their friends' latest evening craze of displaying wonderful colourful slides of holidays, weddings, children etc. This was the 1950s and photographs had suddenly morphed from black & white into glorious technicolour.

'Bruce is interested in travel, aren't you, Bruce?' was the family stock introduction, to which I used to blindly reply, 'My word I am'.

Hedley and Madge Potts had just bought one of the latest single lens reflex cameras and had recently road-tested the new device that covered a breathtaking Sunday drive from Strathfield to Manly. The session began around dark with promise of a tea break around 9pm. There was the ritual of balancing the projector on some thick encyclopedias, finding a power point and pointing the contraption at a blank white wall.

'Take the flying ducks down, Hed,' ordered Madge. 'Lights out!' The first few slides were interesting enough. 'Here's St. Anne's church Top Ryde; this one is the House of David; oh, and there is Northern Suburbs crematorium….'

More photos of significant buildings, but the climax came when the Potts came to a stop just before the Spit Bridge. Hedley reminded us, 'this bridge is famous for opening up occasionally, halting the cars to let all maritime traffic pass below'.

This was the first time Hedley had seen the bridge in action. Not wasting a photo opportunity, we were punished with an overabundance of photos highlighting Madge clutching her handbag with the bridge in the background. We tolerated Madge and the Bridge photographed at every possible angle ad nauseum.

By this time there were giggles all round as some clown commented, 'Can we see the bridge closing, Hedley?'

More stifled sniggers as Hedley continued with his commentary:

'Here's another one where you can see through the road grill', featuring Madge looking bored out of her brain. 'It was only opened last year, you know'.

We all had the most boring, dreariest but hilarious night ever!

How can we ever forget it?

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. Ph John 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

Research Fees

Research fees for non-members:

$25.00 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.

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: bdhsarchives@gmail.com

Would you consider . . .

It would help us immensely if you agreed to receive the newsletter by email. For those of you who prefer receiving the newsletter by post, we assure you the printed version will continue to be issued.

New Family History book

The Alcorns of Kangaloon, Newrybar and Kyogle
A Family and Social History
1857-1950s

Robert and Margaret Alcorn and their family arrived in Australia from Ireland in 1857. This 166 page book covers aspects of their lives and that of their descendants and the society in which they lived in the following century.

It traces the movement of members of the family from Shellharbour to Kangaloon; to Cullinga and Borambil; then later to Newrybar and finally to Kyogle.

The information provided draws heavily on contemporary newspaper articles, and over 540 references to these are included - many covering the involvement of family members in church, agricultural, dairying, local government, co-operative, Red Cross and patriotic societies, companies and organisations. Andrew Carson Alcorn's role in the establishment of NORCO is covered in the book.

Accounts of the WW1 and WW2 war service of members of the family who served in defence force units abroad and at home, or who supported the cause in local organisations on the home front are provided at the back of the book. Of those who served overseas, five did not return.

Included are over 180 photographs, maps, notices, sketches, letters, newspaper and war service extracts.

Now available. Cost: $20.00. Postage and packaging $12.00 extra.

David Johnston: phone: 0439 633042
mavidjohnston5@bigpond.com

Unit 1, 1-9 Shirley Street Carlingford NSW 2118

"Pheasant Hill" Kangaloon 1930s. Photo: Pheasant Hill Collection.

June General Meeting speaker

Stephen Gard

Stephen has been writing professionally since 1986. His work has been published by Jacaranda-Wiley, Rigby-Heinemann, and the Kangaroo Press. For Macmillan, Stephen wrote the ten-volume *Children's History of Australia*. His fiction and verse for children have appeared in *The School Magazine*, including their Bicentennial Collection. Stephen Gard's plays have been produced by New Theatre, The Melbourne Theatre Company, and several provincial groups. He composed the scores for the early films of director Chris Noonan; other works have been performed by The Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and broadcast on ABC-Classic FM.

Photography, video production, woodwork, radio and electronics absorb whatever spare time he can manage. Stephen and his wife, happily married for nearly forty years, are lately the proud and first-time grandparents of a lusty grand-daughter.

Six years ago, Stephen launched his self-publishing venture, Bluedawe Books, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Bluedawe Group, of which Stephen is sole proprietor. The first publication was *Michael Rush: champion Australian sculler* (2011). This was followed in 2013 by *Port Jackson Pullers: Australia's early sculling champions*.

In July 2017 came *Once Upon a Hume: a traveller's companion*, the first of a projected three or perhaps four-volume work about the colourful characters who in earlier times lived in, or on, or near to, or by means of, The Great South Road.

Stephen will speak about this latter work at our meeting. With the aid of a visual presentation, he'll explain how he came to write *Once Upon a Hume*, its intention, scope, his sources, and the book's design.

He will tell the story of two of its interesting characters: Christian Carl Ludwig Rümker, star-gazing grazier of Stonequarry, and heroic Mary Lupton, of Bargo's Lupton's Inn.

Mid-winter lunch in July

We are breaking with tradition this year and holding our annual mid-year lunch in July, rather than June.

This change was decided upon so we could obtain a booking once again at the Bowral Golf Club, where last year's luncheon was such a resounding success.

The date for our Winter Lunch is Thursday, 26 July. Westpac's head of historical services, Kim Eberhard will be our guest speaker at the luncheon.

Westpac has a long and proud history as Australia's first and oldest bank. It was established in 1817 as the Bank of New South Wales under a charter of incorporation provided by Governor Lachlan Macquarie.

As head of historical services, Kim has responsibility for managing the bank's corporate archives – the largest privately held archives in the Southern Hemisphere. Having commenced her career in media and journalism, Kim found her passion in historical research and documentary heritage and, prior to joining Westpac in 2015, has held a number of archivist and research roles, and was President of the Australian Society of Archivists.

Kim will provide a 'show and tell' style Powerpoint presentation about the Westpac archives – its history, the scope of its collection and uses today.

She will also talk about the bank's connection to William Hutchinson, one of the larger landholders in the Berrima District from the early 1820s, who was involved in the establishment of the Bank of NSW and a director.

The Golf Club will provide a delicious 'Christmas in July' style meal. The cost for the event is $40 a head.

Bookings and payment may be made at the archives.

A morning of Bundanoon memories

The Bundanoon History Group's Oral History Project invites BDHS members and anyone interested in local history to attend an event on Tuesday 26 June in the Soldiers' Memorial Hall, Railway Ave, Bundanoon commencing at 11:00am.

Come and hear some fascinating recordings of stories from ten Bundanoon residents, from the 1930s to today, including the Tebbutts, Jim Rundle, Jill Francis and Jack & Lily Hepher. Listen to their histories whilst viewing a slideshow of related images.

A gold coin donation includes a light sandwich lunch and tea or coffee.

For more information please contact Marianne Ward on 4883 6082 or nedwin@gungaru.com.au

Harper's Mansion has a Possum

Currently hanging in the parlour at Harper's Mansion, Berrima is the watercolour 'The Possum', a significant painting by Louisa Atkinson, a noted botanist, journalist, novelist and artist of the mid-1800s.

Louisa Atkinson was born in 1834 at Oldbury Farm, Sutton Forest.

The watercolour now at Harper's Mansion was painted in 1860 when she was living at Kurrajong Heights in the Blue Mountains.

Many of Louisa's works are now held by the NSW State Library, but 'The Possum' was gifted to the National Trust by Janet Cosh, Louisa's granddaughter, a long-time resident of Moss Vale.

It hung in old Government House for several years and has recently been restored and re-framed. The fragility of the watercolour and its susceptibility to fading means it can only be put on display for a few months. David Cloonan who now looks after the collections at Harper's is working to source additional paintings for the house.

Harper's is open every Saturday and Sunday and most Public Holidays.

Supplied by: Chris Thompson, Harper's Mansion Management Committee Chairperson.

Convict Bonnets now at Civic Centre

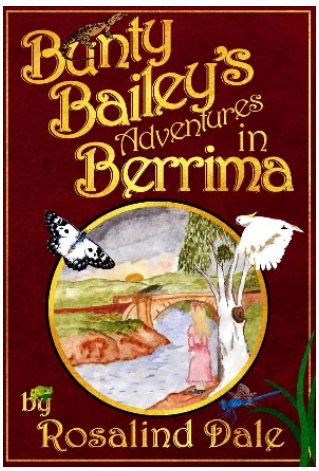
The Fellowship of First Fleeters, Southern Highlands Chapter proudly presents "Stitched with Love" a display of bonnets created by members and friends of the local Chapter to honour convict women with descendants in the Southern Highlands. The bonnets are accompanied by stories of some of our ancestors.

The display is on at the Civic Centre Foyer Gallery, Wingecarribee Shire Council, Moss Vale, from 5 June to 28 June, open 8:30am to 4:30pm. Free admission.

If you missed this fascinating exhibition when it was on display at Berrima District Museum in May 2017 during the Heritage Festival, you can view it this month in Moss Vale.

Bev Schweers and Gwen Herbert at the Bonnet display, Berrima District Museum in May 2017.

New book for available to purchase



A new publication written by our member Ros Dale, titled "Bunty Bailey's Adventures in Berrima" is now available for purchase on our website and at the archives and the museum.

Soft cover, 85 pp, size B5, colour illustrated, cost $20.

The book explores the life of Bunty, a girl aged 9 years, in 1849. Her daily life and adventures highlight the difference between our Colonial beginnings and the present day. Some events have been fictionalised and others are based on actual incidents. Many buildings and places in the story are still to be found in and around Berrima.

Research Team tasks and activities

April - June 2018, compiled by Frank Mitchell

The working team of dedicated volunteers at the Mittagong Archives have been recently engaged by a multitude of inquiries from the public and even some government institutions.

A sampling of those queries shall be shown in the following:

'Roads & Maritime Services' for detail on the earliest Berrima bridge and any possible remains on that magnificent and graceful single arch, dressed stone structure of 1836 designed by the Government Superintendent of Roads and Bridges, David Lennox. Very little would seem to remain of the structure itself after being destroyed by two successive floods, of which our designer could not have imagined or predicted at the time.

An issue that became apparent on this task was on inspecting those remaining blocks of dressed sandstone, many of which form the perimeter boundary of the Berrima Commemorative Park to find todays motorists with their heavy SUV type vehicles parking and nudging up to the coping stones until their towbars or bull-bars scrape and chip the convict hand hewn and dressed blocks turning them back to sand from whence they came!

Roads & Maritime Services also Local Shire Council are aware of this matter and hopefully some action will be taken to prevent this activity.

Private research enquiries have come from two different people in regards to Pioneer Families of WAITE, KING and BURGESS, with many convict associations from the earliest days of the district, convict labour to Throsby and his early expeditions, land selection, stock droving, bullockies and railway navvies have all featured amongst those family descendants.

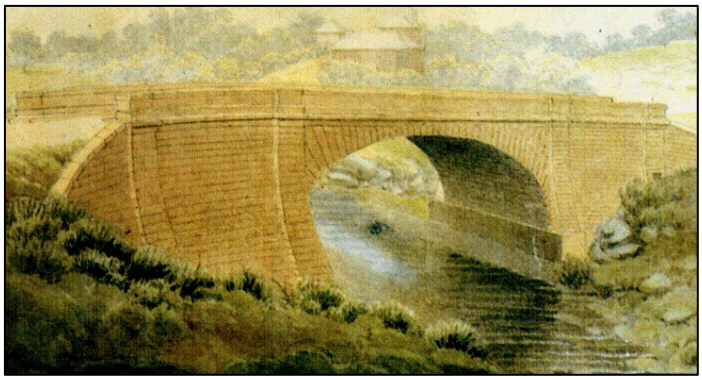
Another enquirer whose oral history had told him his two ancestral brothers had built the railway from Sydney to Melbourne, now knows the truth of the matter is more like his ancestor maintained the railway from Minto to Picton! Although that early navvy had indeed worked for the Contractor building the extension from Moss Vale to Goulburn, Great Southern Railway in 1869.

The origins of property names seem to engage the imagination of present owners from time to time and give this team the curious task of interpretation of the facts. 'Melford' in Bowral circa 1920 was one such query, where it eventually turned out to be the very first property name given by the family to an early squatting run near today's Tullamarine Airport in Melbourne, and seemed to have originated with a much earlier grand establishment in East Anglia, known as 'Melford Hall' the ancestral home of the name Firebrace, who were wealthy and influential members of the aristocracy in the 1700s.

Something that this team is well aware of and trying to avoid, is not to breach the copyright of existing documentation or the research of others that has been compiled by many donors in our biography files, going back to the 1970s.

Another contentious issue relating to privacy is that of Family Trees having been deposited with our archive that contain a great deal of personal detail on living individuals, some of them having been born up to the present time, where 'Great Grannies' have insisted we update our holdings to include the latest births in the family in recent months!

In summing up these activities, I would like to say the 'Team' although primarily working as individuals we enjoy a good working relationship with colleagues. I wish especially to thank the Management Committee for its encouragement and the 'Scanning Team' of Jenny Frost and Dianne, along with any others I may not be aware of.



The sandstone bridge at Berrima had an arch span of 50 ft and a width of 27 ft, including parapets. It opened in June 1836, carrying traffic until August 1857 when its upper part was washed away by a flood. A wooden structure erected to span the gap was swept away in 1860 by a flood that further broke up the stonework.

Beyond repair, the Royal Engineers hastily replaced it some 145 ft downstream with a sturdy wooden truss structure on two piers.

A photo by Frank of some of the sandstone blocks in the Park is shown here.

Meehan's 1818 survey expedition

In 1818 a government expedition led by James Meehan conducted the NSW colony's first survey of land to the south of the Cowpastures. This year marks the 200th anniversary of the survey, historically significant for opening up the Southern Highlands and Tablelands to settlement.

From Picton, after surveying the Bargo Brush and Wingecarribee district, the party trekked into unexplored land around the upper Shoalhaven River. Governor Macquarie subsequently encouraged settlement in the areas, which began in the 1820s.

Prior to 1818, some exploration to the Wingecarribee River and beyond had been undertaken. In 1798 a group led by John Wilson had trekked through the area, reaching Towrang, near present-day Goulburn. In 1814 Hamilton Hume, aged 17, explored on foot from Appin to the Wingecarribee with his brother John and an Aboriginal friend.

When they returned home and told of the rich, grassy lands in the highland country there was great interest. Dr Charles Throsby and John Oxley had cattle moved into the area. Throsby, a former ship's surgeon, had already undertaken explorations from Appin to the Illawarra. In 1817 he explored the Wingecarribee district with Hamilton Hume, and was rewarded by Macquarie for the discovery of this area's fertile lands.

Meehan holding a field book, plan and compass; a satchel at his feet features a shamrock and behind him is a blazed tree and waratahs.
Photo: Kim Archibald

James Meehan, the Deputy Surveyor of Lands, was instructed by Macquarie to conduct a survey of the Bargo, Wingecarribee and upper Shoalhaven districts. He was also to seek a route to the coast, suitable for an envisaged inland vehicular road between Sydney and Jervis Bay. The survey expedition commenced on 6 March 1818.

Born in 1774, James Meehan became a schoolteacher and surveyor in King's County, Ireland. He was convicted for activities as a member of the outlawed Society of United Irishmen, prior to the failed 1798 revolution, and transported to NSW. He arrived in February 1800, and was assigned as a servant to Surveyor General Charles Grimes.

Meehan was instrumental in mapping large areas of the colony. He accompanied Grimes and Francis Barrallier in exploring the Hunter River, King Island and Port Phillip. When Grimes took leave from 1803, Meehan was the colony's only qualified surveyor. He measured farm grants, including John Macarthur's Camden Park property. In 1806 he received an absolute pardon and in 1810 was granted 1140 acres at Ingleburn, which he named Macquarie Field.

Meehan was due to be appointed Surveyor General in 1812 but explorer John Oxley, who tirelessly petitioned the British Government, was chosen instead of the Irish ex-convict. Meehan, however, was made Deputy Surveyor of Lands by Macquarie and subsequently measured farms in NSW and Van Diemen's Land. He accompanied Macquarie on most tours of inspection and made significant contributions to the mapping of the colony. He laid out and measured Sydney, Parramatta, Bathurst and Port Macquarie, and surveyed Hobart Town as well as numerous townships in NSW.

Meehan retired to his property in 1822, dying there in 1826. Macquarie said of him that "no man has suffered so much privation and fatigue in the service of this Colony". Meehan was belatedly honoured in 2010 with a statue on the Loftus St facade of Sydney's iconic Lands Department building. As there were no portraits of him, the stonemason made use of a photo of Meehan's son, hoping he looked like his father.

The 1818 expedition included explorer Dr Throsby who brought along Joseph Wild and two Aboriginals, Bundle and Broughton, their local knowledge proving invaluable. The third leading member was Hamilton Hume who, aged just 20, had already earned respect for his exploration skills and ability to communicate with Aboriginals. Other members were: George Grimes, son of a former Surveyor General; William Sly and Thomas Waters (Throsby's men); John Glynn (Meehan's servant); and Robert Cooling, John Thomas and Charles Gulliver (Government men). Macquarie provided the expedition with wagons, equipment and provisions to sustain 12 men for five weeks. Meehan conducted his survey by use of a perambulator (wheeled measuring instrument) and a prismatic compass, noting distance measurements and bearings in field books. Both he and Throsby also documented the route in their journals and letters.

Locally, Meehan is not as well remembered as Throsby or Hume but deserves recognition for his part in opening up vast areas of farming land.

The survey route plotted in 20th Century

The survey extended over 200 miles and involved about 1,350 observations. Due to heavy and prolonged rain, it was not easy going.

From the journals, notes and letters of Meehan and Throsby, their route was plotted in 1921 by R H Cambage, a Lands Department surveyor who, on foot and horseback, studied geographical features mentioned and placed them on parish maps.

The findings, presented to the Royal Australian Historical Society, were replotted in 1978 by A K Weatherburn who used improved topological techniques to update the maps. An outline of the route follows here.

Meehan's survey commenced on 6 March 1818 at the southern edge of John Macarthur's 'Upper Camden Farm'. From Picton, the party headed southward through the Bargo Brush to the Mittagong Range and thence to the Wingecarribee River.

After crossing the river and reaching the head of Colyer's Creek, south of Mt Broughton, the party hoped their Aboriginal guides would lead them down Yarrunga Creek into Kangaroo Valley and through to Jervis Bay. Flooding caused by the prolonged rain thwarted this. After returning to Mt Broughton on 14 March, they headed west towards the Wollondilly River but again had to retrace their steps due to the boggy Long Swamp Creek.

Passing through present-day Penrose State Forest, they reached a river which, it being 17 March, the Irish Meehan named St Patrick's River in honour of it being the saint's day. While waiting there four days for floodwaters to recede, Meehan surveyed upstream and followed a ridge to a deeply entrenched tributary of Johnstone's Creek which discharges into Bundanoon Creek. As this did not afford a suitable passage to the coast, it was decided to head south-westerly in the hope of finding a suitable ford to cross the Shoalhaven River.

To their dismay, after passing over Barber's Creek and reaching Bungonia Gorge on 25 March, the stupendous Shoalhaven Gorges were impossible to cross. Meehan noted that "we could see Shoals Haven River and the country to the west [but] found it was utterly impossible to proceed any further in that way, the country so very irregular and broken".

It was decided to divide the provisions and men and meet at Jervis Bay. Throsby would return northward to where they had made their earlier attempt and Meehan would venture southward to find a way to the coast.

Throsby took his four men and the two Aboriginal guides. They left carts at Black Bobs Creek, proceeded back to Colyer's Creek where the water had subsided, crossed to the Yarrunga Valley and reached Jervis Bay on 3 April. Throsby awaited Meehan for four days but, due to low provisions and local Aboriginal hostility, decided to return to Black Bobs, arriving on 10 April.

Meehan, after departing from his 'station' overlooking Bungonia Gorge, ventured further south-westerly, accompanied by Hume, the remaining four men and three horses. Despite a final attempt by Hume, who was a strong swimmer, to cross the Shoalhaven, it proved impossible. Thus, being unable to proceed to Jervis Bay, they could not meet up with Throsby.

Meehan's party proceeded southwest and on 3 April came to a large inland lake (Lake Bathurst), the shore line of which Meehan surveyed. Moving on he discovered the Mulwaree Ponds and had views of extensive plains to the southwest. They returned to Bungonia Gorge and then along their previous course, recovered the carts at Black Bobs Creek and arrived back at the Cowpastures on 14 April.

Although the attempt to find a wheeled traffic route to Jervis Bay failed, it did open up connections. Throsby's bridle path into Kangaroo Valley via Yarrunga soon became a major stock route between Bong Bong and the coast. Meehan's traverse into the country around Lake Bathurst and the Mulwaree area prompted the immediate interest of settlers seeking land and was instrumental in the planning of roadwork from Picton to the Wingecarribee district and beyond, built under Throsby's charge in 1820.

Governor Macquarie set in place the settlement of the Wingecarribee district and encouraged the exploration of the vast area beyond, which he named Argyle. In 1820 he toured the new roadway to the south and gave the name "Throsby Park" to Dr Throsby's grant at Bong Bong and "Goulburn" to a new settlement at the centre of Argyle district.

Sources:

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Compiled by Philip Morton

Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc

PO Box 131 Mittagong NSW 2575 ~ Telephone (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), Harlan Hall (Project Manager), Lyn Hall (Graphics, Exhibitions), Sylvia Carless (Roster), Alan Hornsby, 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.

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