



Bowral



Mittagong



Berrima



Moss Vale

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 592 May 2026

From the President's Desk

The markets which pop up each Saturday and Sunday are always a draw for both residents and visitors to the Shire. They offer opportunities for savouring some new flavours, just as I did recently at Exeter market.

Among the many stalls offering everything from clothes and plants to fresh vegetables and newly baked breads, I stumbled upon a crocodile burger stand. An attractive modern twist on an ingredient of yesteryear? Yet, it was hard not to be drawn by the more familiar aromas drifting from stalls offering Turkish and Japanese cuisine alongside those escaping from a pizza oven.

As I made my way home through Sutton Forest, the signs for Golden Vale Road and Oldbury Road set my thoughts racing ahead to our upcoming tour at the end of the month. We'll be visiting Golden Vale, Browley, and the historic White Horse Inn in Berrima. These prestigious homes, rich with character and history, tell the stories of influential families and the dedicated workers whose efforts shaped both the estates and the region. If you'd like a preview or just a good read while the wind howls outside, please see pages 4 to 7.

It's fascinating to imagine the cooks in these grand mansions consulting Edward Abbott's colonial era 'The English and Australian Cookery Book' published in 1864.

Early settlers faced the challenge of working native flora and fauna into their meals, striving to replicate the familiar dishes from their homelands. Abbott's recipes were nothing if not adventurous. Think battered kangaroo brains deep fried in emu oil or roasted wombat, with other dishes very likely influenced by Aboriginal knowledge of this land's bounty.

Just two days before our tour, with a BYO lunch, we have the pleasure of hearing Dennis McManus speak on 'The Wonderful Heritage of Wingecarribee Shire and its Protection' at our General Meeting on Thursday 28 May at 10.30am. Dennis's dedication to heritage preservation guarantees an insightful presentation. See page 3 for an introduction to Denis.

Also on page 3 is a summary of the proposed changes to our constitution which we will vote on whether to accept, at a special meeting immediately before that General Meeting.

Looking ahead, our Mid-winter Lunch is to be hosted at Mittagong RSL on 25 June, with Carol Liston as our guest speaker. It's \$50 per person and promises the comfort of familiar Australian fare before Carol's entertaining presentation.

Oh, and she will be talking about a building in Sydney with a lot of history.

Stuart Handley

GENERAL MONTHLY MEETINGS 2026 and SPEAKERS

MAY 2026: Thursday 28 May at 10:30am, Civic Centre Theatrette, Moss Vale
Dennis McManus: *The Wonderful Heritage of Wingecarribee Shire and its Protection*
MORNING TEA served after the talk

JUNE 2026: Mid-Winter Lunch, Thursday 25 June at Mittagong RSL, 12 for 12:30pm
Speaker Assoc. Professor Carol Liston AO, President of the RAHS. Cost is \$50



Moore Memorable Musings



WORKING OUT

Have you noticed the dramatic boom in gyms, exercise classes, fitness regimes, mental health assessment, gym junkies etc over

the last 5 years? A direct knee-jerk reaction to the pandemic I guess, because of an unfit lockdown.

We are in the process of downsizing and the first object to be thrown out is our talking scales.

The last time they were used they announced, "one leg at a time." How embarrassing was that!

There's nothing wrong with our fitness program. We get up at 5, five to 9, then I work out.

I'm always working out. I work out what we're going to eat for breakfast!

Then there's that magic word EXERCISE. When I first heard it, I thought someone said "extra fries!"

Oh yes, I'm familiar with all the mod gym talk. There's the cardio workout. This is a nice way of saying, 'put your cardigan on, take your cardigan off, and repeat five times.'

Following on with lunges and crunches. I tend to combine these two and call it lunches instead.

With more talk about abs, pecs, peeled and ripped I'm absolutely peckish so ripping into a peeled orange or mandarin is more my style.

I reckon I should leave the lats and traps alone because once I got my finger caught in one and it's never been the same since.

Gym squats were mentioned one day in the class. I said 'no' to that because I thought it was too early in the day for gin shots anyway.

So instead, someone mentioned six-pack and I figured it wiser to buy one of those instead.

There so much talk about guns, buns, pumped and gym rats I thought it much safer if I returned home to the peace and quiet of my own sofa and watch my favourite TV program. Then I can work out what to eat for dinner!

Bruce Moore

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Our **Family History Group** meets on the first Wednesday each month, at 1pm. Convenor: Denise Mackey.

The Society's **DNA Interest Group** meets at the theatrette on the third Thursday each month at 1pm, **BUT please note that on 18 June it will be at 2:00pm**

Convenor: Robyne McKinnon

BERRIMA DISTRICT MUSEUM

1a Marketplace cnr Bryan St, Berrima

OPEN: FRIDAY to SUNDAY

10.00am to 3.00pm

throughout the year including school and public holiday periods. Closed Christmas Eve, Christmas Day.

Groups welcome at other times by arrangement. Ph John 0434 623 402

Museum: Phone 4877 1130 or email bdmuseum@bigpond.com

Our Contact Details

The Society's Research Centre is now at the Civic Centre, 68 Elizabeth St, Moss Vale. Please note that all membership enquiries and changes of address should be addressed to:

The Membership Secretary
c/- bdhsarchives@gmail.com

or c/- our postal address:
PO Box 188 Moss Vale NSW 2577

Research Centre Opening Hours

Monday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Tuesday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Saturday 10:00 am – 1:00 pm



Our Berrima District Museum has recently been given a 'facelift' with external guttering repaired, the bull-nose roof painted and new signage erected.

Our Mid-winter Luncheon

Thursday 25 June, 12 for 12:30pm



Alexandra Room, Mittagong RSL Club

Come along and enjoy a delectable two-course lunch, with bar service available, tea/coffee provided and the usual lucky door prizes and raffle.

Cost is **\$50/person**. You need to book and pay by **16 June** at the latest, so please let us know by email to add you to the list, and either pay at the archives or make direct payment into our account: (Bendigo Bank) BSB 633 000, Account 200107100 with Lunch + initial and surname as reference.

The speaker will be Assoc. Professor **Carol Liston AO**, the Royal Australian Historical Society President, who will present a history of the RAHS and its History House in Macquarie St, Sydney.

Berrima and Sutton Forest tour

Our self-drive tour on Saturday 30 May is now fully booked. Thanks to all the members and friends who are keen to do the tour of three Berrima and Sutton Forest properties: the White Horse Inn, Golden Vale and Browley.

Car-pooling is encouraged.

All participants will be contacted by email prior to the tour day with some guidelines regarding timing, locations and access to the properties.

Those attending may wish to read an historical overview of the properties, which is provided on pages 4 -7.

May General Meeting at 10:30am

Speaker: Dennis McManus PSM

An Illustrated Talk on the Wonderful Heritage of Wingecarribee Shire and its Protection

The talk will provide background to the heritage of Wingecarribee Shire and why it is no accident that it has such a wealth of heritage items. It will detail current protection and the progress of the 2021/23 Community Heritage Study. There will then follow a presentation of some of the wonderful items in the Study by category – many of which may be a surprise.



Dennis holds a BA Degree in Geography and Australian History, a Diploma in Town Planning and a Master's Degree in Heritage Conservation. He worked for 15 years as a Planner with NSW Planning and for 25 years as a Senior Heritage Officer with the NSW Heritage Council.

In 1997 Dennis was awarded the Public Service Medal under the Order of Australia Awards for his services to heritage conservation in NSW.

He moved to the local district in 1999 and retired in 2006. From 2011 to 2021 Dennis was a community representative on the Wingecarribee Shire Heritage Advisory Committee. Importantly in 2020/2021 he jointly co-ordinated with Council a major Community Heritage Study of the Shire which recommended a number of actions including the heritage listing of over 400 new items together with 15 new and extended conservation areas.

Please note that the General Meeting on 28 May will be preceded by a Special General Meeting at which members will be asked to vote on proposed revisions to our BDH&FHS Constitution (see next column).

The May meeting will commence at 10:30am.



Summary of Constitution revisions

WHY? Our Constitution was last revised in 2018, and the Department of Fair Trading has since removed the requirement for small organisations to have their accounts audited annually. As changes had to be made regarding the account reporting process, we have taken the opportunity to review the entire Constitution including some role descriptions. The proposed revisions were itemised in the April issue, and include the following main items:

PART 2 OBJECTS

“To establish and maintain a museum” - words to be added “as a branch of the Society acting under the Management Committee”.

Another note to be added - “The assets of the Society shall be applied solely in the furtherance of the above-mentioned objects and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to members of the Society except as bona fide compensation for services rendered or expenses incurred on behalf of the Society.”

PART 3 MEMBERSHIP

Categories of Membership delete “student member”

PART 4 THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Treasurer shall “submit the financial statements to the Management Committee meeting and the Annual General Meeting;” “Prior to the Annual General Meeting, arrange for the financial statements to be checked for ‘reasonableness’ by an accountant who is a member of a recognised Australian professional accounting body;” “Organise an independent review/audit of the annual financial statements if or when required by legislation or at the request of the Office-bearers of the Society (not including the Treasurer) or through member voting at the Annual General Meeting;”

Office-bearers add “and Museum Manager”

Museum Sub-Committee – “Museum Manager, Museum Collections Manager and not more than six ordinary members”.

Public Officer: two clauses to be added:

“The Public Officer serves as official contact for NSW Fair Trading regarding the incorporated association and is responsible for ensuring the Society complies with the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 and any other applicable State and Commonwealth legislation.” and “The Public Officer needs to be someone other than the Secretary, as the Public Officer is required to assume the duties of Secretary when that position is vacant.”

Historic overview of the three local properties our 30 May tour will visit

The numerous members and their friends who have booked on our tour may find it useful to 'brush up' beforehand on some history of the properties, so here is a compilation to serve that purpose. For those readers unable to join in the tour, perhaps the history provided below may be of some interest as a 'virtual' tour of these properties through time and space.

THE WHITE HORSE INN/ROYAL MAIL COACH HOTEL

The *White Horse Inn* is a three-storey 1830s Georgian sandstone building at 3 Market Place, Berrima. It has served numerous purposes under a succession of owners including, most recently, Reg and Joy Grundy who purchased the property in 2012.

From 1839 to 1850 the building was an inn named the *Royal Mail Coach Hotel* and later became a residence for Dr Lambert known as *Rosebank*. In the 1930s it was renamed *Wandeen*, being a boarding house and residence. The property was renamed the *White Horse Inn* in the 1970s, serving as a restaurant and small motel.

The following overview of its history is drawn in part from Shylie Brown's book *Life Behind the Bar* a BDHS publication detailing the owners and operators of the early local inns. The book is available for purchase.

After receiving an endorsement from the Licensing Board in the 1830s to move to a more prominent location, Michael and Jane Doyle, who operated an inn and coaching business in Berrima, purchased land and built the inn they named the *Royal Mail Coach Hotel*. It opened on 31 October 1839.

Doyle had many strings to his bow as cattle and horse auction sales were frequently held at his hotel. At the same time Doyle opened an agency and booking office for Mrs Ann Richards' coach line as he had won the contract to carry Her Majesty's Mail. He became the agent and contractor for conveying Her Majesty's Mail from Campbelltown to Goulburn in 1840. He was also the local agent for the *Bell's Life & Sporting Reviewer* and the *Sydney Gazette* from 1840 to 1846.

Berrima was a busy town in 1841 when the census was taken. Doyle's inn was then described as a stone or brick house, unfinished but inhabited by 16 males and 6 females.

Horse racing was a favourite sport of early colonial life and Doyle was elected as one of the race officials after he had rallied support to form a racing club in Berrima. One of the first decisions made at a meeting

in the *Mail Coach Hotel* in May 1841 was to put forward a plan to establish an annual 3-day race meeting to be held in August 1843 on the Atkinson estate. The event was described as a great success with good attendance and the racing well managed.

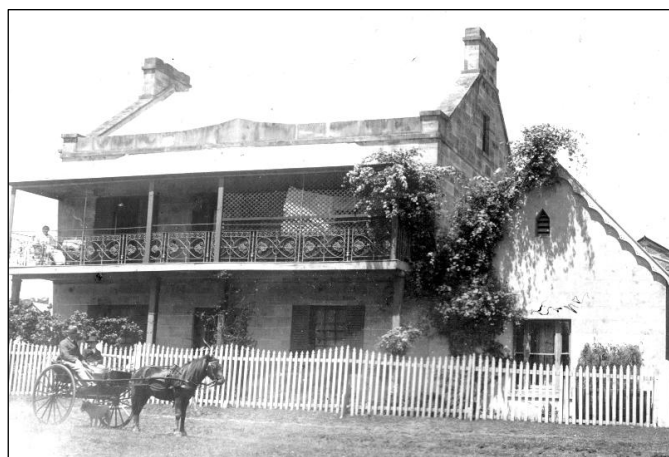
In 1845 Doyle was nominated to the District Council. He continued as licensee of the *Mail Coach Hotel* but passing traffic slowed as the 1840s depression took effect. Edward Shipley held the licence of the hotel in 1849, but it was de-licensed when Michael Doyle defaulted on his mortgage and Peter William Plomer, solicitor, took possession of the property in 1850.

Doyle had liabilities to the tune of £1000 and assets only valued at £215 when he was declared insolvent. He and his wife were forced to leave their hotel and they moved to Sydney. Plomer was threatening to prosecute trespassers if they were found removing or injuring the property formerly the *Mail Coach Hotel*. He authorised Joseph Levy to act as his agent.

The inn was put up for sale the following month, described as: "a large stone house three stories high including cellarage, bar, parlours, bedrooms on two acres land. Also, two cottages suitable for shops or dwellings. A stone building with oven, a well floored granary used as a contract bakehouse and store. A large stone kitchen with pantry and servant's apartments overall. A 15-stall stable and well-floored hayloft . . with accommodation for 15-20 horses and carriages, a slaughterhouse . . slab huts . . orchard . . all securely fenced."

Plomer sold the unlicensed *Mail Coach Hotel* to Thomas Bray in September 1850. The Bray family held the property until 1873 when they sold it to John Soame Richardson and it continued to be used as a private residence.

Some modifications had been made by this time, including the addition of a high pitched, gabled roofed structure in Victorian Gothic revival style alongside the original building, and a two-storey stone storeroom added to the rear.



Fast forwarding to 1979, a kitchen fire damaged the main building, but fortunately it was repaired to its original condition. As already mentioned, by this time the property was functioning as a restaurant, motel and tea shop, with residence, as shown below.



The property was listed on the NSW State Heritage Register on 2 April 1999, its significance including that "it has associations with important phases in the foundation and growth of Berrima because of its various uses over time to the present day and in particular, its use as a coaching inn and traveller's hotel. It is a sizable and well detailed early building which shows the prosperity and early pretensions to style. Much important early fabric remains and the essential original form of its Georgian styling is relatively intact. It is also valued by the community as a prominent building contributing to the historic character of Berrima."

By the early 2000s the restaurant had closed and the building began to look neglected. In 2012 Reg and Joy Grundy bought the property for \$1.44 million and soon after they initiated a meticulous restoration.

Reg was a pioneering television producer and Joy Chambers-Grundy was a Logie Award-winning actor and bestselling author. Together, they built one of the largest independent production companies in the world, with game shows such as *Blankety Blank*, *The Price is Right* and *Jeopardy*. Both are now deceased and the property has recently been listed for sale.

GOLDEN VALE

Golden Vale is located midway along Golden Vale Road at the foot of Mt Gingenbullen (to its south-south-west) near the Medway Rivulet. It occupies cleared and grazed country, surrounded by rural properties. The farm is treed and dammed.

It is a National Trust property, described on the Trust's website as being first promised to free settler Michael Hogan in 1822, with the property having been subsequently owned by people of very diverse backgrounds which reflect the local district's patterns

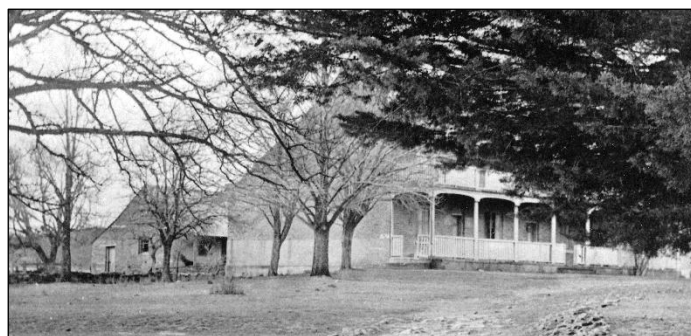
of settlement. This includes emancipated convict, Thomas Wilmot, who purchased the land from Michael Hogan in 1830; Edward Carter, who found shale oil at nearby Joadja; and Sir Phillip Goldfinch, a member of the NSW colonial patrician King and Cowper families and a founder of the secret counter-revolutionary Old Guard formed during the Lang government. Goldfinch undertook many changes, re-aligning the driveway and lining it with trees, putting in an English style garden, and expanding the stables.

The last owner, The Hon Geoffrey Keighley OAM, was a businessman, politician, pilot and first-class cricketer, who was educated at Eton and Oxford.

The property was occupied by Mr and Mrs Keighley from the mid-1980s and was gifted to the National Trust in 2005. Today the house contains an extensive collection of furniture, pictures, documents and *objet d'art* from the Keighley period; the collection of a couple who had wide interests in travel, sport, gardening, literature and politics, and who cultivated a taste for a gracious lifestyle.

A deeper dive into *Golden Vale's* history follows here, with information compiled from Linda Emery's book *Tales from a Churchyard* and the Society's archives.

Thomas Wilmot was transported to Australia having been convicted in 1813 for horse stealing. He became an assigned servant to John Waite of Browley until 1822 when he received a ticket of leave. In 1828 Thomas married Mrs Waite's sister, Maria Robinson, even though he was already married in England.



He became an innkeeper, the licensee of the *Kentish Arms* (pictured) on the Southern Road, and acquired several parcels of land nearby, one of which he named Golden Valley. The *Kentish Arms* stood on the *Mereworth* property owned by John Atkinson, brother of James Atkinson, who had established the adjacent *Oldbury* property. Both were a few miles south of Berrima which from the 1830s had become a major town on Surveyor-General Major Mitchell's new line of the southern road through the district.

The *Kentish Arms* made an income from passing traffic in need of a break in the journey. Atkinson had converted his substantial dwelling into an inn and

Wilmot was one of several innkeepers he employed. Wilmot died, however, in 1846, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reporting that “the deceased was a very worthy man, much respected in the district”.

The Golden Valley property was bought by Edward Carter, perhaps after the death of Wilmot whose financial affairs were in some disarray and it was ten years before his estate was finally settled.

Edward was the son of Benjamin and Ann Carter, free settlers of middle age with several children who arrived in Australia in 1833 from Nottinghamshire. By 1834 Benjamin was working as overseer for John Nicholson of *Newbury* at Sutton Forest. This property gained a fine reputation for being well run. Benjamin later settled at Emu Creek (now Canyonleigh) to the west of Berrima where he built a substantial stone house. The family prospered and soon added to the original holdings until they could be counted amongst the largest landholders in the district. After the death of his parents in 1858, Edward Carter, as the eldest son, took over the management of all the family properties.

Edward is generally credited with the discovery of the shale oil deposits at Joadja Creek, although the Aboriginal people had long known the properties of the ‘fire stone’. He was the first to register a claim in 1873 and he worked it for a while but sold to the Australian Kerosene Oil and Minerals Co in 1878.

His specialty was farming and grazing and by the 1880s his holdings included the southern district properties of Nandi, The Gap, Tugalong, Bangadilly and Evandale, and Lake Edward at Crookwell.

He had purchased Golden Valley, and built *Golden Vale* there in 1870, an elegant two-storey sandstone residence so fitting for a family who had risen from ‘humble settlers’ to district leaders.



Edward Carter married Mary Ann Hanslow in 1856 and together they raised six children at *Golden Vale*. He died March 1903 and was buried in the family grave at All Saints Church, Sutton Forest, joining his wife and eldest son already interred there.



Golden Vale homestead and farmland (pictured here in the 1970s) may be considered as Carter’s lasting contribution to the district he loved.

BROWLEY

The Browley property is located on the northern slopes of Mount Gingenbullen, along Oldbury Road up from the Illawarra Highway, between Sutton Forest and Moss Vale.

A brief overview of its history: the property was established by John Waite, an early settler in the district, who was granted the land in 1820. By 1828 he had increased his holding to 1000 acres, growing grains and grazing cattle and sheep. The barn was built during the 1830s and used for shearing and grain storage.



This structure, with its splayed vertical openings to provide ventilation for grain and with large doors to allow easy access for wagons, remains an impressive building today. Browley is still a working farm and the barn remains in use for housing machinery and workshop tools.

As stated above, the family of John Waite and his wife Mary (nee Robinson) were one of the earliest to settle in the Wingecarribee district, receiving a land grant of 100 acres at Sutton Forest in 1820. Research on the Waite and Robinson families, prepared by a great, great grandson, was provided to our Society in 2011. Extracts from this research follow here.

John Waite was born in England in 1781 and sentenced in 1803 for acting with another to steal two sheep in Kent. He was transported to NSW and, after arriving in Sydney in May 1804, was assigned as a Government Man to Dr Charles Throsby.

In August 1804 Throsby was appointed to the new settlement at Newcastle as assistant surgeon. He resigned in 1809 and withdrew from public service, engaging in pastoral pursuits at Upper Minto, on Glenfield, a property granted to him.

John Waite was granted a conditional pardon in 1809 and a ticket of leave in 1810, and could reside in the Parramatta district, provided he stayed in Throsby's service.

In 1812 Waite married Mary Robinson (born 1797) and their first child, Elizabeth, was born that year at Glenfield. A second child, Mary (1814) died an infant, then were born Maria (1816) and John (1818).

Waite most likely accompanied Throsby on all his explorations into country south and southwest of the Cowpastures during the seven years to 1821. Joseph Wild, who came into Throsby's employment in 1814, would have been with them. After their exploration from Bong Bong to the Bathurst area, in 1819 Governor Macquarie made a substantial grant to Throsby of land at Bong Bong and also provided both Waite and Wild with 100 acres each of nearby land.

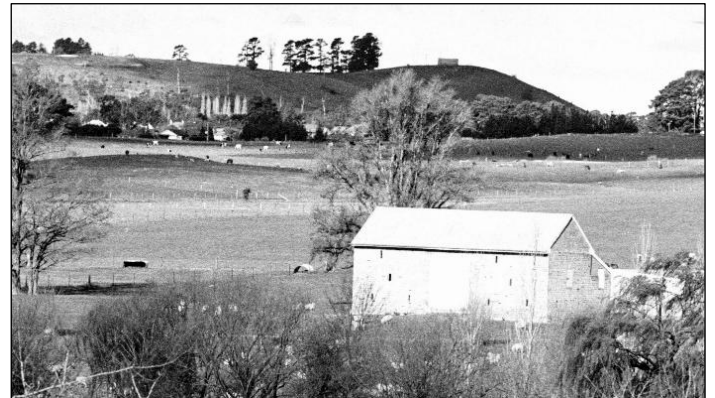
John and Mary Waite settled on their land grant at Sutton Forest. Their second son, Charles, born at Throsby Park in May 1821 was the family's first locally born child. Waite named his grant *Browley* and the next child Matilda was born there in 1822. Waite then sought additional land from the colonial government. Throsby endorsed Waite's request for permission to farm an unoccupied 500 acres adjacent to his property, until required by Government, the better to enable him to keep a dairy. The request was granted. The land is measured out as 699 acres on the Parish Map. Waite had already acquired Wild's 100-acre grant and, in 1825, again with Throsby's endorsement, purchased an adjoining 700 acres.

Waite's enterprise burgeoned, as by 1828 it appears he was working 1600-1700 acres. This land extended west of today's Illawarra Highway, between Berrima Road and Oldbury Road, to a line near the Cement Works. It once encompassed what is now a major part of Moss Vale, where there are now a Waite and Browley Street.

On *Browley*, his original land grant, Waite built a brick house, workers' huts, coach house, meat works and other outhouses. At the census of 1828, of the 1000 acres Waite owned, 170 were cleared and 50

cultivated and his stock comprised 20 horses, 300 cattle and 650 sheep. Working for him were 13 men of various categories, free and assigned.

The Waite's had five daughters and three sons. Apart from the oldest, Elizabeth, all were under 12 years of age at that time. Mary employed a servant and her sister Maria also lived with them, as did Thomas Saw, aged 55, free by servitude. In total there were 24 adults and children at Browley in 1828, with Elizabeth away at school in Parramatta. By 1838 another daughter and three more sons would join the family.



In the 1830s Waite had the barn/granary built on the property. It was large, being 60 x 40 feet in size, 30 feet high, with a 13 feet skillion at the back, used for shearing and grain storage. The barn had a timber frame, with 2-feet thick sandstock brick walls, and was provided with a cobblestoned floor.

James Atkinson of *Oldbury*, who wrote a guide for prospective settlers in 1825, reckoned "a spacious barn floor is very useful, as threshing is sometimes the only work the men can be employed upon in wet weather, and is also particularly useful for the purpose of shearing sheep upon". Wheat grown on *Browley* was milled at *Oldbury* with power obtained from a waterwheel.

Waite also erected a schoolhouse, probably around 1826, to be as well "a place of worship and occupied as such until one has been built by the Government". It was considered a Church of England school and a forerunner of All Saints Church, Sutton Forest. The intention of using it for divine service was in keeping with the Waite's long-standing religious affiliations.

Mary Waite died in 1850, and John passed away in 1863. The property was then sold to the prominent Morrice family, who owned it for around 50 years. The land was sub-divided into rural and town allotments. In the 1920s the Cowley family purchased the homestead block and restored the old house, being owners until 1960. Under the subsequent owners, *Browley* is still a working farm.

compiled by Philip Morton

Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc

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

RESEARCH CENTRE and ARCHIVES	Wingecarribee Shire Council, Civic Centre 68 Elizabeth Street Moss Vale OPEN: Mondays, Tuesdays 10am-4pm and Saturdays 10am-1pm. Closed Public Holidays. Library collection contains reference books, journals and a general collection.
MUSEUM	Market Place, Berrima. Tel: 02 4877 1130. Email: bdmuseum@bigpond.com OPEN: 10.00am to 3.00pm, Fridays to Sundays. This includes during school and public holiday periods.
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: Single \$25.00; Family \$35.00 (plus a Joining Fee of \$10.00)
AFFILIATIONS	Royal Australian Historical Society, Museums Australia Inc and NSW Association of Family History Societies.

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BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY Inc.

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