



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 593 June 2026



From the President's Desk

Reminisce with Bruce Moore about reading Biggles stories, page 2, then take to the air with Ted Marriot, a real life Biggles character of his generation.

A former president of our Society, Ted Marriot was an RAF pilot in WWII before taking up challenges of flying low over treetops into remote areas of Papua New Guinea in search of rough dirt landing strips hacked from the jungle by hand.

Author, researcher, traveller, enthusiastic student and teacher, how did this modest character find time to commit so heavily to our then, young Society. See pages 3-6.

Ted was one of that dedicated crew who threw themselves whole-heartedly into 12 months of hard work to transform a sorry-looking rescue cottage into a regional museum which has continued to grow in reputation and visitor appeal over the last fifty years. See pages 4 & 7 for our Cinderella preparing for the ball.

Our own 'sliding doors' moment saw Mr Lansley's donation of that cottage being accepted by a single vote in a special meeting. See page 3. Had one 'fence sitter' jumped into the 'No' garden then we would not now have our museum colleagues up to their elbows in preparing for a joyful anniversary in early December to celebrate welcoming the first visitors into our new venture.

Thank you Dennis McManus for reminding us, in our General Meeting, of the many older, stylish houses we have in the Highlands and encouraging us to see our neighbourhoods with fresh eyes. Surprisingly the majority are smaller sized dwellings with strong kerb appeal.

Talking of appeal. Carol Liston, a good friend of our Society, will be guest presenter at our Mid-winter Lunch on 16 June. She will be sharing an insight into the workings of the Royal Australian Historical Society and a history of its home in Sydney.

Our Mid-winter Lunch, one of the social events of the season is, like last year, at Mittagong RSL and at \$50 each, the same price too. Page 3 for how to reserve your seat.

Our tour of The White Horse Inn, Golden Vale and Browley properties last week was enjoyed by all despite the cold of winter being an uninvited guest.

Can you spot yourself in the group photo outside the White Horse Inn in Berrima on page 2?

Thank you everyone who contributed to a unanimous vote to update our Society's Constitution for it to conform to new Office of Fair Trading legislation. There is the updated version of our 'rule book' on our website for you to have a read when life becomes too exciting.

Stuart Handley

GENERAL MONTHLY MEETINGS 2026 and SPEAKERS

JUNE 2026: Mid-Winter Lunch, Thursday 25 June at Mittagong RSL, 12 for 12:30pm

Speaker: Adjunct Assoc Professor Carol Liston AO, President of the RAHS. Cost is \$50

JULY 2026: Thursday 23 July at 2:00pm, Civic Centre Theatrette, Moss Vale

Linda Emery with *Captured in the Light*, recent photographs and other acquisitions

AFTERNOON TEA served at the end of the meeting



Moore Memorable Musings



AN EXTINCT SPECIES

Australia has lost a few native animals like the King Island Emu, Tasmanian Tiger, Paradise Parrot etc.

However, I'd like to think that we can save our very own human generation's experience. It is one living history and a link to the past.

I keep thinking of the unforgettable bits in our lifetime which are worth remembering and perhaps reiterating.

Let me share with you a few items which I'm sure we will never see or hear of again.

The first that comes to mind is the clothes-prop man. Hearing the gentle clip-clop of his horse on the road and the cry of "clothes props!" still rings in my ear. Today he is non-existent.

Likewise, the postie's whistle if there was mail. From dawn till dark suppliers called. From the milko to the fisho, the rabbit-o, then the baker and the greengrocer.

The mournful but distinctive sound of a steam engine's whistle. Lucky for us some of those heavy locomotives have been lovingly restored and regularly pass through the Highlands.

The mere sound of these fiery beasts still send nostalgic shivers down my spine.

Obsolete radio serials such as 'Dad & Dave from Snake Gully,' 'Martin's Corner,' 'Blue Hills,' 'Ada & Elsie,' 'Yes What?' then 'The Air Adventure of Biggles' are now a memory.

What happened to those nonsense songs, popular with folks who had survived two World Wars and a Depression?

One classic song which fooled the Japanese Army was 'Mairzy Doats and Dozy Dotes' (Mares Eat Oats). They thought it was a secret coded message.

'I've got Sixpence,' 'My Canary has Circles under his Eyes,' 'Purple People Eater,' 'Itzy Bitzy Teeny Weeny Yellow Polka Dot Bikini,' 'Does Your Chewing Gum Lose its Flavour on the Bedpost Overnight?' and 'Hello Mudda, Hello Farder, her I am at Camp Granada' have vanished.

I can't recall if one silly song has been written this century.

If it had, it would not have been tolerated or possibly understood by today's generation.

Their perception of life is entirely contrary to what we have experienced.

What has made the difference? I'm guessing that a new super-serious technical & digital age has replaced the old-school, light-hearted, analogue one.

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



Out front of the White Horse Inn, Berrima are the 3-house historic self-drive tour attendees on Saturday, May 30

The Mid-winter Lunch is this month

Thursday 25 June, 12 for 12:30pm



Alexandra Room, Mittagong RSL Club

Enjoy a delectable two-course lunch at the Mittagong RSL Club, with bar service available, tea and coffee provided and the usual lucky door prizes and raffle.

Cost is a very reasonable **\$50/person**. You will 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 pay in person at our Research Centre/Archives in Moss Vale or make a direct payment into our account: (Bendigo Bank) BSB 633 000, Account 200107100 with Lunch + initial and surname as the reference.

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



Carol Liston is Adjunct Associate Professor of History at Western Sydney University, in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts who specialises in the history of colonial NSW from 1788 to 1860. She has a BA (1973), and a PhD (1980) from the University of Sydney.

Members may recall the wonderful talk on *Convict Women* Carol gave at Dormie House in 2024 for our Mid-winter Lunch, including that the female convicts were canny survivors, lived on their wits and often entrepreneurs running profitable schemes before they were caught and charged. Her presentation this year should be equally enjoyable and informative.

Our first BDHS Research Officer

EDWARD PALMER WEST ('TED') MARRIOTT

also a former BDHS President and Vice-President

In October 2025 we received an email request for information from a distant relative of Edward West Marriott who wrote *Thomas West of Barcom Glen*, published in 1982. The inquirer, from Wentworth Falls, had borrowed the book from his sister and read on its sleeve that in 1982 Marriott lived in Bowral and was President of Berrima District Historical Society, and so he wondered what we knew about him and whether any of his family were still in the area.

Research Officer Frank Mitchell dug out the Edward 'Ted' Marriott biography file held in our archives and found that it includes an obituary, a 20-page memoir, and a photo of Ted in an acting role for a movie sequence set in PNG. Frank replied to the relative that "Marriott certainly had an adventure filled life and career, including with the RAF as pilot on bombing raids over Europe in WWII, extensive knowledge of Papua New Guinea as a pilot after the war and connections to the Solomon Islands."

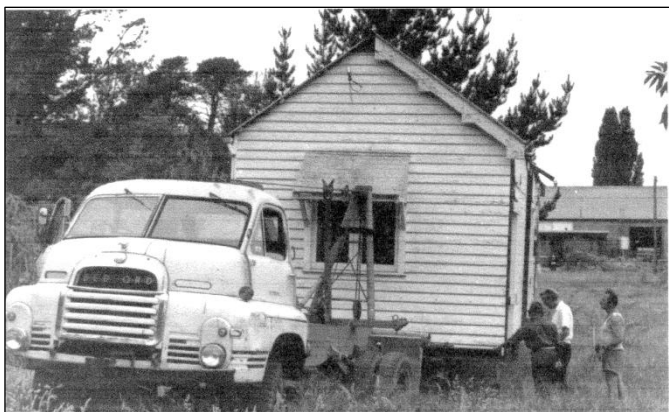
The relative happily paid a research fee to receive a full scan of the biography file, which includes details about Ted's family, and the photo. As we had a spare copy of the *Thomas West* book, we offered that to him as well, and he was very happy to purchase it.

As Ted Marriott was an active, early member of our Society, Frank suggested that his story would be of interest to members. Providing it now in mid-2026 is most appropriate, being the year that we celebrate our museum's 50th anniversary. Ted joined the BDHS in 1974, when it had no permanent home for its museum or archives, that situation being rectified by 1976 with the help of Ted and other early members.

After a portion of Crown Land was made available in 1975 at Market Place, Berrima, near the bridge, BDHS members began the process of establishing a permanent museum there, many hoping to make use of a weatherboard cottage recently offered by Frank Lansley that would be relocated from Moss Vale.

The BDHS newsletter of September 1975 (No. 33) reported the following: "At a special meeting held on 14 August, 33 members attended. Re the cottage offered by Mr Lansley, 20 voted to accept it, 8 against, with 5 abstainers. Of the members unable to attend, who sent in their views, 5 voted to accept, 7 voted against, and 4 were non-committal. At the meeting, it was announced that 42 volunteers for duty at the museum had given in their names."

“An interim sub-committee, consisting of Mrs Moore, Mrs Barrand, Mr Klein and Mr Marriott had prepared the way for the Special Meeting and had submitted an excellent Report.”



The Lansley cottage was relocated to Berrima in December 1975 but took almost another 12 months to be made suitable for the purpose. Renovation was completed by October 1976, and the new museum opened to the public that December, as seen below.



Also in 1976, a room to serve as storage for the BDHS archives was acquired at Berrima Court House. This was made use of from August 1977 until 1982, when permanent premises were obtained at the Mittagong Council Chambers, vacant after the district's several councils amalgamated in 1981 into Wingecarribee Shire Council to serve the entire Southern Highlands.

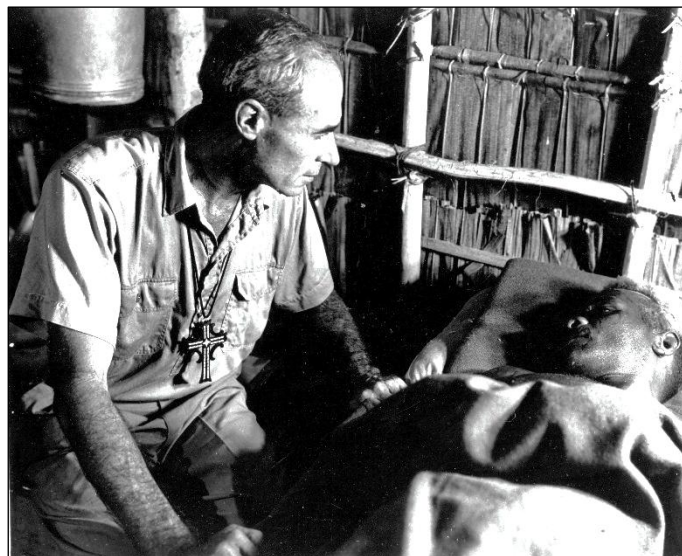
The year 1976 thus marked a major milestone for our fledgling Society, with a home for archives material secured and a museum building opened in Berrima. Biographies of some of the prominent early members of our Society who brought this about, namely Doug Cull, Edwin Klein, Janet Cosh and Rachel Roxburgh, have been provided in past issues of this newsletter. Following here, compiled mostly from the archive's biography file, is a brief life-story of Ted Marriott who was another that helped the BDHS grow and flourish.

Edward Palmer West ('Ted') Marriott was born at Cremorne, Sydney, on 22 February 1916, to parents Edward West and Lucy Margurit Marriott. He had an older sister Melody and two younger sister Sylvia and Susette. In his teen years he was a boarder at The Armidale School (TAS), an Anglican-run school, and

afterwards attended Sydney University. He gained qualifications as a teacher and in the early 1930s took on a position at the same Armidale school. After several years there, he left to go on a tour of the British Isles and Europe with his sister Melody. He then stayed in Scotland to study for a Master of Arts Degree at Edinburgh University, graduating in 1940. After that he served with the RAF until WWII ended and, on returning to Australia in 1946, again took up his teaching position at TAS College.

Ted Marriott married Glenys Mary Coleman in 1947 at Sydney but by 1950 they were divorced. They had one daughter Sue (Mrs N Drury) who would raise three children.

In 1950 Ted went to Papua New Guinea, initially as a pilot and then as a teacher, remaining there for 20 years – more about this period, including extracts from his own memoir, are provided later.



Pictured is Ted Marriott (left) playing the role of a pioneer Anglican bishop at the Solomon Islands in the film *Spearhead*, directed by Ossie Emery in 1964

Ted Marriott came to the Southern Highlands in the early 1970s, buying a property *Four Winds* at Bowral, writing a family history book, and for 15 years being an active and highly respected committee member and researcher with the BDHS. His book, *Thomas West of Barcom Glen*, was about his great-great grandfather, whose life and work in the early years of the 19th century took Ted eight years to research and compile. He self-published the work in 1982.

When our Society first created a Research Officer position in 1976, Ted Marriott had been a member for two years and took on the role. It seems that, once the museum was up and running in its new permanent building, he preferred to concentrate on research matters and from 1977 would have mostly worked at home while perhaps keeping an eye on the Society's archives room at Berrima Court House.

In 1978 his position was retitled as 'Director of Historical Research'. An Assistant Research Officer was also appointed in 1979, with Rachel Roxburgh filling that role until 1982, then Barbara Foodey (1984) and Carole Douch (1987-1988). After Ted Marriott passed away in 1990, Carole Douch and Elaine Dayball carried on as Research Officers.

Did Ted Marriott and Rachel Roxburgh, both highly experienced overseas travellers, spend much time working together as BDHS researchers or did they concentrate mostly on their own projects? When the BDHS Archives gained larger premises at Mittagong in 1982, undoubtedly Ted would have relished the more suitable and central location.

Ted Marriott filled numerous other roles as well. Having joined in 1974, he served as a member of the BDHS Management Committee from then until 1988. He was a BDHS delegate to the RAHS Conference in 1975 and 1976; Vice-President from 1977 to 1979, President from 1980 to 1982; and Vice-President again from 1984 to 1985. In 1987 he was made an Honorary Life Member of our Society.

As Director of Historical Research, Ted supervised the team of BDHS volunteers who continued the work of recording local cemetery transcriptions that Janet Cosh had commenced in 1971 at All Saints in Sutton Forest. In June 1989 Ted reported that the Society had recorded the inscriptions on the headstones in 17 of the cemeteries in the district and had found these to be invaluable in family history research.

Ted Marriott died on 19 June 1990. His BDHS colleague and a former BDHS President, Doug Cull, wrote a tribute piece which is quoted here in full:

"Although there were some problems with Ted Marriott's health since he returned from a trip to see friends from his war time squadron in England last year, we had all thought that with an able assistant in Mrs Carole Douch being appointed to relieve him of much of the burden of responsibility as Research Officer for the Society would soon bring him back to the fullness of the energy and enterprise he has constantly given to his role in dealing with a multitude of enquiries from persons far and wide.

It was then a bewildering shock to learn on 19 June of the unexpected death of our honoured and much respected friend and officer of long standing, after a fall in which he had sustained a fractured femur. He was a patient in Mona Vale Hospital for three weeks.

The whole of the district respected this urbane, unassuming gentleman. He was a highly qualified man, having completed a Master of Arts Degree at Edinburgh University, Scotland, in 1940; then as Wing

Commander had been in the thick of Air Command's defence of Britain in her hour of greatest need. Sent to Canada as Instructor to cadet Air Force trainees, he was to return to again lead his squadron from a base in Foggia, Italy, in mopping up raids over German forces left in Yugoslavia and elsewhere.

Returning to Australia in 1946, he again took up teaching in Armidale at TAS College. In 1950 he went to Papua New Guinea, first in Wewak learning the ropes and the management of a commercial business of flying small planes over the difficult terrain in that mountainous and storm-tortured island."

Further insights into the life of Edward West Marriott are found in the obituary provided in the *Southern Highland News* of 27 June 1990. Extracts follow here:

"The death of Ted Marriott . . . brought sadness and a great sense of loss to all those who knew and valued the fine qualities and integrity of this outstanding member of the local community.

Members of the BDHS, particularly those who have worked in the Archives section and the Museum; friends outside the Society who appreciated his scholarship and dedication to his chosen way of life among the classics and love of literature, as well as the many hundreds of people who benefitted from his research, patiently and meticulously tracing backgrounds and family information of the earlier settlers, whether in this district or other areas throughout Australia and overseas, will be distressed to hear of his passing from among us.

Reserved, courteous and unassuming, Ted, a highly qualified photographer, journalist and intrepid pilot with a love of flying which took him on hair-raising ventures in New Guinea after he returned from serving in the RAF. He was a Flight Instructor in Canada and Wing Commander in bombing flights over Europe in 1940s and in 1944 near the end of the war in Foggia, Italy, yet he did not speak of either his academic qualifications nor of his war service and later success in New Guinea and as a teacher in the Solomon Islands. His life was too full of projects in which he involved himself to seek acclaim for past adventures.

Returning to Australia in 1946 he spent some years teaching at Armidale, then being sought out because of his reputation as a skilled pilot by war ace Wing Commander R H Gibbes late of the RAAF, who had formed Gibbes Sepik Airways based at Wewak in Papua New Guinea.

He joined 'Bobby' Gibbes in 1950 and spent the following two years flying hazardous missions into the remote highlands taking supplies of machinery to

mining companies; ferrying passengers and workmen, Government officials in time of tribal fighting in otherwise inaccessible mountain villages; bringing in the injured or desperately ill for medical attention in Port Moresby, and generally building up a reputation of courage and responsibility among the customers who needed a reliable pilot.

After eight months in Wewak, Ted was transferred to Port Moresby and appointed by Gibbes as head of a newly expanded venture, flying 100 hours a month into Tapini and Wau where the airstrips were small, cleared areas on the shoulders of mountains with sheer drops on three sides. He earned the nickname of *King of Tapini* for his unerring judgement in landing and take-off from these precipitous heights. Having logged 1000 hours in 8 ½ months, Ted was grounded for 3 ½ months."

Ted himself states in his memoir that, to fill in time after being grounded, he went to the Mission Station at Dogura, Milne Bay Province, in the south-east of Papua New Guinea, and started doing research on the agricultural possibilities of the area that supplied the Mission and the schools run by the British Overseas Service. He was about to join the teaching college for boys located on a slope of Mt Lamington when the volcanic mountain erupted. Luckily, all the students were on holiday, and Ted was 170 miles away, but all the collage staff were killed. He assisted the reorganising of the Mission's teaching facilities and was then to remain there and in the nearby Solomon Islands for eight fruitful years.

Had Ted continued as a pilot with Gibbes, he would have become part of Papuan Air Transport, which became a highly successful commercial operation with several planes including a DC3, hotel at the airport, gift shop, taxi service and sundry other side lines. But he wrote that "as a trained teacher before the war, it was my duty to help reconstruct the school and restore the interrupted education of the boys . . . I gave away the idea of flying."

Retiring from the Mission in the early 1970s, he spent some months flying around Australia in the company of friends. He then began his family history research and moved to the Southern Highlands where he lived at *Four Winds*, a property he bought in Bowral and, as already described, became an active committee member and researcher at the BDHS.

He had already compiled a book that was published in January 1956, titled *Papua & New Guinea in pictures: a book of elementary social studies*. A far more ambitious undertaking was *Thomas West of Barcom Glen*, mentioned earlier, a family history book about his great-great grandfather.

On the book's back flyleaf it states that, after eight years of increasingly intensive research, Ted had compiled so much information that he and his colleagues in the family felt that it had to be put into book form to be available to the 3,500 or more descendants of Thomas West and whoever else was interested in family

history. As a former Senior Information Officer in the British Overseas Civil Service, Ted had considerable experience in writing for publication.

In brief, as described on the flyleaf, the book is about Thomas West who was transported to NSW in 1801. As a carpenter and millwright, he gained the approval of Governor Macquarie to build what proved to be the first successful watermill in Sydney. For this enterprise he was rewarded with an unspecified grant of land which encouraged him to diversify his milling with dairying but also led to a legal battle in which he was represented by William Charles Wentworth and Dr Wardell. From this experience West gained a passionate attachment to his land, which was passed on to his younger son, the better-known Obed West.

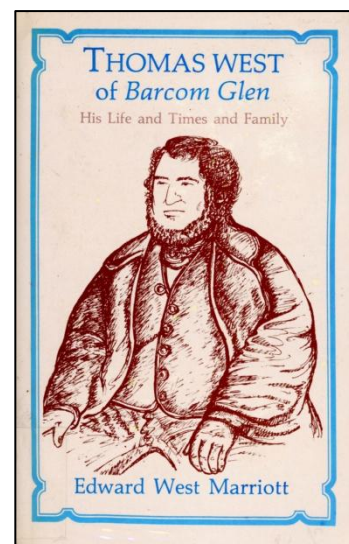
The book is described as a well-researched family history which deals not only with details of the family and the tragic estrangement between the father and the elder son, but portrays the convict experience, the bitterness of the struggle between emancipists and exclusivists, and life in early 19th century Sydney.

After its publication, the book was described in a *Sydney Morning Herald* review as the very model of a modern family history, a remarkable achievement by a new author and publisher, operating in a field so perilous as family history.

At the end of his 20-page *memoir*, Ted states that from time to time through the years he would wonder how he'd have fitted into commercial life with Papuan Air Transport, and indeed whether he would have survived. "It was not until I was grounded that that I began to think of the close shaves I had had and how, so far, luck had been with me."

His luck in surviving was a great boon for all those he helped and, of course, for our own Historical Society.

compiled by Philip Morton



Museum opened on 4 December 1976

The late 19th century, weatherboard cottage pictured below while still *in situ* at 33 Railway St, Moss Vale, was donated to the BDHS by Frank Lansley in 1975.



He had built a new brick home immediately behind the old residence and wanted it gone. A brief history of the Lansley family, as published in the *Southern Highland News* in June 1977, is provided here:

“After a span of 50 years in the service of Esso as agent and distributor for the company over a very wide area of the Southern Tablelands, Mr Frank Lansley of Moss Vale has called it a day. The retirement of Mr Lansley and his wife who played no small part in the administration of the business over the years comes as a fitting reward for their close attention to detail and concentration.

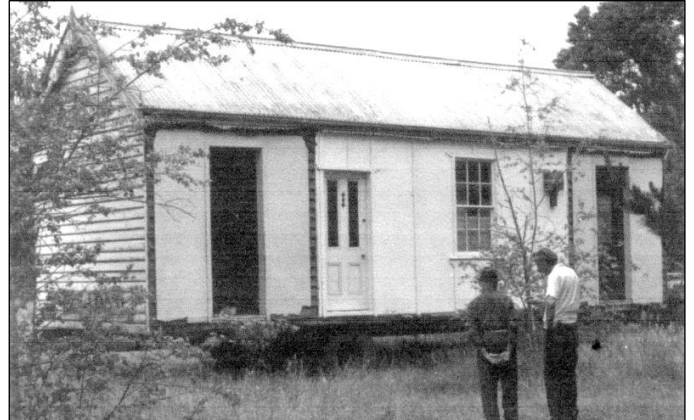
The late father of the family came from the Robertson district to Moss Vale in 1926, where he operated a dairy farm on the southern approach to the town. Son Frank was then co-proprietor of a milk carrying business covering the Dairy Farmers Robertson-Moss Vale interests.

His father established a carrying business in Moss Vale and was later joined by his sons Frank and Alf, who transferred to Sydney in 1945. Being granted the Esso charter for the district, the business continued to expand and outgrew facilities offered in premises at Railway Street and so the depot was transferred to a modern set-up fronting the Illawarra Highway on the southern border of the township.

Mr Lansley will now have more time to concentrate on his favourite game of bowls as a life member of the Moss Vale Bowling Club and past president.

Mrs Lansley's favourite hobby is her home garden which is already taking shape around their new two-storied brick residence which was recently completed on the allotment originally occupied by the agency business.”

Having been offered the weatherboard cottage in 1975, our Society began the process of establishing a permanent museum, to be housed in the cottage that would be relocated to Berrima, on a portion of Crown Land that had been made available in Market Place. As mentioned in our Ted Marriott feature in this issue, a majority of members voted in favour of the move at a Special Meeting in August 1975.



The cottage was relocated in December 1975, but it took members until October 1976 to make it suitable for the purpose. The museum opened to the public on 4 December 1976, a milestone date that we take as the museum's birthday. The official opening, held on 19 March 1977, was a grand day, as shown below.



First museum curator, Bonnie Peirce, makes an address



A section of the crowd at the museum's official opening

Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc

PO Box 188 Moss Vale NSW 2577 ☎ Telephone (02) 4872 2169

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.

If undelivered return to:
Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc
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BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY Inc.

PATRON: Councillor Jesse Fitzpatrick, Mayor of Wingecarribee Shire

President	Stuart HANDLEY	Archivist	Linda EMERY
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Jnr Vice President	Ian MACKEY	Membership Secretary	Janet BLACK
Hon Treasurer	Rhonda BROWN	Newsletter Editor	Philip MORTON
Acting Secretary	Philip MORTON	Conservation Officer	Denise MACKEY
Research Team	Frank MITCHELL, Carolyn DOUGHERTY and Janet BLACK		

Management Committee: President, Vice Presidents, Acting Secretary, Treasurer and members Denyse Barker, Ros Dale, John Schweers, Melissa Coorie and Lyndal Breen

Museum Sub-Committee: John Schweers, Dr Conni Lord, Vanessa Dalgleish, Lyn Hall, Sylvia Carless and Michele Woods