



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 594 July 2026



From the President's Desk

A pleasurable opening to our newsletter this month is to share the news of Linda Emery 'medalling' at the recent King's Birthday weekend. Congratulations Linda on your being awarded the OAM.

When you read about her contribution to preserving and sharing our region's history on page 3, you will agree that it is well deserved.

No time for Linda to rest on her laurels as she is guest speaker at our July General Meeting when she is to share some of the latest editions to our archives. Linda's sharing will include anecdotes and tales of death, deception, good deeds and promises made. With every photo or artifact, you will be drawn into another time and a past perhaps never told. Page 3 for a taster.

The good news continues to flow with Council approving the Heritage Planning Proposal at its recent meeting. A dedicated group of heritage supporters has spent years gathering evidence in support of this Proposal so congratulations to them on this result. Read about Council's attitude to heritage in Dennis McManus' account also on page 3.

An organisation that was founded in 1901 in Sydney by a group of 'like-minded hobbyists', has been preserving and sharing history for even longer than our Society.

The work of the Royal Australian Historical Society was outlined by our Mid-winter Lunch guest speaker, Carol Liston. Well done them for getting a whole new roof on their History House HQ after years of waiting and much fundraising.

See page 2 for photo of Carol and Shylie Brown, one of our volunteers whose knowledge of older buildings such as the Female Factory is truly impressive.

It is always a good news story when our newsletter editor, Philip Morton, shares a tale of a reader from afar contacting us with thanks for publishing articles which have touched upon their family's history. This time an email from a Brisbane resident regarding a piece that appeared in a 2019 edition has Philip sending us along the trails of stagecoaches and mail runs. See pages 5 to 7 for a bumpy ride to Nowra via Kangaroo Valley. Were cushions supplied? Can we have more stories of stagecoaches please, the Greyhound buses of their day?

Our museum 50th anniversary celebration planners are really needing your help. Can you lend us photos of buildings or streetscapes of the Shire in the 1970s and images of vehicles of that time too. Cars, motor bikes and especially panel vans seemed to be an essential element for a social life in a rural community. Photos anyone?

Stuart Handley

GENERAL MONTHLY MEETINGS 2026 and SPEAKERS

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

Linda Emery with *Captured in the Light*, favourite pictures and stories from the archives

AUGUST 2026: Thursday 27 August at 2:00pm, Civic Centre Theatrette, Moss Vale

Chris Thompson speaking about her latest book *Roads out of Sydney*

AFTERNOON TEA served at the end of the meeting



Moore Memorable Musings



IMPROPER NAMES

We're all very good at using proper names to emphasise a point. Here's an example: Some people don't know if they are Arthur or Martha.

Once there was one bloke, living across the road from me who was as old as Methuselah. He was as Irish as Paddy's pig, a bit of a nosey Parker but however was a Jack of all trades. He taught me to have the patience of Job and as a young bloke, heavens to Betsy, I needed that. His motto was 'too much work makes Jack a dull boy' and to keep your life 'Even-Steven.' How right he was.

Here we are, Darby and Joan at home, as pleased as Punch, living the life of Riley. Blind Freddie can see that. Although in these tough times we often rob Peter to pay Paul and not be a doubting Thomas, trying not to keep up with the Joneses.

I'd like to think that any Tom, Dick or Harry can do a Bradbury in this country of ours and be successful. It's Murphy's Law that we have Hobson's choice in this life, for Pete's sake.

You can bet London to a brick on that. So Bob's your Uncle and Fanny's your aunt! My advice is not to be a nervous Nellie, a shrinking Violet or a smart Alec. I reckon Henry Lawson hit our Achilles heel by writing negatively, 'we'll all be rooned, said Hanrahan!' This gave most people Buckley's chance of getting on. It makes you want to Peter out! Or even do a Harold Holt! He certainly found his peace in Davy Jones' locker.

Let's have a Captain Cook at Paul Hogan's story. He used to say 'let her rip, Boris, old son!'

He was as game as Ned Kelly, wearing nothing but a Jackie Howe when he discovered show business. He was in like Flynn and as happy as Larry. Before you could say Jack Robinson there he was, Johnny on the spot, taking the Mickey on the Tele.

Some reckon he was the real McCoy, but in those early days, no one knew him from Adam.

Bruce Moore

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Our **Family History Group** meets in the Moss Vale theatrette on the first Wednesday of each month at 1pm. Convenor: Denise Mackey.

Our **DNA Interest Group** meets in the Moss Vale theatrette on the third Thursday each month at 1pm. 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

Carol Liston's informative talk

At our recent Mid-winter Luncheon at Mittagong RSL the guest speaker was Adjunct Assoc. Professor Carol Liston AO, President of the Royal Australian Historical Society. Carol presented a history of the RAHS and their History House at 133 Macquarie St, Sydney.

The talk was most fascinating and informative. Carol explained that the RAHS, the nation's oldest historical organisation, was founded by a small group of like-minded hobbyists in

1901 and membership grew steadily. *The Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceedings* was first published in 1906. In 1918, the Society was granted the right to prefix the title *Royal*. First patron was David S Mitchell, Australiana collector and Mitchell Library benefactor.

While universities initially showed little interest in Australian history at the time, the NSW Dept of Education provided considerable support to the fledgling RAHS. In 1941, the first History House at 8 Young Street, Sydney, was opened, serving as premises until the RAHS moved to Macquarie Street in 1971.

A project to upgrade the historic Macquarie Street building, which had been an elite boarding house, was put on hold during the Covid years, but has been underway since 2024 and repairs to a badly leaky roof are now complete, with Sydney's recent downpours being a real-world test of the waterproofing, as no leaks were reported. The roof works' cost was supported by donors and a Heritage NSW Caring for State Heritage grant.

The building upgrade project is now moving into its next phase, focusing on the basement and drainage works. The RAHS is also exploring options to improve access, including a lift.

Carol also spoke about the RAHS's affiliated societies and outreach programs, including the regional seminars, which our Society, as an affiliated member, gladly supports.

- compiled by Philip Morton



Carol Liston, after her presentation on the RAHS at our recent Mid-winter Luncheon held in Mittagong RSL Club, is thanked by member Shylie Brown

Linda Emery awarded the OAM

Congratulations to Linda Emery, who is a recent recipient of the Member of the Order of Australia award, named in the 2026 King's Birthday Honours List for service to the community of Wingecarribee.

A congratulatory entry on the Wingecarribee Shire Council's official Facebook page appeared following the announcement of the awards on the June long weekend. It reads as follows:



"A huge shoutout to Linda Emery OAM, a very deserving Member of the Order of Australia recipient named in the King's Birthday Honours List on the weekend! Linda has dedicated decades to preserving and sharing our region's history as part of the Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc. since 1989 and is currently the organisation's Senior Vice President and Archivist."

"From heritage work with Council to national roles, a researcher on 'Who Do You Think You Are?' and authoring numerous books, her passion for preserving our stories has made a lasting impact. Such well-earned recognition for decades of dedication - well done, Linda."

In addition to her outstanding work as cited above, Linda's significant contributions to the community include the following:

- Former Secretary and member of the Bong Bong Common Management Committee (1995-2010)
- Member of the WSC Heritage Working Group (2000s-2020)
- With the Royal Australian Historical Society as Councillor (2017-2023); former member Heritage Committee and volunteer for more than 20 years
- Oxley College, Bowral, a member on the Board of Governors (2006-2017).

Linda has published numerous works of history that cover a broad range of subjects. These include *Exploring Exeter* (1998, reprinted 2003, 2009, 2020); *A Lovingly Woven Tapestry: Oxley College Bowral 1983-2004* (2006); *Pride, Spirit and Enthusiasm: A History of Mittagong RSL Sub-branch 1919-2019* (2019); *Poppy Seed from France: a tribute from the children of Villers Bretonneux*, a BDHS project that Linda co-ordinated, compiled and edited (2019); and *Pictorial History - Southern Highlands* (2008, reprinted 2013, 2026).

Our July General Meeting speaker

LINDA EMERY with CAPTURED IN THE LIGHT

Favourite pictures and stories from the archives

It has been a few years since the last "Captured" so I have plenty of new material to share on this trip through Southern Highlands history. In a break from tradition, I am also including some objects, and in particular a spectacular example of a racing trophy with a fabulous connection to Berrima and one of its more famous sons.

Good news regarding local heritage



Following on from his enjoyable and informative presentation on local heritage at our May General Meeting, Dennis McManus provided us with the following update on 18 June:

You may have already heard the great news that Council has today approved the Heritage Planning Proposal PP-2024-2040 recommended by the Planning Panel on 27 May. It will now go to the NSW Department of Planning for a final sign-off and incorporation as items in our Current LEP 2010.

It was a lengthy council meeting on 17 June with discussion of the Heritage Planning Proposal not taking place until between 7:30 and 8:00pm and then continuing next morning. Thanks to the more than thirty supporters who attended the meeting and a special thank you to Angela Williamson for the *Wingecarribee Heritage Supporter* badges.

Further good news is that Council approved two important additional matters: the establishment of a *Heritage Grant Assistance Program* and the re-establishment of a *Heritage Advisory Committee* as had existed up until 2021. Importantly, senior staff recognised that more resources need to be applied to heritage and, in discussions, made reference to a free heritage advisory service being considered for next quarter. Thanks to all those who helped to achieve this outcome after many years of work.

Dennis McManus

A Treasure from the Archives

Linda Emery

Among the great benefits of our move from Mittagong to Moss Vale Civic Centre has been the discovery – or should I say rediscovery – of some hidden treasures in our collection. One such item was a copy of *The Cow Pasture Road* by Hardy Wilson.

Donated in 2002, this beautifully illustrated book is set in Sydney's Cumberland Plain by Australian architect, artist and author William Hardy Wilson (1881-1955). Wilson's playful and whimsical story of a journey from Prospect to the Cow Pastures at Camden is brought to life by his exquisite pencil and watercolour illustrations of early colonial houses, properties and churches, some of which no longer survive. Below is one of the illustrations with its caption:



“Where Cattle Pasture at the Thresholds of Deserted Homes”

Published by Art in Australia in 1920, the edition was limited to 600 copies, 500 of which were originally for sale in Australia. It preceded Wilson's better-known 1924 publication *Old Colonial Architecture in New South Wales and Tasmania*, considered the first major publication dedicated to the documentation and conservation of Australian buildings.

Born at Campbelltown in 1881, the great grandson of early NSW colonist Caleb Wilson, he attended Newington College, where he captained the First XV Rugby team and was awarded the School Drawing Prize. He went on to study at the Sydney Technical College and after working for a time with a Sydney architect, travelled extensively overseas in Europe and the United States, returning in 1910. He exhibited regularly with the Society of Artists, and with other artists he founded the Fine Arts Society.

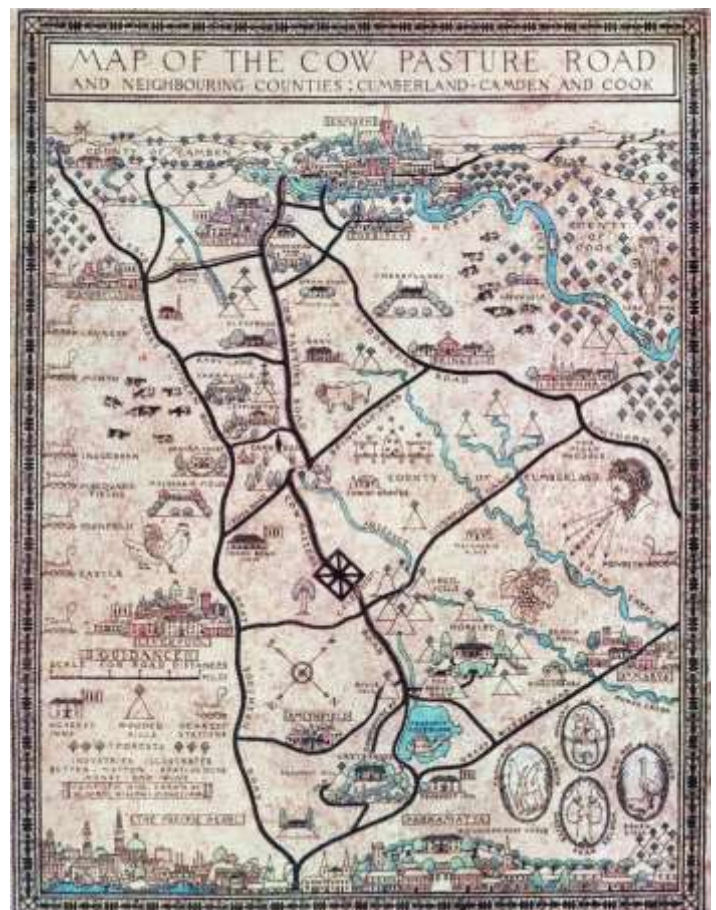
Wilson was a great proponent of the US Colonial Revival style of architecture and adopted a similar style in the design of homes and commercial buildings in Australia, notably the house and other buildings he created for camellia expert E.G. Waterhouse at *Eryldene* in Gordon.

As a rare book, with a value of between \$300 and \$400, it is not in our general library collection but

stored with our manuscript collection. Members are welcome to have a browse through this lovely item in the archives.



St John's Camden



Map of the Cow Pasture Road and neighbouring Counties

The wide spread of our local history

Our Society recently received this request by email:

"I am researching my great, great grandfather John Cullen who lived in the Moss Vale district in the late 1800s. I have discovered an excellent article in the BDH&FHS Inc's newsletter No. 513 of February 2019 titled "The Cullens at Burrawang/Moss Vale", being Part 2 of a series compiled by Philip Morton. I would be very grateful if you are able direct me as to how to find Part 1 – Many thanks, Helen Dobbin [Cullen], Brisbane, 19 June 2026."

We replied that it was good to hear that she found the Cullen article useful and that Part 1 had been published in our December 2018 newsletter, #512. In case she could not find it in the back issues on our website, a pdf copy was sent with the message.

Helen then replied on 21 June as follows: "A very big thank you for your prompt response to my email and the wonderful information on John Cullen."

"My grandfather, Stanley Harold Cullen, wrote his memoir in 1978 and, as a 17-year-old, I typed it up for him. That copy is now disintegrating as the paper at that time was of a poor quality compared to now. I am now rewriting Grandad's story and including the family tree back to the early 1800s. I felt that as John Cullen [his grandfather] was very much a part of his early years, I would document that part of his/our history, before the rewrite. Robert James Cullen was Grandad's father and worked 'The Camp' (*Editor: see details on page 6*) for John Cullen, his father. Not a happy relationship, I believe, but again I have found little information about Robert James. Did John Cullen have only one farm? I'm also intrigued by Oldbury homestead. Growing up it was often mentioned, and I understood it had belonged to John Cullen. I now believe it belonged to James Atkinson."

"I am so very grateful for the information in these two articles you have researched on John Cullen."

- Many thanks again, Helen Dobbin [Cullen]

In the reply to this we said that we could delve into our CULLEN biography file to find more information or, as all our biography files have been digitised, we could provide the entire, quite large, file to her for a research fee. She happily took up this offer.

As well, it was pointed out that a search through back issues of our newsletter would turn up some history articles about James Atkinson and *Oldbury*.

For the interest of readers, an abridged version of the Cullen family series from 2018-2019 follows here.

The first selections south of the Wingecarribee Swamp were registered in 1862 and the private village of Burrawang took shape. Initially it served as the eastern area's hub, by 1867 having a post office, store and inn. One of the area's earliest selectors was John Cullen. He would prosper at Burrawang and at Moss Vale where, in the 1870s, he and his younger brother James became hotel owners.

John Cullen had emigrated from County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, arriving in NSW on the ship *Kate* on 4 December 1855, aged 21 years. He came from humble origins, his father being a farm labourer, so most likely was seeking better prospects. His younger sister Jane had already emigrated, arriving in July that year, aged 19, on the *Exodus* with her husband William Vance, an agricultural labourer. They settled at Kiama, where their five children were registered.

John joined them at Kiama, found work and soon married an Irish immigrant, Anna-Maria Curry, who gave birth to their first child in 1857. Eventually they would raise 11 children, five girls and six boys, the last nine being born in the Wingecarribee district.

As John and Jane considered that there were great opportunities for settlers prepared to work, they encouraged the rest of the family back in Ireland to also emigrate. Their parents, Rebecca and Robert Cullen, and three younger children – Ann 19 years, James 17, and Sarah 12 – arrived at Sydney in March 1861 on the ship *Queen Bee*, with John as sponsor.

By the early 1860s both the John Cullen and William Vance families had taken up at Burrawang, along with the Cullen family from Ireland. John's property was located on Pearson's Lane, midway between Wildes Meadow and Robertson.

Cullen was instrumental in forming a Loyal Orange Lodge at Burrawang. In 1872 the *Protestant Standard* reported that the Burrawang LOL, being number 80, was opened on Saturday, 18 May, with several Sydney brethren present. The meeting was held at Cullen's home and continued there for many years.

Also in 1872, young James Cullen married Matilda Millar of Goulburn. They would have eight children.



In 1873 James became proprietor and first licensee of the Commercial Hotel, Burrawang (*pictured above*).

The single-storey, timber building in Barrett St (now Hoddle St) had nine rooms, outbuildings, stable and coach house, and a well of pure water, on 69 acres. James re-named it the Burrawang Hotel in 1876.

Move to Moss Vale By this time the fledgling town of Moss Vale was growing around its railway station, the Southern Railway between Picton and Goulburn having opened through the local district in 1867.

John Cullen purchased the leasehold in 1875 for the Terminus Hotel in Moss Vale along with an adjoining railway store and meeting hall, all built opposite the station in the early 1860s by Martin Larkin who had moved to the district in anticipation of the railway.



In 1880 Cullen renamed the hotel as the Royal and was proprietor and licensee until 1888, when he was elected to the first Moss Vale Municipal Council, and Edward Goodridge took over as licensee. In 1893 Goodridge, by then also an alderman, paid Cullen an estimated 6,700 pounds for the hotel, store, hall and land, and subsequently enlarged the hotel.



Cullen acquired another Moss Vale hotel in 1883, being the Tattersall Hotel (*pictured*) a late-Victorian two-storey, brick building erected in 1879 at the corner of Lackey and Argyle Sts. Its first proprietor and licensee, Thomas Tate, sold it to Cullen. After being its lessee for only a year, Cullen passed the licence to Edward Aland, the husband of his daughter Elizabeth. The Alands changed the name to the Central Hotel in 1891 and in 1906 made additions

and renovations. They decorated it with an elegant first floor wrap-around verandah, timber posts and fine balustrade. They held the licence until 1910 and sold the property in 1914. Many publicans then came and went and the building was greatly altered, most especially with the removal of the verandah in 1928. The Central Hotel closed its doors in 2013.

Having become well established in the district, Cullen was nominated as an alderman on the first Moss Vale Municipal Council, gazetted on 14 September 1888. Out of 29 candidates, he was one of the nine elected, ranking fourth in the vote count. His brother James was subsequently elected but only served one term. After five years as an alderman, John Cullen stepped down in 1893, then being in his sixties, and was made an honorary magistrate, serving on the bench at Moss Vale Police Court until well into the 1900s.

John Cullen had already disposed of his Burrawang land and purchased a property known as The Camp (later as Southdowns), described by a visitor in 1896 as “a beautiful homestead”. Located a few miles out of Moss Vale on the Robertson Rd, John and his wife Anna Maria lived there until moving to Ashfield, Sydney, around 1910.

As already stated, John’s sister, Mrs Jane Vance, had emigrated from Ireland in 1855, the same year as he had. She died in July 1913, the *Scrutineer* describing her as an esteemed Burrawang resident. At their home in Ashfield, Anna Maria Cullen subsequently passed away in July 1919, aged 85, and John Cullen in December 1921, aged 88. The *Scrutineer* noted that he “was one of the oldest identities of this district, a widely known and a highly respected citizen”.

In regard to John’s younger brother, **James Cullen**, he had, in April 1879, sold the Burrawang Hotel and relinquished its licence, having secured a lengthy lease at Moss Vale on a town block owned by the Throsby family. At the corner of Argyle and Valetta Streets, James erected a two-storey, brick building of 21 rooms with first floor verandahs. It had a 16-stall horse stable and coach house with room for nine coaches. The premises opened in late 1879, James being proprietor and licensee. He advertised it in Sydney papers as the “Family Hotel, opposite the Goods-shed, Moss Vale. Ample accommodation for families and visitors. Best brands of wines and spirits. Horses and buggies for hire at all times.”

His hotel was more commonly known as *Cullen’s Family Hotel* and became the booking office in 1881 for a new coach line that ran between Moss Vale and Nowra. By the late 1890s James was ready to retire and advertised his hotel for sale.

When the Family Hotel did not sell, James Cullen was declared bankrupt in 1890 and moved to Sydney where he died in September 1911, aged 63.



Various licensees ran the Family Hotel until, due to structural problems, its licence was revoked in 1911. After renovations it served as the *Buena Vista Guest House* and was demolished in 1940.

Our CULLEN biography file includes an article about James Cullen for a time also being a coachman on the Moss Vale-Nowra coach line. This story was included by Alan Clark as one of the many entries researched and compiled by him as short histories in *Coachmen of the Nowra District* published by the Shoalhaven Historical Society in 2018. The entry is provided here.

CULLEN & HADDIN Two Moss Vale coachmen, James Cullen and John Haddin went into partnership in 1884 and bought out Potter & Coles whose business included carrying the mail between Nowra and Moss Vale. Haddin had been granted a coach licence in October 1883, and the company's introductory advertisement stated that the drivers were experienced men, who had been on this route for three years, which suggests they were the same as used by the previous proprietors.

The new owners started on the first day of 1885. Coaches left Nowra each Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 4:00am, arriving at Cambewarra at 5:00am, Kangaroo Valley at 6:30am and were in Moss Vale in time for the Sydney midday train. Horses were changed at Kangaroo Valley, and passengers were able to buy meals at William Rigney's nearby boarding house. The return journey left Moss Vale each Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, after the arrival the midday train from Sydney. Conveniently, bookings there were made at the Family Hotel, owned by the Cullen family.

The Nowra booking office was in Edwin Seccombe's Albion Hotel, and passengers living in the town could be picked up from their homes. Fares were not advertised for a start, but within two months they had been reduced – Nowra to Cambewarra, 2 shillings; Cambewarra to Kangaroo Valley, 3s;

Kangaroo Valley to Moss Vale, 6s; and Nowra to Moss Vale, 8s. During April there was a further reduction to 5s for the day coaches, and 7s 6d for the night coaches. That did not last long, and by the end of the month a charge of 10s was made, with 18s for a return ticket. Passengers were informed that they would be carried in a style "never before attempted on the line" and would receive due consideration from the drivers who were competent and obliging.

When the mail contracts were renewed in 1886, Cullen & Haddin were allocated the route from Moss Vale, through Yarrunga, Barrengarry, Kangaroo Valley and Cambewarra to Nowra, using a vehicle hauled by two horses for an annual fee of 200 pounds. The company was pleased with its prospects, for late in the year it commissioned a new stagecoach to be built at Moss Vale, capable of carrying 25 passengers, and the *Shoalhaven Telegraph* declared that "when finished it will be the grandest stagecoach yet seen on the South Coast." In 1888 the focus was on the coaches that left Nowra at 3:00pm on weekdays, being "for the convenience of passengers". The advertisement ran for seven months, with the service ending shortly after that.



From the *Coachmen* book: Stopped for a breather on a steep section of Kangaroo Valley Road, both the passengers and the horses would have welcomed the break (*Shoalhaven Historical Society photo*)

Cullen and Haddin's days as business partners ended, possibly in 1889. Haddin continued in the coaching business at Lackey Road, Moss Vale, and in 1892 he took delivery of an outstanding coach that was constructed locally by the firm of Brownlow & Mirow, to be pulled by two horses, and was especially for the use of the then NSW Governor, Lord Jersey. With the vice-regal summer residence *Hillview* nearby, Haddin provided vehicles for a succession of Governors.

After leaving the local area, Haddin spent his later years at Dunoon in the Lismore district, where he died in 1924 aged 83 years.

compiled by Philip Morton

Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc

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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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