

Founded 1960

BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC

NEWSLETTER
No 458 February 2014

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ABN 29 362 616 937

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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: berrimamuseum@bigpond.com OPEN: Saturdays, Sundays, NSW Public and School Holidays (except Good Friday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day) 10.00 am to 4.00 pm.

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 \$20.00 - Family \$33.00.

AFFILIATIONS: Royal Australian Historical Society, NSW Association of Family History Societies, Museums Australia Inc & Regional Chapter.

GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

FEBRUARY MEETING: Thursday 27 February 2014 at 2pm

VENUE: Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers Building, Bowral Road, Mittagong

GUEST SPEAKER: Linda Emery and Max Rogers

Captured in the Light

Another presentation in the series *Captured in the Light* by Linda and Max: the stories behind some of the interesting photographs recently added to the BDHS collection.

AFTERNOON TEA: To be served following the speaker - Members - please bring a plate or a donation.

Inside this month ...

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And more ...

MARCH MEETING: Thursday 27 March 2014 at 2pm

VENUE: Society Research Centre, Old Council Chambers Building, Bowral Road, Mittagong



Diary dates

FEBRUARY

13 Management Committee Meeting
27 General Monthly Meeting

MARCH

13 Management Committee Meeting
27 General Monthly Meeting

APRIL

10 Management Committee Meeting
12 School holidays commence
24 General Monthly Meeting
28 School holidays conclude

Membership

All membership enquiries and changes of address details should be addressed to the Membership Secretary, c/- the society's postal address or bdhsarchives@gmail.com

From the President's Desk

Bruce Moore

Now the year begins in earnest. Christmas presents safely away until we find a good home for them, grandchildren off to kindy/school/university, tradespersons back to work, fishing tackle washed and back in the garage. In the meantime your Society members have been back a month and preparing for the year ahead.

We look forward to our first general meeting on the 27th Feb. at 2pm in the archives where "The Max and Linda Show" kicks off with one of their infamous local slide shows.

Max Rogers is our dedicated researcher and Linda Emery is, as everyone knows, our resident archivist.

It will certainly be a lot different to those evenings of old when you were asked to show Auntie Lena your travel slides. Fascinating it may have been to you, but I could guarantee my old Uncle Dudley would be snoring his head off within 5 minutes.

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Australia Day was celebrated in style in Berrima. Our contingent of members looked like a fashion parade in the 1850s (see photos). The gentlemen dressed appropriately in hats of the era accompanied the ladies in their finery, long dresses, aprons for the servants and even a bottle-fed baby was seen nursed by its mother in her night attire. The parade itself was led by VIPs in cars, the Highland Scottish band, closely followed by the CWA ladies and then the BDHS (us). Morris Minors, tractors, SES and fire trucks tooted their way down the Hume Highway waving to the sometimes 5-deep throng. The best our Council could muster up was a couple of service vehicles and a Water and Sewerage leviathan.

I think we could do a little better than that for our Sydney visitors. Any suggestions?? Please!

I picture our beloved councilors in convict apparel dragging the ball & chain with the Mayor behind, wielding a large whip to get them all moving in unison!

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There was a contortionist convention in Sydney Town Hall recently when in the middle of an interesting talk, there was a blackout. It was so dark that you couldn't see your hand in front of your backside!

Society Positions

At the Annual General Meeting held on 28 November 2013, the following nominated office bearers and committee members were elected and posts appointed.

Office Bearer positions

President	Bruce Moore
Snr Vice Pres	Linda Emery
Jnr Vice Pres	Leonie Knapman
Hon Secretary	Philip Morton
Hon Treasurer	Patricia Doris

Other Management Committee members:

Robyn Arrowsmith, Denyse Barker, Ros Dale, Peg Harvey, Carolyn Hutton, Max Rogers, John Schweers,

Museum Sub-Committee:

Ian Alexander, Sylvia Carless, Judith Green, Harlan Hall, Lyn Hall, John Schweers, Gil Wheaton, Bob Williams.

Appointed Posts

The following people have been (re)appointed to these posts:

Archivist	Linda Emery
Research Officer	Max Rogers
Museum Curator	Bob Williams
Newsletter Editor	Lavinia Ford
Publications	Carolyn Hutton
Property Officer	Peter Cruickshank
Librarian	Carolyn Dougherty
Publicity Officer	Philip Morton
Conservation	Sally Ross
Membership	Peg Harvey
Minute Secretary	Peg Harvey
Tours & Talks	Ros Dale
Public Officer	Peg Harvey

Some 2013 facts & figures

Results achieved by our many volunteers during 2013 include:

Publication sales revenue:

\$5033.75 at the archives, and \$1855.50 at the museum.

Museum admissions:

1,631 door sales @ \$5 (\$8155); 463 group visitors (\$2002).

Research handled at archives:

Phone enquiries - 522

Requests by email - 459

Personal visits - 370

Total for year - 1,351

BERRIMA DISTRICT MUSEUM

Market Place, Berrima
Near the bridge

OPENING HOURS

10 am - 4 pm.

Weekends, Public Holidays and NSW Public School Holidays.

Closed Good Friday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

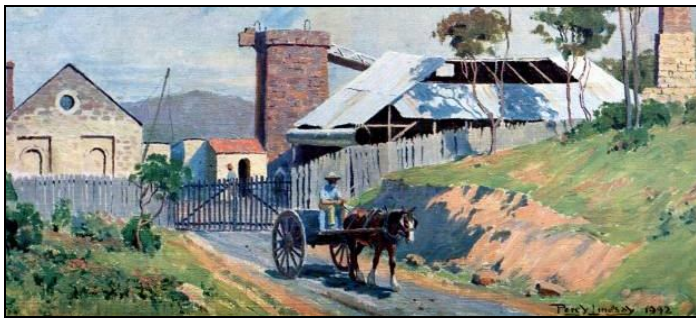
Groups also welcome at other times by arrangement. Please telephone Bob or Gloria on 4889 4405.

February General Meeting

At our meeting on Thursday 27 February at 2:00pm will be another in the series **Captured in the Light**.

This series of photo presentations by Max Rogers and Linda Emery features the stories behind some of the interesting photographs in the BDHS collection.

Hear some fascinating local history tales arising from the varied selection of historic photos to be featured. Perhaps the photos below will spark your interest.



New acquisition: rare and impeccable

Linda Emery, Archivist

We recently received a lovely gold and seed pearl pin, donated by Bill Flemming, formerly of Burradoo on behalf of his late mother, Mary, the great granddaughter of Henry Badgery of Vine Lodge, Exeter. The pin was presented at the fourth Bong Bong Picnic Race meeting at Moss Vale held on 16 and 17 January 1890. It is inscribed "Bong Bong 1890".



A list of prizes for the various races held over the two-day meeting was published in the *Bowral Free Press* and from this list it can be deduced that the pin was the 2nd prize in the Wingecarribee Plate race held on Thursday 16th January. The race was run over 1½ miles, with only two horses entered. Patrick Hill Throsby's horse *Midnight* won the race in 2 minutes 23 seconds, with Andrew Delfosse Badgery's *Ripple* taking second place.

The pin has remained in the Badgery family since then and was worn by Andrew Badgery's daughter Ethel and her daughter Mary Flemming (nee Phillips). Trophies and prizes from the early years of the Bong Bong Picnic Races are rare and this is a particularly nice example, with impeccable provenance. Our thanks to Bill for his generosity and thoughtfulness in wanting this important piece of memorabilia to remain in the district. It will be housed at our Berrima Museum.

Tour to historic Joadja

This self-drive tour is booked for Friday 28 March. It has been recommended we arrive on site at 10.30am to start the day. Car-pool arrangements will be organised nearer to the date.

The cost of \$30 per person will include:

- Morning tea (cake, biscuits, tea, coffee, hot choc)
- A 90 minute tour of the Joadja complex on the people movers (Leonie Knapman will be present for people who would like to talk to her about Joadja's history but Val of Joadja will be doing the commentary)
- lunch (if anyone has special food requirements for allergy sufferers, vegetarians etc they will have to notify us)
- a tasting session for the wines and sherry made at Joadja.

Tour numbers are limited, and BDHS members and friends are being given first preference. If need be, the tour will be

advertised to the general public. So it is suggested that members wishing to take part make sure to book and pay well ahead. Bookings can be made by contacting the archives.



Kiama Family, Social & Local History Expo

In 2014 the Kiama Family History Centre celebrates its 25th Anniversary and will be holding a Family, Social & Local History Expo.

There will be two guest speakers: Cora Num, genealogist, and Gail Davis from State Records NSW. People who are interested in Kiama history can join well-known historian Ray Thorburn who will be hosting short historical walks around town.

The Expo is being held at the Kiama Pavilion on Saturday 12th April 2014, commencing at 9.30 and will finish at 4.00pm. Entry is free as are the talks and the historical walks. Refreshments will be available at the Pavilion.

Our Society will take part in the Expo by setting up a table with books and information about our district. As members know, there are significant direct historic links between our two areas.

New publication

A Light in the Window Harper's Mansion—Berrima, the place and its people

Written and researched by Ann Beaumont, who is a member of our Society and of the National Trust, and published with Federal Government assistance, this recently published book draws heavily on primary sources. It brings to light many new facts about the Harper family, and the house they built at Berrima overlooking the town and their Surveyor-General Inn.

Ann also gives an insight into the 120-year ownership of the house by the Catholic Church, and she introduces the priests, nuns and tenants who lived there.

The book, with many photos and illustrations, outlines the National Trust's ownership of the property, restoration and garden creation, and acknowledges the hundreds of volunteers who have made it one of the Trust's most often visited properties.

The book is available for purchase for \$25 from our Historical Society archives, museum and website. It is also available at other locations in the Highlands.

* * *

A Light in the Window was recently launched at Harper's Mansion by Dr Clive Lucas OBE, who was responsible for the house's restoration.

In anticipation of the book's launch on the Australia Day weekend, ABC Illawarra's Justin Huntsdale interviewed Ann. The resulting article posted on the ABC website conveyed Ann's passion and her inspiration. Extracts are reproduced here.

Rich history unveiled in new Berrima mansion book

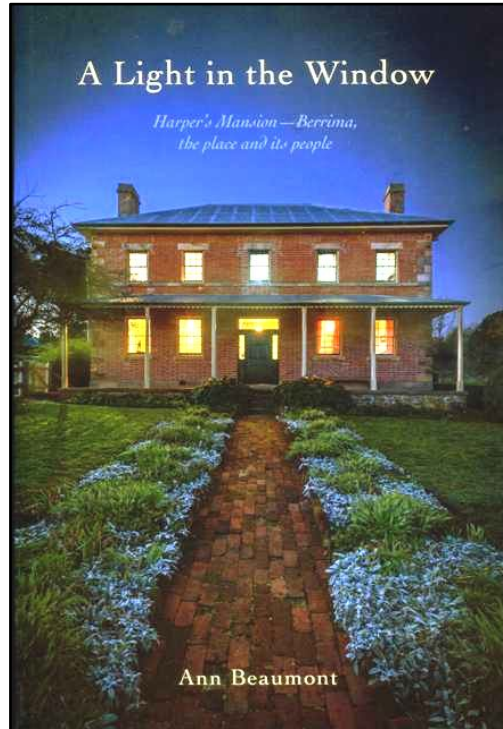
When historian and author Ann Beaumont would drive through Berrima on the old Hume Highway on her way to Canberra, she'd always look at Harper's Mansion. Working as an ABC political journalist she was always in transit when she passed through the Southern Highlands, but this grand old house on the hill captured her attention.

"I'd see this old house and think it's falling to bits and nobody loves it and I'd like to renovate it myself," she says.

"When the Berrima bypass went through I was relieved because I wouldn't have to see it most likely demolished."

She probably never expected to end up living at nearby Mittagong, and almost certainly wouldn't have thought she'd end up writing the definitive history of the house.

Built about 1835-36 by James Harper and his wife Mary, the house is now owned by the National Trust and lovingly cared for by a team of Southern Highlands' volunteers.



It was an especially significant moment for Ms Beaumont when she launched her book. "I've always been passionate about history, and when I became involved in Harper's in 2001, I noticed its history was mottled. "It had been handed down and distorted by the last surviving member of the Harper family to live in Berrima."

It's a building rich in history, not all of it noble.

The more Ann studied the records, the more she learnt about James Harper, the charismatic police officer and publican, but also 'wheeler and

dealer' and 'opportunist'.

She says by the time the family had built their mansion overlooking the Berrima township they'd begun climbing the social ladder.

She also suspects James' reported sudden death in 1845 aged 39 was a suicide that was essentially covered up by his friends in the police and medical profession. "I've been through the old newspapers and reports, and when he died there was not one mention of his death. He was in quite a bit of financial trouble - that's my theory and I think I can support it fairly well."

The house is also home to an impressive heritage-style garden and maze in the back yard cultivated by a landscape gardener living there as a tenant from 1999 to 2006.

Now paying its way through weekend open days and private functions, the mansion sits as a proud beacon on the hill for Berrima, offering a priceless look into the small town's history.

Ann Beaumont's book elaborates on those stories.

"I'm so pleased we can get this book out - it's been a lot of work but a fantastic journey."

compiled by Philip Morton

History honoured on Australia Day

Leonie Knapman, our Vice-President and Mittagong resident, was named Wingecarribee Shire's Citizen of the Year at the 2014 Australia Day celebrations held recently in Berrima. Her tireless efforts as a volunteer were recognised and acknowledged.

Mayor Councillor Juliet Arkwright with Junior Citizen Jack Moran (Oxley College) and Leonie Knapman, Citizen of the Year 2014

Photo arranged by Roy Truscott, SH News



Leonie's passion for local history and her commitment to our Society are well known to members. Perhaps less well known are her untiring efforts with volunteer organisations and community committees - in fact, Leonie is involved with 14 community and council committees.

Along with her husband Greg, she contributed greatly to the Bowral & Moss Vale Sesquicentenary events through volunteer work on the organising committee. They also serve with the State Emergency Services Wingecarribee unit and local driver reviver programs.



After the official ceremonies held on the lawn at the front of the Courthouse, the Grand Parade took place along the main street of Berrima with the official dignitaries leading in vintage cars followed by a large contingent of participants and cheered on by crowds of flag-waving onlookers. Our Society's banner was proudly paraded with a colourful dozen of our members dressed in period costumes.

We shared the crowd's acclaim with the group of CWA ladies who were ahead of us. But the accolade for the most unusual and spectacular participant in the Parade must go to Council's sparkling new sewer drainage machine that towered above us mortals!



Photo: Robyn Arrowsmith



President Bruce Moore at the centre of a historic gathering

Cricket museum curator awarded

Our Society congratulates David Wells, the curator of the Bradman International Cricket Hall of Fame at Bowral, who was honoured with a Medal of the Order of Australia in this year's Australia Day awards in recognition of his contribution to the preservation of cricket history.

David has been involved with museums for 30 years. Since 2002 he has been curator of the Hall of Fame, previously known as Bradman Museum. It is owned and operated by the Bradman Foundation, a not-for-profit charitable trust governed by an honorary board. It first opened in 1989 in the presence of Sir Donald and Lady Bradman on the edge of the historic and picturesque Bradman Oval.

In 2010 the Museum was expanded to accommodate the International Cricket Hall of Fame, one of the Wingecarribee Shire's major heritage drawcards.

Centenary of Exeter rail disaster

by Linda Emery

Exeter Station is well known amongst railway buffs for its unique character but it is also remembered for being the site of one of the worst train crashes in New South Wales railway history.

When the Temora Mail left Sydney's Central Station at 8.10pm on 13 March, 1914, none of the 134 passengers could have anticipated the tragedy that would engulf them just four hours later. In the dead of the foggy night, the Mail collided with the locomotive of a north-bound (Up) goods train still on the main line as it backed into the siding at Exeter for the priority train to pass on the single track.

The goods train comprised fifteen trucks laden with bullocks and was too long to fit into the loopline so it was being shunted into a siding. While it was being manoeuvred, the distant signal was set to red to stop the mail train if it reached Exeter before the goods train was safely off the track. In the fog and rain the driver of the Temora Mail, Peter Irwin, thought the signal was green and continued on until it was too late. Out of the gloom, the locomotive of the goods train appeared just 50 metres away and although Irwin applied the emergency brakes, they merely locked on the wet track and the two locomotives collided with enormous force.

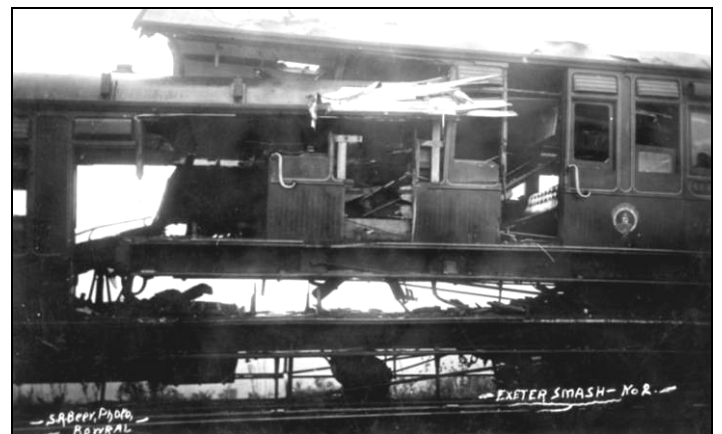
The wooden passenger car nearest the locomotive was propelled through the carriage behind, demolishing one compartment after another and crushing all in its wake. Fourteen people died and 32 others were injured as a result of the accident. Among those killed was a young couple, James and Ethel Minnis, who had been married for only a few brief months. Ironically, James Minnis worked in the Signal and Interlocking Engineers Branch of the Railways, the department responsible for the construction, maintenance and repair of signalling equipment, telegraphs and telephones throughout the NSW rail network. Three members of the Heaver family also died: John Heaver, his daughter Alice and daughter-in-law Annie, who died in the arms of her husband Arthur. Six members of the family were travelling to Cootamundra to bury their wife and mother Sarah, whose coffin was also on the train. Mail-guard Alfred Charles Bray, one of five mail sorters at work in the newly-built Travelling Post Office (TPO) van of the Temora Mail, was standing near the van door ready to toss the mail bag for Exeter on to the platform. He died of severe head injuries leaving a wife and seven children.

Rescuers worked throughout the night to free those trapped in the wreckage, many of whom were trapped for hours. Fitters from a nearby railway workers' camp were first on the scene and were soon joined by

uninjured passengers and local people. Two doctors from Moss Vale and two from Goulburn were rushed to Exeter to treat the injured passengers before they were transferred to Bowral Hospital. Nearly one hundred people gathered to help in any way they could. Mrs Badgery from Vine Lodge at Exeter soon set up the School of Arts Hall, organizing food and drink for the workers. One hundred years on descendants of the Vine Lodge Badgerys are still involved in the community and will be helping again with refreshments on the anniversary of the disaster.

The centenary will be commemorated in Exeter on Thursday 13th March 2014 with a memorial service beginning at 10.00am at St Aidan's Anglican Church, followed by the unveiling of a plaque in the station precinct and morning tea in the church hall. An open invitation is extended to all who wish to mark the occasion. Where we have been able to trace them, descendants of the victims have also been invited to attend.

For further information please contact the Anglican Parish of Sutton Forest Office on 02 4883 6019.



The Great Southern Rail saga

Part One of a series compiled by Philip Morton

In 1863 the southern railway opened to Picton

Railways were still new to the world when, in January 1846, proposals to build them in NSW were first considered at a public meeting in Sydney. Information was gathered on building to Windsor, Bathurst and Goulburn.

It was reported that a line to Goulburn could be built for 750,000 pounds with an 8% return on investment. A preliminary route survey was voluntarily undertaken in 1846 by Lieutenant Thomas Woore of the Royal Navy, who had settled near Goulburn in 1836.

He considered three routes: easterly along the coastal range and up to Bong Bong; a middle line following Surveyor-General Mitchell's southern road through Bargo; and a western route along the ridge between the Bargo and Nattai Rivers to reach Chalker's Flat (now Mittagong) and on through the Wingecarribee district.

As the coastal route was impractical and the middle line required bridges beyond the means of the colony, the western route was his preferred option. This caused much controversy and Mitchell described it as a 'rummaging' survey.

However Woore was requested to undertake a more detailed survey, even though funds were not available, with a promise of later payment (that never eventuated). In January 1848 Woore presented a report and drawings and his western route was adopted. The Southern & Goulburn Railway Co. was formed to commence the line from Picton.

The NSW Legislative Council appointed a select committee in March 1848 to consider the overall practicability of railways and thus began a long series of battles - engineers versus politicians - over how to build the lines, what rail gauges to use and how to conquer topography.

Woore maintained that the greatest difficulty to Goulburn would be ascending to the highlands, over 2000 feet in just 32 miles: 'no such ascent has ever been attained.' Ironbark timber would, he said, best answer for rails and almost any other timber would serve as substructure. Advice was sought of an experienced railwayman, Francis Shields, who had worked on English railways and then emigrated to become head of Sydney's survey department. He advocated the use of iron rather than timber for rails and proposed that the first railway built should be a main trunk line from the city that would branch west to Parramatta and south to Liverpool and beyond. The Sydney Railway Company (SRC) was formed in October 1849 with Shields the Chief Engineer.

Construction at Cleveland Paddocks began in July 1850 but soon encountered financial, engineering and labour difficulties. Progress became more rapid in 1854 when SRC imported experienced workmen (navvies) from the UK and the first iron rails were laid. The following year four steam locomotives arrived, built in the UK by R Stevenson & Co.

That same year the Government purchased SRC for 500,000 pounds and the first section of 13 miles to Parramatta opened - at a cost of 640,000 pounds.

The Government had taken over, but did not know how to operate a railway. Fortunately in 1856 it appointed John Whitton from the UK as Engineer-in-Chief; he would serve for 33 years and be called 'the Father of the Railways'.

Under Whitton's astute guidance the south line reached Campbelltown in May 1858 and within a few years the various lines around Sydney became profitable. In 1863, for instance, 627,000 passengers and 287,000 tons of goods were conveyed.

Before it could be extended to Picton, the line had to cross the Nepean River so the Menangle railway bridge was built in 1863. Designed by Whitton, it had multiple spans supported by sandstone piers and, with extra piers added in 1905, is still in use.

The Southern & Goulburn Railway Co. made a start on the line from Picton but soon ran into difficulties and, as with SRC, was acquired by the Government. Even so, after the opening to Mittagong there were still trucks in use that had "S&GR" on their sides.

It may seem odd that Picton was selected as a major point on the southern line, with steep hills making a south passage difficult and not being on a direct line from Campbelltown. However Picton's founder, Major Antill, had lobbied for it and contracts were let for a wide viaduct and tunnel enabling the railway to exit.



The Campbelltown to Picton section of the new southern railway opened in July 1863 and a village grew around the Picton railway terminus where the steam locomotives could bunker (load) coal and take on water. Contractors had already started on sections southward to Nattai, so the long-hoped-for Great Southern Railway to Goulburn was on its way to the Wingecarribee, then known as the Berrima District.

To be continued next issue

DIARY DATES

THURSDAY	13	FEB	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	27	FEB	Monthly General Meeting	2:00pm at the Historical Society
THURSDAY	13	MAR	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	27	MAR	Monthly General Meeting	2:00pm at the Historical Society
THURSDAY	10	APR	Management Committee Meeting	
THURSDAY	24	APR	Monthly General Meeting	2:00pm at the Historical Society

If undelivered return to:

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THE BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL AND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

is proudly supported by the following organizations that encourage the work of our Society in collecting, preserving and maintaining the history of the Southern Highlands.

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