

Founded 1960

BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC

NEWSLETTER

No 483 May 2016

Located in the Wingecarribee Shire,
Southern Highlands of NSW

ABN 29 362 616 937

From the President's Desk

Last month was a busy one on both the Archives and the Museum's calendar.

I cannot believe it's now over 12 months since our new museum extension was opened. The Southern Highlands 1200 is still wowing visitors, 90% of whom are from outside the area. Many of the names on the wall have been given a face in terms of a photo and a brand new life on our database.

I can't help but thank the volunteers who 'man' the Museum regularly for 5 days a week.

On a sad note, we lost a good old stalwart volunteer in Carol Nolan, who tragically died in a car accident near Yerrinbool in early April. She was the larger-than-life 'character' of the Monday volunteers at the Archives. (see article inside.)

April is always hectic. We attended the Kiama History Expo that is always a busy and informative spectacle. Not unlike the Caravan & Motor Show, the exhibitors were busy selling books and sharing historical information.

Anzac Day came and went with representatives of our Society laying wreaths in Moss Vale, Bowral and Mittagong. The crowds were even bigger this year, 101 years after



Bruce Moore, President

Continued on page 2

GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

MAY MEETING: Thursday 26 May at 2:00pm

VENUE: Berrima District Museum, Market Place, Berrima
NOTE change of venue. May meeting is not as usual at the Society Research Centre in Mittagong

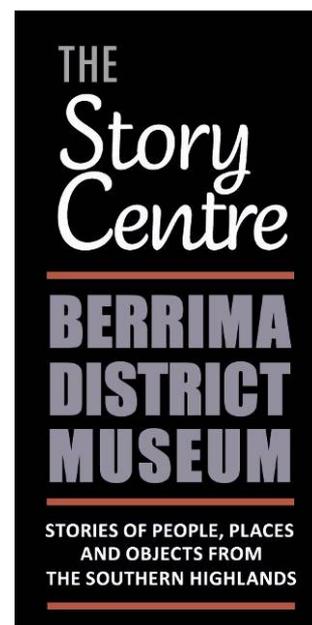
SESSION: "Behind the Scene at the Museum" to be presented by John Schweers and a team of museum volunteers

AFTERNOON TEA: To be served following the session.

JUNE MEETING: Thursday 23 June at 12:00 for 12:30pm

EVENT: Annual June Luncheon

VENUE: Lion Rampant Hotel, Mittagong (details page 2)



From the President

Continued from front page

the Dardanelles landings.

It was gratifying to see preschoolers to veterans lining the streets. Although still on holidays, college borders and regular students were decked out in full uniform, accompanied by their respective bands. There were day care groups wandering past, some toddlers who have only just mastered walking, desperately searching the crowd to see if their parents were waving.

Now May is here and we look forward to our General Meeting at our new look state-of-the-art Museum in Berrima where volunteers will treat us by talking about some of their favourite artefacts.

This will happen at 2pm on Thursday 26th May. Afternoon tea will be provided.

There was this Chinese girl at a travel agency when I was in Shanghai, I asked her if she could escort me for a city tour and asked for her mobile number, so I could call her to make arrangements.

She got excited and said:

"sex sex sex, wan free sex for tonight"

Wow, I'm guessing this is how Chinese women express their hospitality!

I thought my luck had changed.

But then, my friend interpreted it for me and told me what she really said was: 666 136 429.

Would you consider . . .

As we all know Australia Post has significantly increased their postal charges, and as we have a sizable membership the cost for postage each month is quite substantial.

Therefore it would help immensely if you would agree to receive the newsletter by email.

However for those members who find it difficult to use a computer or to print out the newsletter, or who just prefer to have it posted, we will continue to post it to you.

Berrima District Museum

THE STORY CENTRE

Please note that the museum is now open at least 5 days a week

MUSEUM OPEN: 10am to 4pm

WEDNESDAY TO SUNDAY

and every day during NSW school holidays and on public holidays.

Groups welcome at other times by arrangement. Please phone John on 4872 1660.

Membership details

Please note that all membership enquiries and changes of address details should be addressed to:

The Membership Secretary
c/- the Society's postal address
or email : bdhsarchives@gmail.com

Bundanoon's big book sale



Your donations eagerly sought !!!

The Bundanoon History Group will be holding another mammoth book sale on **Saturday 23 July** in the Bundanoon Memorial Hall.

For this fund-raising event to be a big success, the Group seeks donations of books and magazines, as well as quality DVDs, CDs and records.

Our Society's members who live in the local district are requested to keep this in mind and, if they have stock they wish to contribute to this worthy event, to make contact with:

Marianne Ward, phone 4883 6082 or Philip Morton at the BDHS archives

There are various options to get your contributions to the Group. They may be delivered to the Hall on the day before, Friday 22 July.

Alternatively, pick up can be arranged from anywhere in the Highlands.

Past book sales at Bundanoon have been a huge success, and this year it will follow a similar pattern with stock priced at \$1, \$2 and \$5 and a table of special and collectable books priced in a higher cost range.

June luncheon

Thursday 23 June

The venue for our June luncheon this year is the dining room, Lion Rampant Hotel, Main Street, Mittagong (opp St Stephens Anglican Church).



In the 1870s, on the site of the present Lion Rampant Hotel, a 3-storey brick building was erected for Frederick Draper, an auctioneer and store-keeper. In 1880 he opened it as the *Commercial Hotel* with a license to sell beer and spirits. This building had an unusual mansard roof with dormer windows. It was totally demolished in 1927 and the present hotel erected.

Our luncheon will be two courses, entrée and main with alternate drop.

The cost is \$30 per person. Lunch will start at 12:00 for 12:30pm. There will be the usual door prize, a brief history of the venue and a few surprises.

Please book and pay at the Archives as soon as possible; seating is limited.



Archives opening hours

Monday 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Tuesday 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Saturday 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Research fees

Research fees for non-members:

\$20.00 per hour or part thereof for telephone and postal enquiries.

\$5.00 per hour or part thereof for enquirers who attend the archives and carry out their own research.

May monthly meeting to be held at museum in Berrima

“Behind the Scenes at the Museum”

Instead of one specific speaker, several experienced museum volunteers will present a session to provide some fascinating insights into processes, activities and outcomes that happen behind the scenes. This session will be co-ordinated by museum manager John Schweers. Firstly he will introduce several of the museum’s volunteers to present some insights.



Michele Woods will share some stories about the putting together of the Southern Highlands 1200 Exhibition. These stories will include:

- How the team handled last minute complications, particularly with the photos for the wallpaper;
- How decisions were made regarding objects to display;
- How difficulties were solved with using borrowed material from the War Memorial and from the families of those locals who served in WWI.

The museum’s Conservation team will then share some insights into what they do and how they solve the complexities involved. Hear how museum conservation differs from that required at the BDH&FHS Archives.



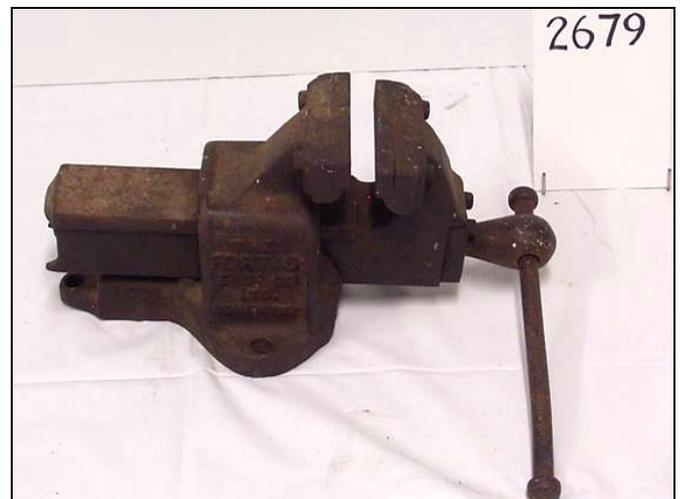
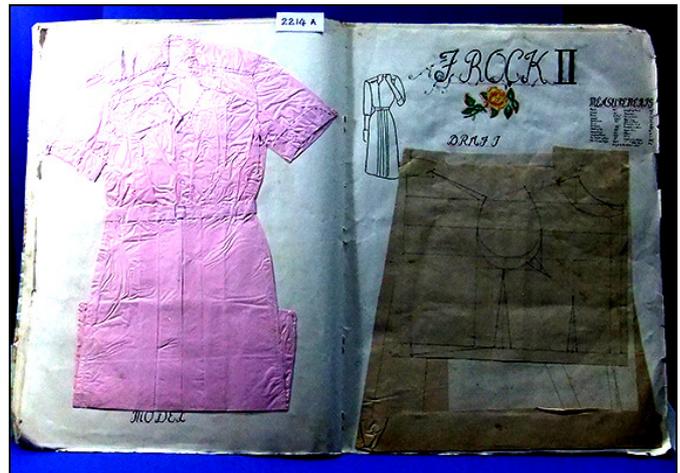
This will be followed by a tour around the museum, including into the storage and preparation areas not usually open to the public.

A special afternoon tea will be provided on the front verandah, weather permitting, or otherwise inside.

NOTE: As this meeting on Thursday 26 May will be held at Berrima, not as usually at the Archives Research Centre, car-sharing will be available from the archives for those needing a lift to Berrima and back.

Not all the numerous items in the museum’s collection are on display, there not being enough display space. Display items are regularly changed and new items featured.

Some of the items in the collection are shown here.



Early blacksmiths in the spotlight

Earlier this year Alf Wilford of Spence in the ACT contacted the BDHS regarding his interest in early blacksmiths. He is associated with a local museum at Hall, a village on the Barton Highway near Canberra. An exhibition was being planned for April to feature the nearby historic Ginninderra settlement, including an old smithy.

Alf enquired whether the BDHS had any early photos and information on James McCleery who established a blacksmith at Moss Vale and who, before that, had a smithy in Wollongong. Included in Alf's collection of items for the exhibition at Hall were some work tools on which the name J McCleery was clearly stamped.

There was some information in the BDHS archives on James McCleery and a lot more on his sons. In the 1890s they had taken over the Moss Vale blacksmith and coachbuilding premises after their father became ill. McCleery & Sons became a very successful business in the early 1900s and won awards for their custom-built sulkies.

Archivist Linda Emery conveyed to Alf the relevant information and photos held at the BDHS. As there was not much detail about the early life of James McCleery and what brought him to Moss Vale, this piqued the interest of volunteer researchers David Baxter, Philip Morton and Marg Muntz.

With guidance from Linda, the team searched NSW births/deaths/marriages, early newspapers on Trove, BDHS archives and David Baxter's private collection. As details were found, a more complete history gradually emerged of the McCleery family and their blacksmith and coachbuilding business. This history was compiled into an 8-part series for the Monday History column in the *Southern Highland News* which began in the newspaper in mid March.

As the BDHS had very few photos of the McCleerys in its collection, an appeal was made in the column. A family member loaned us some early photos which were scanned and added to our collection. One of the photos was of James, dating from around the 1870s. This was a rare find indeed!

A copy of our James McCleery history and the newly obtained photos were sent to Alf Wilford in early April. He was most grateful and replied as follows:

"Last Saturday our local museum at Hall opened the special exhibition on the old Ginninderra smithy. A friend, Kingsley Southwell, and I gave a simple blacksmithing demonstration after the opening, making small items like bicycle tyre levers, nails, hooks, and bent-rod screwdrivers. This gave spectators a lot of interest. Another friend of mine, James McDonald, is a descendant of Harry Curran, the last blacksmith of Ginninderra.

The Ginninderra smithy still exists beside the Barton Highway, in a run-down condition. Not surprising, as it has not been used since Harry retired in 1949. The bellows is still inside and the tools are in safe storage.

Many thanks for your very informative and interesting text on James McCleery. Regards, Alf Wilford."



In turn we thank Alf for providing us with some photos and detailed information about blacksmiths' tools and equipment, and also for sending a written history of blacksmiths in the Canberra area.

Long before present-day Canberra was established, Ginninderra was a village on the Queanbeyan to Yass Road. 'Ginin-ginin-derry' was an aboriginal locality first traversed by Europeans in the early 1820s and settled by them around 1826.

Throughout the 1850s the need for blacksmith shops escalated in the locality as development increased. A further surge in growth occurred following the 1861 Crown Lands Act and the immediate influx of free selectors. For half a century the village at Ginninderra flourished, and in its prime could boast a church, two schools, store, police station, post and telegraph office, School of Arts, boot maker, nursery, Farmers Union hall, annual show, sports teams and a hotel.



If you are interested in visiting the historic blacksmith exhibition in the ACT, it is in the former Hall Primary School, Victoria Street. There is easy parking and no entry cost, but donations appreciated. It is open every Thursday (9.30 - 12.30 pm) and the first Sunday of the month (Hall Market Day) (10am - 4.00 pm), or by appointment (museum@hall.act.au) or 0408 259 946.

From forge and anvil, hammer and tong, blacksmiths supplied the stuff of life

As BDHS members are well aware, early settlers to areas further south had to pass through the Berrima district. The first southern road from Sydney was built around 1819 and soon coaches and wagons began travelling through the Southern Highlands where inns were established along the way. These also served as staging posts where horses were changed and where farriers replaced the worn shoes of horses.

Premises were set up nearby where blacksmiths plied their trade using iron working skills developed in their northern hemisphere home countries to supply the thousands of metal objects that then made up the equipment of daily life.

Some blacksmiths also needed to be fine artists to work on the superbly detailed wrought ironwork as required for cathedrals, churches, residences of the wealthy and major public buildings.

Builders came to depend on the local blacksmith for nails, hammers, chisels, wedges, hinges, hooks and door latches. Farmers bought axes, sickles, shoes for horses and oxen, and chain and weapons. Travellers obtained wagon wheels and parts, and harness hardware. Housewives sought cooking utensils, pots and kettles from the local smith.

When any iron-worked item broke, the blacksmith repaired it. All the while he made and maintained his own shop tools - anvils, hammers, tongs, and all the special tools invented for specific jobs.

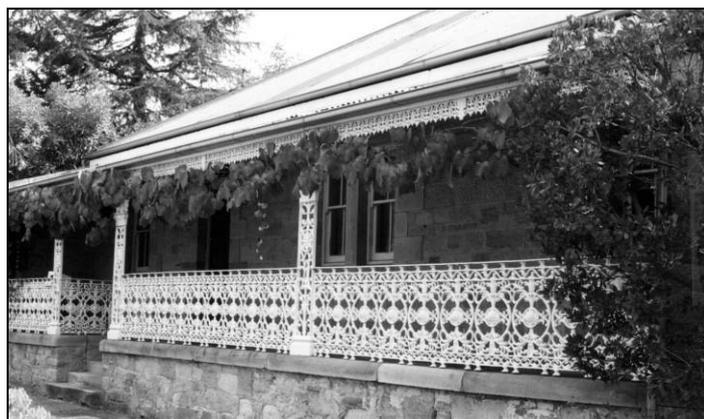


As the local Berrima District grew and prospered with farms, towns and industries established, blacksmiths were in great demand. Major early enterprises, such as the butter factories of the late 1800s in the Robertson area, usually had a blacksmith shop on the premises for the repair of wagons and equipment and where horseshoes were fitted.

The first iron worked by blacksmiths in Australia was raw iron imported as ballast in sailing ships. As this proved expensive, when local iron ore was found it was not long before attempts were made to establish iron ore smelting works. At Nattai (now Mittagong), a seam of iron ore along with the other necessary raw materials, coal and limestone, were found, and a

smelting works commenced in 1848. The Fitz Roy iron works produced Australia's first raw 'pig' iron cast into useful products.

Ongoing setbacks led to the eventual closure of the furnace smelter in 1877. However, as is well known to locals, Mittagong came to be regarded as the birth place of the Australian iron and steel industry. While in operation, the iron works provided employment and opportunity for blacksmiths and some fine examples of their craftsmanship may still be seen today in the decorative iron lacework that features on some of Mittagong's early buildings.



Among those who made use of the stockpiles of iron at the Fitz Roy works was William Brazenall and his sons. By the 1880s they had established blacksmith and iron foundry businesses at Mittagong.

One of their local advertisements in the 1890s stated: "Castings made to order in iron, brass, copper; pilasters, brackets and friezes, latest designs at Sydney prices; saw milling, agricultural, and other machinery repaired on shortest notice".

The building of coaches and buggies to suit local conditions was another speciality of smiths. Those in this line of business included Mr F Wylie in Bowral, and Thomas Brownlow, Oscar Mirow and James McCleery, all based in Moss Vale.



A history of James McCleery (seen above in apron), his wife and family and the business carried on by his sons will be provided in this newsletter over coming issues, starting from the 1860s and following the McCleery family through into the 20th century.

Compiled by Philip Morton

Vale to a respected member

Carol Nolan, a member of our Society and an active volunteer at the archives in Mittagong, died on 2 April 2016. She will be greatly missed, particularly by the 'Monday' crew at the archives.

A funeral service was held at St Stephen's Anglican Church, Mittagong on 13 April. Eulogies were read by a family member, a CWA representative (in which group Carol was most active) and, on behalf of the BDH&FHS, by our Librarian Carolyn Dougherty.

Carolyn's words were greatly appreciated by all who attended the service, and are reproduced here.

My name is Carolyn Dougherty and I had the privilege of working with Carol for over 13 years at the Berrima District Historical Society during which time we became close friends. Carol always had a project on the go and was a joy to work with. Her most recent project involved transcribing records from St Jude's, Bowral and St Stephens, Mittagong, reading often almost indecipherable handwritten information, and transferring from microfilm onto paper to be typed into a database. This required patience and tenacity and Carol was perfect for this time consuming work.

Carol also sorted and sold second hand books at the Archives, providing a steady inflow of cash to the coffers. On occasions this also involved the organisation of weekend book sales.

But Carol's biggest project was her book 'Digging up the Past'. She spent a couple of years painstakingly researching local newspapers searching for deaths and obituaries, and this was pre Trove so it meant trawling through countless reels of microfilm. We both became totally absorbed and fascinated with the rituals associated with death in the Victorian era and the language and terminology used by both the clergy and the press. The end result was a publication of which Carol could be justly proud.

Among the eloquent phrases which recur throughout Digging up the Past and which we had often discussed were that the departed 'had passed over to the other side' or 'joined the silent majority'. The first is comforting. I like to think Carol has just passed over to the other side, not too far out of sight, but I just cannot imagine Carol being part of any silent majority.

Having grown up in the area, Carol was our 'go to' source of information on all matters relating to Mittagong - who owned which house and when, who was related to whom and the history of various businesses etc. The extent of her local knowledge seemed to know no bounds with staff and researchers the beneficiaries of this knowledge.

Carol had a wonderful sense of humour; she always had a twinkle in her eye especially when telling jokes. She was a great yarn teller though to her despair we seniors were sometimes slow to get the punch line.

Another of Carol's passions was craft at which she excelled. Last year, before Anzac Day, Carol arrived at the Archives with bags of red and black wool, needles, patterns and instructions for the making of red poppies. We all set to work under Carol's directions. Many of our offerings were at first quite hilarious but we improved, Carol persisted and the result was a wonderful cloth covered with hundreds of poppies to adorn the font at the Mittagong War Memorial. Carol had that knack of being able to galvanise and motivate people.



Carol loved motivating, encouraging and assisting younger members of our Society whenever possible. A recent new young volunteer was warmly embraced by Carol who was keen to share her knowledge and encourage in any way she could. Carol's friendly easy going manner ensured that despite the age difference the two became friends.

Over the last few years Carol had been researching the historic Rowe's Hill Cemetery, Mittagong, where members of her own family were buried. Her aim was the production of a book, a project which the Archives are hoping to complete in her honour.

Carol was compassionate, generous, loyal, straight forward and enthusiastic. She loved her family and took a great interest in her nieces and nephews. She was also a wonderful friend to all of us at the Archives, and I know I speak for everyone when I say our lives have been enriched by time shared with her.

In short, Carol achieved so much during her time with the Society and was such a valuable asset.

I could find no better words to conclude this eulogy than the following taken from an entry in Carol's book Digging up the Past. From the obituary of Marion Gibson published in 1891: "It is our painful duty to record the death of a lady for whom the public justly entertained the deepest respect. Those who witnessed the obsequies seemed fully sensible that they were losing a kind friend, a loving neighbour, and one, withal, who was so cheerfully and charitably disposed that her place will not be easily filled."

We will all miss you Carol and our Mondays will never be quite the same.

Book stall at Kiama History Expo

Greg & Leonie Knapman represent BDH&FHS

Kiama Family History Centre is owned and operated as a community service by the Kiama Municipal Council. The Centre's aim is to assist researchers in their quest for knowledge about their family history and provide information about the social history that impacted on the everyday lives of their ancestors.

The Centre held its bi-annual Family, Local & Social History Expo 2016 on Saturday 16 April 2016.

They had 35 groups operating stalls and due to lack of floor space had to knock back others. The groups were mainly local historical societies and historical research entities, including Trove and Ancestry.



Our Society was ably represented by Leonie & Greg Knapman, who had two tables to display a selection of our publications for sale and answered questions and queries from interested members of the large crowd of people in attendance. During the day there were talks from four speakers:

Ray Thorburn - Assisted and Unassisted Immigration to Australia; Carole Riley - Land records in NSW; Gail Davis - Weird, wonderful & surprising records at the State Archives; Allan Murrin - An Overlooked Source: using the Latter Day Saints Catalogue.

After the event, Leonie received the following email from Susan Lark, the event organiser: "Dear Leonie. On behalf of the staff and volunteers of the Kiama Family History Centre, I would like to thank you for attending our Expo. Our final head count for the day was 947 people. We have already received a number of phone calls and emails congratulating us on the day, but we could not have had such a successful day without your attendance. Please pass on our thanks and best wishes to your husband. Thanks, Susan."



A Man of Colonial Significance

New book by Ann Beaumont

A Man of Many Parts, the Life and Times of Edward Charles Close 1790-1866 is the sixth book by writer-historian Ann Beaumont, one of our members.

Ms Beaumont's previous book *A Light in the Window, Harper's Mansion Berrima, the place and its people* won a National Trust Heritage Award in 2014.

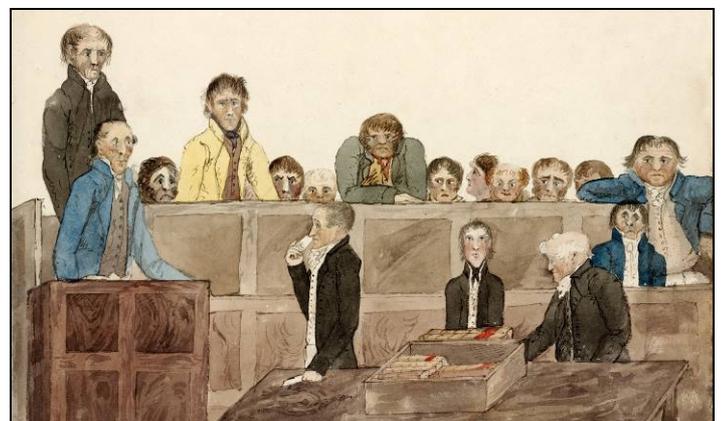
The new book was recently launched by Close's great grandson Edward C Close IV at Morpeth House, the old family home on the Hunter River.

Edward Close is known as the *Father of the Hunter*. He was also one of the Peninsular War veterans who made a great contribution to the development of the colony. He arrived in NSW with his regiment in 1817, the first of the Peninsular War regiments to take over the garrison in Sydney Town. He resigned his commission and in 1822 took up a land grant on the Hunter River, carving an estate from the wilderness with convict labour. He developed part of his land to create the private town of Morpeth.

He was not only a soldier, settler and philanthropist but also a noted colonial artist, painting the Sydney Barracks, and scenes of Sydney from as early as 1817. From 1819 his paintings include Aborigines from the Illawarra area, not only the Five Islands Tribe but possibly some of the Gundungurra people who inhabited what is now the Southern Highlands. Many of these paintings are included in the book as well as images from the Close family archives.

Ms Beaumont says that while he was one of many military men who helped provide the backbone of the colony, Close stood above most others because of his empathy, kindness and practical Christianity.

The new book can be purchased at bookshops in the Hunter region, the National Library shop in Canberra or from www.highlandhousepublications.com.au



Edward Close's rather amusing impression of the court room scene involving Rev Samuel Marsden and Governor Macquarie's secretary John Campbell in the colony's first libel trial in October 1817. State Library of NSW.

- compiled by Philip Morton

Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc

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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: bdmuseum@bigpond.com
OPEN: 10.00am to 4.00pm, Wednesdays to Sundays, and during school and public holidays.
Museum Committee: John Schweers (Manager, Tour Bookings), Harlan Hall (Project Manager),
Lyn Hall (Graphics, Exhibitions), Sylvia Carless (Roster), Judith Green (Procedures), Michele Woods
(Exhibition content), Harold Wall (Human Resources).
- MEMBERSHIP:** Any person wanting to join the Society may do so at any stage during the year by completing a form
and paying the appropriate fee. Joining Fee \$10.00 - Single \$25.00 - Family \$35.00.
- AFFILIATIONS:** Royal Australian Historical Society, NSW Association of Family History Societies,
Museums Australia Inc & Regional Chapter.

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