



Bowral



Mittagong



Berrima



Moss Vale

# BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY Inc.

Founded 1960

Located in the Wingecarribee Shire,  
Southern Highlands of NSW

## NEWSLETTER

No 487 September 2016

### From the President's Desk

I'm always fascinated what a difference a few favourite clichés can do to a story. After watching bits of the Olympics Games in between ads, I couldn't help relating it to all who beaver away in the Archives.

Apologies in advance to anyone who is offended, me included!

The Mittagong Pentathlon: Olympic Fever hits Archives.

Well we were all a bit slow off the blocks to begin with, but Peg took it out hard. After taking our morning anti-inflammatories, we finally broke through the pain barrier to sprint ahead with Max leading the research.

Carolyn got herself into a beautiful position by updating new library books, going from strength to strength she got the job done.

Pacesetter Linda's game plan came unstuck when the phone rang and a customer needed urgent attention.

Philip arrived out of breath pulling up with his cheese & hammy, but moving forward



**Bruce Moore,**  
President

*Continued on page 2*

### GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

**SEPTEMBER MEETING:** Thursday 22 September at 2:00pm

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

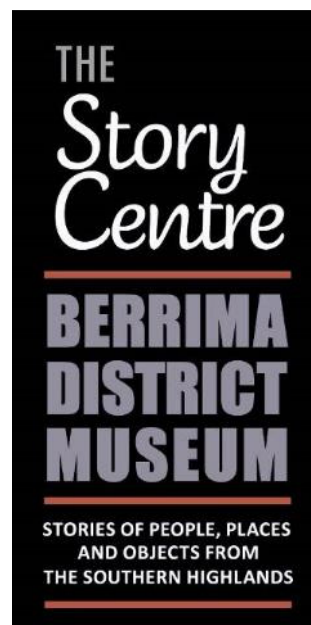
**GUEST SPEAKER:** Brett Bowden, UWS Politics/History Professor and author

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

**OCTOBER MEETING:** Thursday 27 October at 2:00pm

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

**TOPIC:** An 'Archives Roadshow' - members invited to bring along interesting objects for a "Show and Tell" afternoon.



## From the President

*Continued from front page*

joined the leaders at morning tea.

Patricia, flying under the radar, had the physical and mental edge to bring the numbers home.

Whilst chasing history, Warren was saying to Jenny that perhaps they had reached their peak too early, but will keep moving forward.

When John presented himself, he said a better person beat him to the coffee on the day. He gave it his best shot with only 41 beans to the cup. His best P.B. was in the Sydney 2000 marathon downing 3 cups to the kilometre. What a finish!

Both Sandy and little Linda were in the zone and mostly on track while I'm sure others were in another Stadium.

Roberta declared she was bushed, but had conserved enough energy to help Denise upstairs toward their goal. Karen had just completed a marathon drive from the starting line and was ready for a cuppa.

The fastest off the blocks for morning tea was Bruce who was well qualified to takeout a medal and came in as favourite. Although well past his prime, seen embracing scrap paper from the photocopier, he was awarded a gold espresso for this re-cycling event. The kettle was still boiling as he powered through the heat, grabbing an Orange slice of the action. This boy's a legend in his own lunchtime.

He certainly munches above his weight.

This 70-something-year old who's seen 18 Olympic games has had the whole town of Werris Creek on the edge of their seats. What a great future!

Whew! After those hectic two weeks I went home absolutely exhausted looking forward to a quiet celebratory drink with my bride.

But alas! Someone had raised the Bar and there was nothing left in the tank

## 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 to:

bdhsarchives@gmail.com

### Membership Renewals

Renewals for the 2016-17 financial year are due by  
**1 October.**

A renewal form is enclosed with this newsletter. Members may pay by cheque, cash, or by deposit to our bank account.

The Society's bank details are:

BDCU-Alliance Bank

BSB: 802-101

A/c No. 883010

These details are shown on the renewal form.

#### IMPORTANT NOTE:

If depositing funds to the bank, please ensure that your

INITIAL and SURNAME are used as a reference.

The completed renewal form with copy of bank receipt must be returned by mail or email.

Until this is received your membership cannot be updated.

### 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.

We thank the numerous members who have already responded to this appeal. For those of you who prefer receiving the newsletter by post, we assure you the printed version will continue to be issued.

## Historic Bushells tea sign

You can often miss some of the most interesting history in a streetscape if you don't look up. That's the case in Bundanoon where, above the newsagency, there is one of the once very familiar advertisements for "Bushells Tea - The tea of flavor".



**Photo: Bundanoon History Group**

Bushells have started a project to restore some of these historic signs around the area and have chosen the Bundanoon sign as one of the first for a makeover.



**Makeover underway. Photo: P Morton**

On Saturday 17th September they are hosting an afternoon tea from 1.30pm to 3.30pm to celebrate the unveiling of the repainted sign.

Bundanoon History Group will be opening the Old Goods Shed display and archive and the afternoon tea will be held on the lawn area adjacent to their building (or in the Bundanoon Memorial Hall if it happens to be raining).

Bushells have issued an open invitation to attend what should be a lovely community event.

Already people are talking about their memories of Bushells and Bundanoon as the sign springs to life once more. So come along and enjoy the trip down memory lane. Who still owns something they bought with Bushells coupons?

*Linda Emery*



## Guest speaker for September

### Brett Bowden

Professor of History and Politics  
School of Humanities and Communication Arts  
University of Western Sydney.

Brett has previously held appointments at the University of Queensland, The Australian National University, and the University of NSW at the Australian Defence Force Academy.

He has held visiting positions in the Centre for the Study of Democracy at University of Westminster in

London, and in the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research at Bielefeld University in Germany.

Brett has taught courses on subjects including World Politics, Politics of Globalization and Governance. His areas of research expertise include where the social sciences and humanities cut across inter-disciplinary fields such as history, politics, political philosophy, ethics, international relations, international law.

Brett is a regular commentator and contributor in both electronic (TV and radio) and print media in Australia.

A resident of Mittagong, he is a multi-award winning author. Books he has written include 'Civilization and War' (2013), 'The Empire of Civilization: the Evolution of an Imperial Idea' (2009) and 'Australian Political Parties in the Spotlight' with D Jaensch and P Brent, (2004).

His latest book is 'Direct Hit: The Bombing of Darwin Post Office' (Rosenberg, 2016).

In summary, on 19 February 1942, 188 Japanese fighters, bombers and dive bombers launched the first of more than 60 air raids on Darwin.

Although most Australians know there were bombing raids, the impact and devastation is not always realised. Many of the injured and killed were civilians. The direct hit on the Darwin Post Office and adjoining Telegraph buildings was a devastating blow to Darwin and Australia's lines of communication. The Overland Telegraph met the undersea cable which linked Australia to the rest of the world in Darwin.

We look forward to a most stimulating presentation on 22 September from this renowned Mittagong resident and expect to be pondering some wider perspectives.



## October tour to Hill Top/Balmoral

The Society is holding a bus tour to the villages of Hill Top and Balmoral and the Big Hill railway cutting on Sunday 30 October, not 23 October as previously stated in the newsletter.

The bus will depart at 9:30am from the Archives and return at around 3:30pm. Morning tea and a country-style lunch will be provided. The tour cost is \$20.

In order to reach Hill Top, we follow Wilson Drive from Colo Vale. This road was originally the route of the line for the Great Southern Railway built in 1867. Still evident are rock cuttings, embankments and culverts.

After a tour of Hill Top's historic sites, morning tea will be served in the park. We then proceed to the Big Hill Cutting, for a spectacular walk along a section of the original rail line through the 78 feet high cutting.

There will then be a stop by the roadside at the bridge over the Big Hill Cutting to view the large monument sculpture erected in 1980. It was created by Joseph Enfield, who had retired to Balmoral, as a tribute to the human endeavour of the men who had excavated the Cutting in the 1860s.

Next we visit the third Balmoral school, built to a fine compact design. Opened in 1893, it stayed in service until 1928, and today is part of a private residence. We will be shown the classrooms in the interior of the structure where much of the original layout remains.

The tour then heads to Balmoral Village Hall for lunch and to meet with a group of local residents who will provide some anecdotes of the area's history and of the sculptor, the late Joe Enfield, and his wife, who are held in high regard by the Balmoral community.

After lunch we will visit an historic homestead in the area, the details of which are still being negotiated.

Once a complete itinerary is finalised, details will be available at the archives for those making a booking and will be provided in the October newsletter. To secure a place on the tour, we suggest you book and pay as soon as possible. Bookings may be made in person, by phone or email to the Archives.



**The third Balmoral school, opened in 1893**

## Early photos of life at Willow Vale

Carolyn Dougherty

During our recent Open Day at the Archives I had the pleasure of meeting retired pharmacist John Murray, and discovered we had a shared interest in the village of Willow Vale.

While my interest developed following a move to the area some 18 years ago, John's association and that of his family went back to the early 1920s when his grandmother, Edith Murray, purchased land on the corner of Orient and Badgery Streets, Willow Vale.

Following the purchase, Edith's son Bertram built a small dwelling for use as a weekend retreat for his parents. Bertram, a commercial traveller, entertained his many friends at this bush hideaway. They came to enjoy the fresh air, the scenery, the wildflowers, tennis parties, picnics and bushwalks.

Following the death of Edith's husband in 1933, Edith moved permanently to the cottage in the bush. John's father Bertram had by this stage settled down and married Olive Doyle in 1932. Olive too loved spending time at Murray's Cottage. John was born a few years later.

Throughout his early years John was a constant visitor to the Willow Vale cottage, years during which he was allowed to explore the surrounding bushland. John developed a love of bushwalking and is still an avid bushwalker today. He belongs to an Illawarra group researching aboriginal sites. These interests have taken him all over Australia. John also travelled and trekked extensively overseas with his late wife Virginia.

John has generously allowed us to scan his father's photo albums which provides a wonderful insight into life at Willow Vale or Braemar, as it was more commonly known during the 1920s through to the 1950s.

Early photos show tennis parties held on a court owned by the Wilson's of Orient Street, also outings to the nearby Sheepwash Creek, Weeping Falls and other points of interest. There are photos of visitors with huge bunches of wildflowers including waratahs, wattle and tea tree collected to take home to the city. People came by car or train, alighting at the nearby Braemar platform.

A number of photos show Beverley Cottage, a nearby farm on land diagonally opposite Murray's cottage where as a boy John was sent for eggs and other produce. Milk was obtained from Gottings dairy adjacent to present day Kamilaroi.

Very few photos of early Willow Vale have been given to the Archives so John Murray's collection has been very gratefully received and helps to fill the void.

Thank you John.



A party at Sheepwash Creek in 1928.



Olive & Bertram Murray at the Willow Vale cottage, 1930s.



A young John Murray with his mother Olive and grandmother Edith at Willow Vale, 1940s.



Wilson's Tennis Court Orient St, Willow Vale.



The Murray's enlarged and modernised cottage in 1949.

## Mittagong's north villages in 1930s

Braemar village is located on the Old Hume Highway north of Mittagong town centre. A short way beyond it, beyond Bunnings, and before the Freeway entrance, is a turnoff to the right into Aylmerton Rd, which leads to the locality and village of that name. Opposite this turnoff, on the left side of the Old Highway, is a rural property named Ravensdale, where remnants exist of a stone cottage built perhaps as early as the 1860s with the present residence dating from the 1920s.

This property has been the farm and home of several generations of the McFarlane family since the early 1900s. Recently Tim McCartney, local historian and member of our Society, visited Ravensdale with Colin McFarlane. Tim noticed a bundle of old family photos which Colin allowed him to borrow for the Society to scan and add to our local photographic collection.

With Tim and Colin's help, the locations, people and dates have been identified for 30 of the photos. These portray the McFarlane family at Braemar/Aylmerton and the Kendrick family at Colo Vale in the 1930/40s.

The 1922 Census lists Sydney Graham McFarlane as a saw miller at Ravensdale in Braemar, as the area was then known. Elizabeth McFarlane, his mother, is also listed. By 1935 the Census lists Sydney as being at Ravensdale, Aylmerton, along with his wife Vera.

Vera Kendrick had married Sydney in 1924 and they raised four children: Enid, Colin, Gordon and Mavis.

The new-found photos feature Vera and the children plus images of the entrance to Mittagong Baths, its gardens and picnic area, Mittagong street scenes, and activities such as sulky and horse riding. There are also Aylmerton Public School class photos of the 1930s, where the McFarlane children attended, plus a photo of Aylmerton's second Post Office and store, which the McFarlane's operated.

Aylmerton's first Post Office and store, opened by the Simons family in 1927, was destroyed in the 1939 bushfires. A new fibro structure, built nearer the then Hume Highway by Sydney McFarlane, became the recently widowed Gertie Simon's new premises. From the early 1940s it was operated by Vera McFarlane until her death in 1971. Her daughter Mavis, who had assisted with the business, took over until extension works for the highway required its demolition in 1979.

The premises served as post office, newsagent, small store and, above all, as a regular meeting place for neighbours. Its closure was reported in the *Southern Highland News* as the end of an era. One lady who lived in the area nearly all her life is quoted as saying "it has always been the centre of the community, it is what has kept us close".

Our image collection had few photos of Aylmerton, so we are grateful for these new-found images, some of which are shown here. Thanks Tim and Colin.



Enid (back), Gordon, Colin and Mavis McFarlane, 1930s.



Aylmerton School class 1939: Gordon & Colin in front row.



Vera McFarlane and son out front of Ravensdale, c1940.



Vera McFarlane and son at Aylmerton Post Office in 1952.

Photo scanning and research by Denyse Barker,  
Philip Morton and Carolyn Dougherty.

## A history of Arrankamp at Bowral

The Oxley family were awarded land grants totalling 5,000 acres in the parishes of Mittagong and Berrima. The first of these grants was made to surveyor and explorer John Oxley in 1823. It was through this Oxley land that the southern railway was built in the 1860s and the township of Bowral was established on subdivisions of the Oxley estate.

On the opposite side of the railway line from the township, Oxley land stretched from the western ridge of Mt Gibraltar to the Wingecarribee River. Some of this land was sub-divided for sale in 1880.

Five lots, totalling 240 acres, were purchased by John Frederick Holle for a country estate and residence. His land extended from Centennial Road, across present-day Boronia St, and almost to the top of the Gibraltar ridge. Centennial Road was at that time known as the Bowral-Berrima Road, it being the only vehicular track between the two towns.

In the early 1900s Holle's property was purchased by Miss Nellie C Brenan and it became one of Bowral's most exclusive guesthouses. From 1948 the property was absorbed into the Bowral Country Golf Club.

A history of this property and its owners follows here.

Holle, the purchaser of the property in 1880, was a German immigrant. A resident in Sydney's eastern suburbs, his trade was that of merchant tailor. He married Catherine McElheray at St James Church, Sydney in 1846 and was naturalised in 1850.

Having prospered with his business in Sydney, it seems he, like many others, was attracted by the invigorating Highlands climate. He had a sister living in Arrankamp, Germany. Perhaps this was his home town or had special significance to him, for he gave that town's name to his Bowral property.

He immediately set about turning the bushland property into a fine country estate. He had the land cleared and fenced, established an orchard and gardens, built a dairy and stables, and erected a cottage residence and out-buildings.

By January 1885 the Arrankamp estate was sufficiently established for Holle to be advertising locally for "a respectable youth to groom, drive, and be generally useful".

Two years later Arrankamp was advertised for sale by auction in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 9 March 1887. The agents, Richardson & Wrench, described it as follows:

"Charming cottage residence with 250 acres of park-like land situated on the Berrima Road about one mile from Bowral Railway Station. The land rises gently from the road frontage towards the back part of the estate, where is found a ridge of rocks valuable in building stones and sand."

"The cottage occupies an elevated position and is surrounded by a well laid out garden. It contains entrance hall, six rooms, pantry, kitchen, bathroom, servant's room etc, has verandahs on three sides, and an abundant supply of water. There is a gardener's cottage and dairy, 3-stall stable, coach-house, barn and other outbuildings. The orchard is of some years standing and the kitchen garden is well stocked."

"This choice estate adjoins the well-known properties belonging to Colonel Roberts, A H Maxwell Esq, the Hon F M Darley, Chief Justice, Ben M Osborne Esq, and can be recommended as a very desirable residence as well as a profitable speculation by a subdivision in the near future."

Perhaps due to the 1890s depression, the Arrankamp estate was not sold. Holle remained in possession and advertised locally in October 1890 for good plasterers, having begun construction of a substantial new exclusive residence. A uniquely designed, large two-storey building, reminiscent perhaps of structures from his German homeland, took shape.

Unfortunately Holle did not enjoy it for long, as he died at Bowral in 1892. His funeral departed from Devonshire St at Sydney's Central Railway Station for Waverley Cemetery. His wife Catherine was named in his will as heir.

The Arrankamp estate was immediately offered for sale again. The advertisements described the new building as a two-storey, cemented brick residence with iron roof, containing a large hall, 11 bedrooms, kitchen and bathrooms plus stabling etc at rear, situated on 43 acres of cultivated land and gardens. As well, the property included 10 other lots ranging from 14 to 28 acres.

The *Bowral Free Press* reported on 8 October 1892: "Messrs Richardson and Wrench will offer for sale the splendid property of the late Mr J F Holle, Bowral. The property adjoins Centennial Park, and consequently is a nice walk to Bowral. It should prove a grand opportunity for investors."

Once again no sale eventuated and widow Catherine Holle continued in residence with staff including farm hands, housemaid and cook.

In 1894 Catherine notified in the paper that "good trees can be had for the removing either for firewood or posts". In March 1895 she held a clearing sale of household furniture, farm animals and equipment.

### Arrankamp leased as exclusive residence

Catherine then leased the property as an exclusive residence. The first to occupy it was a Mr A G Murray. The *Bowral Free Press* reported in March 1896: "Social evening at Arrankamp, the residence of Mr & Mrs Murray, was quite *en fete* on Friday evening, on which occasion a dance was given, to which about eighteen couples attended".



In 1900 Catherine held another furniture sale so as to lease the property unfurnished. The list of exclusive items was extensive, including a 70 piece Gloucester dinner set, a 42 piece floral tea set, a massive Mahogany Sideboard (described as a superior article), plus bedsteads, mattresses, large wardrobes, dining tables and chairs. After the sale, Catherine moved back to Sydney where she died in April 1905.

A new owner, Miss Nellie C Brenan, had taken up residence at Arrankamp by 1903. Aged 42, she would develop the property into a well-known, exclusive boarding house and live there until her death in 1945.

Nellie was one of seven children, the third Sydney generation of an Irish family. Her grandfather was John Ryan Brenan, a lawyer who emigrated to NSW in 1834 with his second wife and several children. He set up a private practice, became solicitor at the Bank of Australasia and in 1835 accepted the office of Sydney Coroner.

Early in 1836 the principal superintendent of convicts became sick and **Brenan** was temporarily appointed. Feeling sure of the post, he acquired a farm near Parramatta, but his work performance was highly controversial and circumstances went against him. By 1844 he was thrust out of office and died soon after.

At Balmain a family residence he designed was built by convict labour and named 'Garryowen' after the Brenan home in Ireland. It occupied the site where later Callan Park (an institution for the mentally handicapped) was established.

One of his Irish-born sons was John O'Neill Brenan (c1822-1883) who became a NSW barrister, and was appointed as the first Water Police Magistrate at Sydney in June 1851, and Sheriff in 1854. He married twice, his second wife being Mary Fitzgerald with whom he had seven children. They lived at the Garryowen house. She died in 1872.

John O'Neill Brenan is remembered for improving the harsh conditions of convicts in Darlinghurst Gaol. This included allowing them the privilege of using knives and forks - before that "they had to tear their meat asunder like savages".

Ellen Cecilia Brenan, born at Balmain in 1861, was the fourth child of John and Mary. She eventually established herself in Bowral and signed herself as Nellie C Brenan.

Some rare insights into her life were provided in *Smith's Weekly* in 1934, including the following:

"Miss Brenan knows Society well. Her early days were spent in that rare atmosphere in which the chatter writers of today luxuriate. She was born at Garryowen, a convict-built house. Those were the days of affluence, of generous housekeeping, rich friends, grand carriages, a country home at Sutton Forest, near where Lord Augustus Loftus loved to rusticate and tend his prize fowls, pottering about the hen roosts in snuffy old suits and slippers."

"There followed the Carringtons and all the gaiety of that vice-regal regime, and just as suddenly came comparative poverty, and Miss Brenan and her sister Jane looked about for ways to make a living. One sister had married Alfred Lamb and had a daughter who would marry into the Fairfax family."

"Nellie Brenan became governess to the Shepherd Laidley's, and her sister Jane opened the first fashionable cut-flower shop in Sydney, known to all of us as Jean's. Health reasons were largely responsible for Miss Brenan's occupancy, some years later, of Arrankamp. She of the white hair who walks round her estate of some 170 acres in a cotton frock, with the help of a stout walking stick, became hostess there, knowing nothing of housekeeping and little of gardening."

Despite this lack of experience, Nellie made a great success of Arrankamp and lived a remarkable life.



**The Arrankamp residence, c1915,  
after it had become a boarding house.**



**Photo of unnamed woman with lilies taken at Arrankamp,  
late 1920s. It may well be Nellie C Brenan.  
Can any reader confirm this?**

Until her death in 1945, Nellie C Brenan led a most remarkable life at Arrankamp (renamed Arrankamp by 1920) as will be related in next month's newsletter.

- compiled by Philip Morton

## Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc

PO Box 131 Mittagong NSW 2575 ☎ Telephone / Fax (02) 4872 2169  
email: bdhsarchives@gmail.com ☎ web: www.berrimadistricthistoricalsociety.org.au

- 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.

If undelivered return to:  
Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc  
PO Box 131  
MITTAGONG NSW 2575  
Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc  
Newsletter  
Print Post Approved  
PP100001055

PRINT  
POST  
100001055

POSTAGE  
PAID  
AUSTRALIA

<b>PATRON:</b>	Mayor of Wingecarribee Shire: Councillor Larry Whipper		
<b>President:</b>	Mr Bruce MOORE	4872 3762	actmoore@bigpond.net.au
<b>Snr Vice President:</b>	Mrs Linda EMERY	4883 4271	lemery75@southernphone.com.au
<b>Jnr Vice President:</b>	Mrs Leonie KNAPMAN	4871 1804	
<b>Hon Secretary:</b>	Mr Philip MORTON	4883 7862	flipmort@bigpond.com
<b>Hon Treasurer:</b>	Mrs Patricia DORIS	4872 3313	
<b>Archivist:</b>	Mrs Linda EMERY	4883 4271	
<b>Museum Manager:</b>	Mr John SCHWEERS	4872 1660	schweers@hn.ozemail.com.au
<b>Membership:</b>	Mrs Peg HARVEY	4861 4521	
<b>Newsletter Editor:</b>	Ms Lavinia FORD	4869 4038	
<b>Research Officer:</b>	Mr Max ROGERS	4861 3526	robert.rogers2@bigpond.com

**Management Committee:** President, Vice Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, Museum Manager, Research Officer,  
plus members Peg Harvey (Minute Secretary), Denyse Barker and Robyn Arrowsmith.