



Bowral



Mittagong



Berrima



Moss Vale

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 524 February 2020



From the President's Desk

A Happy New Year to all members and welcome to our first newsletter for 2020. The Christmas break has come and gone very quickly, however celebrations were muted as the hot weather and the bushfires created an unprecedented situation for us all. Our thoughts go out to all those affected by the fires especially those in our northern and southern villages whose properties were impacted. It is heartening to see the compassion and dedication of all concerned, especially the volunteer firefighters and the subsequent efforts of physical help and fund raising to assist these communities return to normal life as soon as possible.

At the Archives we are continuing with digitisation and cataloguing of records and photographs as well as attending to research enquiries received during the break. A selection of artworks – paintings, photographs and illuminated addresses were repatriated from the Museum to be re-acquisitioned, restored where necessary, photographed and repacked for storage in the Conservation area. The installation of data cabling and centralised file storage for our computer system is progressing and should be completed in February. An application has been made to Wingecarribee Shire

Council for approval to replace the old carpet on the ground floor of the Archives.

At the Museum there is still time for members to see the interim Digital Gallery exhibition on the paintings of Rembrandt. This is a high-quality exhibition which will be replaced shortly with the Berrima Public School exhibition. Berrima Townlife has now retired, closed their bank account and provided a generous donation to enable the Museum to print 15,000 River Walk brochures which will last for several years. Lyn Hall recently represented the Museum at community meetings regarding the closure of the Berrima Gaol with the last women prisoners to leave in early April. The intention is to hand the property to another Government Department, yet to be disclosed. The Community Committee have been very appreciative of the outside maintenance work that has been done by the prisoners over the recent years. They have stepped up and been a great help to a variety of volunteer managed projects within the Berrima Village.

Talking about volunteers, our Museum is looking for computer savvy volunteers and a handyman who doesn't mind getting his hands dirty. Please give them a call if you are interested.

Ian Mackey

GENERAL MONTHLY MEETINGS

FEBRUARY 2020:

Thursday 27 February at 2:00pm

SPEAKER:

Philip Morton, with an early history of the Meryla locality

MARCH 2020:

Thursday 26 March at 2:00pm

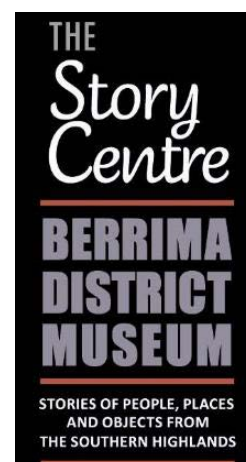
SPEAKER:

Linda Emery, *Captured in the Light* series, No. 13

AFTERNOON TEA is served following the speaker.

Members please bring a plate or a donation.

NOTE: the **Family History Interest Group** meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 1:00pm at the Mittagong Archives



Moore Memorable Musings



BACK TO SCHOOL

I'm sure we're all reminded of our own schooldays when we notice flashing school 40 km zones and 'back to school' products in supermarkets. Let alone increased traffic dodging stressed out Mums running their little Jimmys to school.

My early memories were walking to school and back which was an adventure in itself. A couple of mates joined me in kicking rocks, throwing chokos at each other and generally being silly seven-year-olds. We soon managed to convert our new shoes into trendy crocodile monsters, which collected every pebble known to man. Soon our flapping footwear was treated to a new Dunlop Kromhyde sole, courtesy of Dad, carefully glued and trimmed on a shoe last. This new sole would last for perhaps another week.

Growing up in those post-war days we were all obviously undisciplined Australians and in dire need of drilled military marching. To the sound of a scratchy record playing Colonel Bogey or one of the Souza classics blaring through the PA system, we carefully listened to instructions:

"Left step, arm's length from the boy in front, left line first, right March!"

Whatever that meant, soldier-like we learnt to 'right wheel', 'mark time' and 'quick march' which were burnt into our brains. We were now ready for the Edinburgh Tattoo.

If the headmaster ever blew his whistle (maybe he lost his voice), I think the penalty was death. On our report cards we even got a mark for marching!

After sand pits, plasticine moulding and watching wheat sprout on cotton wool in Kindergarten we became responsible children in Primary. You could willingly volunteer to be either milk or ink monitor, bell ringer or even the prestigious flag raiser. These lofty positions extricated you from class for at least 10 minutes a day.

Because of mentioning I was going to be a chemist one day, I was chosen to pour the tea for the staff just before playtime (morning tea). "Before you

pour, rock the pot like a Manly Ferry, son." What an enormous transition from being a one-time classroom pencil sharpener!

Playtime was exactly what it was. We were released into the searing sun and given the privilege of playing Cocky Laura on the melting asphalt. Wooden benches separated us from the girls tar strip, but didn't prevent us gawking when they were playing hopscotch. They obligingly tucked up their skirts into their underwear! The bell rings, a whistle blows.

"Attention, eyes front, lines straight, now quick march!"

Bruce Moore

Research Fees

Research fees for non-members:
\$30.00 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.

Berrima District Museum

THE STORY CENTRE

OPEN WEDNESDAY TO SUNDAY
10.00am to 4.00pm throughout the year. This includes during school and public holiday periods. Closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day.
Groups welcome at other times by arrangement. Ph: Lyn 02 4862 1626 or John 0434 623 402.

Museum: Phone 4877 1130 or email bdmuseum@bigpond.com

Managed and operated by members of our Society who volunteer their time and expertise.

Archives' opening hours

Monday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm
Tuesday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm
Saturday 10:00 am – 1:00 pm



At Moss Vale station in December 2019 our member and research team leader Frank Mitchell provided a potted history of the Southern Railway, in the limited time available, to the assembly of St James Rail folks who were *en route* to Bundanoon in their Rail Motor Society special train for a Christmas Lunch.

Frank is pictured here (in hat) in the memorial garden at the station, being introduced by Owen Johnstone-Donnet, the tour group's organiser.

(Photo: Glenda Miskelly)

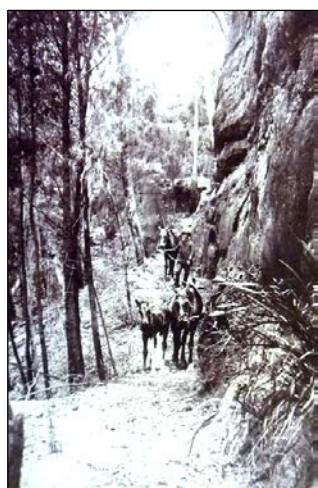
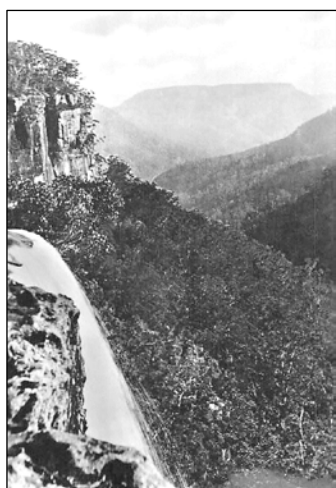
February Meeting's talk topic

An early history of Meryla Pass and the Meryla/Werai area within Wingecarribee Shire

A presentation by Philip Morton

Philip is currently the BDHS newsletter co-ordinator and has been the publicity officer since 2009, having joined the Society initially as a museum volunteer in 2008. He researches and writes popular local history articles that are published each Monday in the *Southern Highland News*, and he serves as part of the team that operate the archives at Mittagong.

Last year the BDHS received an inquiry about the history of Meryla Pass and the origins of the name. Philip and the archives research team looked into the matter, searching out material via the Trove website and in the BDHS collection, a valuable find being research documented by Rachel Roxburgh and Janet Cosh, two prominent local women who took a great interest in Meryla's history in the 1970s.



The name Meryla was applied from the 1830s to a flat-top mountain, a creek, a valley, a pass and, from the 1860s, a railway siding on the Great Southern Railway (later renamed as Werai); it appeared on maps as a parish from the 1860s and there was a twin-drop waterfall called Meryla Falls.

As a parish from the 1860s, Meryla encompassed the area that includes today's Manchester Square and Werai, and extended further south to Sandy Creek and down into Meryla Valley at the western end of Kangaroo Valley. This was reached via Meryla Pass, which was shown by Aboriginal guides to explorer Dr Charles Throsby and his party in March 1818 as a way down to the coast from the Southern Highlands.

Philip will outline the fascinating local history of this rugged area and illustrate it with photos and maps.

All welcome to attend the meeting.

Celebrating Centenarian Judith Green

BDHS member Judith Green has just celebrated her one hundredth birthday.

Judith joined the Society in 1998 as a museum volunteer. She was elected to the Museum Sub-



Committee in 1999 and for the next 16 years, until 2015, served as one of its most enthusiastic and valued members. She was elected to the BDHS Management Committee in 2002, and became Vice President in 2003, a position she held until 2008.

Judith inherited her grandfather's commitment to community service. Alfred Green was a career public servant for 50 years from 1872 to 1922. His association with the State Children's Relief Board started in 1884, beginning his lifelong advocacy on behalf of the well-being of the children of NSW. He took a particular interest in Mittagong's Farm Home for Boys and hostels for working mothers and babies, which were under his direct supervision. He served on numerous boards and committees related to hospitals, health and welfare, as well as being involved with the administration of cricket and rugby for more than 50 years. Judith donated a fine portrait of Alfred Green to the Society which is held in our art collection.

Judith followed in her grandfather's footsteps. She had a distinguished career as a social worker at The Children's Hospital in Sydney and later at Bowral Hospital. She has been a member of both Bowral and Moss Vale Show Societies for many years and was President of Moss Vale Show Society on two occasions. Judith became a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in 1977 for services to the community, particularly for her work in Darwin after Cyclone Tracey.

In 2001 she received the Centenary Medal for service to rural business, produce, and encouraging leadership in young women and in 2004 was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the community through the NSW Meals on Wheels and to the community of the Southern Highlands.

We congratulate Judith on this milestone and on her commitment to BDHS – a wonderful life indeed!

(Photo above by Michele Woods)

Linda Emery

Principia Mathematica and Bowral

Members may have seen a recent piece on ABC TV's 7.30 Report about the *Principia Mathematica*, one of the most important scientific works ever written, held in the rare book collection at Sydney University.

Written by Sir Isaac Newton and published in 1687, this first edition is one of only four known copies annotated by Newton himself. What is less well known is that Bowral was once the home of this irreplaceable volume.



Barrister and politician, Arthur Bruce Smith (pictured) had built *Anglewood* in Yean Street Burradoo in the late 1890s and later built *Walden* in Bendooley Street to which he retired in 1925. He purchased the *Principia* in 1908 from a sale of books owned by Harry Constantine Elderton who had inherited them from the James Family estate in Kent, England.

After Arthur Bruce Smith died in 1936 the book passed to his son Verton and after his death in 1945, to Verton's sisters Barbara and Beatrix who had been instrumental in setting up and running the Burradoo Convalescent Home for WWI soldiers. The *Principia* was still in the family home, Walden, when Barbara and Beatrix donated it to the University of Sydney in 1961. The other three copies are all located in the Northern Hemisphere – two in the University of Cambridge Library and one in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin. In 2016, a copy of the *Principia*, not annotated, sold for US\$3.7 million – so you can only imagine what this annotated version would achieve in the highly unlikely event of it ever being auctioned.

Now digitised and online, it is the most valuable book in the library of Sydney University.

Linda Emery

Moss Vale railway station: an irony

This article is a follow-up to the talk provided to our meeting in October 2019 by Dr Frank O'Rourke, an historian based in Canberra, being about the visit to Australia in 1893 of Franz Ferdinand of Austria.

Franz Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria-Este from 18/12/1863 to 28/06/1914, travelled around the world in 1892-1893. After the suicide of Crown Prince Rudolf in 1889, Franz Ferdinand was the presumptive heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The journey around the world had partly medical reasons: Franz Ferdinand's health was attacked by tuberculosis, a disease that had proved fatal to his mother. Subsequently, the assassination of Franz Ferdinand in 1914 was one of the sparks that fired World War I.



Dr O'Rourke compiled his interesting presentation from Archduke Franz's Diary of the voyage and various newspaper reports of the time. His talk included details about Franz's visit to the Badgery Brothers' property at Arthursleigh, near Marulan.



While the details he provided of the wildlife shooting hunts organized for the Archduke and his entourage raised the ire of many in the audience, it was realised that such hunts were standard practice in those days in Australia and elsewhere around the globe.

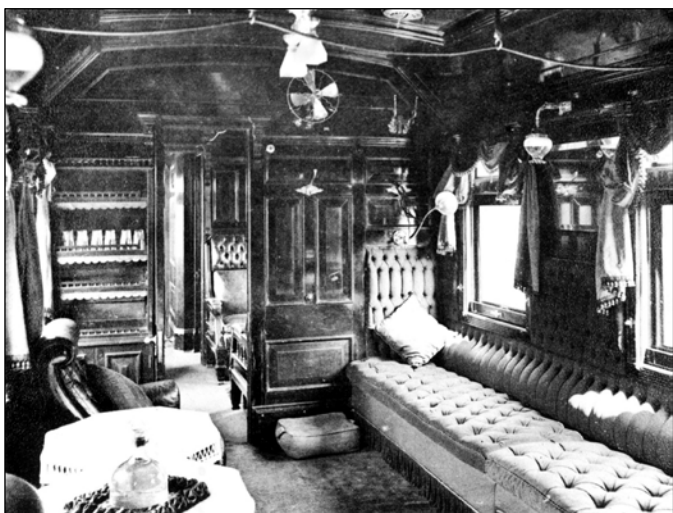


Dr O'Rourke noted that Moss Vale railway station was the stopping-off point for the Archduke, both on his way down to Arthursleigh and on his return, and highlighted the slight coincidental irony of this, in that the assassination of Franz Ferdinand in 1914

sparked World War I, and soon after Moss Vale station became the dropping off and return point for the German mariners who were interned at Berrima.

Dr O'Rourke then provided some specific details about the Moss Vale leg of the Archduke's train travel itinerary, compiled from Franz's Diary and newspaper reports. A synopsis follows here.

The Vice-Regal rail carriage, fitted out in fine style for the exclusive use of the NSW Governor, had been made available to Ferdinand for his NSW travel itinerary, including to Moss Vale.



Franz's Diary: Moss Vale, 22 May 1893: A five-hour railway drive brought us to Moss Vale, on the Southern Line, 138 km south of Sydney, the starting point for another three-day hunting expedition. Mr Badgery, a farmer, on whose extensive property the hunt would take place this time was our guide. In the station of Moss Vale, a rich evening meal was waiting for us. Having conquered it, I retired to the salon wagon that had been decoupled while my entourage booked rooms in a nearby hotel.

Franz's Diary: Badgery Station, 23 May 1893: [At] the end of an eminently successful and interesting hunting expedition in NSW, we had to rush back to Sydney where social engagements awaited . . . we started our return journey to Moss Vale. Our mounting the wagon was greeted with three "Hurrahs". After a drive of four and a half hours we arrived in Moss Vale. As the train would only depart at 2 o'clock in the morning to Sydney, we arranged quickly an improvised night hunt.

We found a hunter who owned three well trained dogs that could track possums and quolls (*Dasyurus viverrinus*), chase them up the tree and then bark. At the spot outside the village where the hunter was already waiting for us with the dogs, they started their chase on the command of 'Go On' only to bark loudly only a few minutes later.

Franz's Diary: 25 May 1893: Until midnight we had bagged six quolls and six possums, certainly a rare result achieved under original circumstances at night in moonshine. When we approached the home of the hunter during our march across the woods, the dogs suddenly disappeared and all whistling and calls were in vain. Their owner assumed that they had returned home to rest as they were tired from the long hunt. We followed their example and returned to Moss Vale.

At 2 o'clock in the morning we steamed out of Moss Vale towards Sydney. Despite the severe cold and the bad bed, I slept splendidly. We had made good use of the day before, being on foot without interruption from 6 o'clock in the morning to midnight.

Evening News, Sydney, 26 May 1893, Moss Vale: The Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, who left for Arthursleigh on Tuesday morning, returned into town last night in the company of Messrs H S and A D Badgery, upon whose estate they had enjoyed some splendid sport. His Highness proved himself, it is stated, a crack shot, knocking over everything he went for. Last night, prior to leaving for Sydney, some of the party proceeded to the estate of Judge Owen for opossum shooting and had some good sport.



According to Frank O'Rourke, the estate of Judge William Owen mentioned in the newspaper article above would appear to be the 'Whitley' homestead at Sutton Forest, built 1891-1893 (pictured).



The first internees arriving Moss Vale station March 1915

Early local steam-sawmill operators

Part One of a series compiled by Philip Morton

With settlement of the local area in the 1820s, the clearing began of some forested lands for farming, pasture and the supply of timber, it being cut up by pit sawing. From the 1860s timber cutters had to obtain a licence to operate on Crown Land, 48 licences being issued locally in 1868.

By the 1880s steam-powered sawmills were in use throughout the district and, ever since, sawmilling has been an important local industry.

On the district's eastern side, the densely timbered terrain impeded settlement until the 1860s, when pioneers began clearing and using the fertile soil for vegetable growing and dairying, with small villages coming into existence including Robertson, Burrawang and Kangaloon. Timber clearing soon evolved into a business: Barrett & Co had a mill at Burrawang from at least 1885, George Cupitt established the Kangaloon Sawmill in 1888, and Seery, Hayter & Co opened a mill in 1889 at East Kangaloon, it being relocated in 1894 to a large forest at Mt Murray, operating until 1905 when a bushfire destroyed the mill there. The eastern area's longest running sawmill, owned and operated by John Missingham and Sons, would open in 1906 on Jambaroo Rd near Robertson.

Following here is an historical overview of Thomas Seery of Avoca and John Hayter of Burrawang.

As well as being sawmill partners, they played major roles in the district's development. Both were long associated with the Robertson Agricultural & Horticultural Society and with farmers' cooperatives that supplied milk and butter to Sydney from local factories, including the Beehive (Burrawang) and the Emu (Wilde's Meadow).

Thomas Seery was born at County Westmeath, Ireland in 1830. He arrived in Melbourne in 1860 on the Whitestar Line. In 1863 he married Letitia Limond at Appin, both being Roman Catholics, and they would have 12 children. The first three were registered at Picton, the others at Berrima from 1868, Thomas having set up a dairy farm at Avoca. He became involved in industry and civic associations and was an active member of the Burrawang Catholic parish. He died in February 1905, aged 76.

John Thomas Hayter was born in 1839 at Camden. In 1860 he married Emma Garner. Of their 12 children, the first two were registered at Camden, and the others at Berrima from 1866.

In the mid-1860s John took up dairying on a large scale at Burrawang and was a member of numerous industry associations. He left the district in 1914, moving to northern NSW where he died in 1927, aged 88 years.

More about their local contributions will be provided subsequently in this series.

On 3 December 1889 the Moss Vale *Scrutineer* published a description of a picnic at Seery, Hayter & Co's steam sawmills that took place the previous Saturday to celebrate the opening of Seery and Hayter's new sawmills at East Kangaloon. The spot chosen was a clearing just below the works, described as being in the bend of the Big River (we know it as the Nepean), "where it is sheltered with tall gigantic trees awaiting the woodman's axe to be felled and further manipulated at the mills close by and utilized for the various purposes of civilised life".



The picnic for the opening of Seery & Hayter's sawmill would have looked similar to this one at Box Vale, near East Kangaloon, c1890. Photo: B Mahony

"The route there and back to Moss Vale, via Burrawang, Robertson, East and West Kangaloon, and home by the road past Eridge Park, forms one of the grandest and most picturesque panoramic stretches of scenery throughout a journey of 40 miles, that may probably be seen in any part of NSW. The roads are greatly improved since the management has been in the hands of our present able Superintendent (Mr Bloomfield); not a piece of road which before was difficult has missed his careful and practical eye, but has been properly graded, levelled, and substantially formed so that travelling the route is now comparatively easy and pleasant. The day was exceptionally fine and enjoyable. Making a start at 10:30am from Moss Vale we arrived by 2pm on the pleasure grounds, rough enough but most picturesque, and then the road through the bush to the mill. We got there without broken bones or saggy springs safely over the ground, having our old friend, John Haddin, as whip, in whose hands we felt safe, even in the face of many dangers."

- to be continued

A Serial by Postcard, early 1900s

"Please Mr Conductor, don't put me off the train"

This little story has been compiled from four undated postcards found recently by Ros Dale in the Joe Ford collection. On the picture side, the reader follows the tragic story of a penniless child returning to his dying mother, depicted on a series of four cards as shown. The wording has been retyped to improve clarity.



Card 1

A lightning express from a station so grand, had just started on its way. Most of the passengers who were on board seemed to be happy and gay. A little boy sat in a seat by himself was reading a letter he had. T'was plain to be seen from the tears in his eyes, that the contents of it made him sad.



Card 2

A stern old conductor then started to take the ticket of ev'ry one there. Till finally reaching the side of the boy, he gruffly demanded his fare. "I haven't a ticket" the boy then replied, "but I'll pay you back some day." "I must put you off at the next station then!" but stopped when he heard the boy say: **CHORUS** "Please Mr Conductor, don't put me off the train. The best friend I have in the world, sir, is waiting for me in pain. She's expected to die at any moment and may not live through the day. And I want to bid mother goodbye, sir, before God takes her away."



Card 3

"As mother was ailing before I left home, and needed a doctor's care, I came to the city to seek employment, but could not find any work there. This morning a letter from sister arrived, 'Come home, mother's dying' did say. And that is the reason I'm anxious to ride, tho' I haven't the money to pay."



Card 4

"A little girl sitting close by then exclaimed, "If you put that boy off it's a shame." Then taking his hat, a collection she made and soon paid the fare on the train. "I'm obliged to you miss for your kindness to me." "You're welcome," she said "Never fear". Each time the conductor would pass thro' the car, the boy's words would ring in his ear.

CHORUS (repeated).

On the correspondence side of the cards, the writer Flo, having recently taken up residence in Bowral, has jotted down her thoughts to Emma Ford of Inglewood, Glenquarry. From the limited family information we have access to, it is assumed that Flo is Florence Carter, a friend of the Fords. Her words indicate that she and Emma are close companions.

Flo's jottings provide a glimpse into local life at the time, for example: "Bowral is dead slow. Emma, can't you shake up a dance? You used to shake up more fun out there in the country than I can strike in town. I'd love to be going to the [Wilde's] Meadow Ball".

Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc

PO Box 131 Mittagong NSW 2575 ☎ Telephone (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 a general collection.
- MUSEUM:** Market Place, Berrima. Tel: 02 4877 1130. Email: bdmuseum@bigpond.com
OPEN: 10.00am to 4.00pm, Wednesdays to Sundays throughout the year. 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. Joining Fee \$10.00 – Single \$25.00 – Family \$35.00.
- 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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