



Bowral



Mittagong



Berrima



Moss Vale

# BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY Inc.

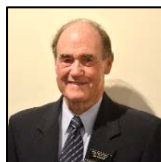
Founded 1960

Located in the Wingecarribee Shire,  
Southern Highlands of NSW

ABN 29 362 616 937

## NEWSLETTER

No 526 April 2020



### From the President's Desk

Looking back at the recent past, who would have believed we could suffer such dire circumstances. Firstly, the drought followed by devastating

bushfires, flooding rains in some areas, and finally the current COVID-19 pandemic which to me is the single greatest disruption to everyday life in living memory.

We are proceeding with this April newsletter mainly to inform you, our members, how we are being affected as a Society. As you would know, the Government restrictions have had a severe effect on the Archives in Mittagong and the Museum in Berrima, both being closed until further notice. A notice was posted on our website cancelling our monthly general meetings until all restrictions on public gatherings are lifted.

Not everything is in abeyance however. Our Archives computer network system upgrade has now been completed after a delay of several months. This system comprises a centralised file storage facility, dual hard drives, UPS surge protection and hard wiring to all computers. Some furniture was relocated to access data points which also meant filing cabinets and the main photocopier/printer needed to be moved.

This year our Society will be celebrating 60 years since its beginnings in 1960 as the Berrima District Historical Society. It has undergone many changes in both form and location throughout those years. The difficulties encountered in the formative years by the Archives and the Museum, including problems in obtaining suitable permanent premises, were highlighted in our "Celebrating 50 Years" of 2010. The early records reveal that, until the present museum premises first opened at Berrima in 1976, files and objects were stored in many different locations, from private homes to business premises and public buildings.

It was not until the early 1980s that the Archives found a permanent home in the Mittagong Memorial Hall, not in the section we now occupy, but in two rooms to the left of the main entrance. Storage space was at a premium. When the Mittagong Tourist Centre moved out to its new building, we were granted a 20-year lease to the area the Society occupies today. In 2019 we successfully negotiated a further 21-year lease, giving us the security of tenure missing in earlier years.

Highlights of the decade 2010-2019 will be featured in this newsletter over the next few issues. **Ian Mackey**

### GENERAL MONTHLY MEETINGS

**APRIL 2020:**

Thursday 23 April at 2:00pm **CANCELLED**

**SPEAKER/TOPIC:**

Ken Jacka to talk about his uncle, Captain Albert Jacka, VC, MC & Bar of the 14th Battalion, 1st AIF

**MAY 2020:**

Thursday 28 May at 2:00pm **TO BE ADVISED**

**SPEAKER/TOPIC:**

Member Shylie Brown taking us for an historic "Walk down Bong Bong St"

**AFTERNOON TEA** is served following the speaker.

Members please bring a plate or a donation.

The **Family History Interest Group** will not be meeting until further notice given.



## Moore Memorable Musings

### DYING TO GET THERE

Watching some commercial TV lately, I'm overwhelmed by the number of ads urging us to leave this planet. Some may do this well before the ad is over.

Apart from talk of Virgin offering trips to the moon, the most macabre things I've seen lately are insurance advertisements for funeral plans and death.

Who wants to be reminded of your impending doom, as if growing older isn't enough of a wakeup call, then I don't know what else we need.

Move to a coffin-like unit near you, the ad says, and downsize! There's also a near-death retirement village near you with names such as "Shrunken Gums" or "Twilight Homes" showing happy, laughing chardonnay guzzling couples. Average age about 40.

They also show half-naked beauties diving into azure-blue swimming pools.

I'm dying to move in with that lot!

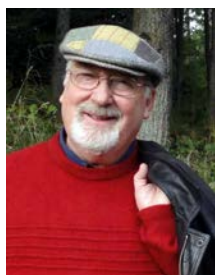
There are the cruise-before-you-die adventures on a giant livestock carrier (aka cruise liner) along with 5000 of your second-best friends all willing to share the Covid-19 virus with you.

The clever ad shows a select few select couples frolicking around a barbecue still quaffing more of those chardonnays.

And the ship sails on, peacefully, to the next quarantined port.

Do we all need hair replacement? A new set of dentures maybe? Make sure your death insurance is updated. Should have gone to Spec savers. No we shouldn't!

Perhaps we should watch more doctor programs on TV. Currently there are at least 12 on offer ranging from RPA to Doc Martin, all of which demonstrate how to save lives. Or perhaps play Doctors & Nurses in the comfort of our own homes.



Bruce Moore

### 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](mailto:bdhsarchives@gmail.com)

### 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.

### Archives' opening hours

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



A photo collage of the recently reorganized Archives Room (top) at Mittagong, where our President Ian Mackey (below) rolled up his sleeves and got the job done, with the help of several members. All work stations are now at the sides and computers are hard-wired to a centralised server above the relocated copier.

## Berrima District Museum

### THE STORY CENTRE

1a Market Place cnr Bryan St,  
Berrima 2577

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](mailto:bdmuseum@bigpond.com)

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

**NOTE: the opening hours shown on this page for the Archives and Museum do not, of course, apply at present due to the pandemic.**

Anyone with a question, a research inquiry, or who wishes to obtain local or family history information, or order photos from our Image Library (viewable via our website) may do so by emailing the Society.



## In lieu of April talk on Captain Jacka

For our monthly general meeting on 23 April, we had arranged that local resident Ken Jacka would talk about his uncle, Captain Albert Jacka, VC, MC & Bar of the 14th Battalion, 1st AIF, 4th Brigade.

As the meeting would be held just a few days prior to Anzac Day, it seemed an appropriate choice of topic. Now, owing to the current pandemic situation, no meeting can be held and services on Anzac Day will take place without participants.

In lieu of the talk and to serve as a commemoration of Anzac Day, an overview of the story of Captain Albert Jacka is presented here, drawn from the Australian War Memorial website, and from notes provided to us by Ken Jacka.

**Albert Jacka** was born on 10 January 1893 at Layard in Victoria. He completed elementary schooling before working as a labourer, first with his father and then with the Victorian State Forests Department.

He enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force in September 1914 and, after training in Egypt, landed on Gallipoli with his battalion on 26 April 1915.

Just over three weeks later, with the Anzacs entrenched above the beaches, the Ottoman army launched a large-scale frontal assault against the Anzacs' positions.

A group of Turkish soldiers captured a small section of trench at a position known as Courtney's Post, which Albert was guarding with four other men. Early attempts to drive them out failed, until Jacka crossed over and leapt into the trench and single-handedly killed seven enemy soldiers. He then held the trench alone for the remainder of the night until reinforcements arrived.

For his "most conspicuous bravery" he was awarded Australia's first Victoria Cross of the First World War.

Jacka quickly became famous – back home his likeness was used on recruiting posters and his exploits featured in newspapers. He rose through the ranks and was commissioned as a lieutenant.



## From notes provided by Ken Jacka:

Albert Jacka died on January 17, 1932, and he (Ken) was born 10 years later - so he never met him, but was told by some of Albert's siblings that his beliefs and personality were very similar to those of his uncle. Ken is Albert's youngest nephew, being fathered by Sid Jacka, Albert's next youngest brother.

After Albert died in 1932 his fellow soldiers from the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion held an annual pilgrimage to his grave until the last of them died some fifty years later.

This annual memorial service continues to this day, and is thought to be the only service that is still held to commemorate a wartime figure from the 1914-1918 War. Ken gave a speech at these services for over 20 years, as well as at some Anzac Day Services at Albert's hometown, Wedderburn, in Central Victoria. Ken and his wife Elizabeth moved from Victoria six years ago and now live in Bowral.

## More from the Australian War Memorial website:

Jacka went on to serve on the Western Front, where he received the Military Cross at Pozières in August 1916 and again at Bullecourt in April 1917. He was severely wounded during this action, and was further wounded when hit by a sniper's bullet in July 1917. He returned to the front after both occasions, but in May 1918 was gassed during a German artillery bombardment near Villers-Bretonneux, after which his remarkable military service came to an end.

Jacka returned to Australia in September 1919 and was greeted by a large crowd. He was described in one newspaper as "the symbol of the spirit of the Anzacs". After being demobilised in January 1920 he went into business with two members of his former battalion. The following year he married, and he and his wife later adopted a daughter.

Jacka was elected to the St Kilda Council in 1929 and became mayor the following year. His political career was characterised by his strong interest in assisting the unemployed, particularly ex-servicemen. Around this time his business was forced into voluntary liquidation and his health began to deteriorate.

He died from kidney disease in 1932, aged just 39. More than 6,000 people filed past Jacka's coffin as it lay in state, and his funeral procession, flanked by thousands of onlookers, was led by more than 1,000 First World War veterans.

Albert Jacka was buried with full military honours in St Kilda Cemetery. His coffin was carried by eight other Victoria Cross recipients, including William Dunstan, whose son Bill lived in the Southern Highlands for many years before his death in 2015.

## A Distinguished Songstress

Linda Emery

Among the many interesting people to have been buried in the churchyard of Christ Church Bong Bong is Jane Anne Aimers or, to use her stage name, Signora Giovanna Ameris.

Her grave is quite imposing with an inscription that reveals she died while visiting Australia. An Italian pseudonym? Surely something to pique the curiosity of any cemetery visitor and, as it turns out, quite a story to be told.



Jane was born in 1845 in the picturesque Scottish Border town of Galashiels on the River Tweed, the daughter of Thomas Aimers and Anne Allan Stuart. Her father was a grocer and spirit dealer who seems to have prospered. By the time the 1871 census was taken, he described himself as a merchant and had moved with his family to nearby Melrose, famous for the romantic ruins of St Mary's Abbey.

Jane became a music teacher in Melrose. Despite the disapproval of her Presbyterian parents to her taking up a musical career, she went to London to study singing with Italian singer and composer, Giacinto Marras, who on hearing her magnificent contralto voice said "You will not go back to your village again". Instead she travelled to Italy to further her career, studying with revered tutor Francesco Lamperti and baritone Giorgio Ronconi.

She made her opera debut in Milan in Verdi's *Il Trovatore* and appeared for three years on the operatic stage throughout Europe, adopting the stage name Giovanna Ameris.



Returning to London, she was much sought after to sing in the salons of the nobility and gentry, performing with soprano Rose Hersee. In 1885 Giovanna was asked to sing by Royal Command for Queen Victoria and the Royal Family at Balmoral Castle. The Queen presented her with a St Andrews Cross of pearls and diamonds as a memento of the occasion.

In poor health, she travelled to Australia in 1888 and on the invitation of her friends, Admiral Henry Fairfax and his wife, sailed on to New Zealand where their party was hosted at Government House in Auckland. On her return to Australia a month later, she sang in Sydney, and in Melbourne in the first Australian production of *The Yeoman of the Guard* at the Princess Theatre.



Jane lived and taught singing in fashionable Richmond Terrace overlooking The Domain, later demolished to make way for the extension of the State Library.

She was staying with Sir John and Lady Martha Lackey at their property Austermere in Moss Vale for Christmas 1890 when she had a stroke and died two weeks later on 8 January 1891. The previous year, while performing in Melbourne, she had been thrown from a hansom cab and sustained a head injury which may have contributed to her death.

And so she is buried far from her Scottish home, but with a grave marker that befits her stature in the opera world.



## Early local steam-sawmill operators

*Part Three of a series compiled by Philip Morton*

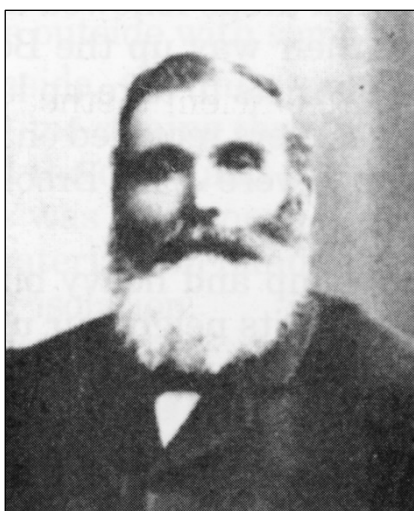
A history of the lives of Thomas Seery of Avoca and John Hayter of Burrawang concludes here. As well as being business partners in sawmill operations, they played major roles in the local district's development.

As outlined in the previous articles, Seery and Hayter co-owned a sawmill at East Kangaloon that began operation in 1889. In 1894 they moved operations to a forest at Mt Murray, near Robertson, where a mill operated until burnt down in a bushfire in 1905. That same year Thomas Seery died, aged 76. He had served on several Show Societies in the district, including at Robertson, and his death was felt with profound regret. The Seery family line continues today from his and his brother's many descendants.

John Thomas Hayter was nine years younger than Thomas Seery, being born in 1839 at Camden. In 1860 he married Emma Garner and they raised 12 children. In the mid-1860s Hayter took up dairying at Burrawang and joined local industry associations.

Then, in 1914, he decided to move to Bangalow in northern NSW. On 18 November 1914 the *Scrutineer* reported that a large gathering of the friends of John and Emma Hayter and Miss Hayter assembled in the Robertson School of Arts to witness a presentation prior to their departure. The paper stated that "another link in the chain of old identities disappears, that gentleman having been a resident of the district for the past 52 years. It was due to him, along with many of the first early settlers, that the district through their energy and perseverance had been raised to its present high standard."

"Hayter was a committee man of the Robertson Agricultural Society upwards of 40 years (being one of the oldest members) and had filled a similar position on the Moss Vale Society and the regret of both was that they were losing a good worker. On the former he held the position of treasurer and that of vice-president.



He had been connected with many butter factories, and for several years past was on the board of directors of the Berrima District Company. He possessed great energy and determination. He could not speak too highly of Mrs Hayter; although not appearing much before the public, her ready help was always given in providing for all socials."

"He was voicing the feelings of all by saying the family's departure created a blank which would be hard to fill. He then presented Mr Hayter with a gold watch, to Mrs Hayter a silver cake basket and to Miss Hayter a silver entree dish."

"Mr Hayter, on rising to reply, was greeted with applause. He made reference to the hardships the district's early settlers had to contend with. There were neither roads nor fences; many times he had to walk from Wilde's Meadow to Kelly's Creek, on the Moss Vale road, for his horses. He had always tried to do his best for the place in which he lived – that was every man's duty – and to make the place better. He was 40 years a churchwarden; 21 years a road trustee; and was one of the first to start the Robertson Show Society. He wished the people and all institutions every success. The proceedings ended with three cheers for Mr Hayter and family and the chairman."

John Thomas Hayter died at Bangalow on 5 August 1927, aged 88 years. An obituary in the *Scrutineer* stated that "he carried on dairying on a large scale in the Burrawang and Robertson districts. He was a good judge of cattle, and had been a successful exhibitor at local shows in the early days. He was also interested in the oatmeal mill at Burrawang in the early days." It also noted that later he was a partner in the Seery, Hayter and Co's sawmill business, and also a partner in the auctioneering firm of Hayter, Graham and Moses, which subsequently became Hayter and Graham, and finally J T Hayter. He was a justice of the peace and a pillar of the Burrawang Church of England. He was a director from their inception of both the Beehive and Wildes Meadow dairy companies and served on the local Show Societies, as noted above. The obituary concluded that "Sam Hayter, of Burrawang, is a brother, and Miss Hayter, of Moss Vale, is a sister. Carl Hayter, of Mittagong, is a son, and John Hayter, the other son, is a resident of Lismore. The deceased's wife (Emma) predeceased him a year or so ago."

As thriving business owners, Seery and Hayter enriched the livelihoods of numerous local residents and, as committee men, they aided the district's development. Today the Robertson Show they helped initiate remains a popular annual event.

## Our Society's 60-year anniversary

The Berrima District Historical & Family History Society reaches its 60th year in July this year, 2020.

The various steps that led to the formation of the Society as a local Historical Society culminated in an inaugural meeting being held at the CWA Rooms, Moss Vale on 21 July 1960, the most appropriate date to take as our birthday. Office bearers were elected and it was decided that the new Society be run on similar lines to the RAHS, thus being more than just a folk museum.

We look forward to being open again at the archives and museum, hopefully by July, so our local members can celebrate the birthday with a cake and a cuppa.

In 2010, the Society published its "Celebrating 50 Years' book, 1960-2010" compiled by the late Ken Reid, President at the time, and member Leonie Knapman, assisted by members including Peg Harvey and Gloria Williams. The book provided a timeline of our formative steps and subsequent developments, presented in a very readable format. It provided a review of each decade's events, illustrated with photos from the BDHS collection. It also listed all Committee appointments and position holders through the decades. Copies of the book are still available for purchase from the Archives.

For the decade just passed, a similar review to those in the 50<sup>th</sup> Year book will appear in segments in this newsletter each month up to July, highlighting key developments and events. Hopefully this will be of general interest and bring back memories for some.

### IN REVIEW: THE DECADE 2010-2019

**The years 2011 to 2013:** All members holding official positions at the decade's start are listed here:

**Management Committee:** President, Leonie Knapman; Senior Vice President, Ken Reid; Junior Vice President, Judith Green; Hon Secretary, Philip Morton; Hon Treasurer, Jan Reid.

**Other Committee Members:** Carolyn Dougherty, Bruce Moore, Carolyn Hutton, Max Rogers, Sally Ross and Bob Williams. **Museum Committee:** Bob Williams, Lyn Hall, Ian Alexander, Sylvia Carless, Judith Green and George Schofield.

**Appointments:** Archivist, Linda Emery; Research, Max Rogers; Museum Curator, Bob Williams; Newsletter Editor, Lavinia Ford; Publications Officer, Denyse Barker; Property Officer, Peter Cruickshank; Librarian, Carolyn Dougherty; Publicity Officer, Philip Morton; Conservation Co-ordinator, Sally Ross; Membership Secretary, Peg Harvey.

**2011** In January the newsletter reported that a very successful display stall was run by the Society over three days at Mittagong Marketplace in November. Members did shifts, selling books and providing information. Below are Ian & Denise Mackey on duty.



In March 2011, the Moss Vale & District Show Society staged its 125th show at the Moss Vale grounds. The BDHS mounted a display of the Show's history, including numerous photos from the collection and some more recent colour photos provided by our committee member Judith Green, who was also on the Moss Vale Show Committee.



At our meeting on 26 May 2011, Bob and Gloria Williams were presented with Life Member awards by Acting President Ken Reid. Ron Mumford then spoke, praising their tireless efforts in operating, managing and improving the museum.



The 2011 June luncheon was held at the Prince Albert Inn, Braemar, where members and guests enjoyed a most delicious meal in the dining room, and Marie Chalker, a long-time member, spoke about the history of the Inn and its owners.







In November 2011, Linda Emery ran a tour to Sutton Forest for members, visiting All Saints Church and graveyard and grounds of The Old Rectory nearby.



A book by Ron Mumford, "Echoes of War in Avoca", was launched at Avoca Hall on 26 November 2011, with around 200 people in attendance, including the Federal and NSW members of parliament. Councillor Duncan Gair was Master of Ceremonies, and the launch ceremony was performed by Linda Emery. The book included a small biography of each of the service personnel, and a photograph of most of those, whose names are recorded on the World War I and World War II Honour Rolls in the Avoca Hall.

## 2012

More than 20 new members attended a "Meet and Greet" event at the Archives on 2 March 2012, being an opportunity to learn more about the Society and meet members of the Management Committee and other new members of the Society. Drinks and nibbles were provided.

In March 2012 John Schweers filled a casual vacancy on the BDHS Management Committee. Having joined the Society in 2010, John developed a keen interest in the running of the museum, and from December 2011 served as a member of the Museum Sub-committee.

He later took on the role of Museum Manager, which allowed Bob and Gloria Williams to gradually step back, but they continued to assist in the background. John is still actively involved in running the museum.



In August 2012 the BDHS received a grant of \$3,300 from the IMB Foundation to purchase software to upload our collection of photographs to the website as an Image Library, making our photos available world-wide to view and to purchase.

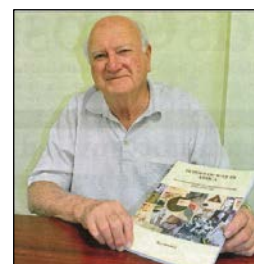
## 2013



On 26 January 2013 the annual Australia Day fair and parade took place at Berrima. For the first time, a group of twelve keen Society volunteers donned period outfits and participated, parading with a banner to highlight the existence of the Historical Society. The crowd clapped, cheered and snapped their cameras as our members passed by on the Old Hume Highway. Some of the group are shown above.

On 18 July 2013 Ron Mumford passed away at his home in Bowral. Linda Emery noted in the newsletter that: "With his death, we have lost a loyal member, colleague, friend and confidante, whose commitment to the Society was boundless." Ron had joined in July 1991 and in 1992 was elected to the committee.

We were able, just prior to Ron's death, to give him a copy of the latest revised edition, hot off the press, of 'Echoes Through the Mist', first published in 1988 by the Avoca Hall Committee. Ron and George Schofield had revised the earlier work, provided additional photographs, and the 2013 edition, published by the Society, was funded by Ron from the profits of his *Echoes of War in Avoca* book. 'Echoes' was our best selling book for a time.



## 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](http://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](mailto: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.

If undelivered return to:  
Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc  
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AUSTRALIA

### BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY Inc.

|                           |   |                                |               |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>President</b>          | Ian MACKEY  | <b>Archivist</b>               | Linda EMERY   |
| <b>Snr Vice President</b> | Linda EMERY                                       | <b>Museum Manager</b>          | Sub-Committee |
| <b>Jnr Vice President</b> | Jenny FROST                                       | <b>Membership</b>              | Peg HARVEY    |
| <b>Hon Treasurer</b>      | Patricia DORIS                                    | <b>Newsletter Co-ordinator</b> | Philip MORTON |
| <b>Hon Secretary</b>      | Peg HARVEY  | <b>Conservation Team</b>       | Denise MACKEY |
| <b>Research Team</b>      | Carolyn DOUGHERTY, Janet BLACK and Frank MITCHELL |                                |               |

**Management Committee:** President, Vice Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer and members Bruce Moore, Leonie Knapman, Denyse Barker, Philip Morton, Carolyn Dougherty, Ros Dale and Kerry Bunker.

**Museum Sub-Committee:** Harlan Hall (Project Manager), Lyn Hall (Graphics, Exhibitions), Sylvia Carless (Roster), Harold Wall (Human Resources) and John Schweers.

**PATRON:** Mayor of Wingecarribee Shire, Councillor Duncan Gair