



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 527 May 2020



From the President's Desk

Who would have predicted the turn of events that have occurred during the past six months, culminating in the current COVID-19 pandemic which has nearly paralysed the world. Fortunately, quick and decisive action by the Australian Government and medical authorities has mitigated the effects and kept our fatalities to a world-class low.

COVID-19 is not the first pandemic to cause havoc in our country. During the final months of World War 1 an influenza pandemic took hold in Europe. Many countries embroiled in the war suppressed early news of the outbreak. This led to the false assumption that neutral Spain, whose press freely reported on the scourge, was the origin of the virus. After the King of Spain contracted the virus, the name **Spanish Flu** stuck. It quickly spread across the globe with reputedly up to 50% of the world's population affected and deaths somewhere between 50 and 100 million people.

Ships returning to our shores at the conclusion of the war carried the virus. The first ships returning with infected passengers on board were safely confined at the North Head quarantine station in Sydney but, unfortunately, other ships returning to Australia were not subject to the same restrictions and the disease quickly spread throughout the country. Spanish Flu was also known as the purple pandemic due to the purple cyanotic skin colour which was a distinctive tell-tale sign that death was near.

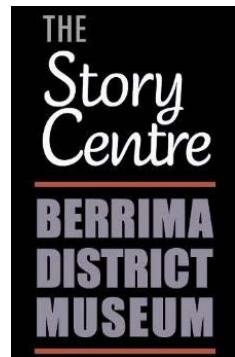
In less than a year more than 12,000 Australians lost their lives. The NSW State Archives website states that a total of 6387 deaths occurred in NSW between January and August 1919. A total of 22,000 cases were reported in NSW, although the actual figure was suggested to be closer to 290,000 people infected.

Restrictions, however, were placed on the people of NSW during 1919, including the closure of racecourses and hotels, and the banning of public meetings. Medical practitioners were given the powers to restrict the movement of individuals, especially those who had come into contact with infected patients. Fines of £20 or more were applied to those in breach of restrictions. Did this influence the formulation of the current restrictions to COVID-19?

And what an uncanny co-incidence is the image (shown on page 2) of health workers during the Spanish flu period, kitted out in their protective clothing and masks, that was included in the travelling exhibition – Windows into Wartime – displayed at the Berrima District Museum from December 2017 to February 2018. Our Society hosted the exhibition which featured a collection of historical images taken on fragile glass-plate negatives by government photographers during the war, giving insights into happenings in Australia during and immediately after the Great War.

On page 3 are details about how to view this fine exhibition online.

Ian Mackey



ALL GENERAL MONTHLY MEETINGS POSTPONED TILL FURTHER NOTICE

MAY 2020: Thursday 28 May at 2:00pm NO MEETING

JUNE 2020: Thursday 25 June – our annual June Lunch, to be advised

We will advise when the **Family History Interest Group** can meet again.

Moore Memorable Musings



A DAY TOO LONG IN LOCKDOWN

2020 being a leap year, we always knew there would be 29 days in February, but this year we had 300 days in March and 10 years in April.

The big day is here. Excitement and tension mounts in our household as we anxiously await the arrival of the WEDNESDAY GARBAGE PICKUP.

Breakfast over, washing up done so now looking forward to the morning, rewarding ourselves with a steaming hot cup of coffee.

Rubbish has been accumulating over the past seven days and has been stored ever so thoughtfully in their respective coloured containers. It's time to take out the bins.

I decided to get dressed up for the occasion. No more sloppy old trackies and slippers for me.

I just might see someone!

What joy it gives me to hear the roar of the monster refuse machine growling and groaning its way up the hill. Its iron jaws agape as it takes up its position alongside our humble garbage containers.

Tension is palpable, coffee shaking in its cup as the giant machine completely dominates the skyline. So which bin will it choose today?

Will it be the noisy bottle & can one, or the tiny red one?

The red wheelie bin wins!

Surprisingly, with the gracefulness of a trained ballet dancer its metal claws gently wrap themselves around the waist of the container and delicately tosses the load into the air.

Miraculously the lid opens and the contents are spewed like a projectile into its dark void, never to be seen again.

With a dramatic flourish of an orchestral maestro, the empty bin is daintily lowered into its rightful position on the driveway apron, empty of its innards. In the blink of an eye, the mechanical device releases its grip and disappears back into the mother vehicle.



The performance over for another week, I cheerfully bow and wave farewell to my new-found friend, the household waste collector.

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

Archives' opening hours

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

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

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

PLEASE NOTE

Our Museum at Berrima and the Mittagong Archives/Research Centre are closed to the public for the duration of the pandemic lockdown.

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.



Medical staff and workers from Riley Street Depot, Surry Hills, April 1919. An image related to the 'Spanish' influenza pandemic in NSW, used in the 'Windows into Wartime' exhibition curated by State Archives & Records NSW.

Digital ID: NRS4481_ST6679

A reminder of a past epidemic

Windows into Wartime: Home front insights

The travelling exhibition 'Windows into Wartime', assembled and curated by State Archives & Records NSW, was displayed at our museum in Berrima from December 2017 to February 2018. It provided insights into significant events and happenings in Australia during and immediately after the Great War, which were explained in accompanying text displays. Included in the exhibition were poignant images relating to the 'purple pandemic' or 'Spanish Influenza' of 1918-19.

An abridged version of the now-closed exhibition is provided online by NSW State Archives. View it at: <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/magazine/galleries/windows-into-wartime>

The purple pandemic story is also available online at: <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collection-s-and-research/guides-and-indexes/stories/pneumonic-influenza-1919>

In summary: Between January-September 1919, pneumonic influenza, commonly known as the 'Spanish Flu', killed 6,387 people in NSW, infecting as many as 290,000 in Metropolitan Sydney alone.

The pandemic threw the people and Government of the State into a community effort rivalled only by that of the then recent war, in an attempt to lessen the spread, and impact, of a deadly disease.

Selections from early newspapers

Some curious snippets dug up by member Ros Dale from *The Teetotal Advocate* of 8 May 1843:

An inquisitive country gentleman, riding on his favourite gray, thus accosted a boy who was tending pigs. "Boy, whose pigs are those?" "The sow's sir," was the prompt reply. "Well, then, whose sow is it?" "My father's, sir." "Well, well, who is your father?" "If you will mind the pig, I will run home and ask my mother."

Productive Labour

A countryman sowing his field, two pert fellows riding that way, one of them called to him with an insolent air, "Well, honest fellow, it is your business to sow, but we reap the fruit of your labours." To which the countryman replied, raising his hand to his neck, "Very likely you wall, vor I be sowing hemp." (Hemp was used to make rope in those days!)

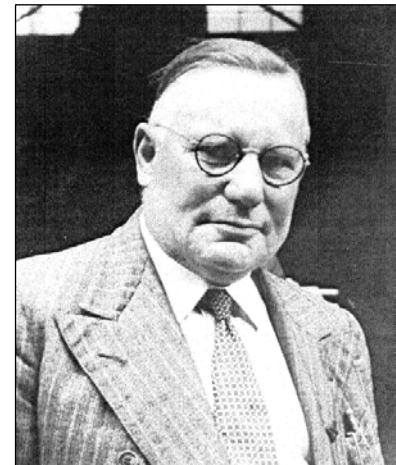
Archie Homann of Bowral

Painter, Designer and Artist

Long-time member and supporter of our society, Jill Lees, recently donated some memorabilia relating to the work of her grandfather, Harold Archibald Homann – known to all as Archie – who worked in Bowral as a builder, painter and decorator. Jill has an encyclopaedic knowledge of people and places in the district, having spent the whole of her working life from the age of 15 with Burton of Bowral, the well-known real estate office and auctioneer.

We regularly call on her knowledge if we have research questions about the district. On a recent visit to her home, she spoke to me about Archie and his story of growing up and working in London as a young man and what an interesting story it is.

Archie was born in London in 1882 to Fanny and Henry William Homann. He was apprenticed to his father Henry in the family firm of W. Homann & Son of Berners Street London, designers and house painters who specialised in creating elaborate 'Pompeian-style' decorative schemes.



Their most prestigious commission came from Queen Victoria for Osborne House (c.1847-50), and throughout the 19th century they continued to design interiors for the grand houses of wealthy clients such as Lord Rothschild and the Duke of Roxburgh. William Henry Homann originally established the firm in the 1840s. His son, Henry William Homann was admitted to the Company of Painters and Stainers in 1864. His son, Harold Archibald (Archie) Homann, continued the family business into the 20th century. As well as interiors, Archie painted scenery and did costume design for the Drury Lane Theatre and was an accomplished artist.

But Archie had a problem – his father didn't pay him! This was not such a problem whilst he lived at home, but after he married in 1905 he needed to support a family. In 1912, Archie decided to emigrate to Australia and with his wife Grace and daughter Kathleen sailed on the *Zealandic*.

They settled in Bowral in 1913 where Archie started in business using his considerable talents.

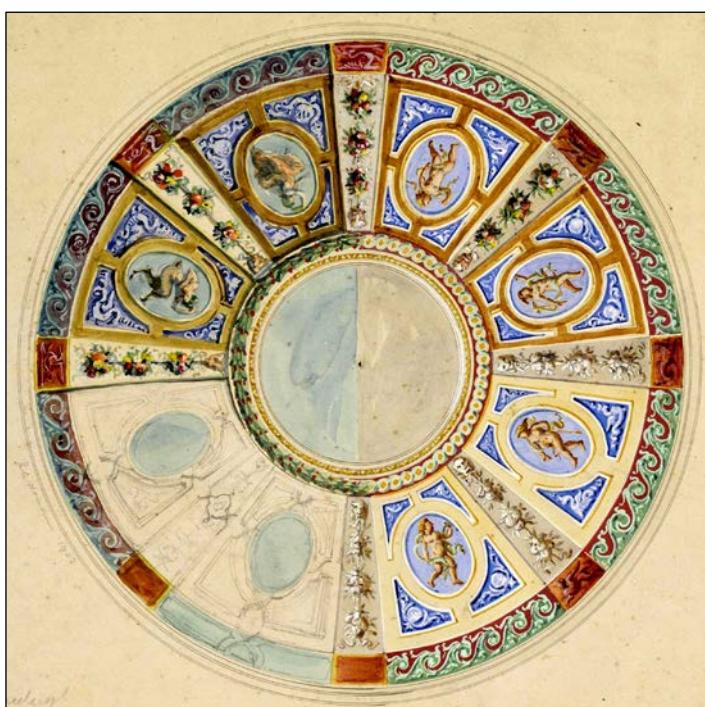
Outside his family, his greatest interest was the game of bowls. He was a foundation member of Bowral Bowling Club and helped put down the original three-rink green in 1914, located behind the Royal Hotel. He was Club Champion several times and also played in district and interstate teams. For 36 years, he was Treasurer of the club, and donated a number of trophies over his long membership.

Sadly, the story of Archie and Grace did not end well. In March 1955, they set off for Narooma for a holiday and to celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary. Nearing Bateman's Bay, their car left the road and both Archie and Grace were killed. The night before, Archie had written and posted a letter to the editor of the *Moss Vale Post* reminiscing about his marriage and their 41 years in Bowral.

Jill recently donated some of his beautiful original designs to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London which can be found in their online catalogue. The Society is fortunate that Jill has donated to the archives colour copies of these designs as well as an original drawing of his design for a ceiling at Trellm, Burradoo as well as a pair of delightful cotton gloves knitted for a young Jill by her much-loved grandmother Grace.

When the archives are open again, I will display Archie's designs so do come in and have a look.

Linda Emery



Designs by Archie Homann for a staircase ceiling for the Duke of Burleigh, Eaton Gardens (above) and a ceiling for Lord Rothschild (at top right)

A costume design by Archie for the Drury Lane Theatre

Review of our past decade (*continued*)

The BDHS celebrates its 60th anniversary this year in July. It was noted in our last newsletter that in 2010 the Society published its "Celebrating 50 Years" book. It provided an overview of our history and a review of developments per decade from 1960 to 2010.

As an adjunct to that publication, in last month's issue we commenced a review of Society events in the decade just gone, 2010 to 2019, with highlights from the years 2011 to 2013 provided. Further 3-year segments will be provided monthly up to July.

From 2013 Bruce Moore was President, having been elected at the November 2012 AGM, the incumbent Ken Reid stepping down due to ill health. Bruce is pictured here at that AGM with our patron, Juliet Arkwright, then Mayor of Wingecarribee Shire.

A new Treasurer, Patricia Doris was also appointed, replacing Jan Reid who did not re-nominate.



Bruce and Patricia ably settled into their new roles and both were re-elected at year's end, continuing in their roles through 2014 to 2016 and beyond.

AN OVERVIEW OF EVENTS, 2014 to 2016

Museum expansion. Construction of an exhibition building alongside the Society's Museum at Berrima began in February 2014. Project Manager Harlan Hall had by then raised \$250,000 towards construction, thanks to many donors and supporters.



Planning was underway for the "Southern Highlands 1200" Anzac Centenary Exhibition to open on Anzac Day 2015 in the new building. Over 1200 men and women from the Southern Highlands served overseas in World War I. Many of their stories would be featured in the museum exhibition.

Community Heritage Grant award. In early 2014 the Society was awarded a federal grant of \$8,900 for preservation equipment and the purchase of image scanning and software. This enabled several of our

local collections to be connected to the National Library of Australia's powerful 'Trove' search engine, including the 'World War 1 German internment camp at Berrima' collection. These collections thus became more 'discoverable' worldwide.



In April 2014 the Society had a stall at the Throsby Park House Open Day; pictured above are Bruce Moore, Harlan Hall and John Schweers staffing it.

Former president Ken Reid passed away on 6 April 2014. The Society extended its condolences to his wife Jan and the family. Born in 1934, Ken was raised in Sydney and went into the family retail hardware business. In the early 1990s he and Jan joined the Parramatta Historical Society and then our Society when they moved to the Southern Highlands in the early 2000s. Ken took an interest in museum matters and was always keen to be driver on bus tours. Jan served as Society Treasurer from 2003 to 2012.

On 31 May 2014 around 40 people attended the Henrietta Rose Room at Bowral Library for the launch of the Society's book "Forgotten Soldiers: Men & Women from the Southern Highlands who served in the Boer War 1899 – 1902". Our member Janet Black had produced the book, expanding on work by the late Colin Sproule.

The 2014 June lunch was held at Mittagong Uniting Church Hall. The Church Group ladies catered and one of them, Marilyn Horton, also a member of our Society, gave a talk on the history of the Church.

A capacity crowd attended our July 2014 meeting for the presentation and book signing by the authors of "Sydney's Hard Rock Story" a book about Bowral trachyte, the hard and durable stone first quarried at Mt Gibraltar in 1886. The book's origins were explained by the authors – Robert Irving, Ron Powell and Noel Irving – who each spoke and, with many illustrations, conveyed the stone's beauty and the extent and surprising variety of its multiple uses.

On 25-26 October, the Royal Australian Historical Society held its Annual Conference at the Mittagong RSL Club, the theme being "Moving History".

Linda Emery and Leonie Knapman were heavily involved in the event's planning and staging, and tours of the local area were provided for participants.

On the Friday evening, the RAHS made use of our museum's new Exhibition space, the paint barely dry, to hold a pre-conference event for Conference visitors and invited guests. A highlight of the evening was the launch, by RAHS President Carol Liston, of our latest publication *Life Behind the Bar: Inns and Hotels in the Southern Highlands 1824-1924*.

The book was the culmination of years of historical research by member Shylie Brown. It provides a listing and description of all the licensees who ran the inns and hotels operating in the local district between 1824 and 1924.



Linda Emery, Shylie Brown and Carol Liston at the launch
Shylie's book soon became one of our best sellers.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2015

On 18 April 2015, at the museum in Berrima, the State member for Goulburn, Ms Pru Goward, officially opened the new exhibition space, named the Williams Gallery, and also the Southern Highlands 1200 exhibition in the new gallery.



The SH1200 Exhibition, many years in the making, involved thousands of volunteer hours, 11 major grants, 65 local building companies and suppliers, and many generous donations from the Southern Highlands community.



On the last Saturday of June, a book sale that had to happen was held in the foyer of our Mittagong Archives with the books being displayed in a room leading off from the foyer. It was organised by member Carol Nolan and fellow volunteers.



Carol Nolan, Roberta Stove and Patricia Doris sell books

The books had been donated from various members' collections, including from the late Joe Ford. As well, there were excess library books and second-hand books provided by our volunteers.

In July the Society published "Changing Fortunes" a book on the history of Willow Vale, Southern Highlands, NSW.

The book was researched and written by Carolyn Dougherty, the Society's Librarian. The changing fortunes of Willow Vale's land owners and settlers are portrayed by Carolyn, a resident of the village.

In November 2015 a group of members, with Linda Emery as guide, visited the Browley and Oldbury properties, on the slopes of Mt Gingebullen.

After inspecting the large historic stone barn at Browley, the group proceeded to Oldbury Farm, which is on land granted to James



Atkinson in the 1820s. The tour finished with a picnic BYO lunch on the lawn at All Saints Church of England in Sutton Forest.



Group photo on front steps at Oldbury

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2016

Nancy Reynolds, an Honorary Life Member of our Society, died on 1 January 2016. Her family had moved to Moss Vale in the 1930s and after High School at Bowral she went to Sydney to train as a nurse, returning in 1951 to a nursing position at Bowral & District Hospital. In 1955 at the age of 27 she was appointed Matron, at that time the youngest Matron in NSW, and a position she held for 35 years until retiring in 1990.

Nancy then regularly volunteered at the archives, always with a smile and a kind word and was much loved by those she worked with. She had a wonderful sense of humour and was sadly missed.

From the end of 2015, a new Conservation team, comprising Denise Mackey and Roberta Stove, replaced long-serving Conservationist, Sally Ross, no longer able to continue in the role.

Denise specialised in artwork conservation, and Roberta looked after book and newspaper restoration. Among the many restoration works undertaken during 2016 were two photos from a collection donated by Tony Springett of Bowral, being large framed photos of Agnes Lilly and Alfred Stephens, grandparents of John and Tony Springett.



In October 2016, Society members participated in a bus tour to the Wingecarribee Shire's northern villages. After morning tea in the park at Hill Top, the tour proceeded to the 78-feet high Big Hill Railway Cutting for a spectacular walk along a section of the rail line that had been excavated by hand and explosives in the 1860s.



After that a stop was made at the bridge above the cutting to view the nearby concrete monument, a sculpture to human endeavour, erected in 1980. Next was a visit to Balmoral's third school, built in 1893. After lunch the bus headed to Aylmerton House, an historic property of around 1870, for a visit. All agreed it was a most enjoyable and interesting day.

In November 2016 a hand-made, wooden water pipe arrived at our museum in Berrima. This unusual acquisition was delivered by Wingecarribee Shire Council staff from Mittagong Water & Sewer Depot.

It was quite a surprise to Council staff when the rare old water pipe, also known as a wooden stave pipe, was spotted in a corner of the depot by Construction Team Leader Frank Van Haeff. It had been excavated at Moss Vale by Council water crews in 2006 and had lain undisturbed ever since. In recognition of its significance, it was decided the curio deserved a more appropriate home.



Denise Mackey (left) and Roberta Stove (right) display the two restored photos with archivist Linda Emery.

On 2 April 2016 Carol Nolan, a member of our Society and an active volunteer at the archives, passed away. She was greatly missed, particularly by the 'Monday' crew.



WSC staff and museum volunteers with the water pipe.

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.

President	Ian MACKEY	Archivist	Linda EMERY
Snr Vice President	Linda EMERY	Museum Manager	Sub-Committee
Jnr Vice President	Jenny FROST	Membership	Peg HARVEY
Hon Treasurer	Patricia DORIS	Newsletter Co-ordinator	Philip MORTON
Hon Secretary	Peg HARVEY	Conservation Team	Denise MACKEY
Research Team	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