



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 539 July 2021



From the President's Desk

Disappointment and frustration at the persistent lockdowns and travel restrictions continue to plague our daily lives as we battle this irritating virus. As a consequence, our mid-year

lunch at the Marist Brothers Hermitage has been postponed to the tentative date of Wednesday 11 August. This date will be reviewed as we get closer and will be guided by Government and health advice.

The Family History Group meeting for July is cancelled as is our General Meeting on 22 July, irrespective of what restrictions may then be in place for NSW.

The Archives remains open on the usual days but with attendance subject to the social distancing and mask rules currently in place.

On a brighter note, the monthly newsletter is once again produced with our enthusiastic, dedicated band of contributors assisting in the endeavour.

This month our series on district private hospitals and Lower Mittagong settlement continues. Part 3 of our private hospitals focuses on Moss Vale. Many small private maternity hospitals flourished throughout the early to mid-20th century and several of the more prominent ones are featured in this issue culminating

with the many trials and tribulations of the Moss Vale Community Hospital.

Continuing also this month is the history of the Hanks family and their association with early local settlement.

Recently, I discovered that Society member Audrey Stuart whose great-great grandparents, Phillis Hanks and George Riley, were both from pioneering families. Audrey, formerly from Mittagong, now resides in retirement on the South Coast and is looking forward to this issue of our newsletter.

Many of our members I am sure could connect with some of the families who settled in the Lower Mittagong area. Many others could also claim to have been born in one of the local private maternity hospitals operating in the first half of the 20th century such as myself, born at Garryowen Private Hospital.

A recent announcement by our Federal Government that approval has been granted for \$67.7m to be allocated to the National Archives to ensure that documents, photos, maps, audio and film recordings will be preserved for future generations and digitised to make them more accessible.

This is welcome news. Additional staff will be engaged to fast track the project.

Ian Mackey

GENERAL MONTHLY MEETINGS 2021

JULY

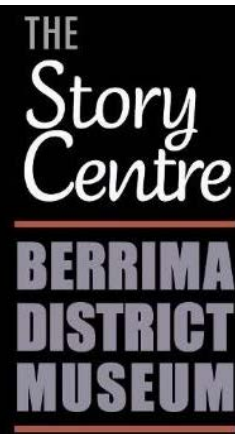
Thursday 22 July – meeting suspended

AUGUST SPEAKER

Thursday 26 August at 2:00pm (if restrictions have eased)
Historian Perry McIntyre will present a history of single Irish women immigrants

Afternoon Tea is served following the speaker

PLEASE NOTE: Our Mid-Year Lunch at Marist Brothers Hermitage, Mittagong, is now scheduled for **Wednesday 11 August at 12:00 for 12:30pm**



Moore Memorable Musings



EGGCORNS

An eggcorn is really a word for a mis-spelt *acorn*. Too often we mishear part of a sentence, especially when we talk to each

other from different rooms.

Here are some common misheard, mis-spelt and mis-understood words and phrases.

I thought my bride was going to visit Fortnum & Masons for a shopping spree. What she actually said was: "I'm going to *water the maples*".

My father was great at giving me advice. After I graduated, he gave me his favourite piece of wisdom: "son, the world is now your lobster."

I have a friend who cannot eat dairy products and she says she is "lack-toast and tolerant". She enjoys a decent "expresso" coffee and sometimes orders herself a "cold-sore" salad.

Her mother is in a retirement village suffering "old-timer's disease".

One of our grandchildren, who was about three at the time, requested "bugger and dam" on his toast.

Another classic was during WW1 an order was passed down the trenches: "send reinforcements, we're going to advance." When it reached the other end, it came out as: "send three & fourpence, we're going to a dance."

See if you can recognise these song one liners:

"This is the dawning of the Age of Asparagus"

"There's a bathroom on the right" (there's a bad moon on the rise)

"The ants are, my friends, they're blowin' in the wind" (answer, my friends)

"I can see Claire-Lee now, Lorraine has gone" (I can see clearly now, the rain has gone)

"I saw her face, now I'm gonna leave her" (I'm a believer)

"Somewhere over the rainbow, weigh a pie" (way up high)

"You cement for me" (you were meant for me)

"I only have ice for Hugh" (only have eyes for you)

At Sunday School I was taught about "the cross-eyed bear for Jesus" as well as: "The Father, the Son and into the hole he goes".

For Covid watchers: "I get locked down, then I get up again . . ."

Sutton Forest Public's clock

Sutton Forest Public School opened on 12 January 1880 with 44 pupils enrolled, and was still going strong with around 70 pupils in 1980 when it celebrated its Centenary. Although Sutton Forest had become a 'sleepy' village eclipsed by nearby Moss Vale, school enrolments were boosted by pupils from the surrounding rural area, including Canyonleigh locality.

To honour the School's Centenary in 1980, the Commonwealth Savings Bank presented it with a fine timber-framed wall chime clock (pictured).

With only 24 pupils enrolled at the end of 2014, the school was closed. Afterwards, some items belonging to the school, including photographs

and the clock, were passed on to Bowral Public School.

Recently the librarian at the Bowral School offered these items to our Society for safe-keeping and Linda Emery was pleased to accept them.

The clock now graces a wall in our Mittagong archives/research room.



Unfortunately, while it keeps good time, the chiming mechanism is faulty and only chimes at irregular intervals.

If anyone knows a local watchmaker who would be willing to donate their time to fix the chiming, we would be most appreciative.



This family portrait at Lower Mittagong includes Venus and Ethel, granddaughters of Thomas and Louisa Troy, flanking their brother Sydney (centre back) and his wife Lena (front) with son Eric, c1908. Their grandmother Louisa was the youngest of the four Hanks sisters who settled in the local area and whose life stories make for fascinating reading. *See more on page 6 and 7.*

July General Meeting cancelled

As noted on the front page, there will be no general meeting this month. Whether a meeting can be held in August will depend on Government health advice.

Linda Emery's Good News Story

Sometimes we come across items in our collection that have been in the archives for many years but have no connection or significance to our area.

In the early days of the Society, we accepted anything and everything and one of the jobs of the archivist is to rationalise our collection to weed out such items. Where possible, I try to find a better place for them and I recently managed to return a bible and a charming little book to a family in Goulburn.

In 1986, Mrs Packer from Bowral donated the bible which had been given to Zoe Edwards in 1907 by her father and the book 'A Gift of Love' which Zoe's brother Sydney had given to his mother for Christmas in 1927 – it still contained the gift card inside the front cover. How Mrs Packer came to have them is unknown.

With a bit of research, through Ancestry I managed to find a descendant, Trish Chamberlain, and it turned out that she was Sydney's granddaughter. Not only that, but her mother Elaine, Sydney's only child, was well and truly alive. Trish and Elaine were mystified as to how the books ended up in Bowral, as the family was originally from Sydney, but were delighted to have them. We were equally delighted to have been able to send the books 'home' after they had been in our archives for 35 years.



Trish Chamberlain with her mother Elaine at the Archives
Photo by V Rickard

Local Private Hospitals Part 3: Moss Vale

Our three-part series on local private hospitals now concludes with a focus on Moss Vale. As noted previously, in the early to mid-20th century the local towns were well served with small private maternity hospitals. Although births initially took place in the mother's home or at the midwife's residence, from the early 1900s birthing mothers could attend small hospitals at Mittagong and Bowral, and similarly at Moss Vale, where several private hospitals existed and where, from 1955 to 1984, a community hospital served the town and surrounding area.

Moss Vale township was flourishing by the early 1900s. A municipal council had come into being in 1888 and the railway station, which served as the district's main hub, also had special status due to it being where the Governor alighted for holidays at Sutton Forest. As well, the district's administrative functions, including court and police, had been moved from Berrima to Moss Vale. When Shires were established in 1906, the country surrounding Moss Vale was incorporated as the Wingecarribee Shire which had its headquarters in the town.

No wonder, then, that Moss Vale people expected the same community services as other centres. In a history of the town's hospitals by BDHS member and Moss Vale historian David Baxter, he notes that from around 1900 several family homes served as cottage hospitals for maternity cases, run by a nurse and/or midwife. He lists many of these including, from 1913, Harriett Fraser of Mt Broughton, Ann Fyfe in White St, Elizabeth Bellamy in Throsby St, Elizabeth King in Arthur St, and nurse Grace Hall who had a private hospital at Kalourgan House, 22 Browley St.

From around 1893 to 1931, Mrs Catherine Thomson ran a birthing hospital at 201 Argyle St, and from 1910 to 1930, nurse Mary Ryde ran a maternity hospital in conjunction with Dr Frederick Stevenson at Venata, 24 Throsby St; and as well, nurse Katherine King was a popular obstetric nurse for many years having her hospital located at Te-Kainga, 9 Berrima Rd and later in Elizabeth St.

The Ayrshire Private Hospital was probably the first in Moss Vale not to specialise in just births, making it a general hospital in the modern sense. According to notes provided by BDHS member Dr Narelle Bown of Moss Vale, it was conducted by Matron Elsie Walker and initially located in a semi-detached building adjoining the Council Chambers at 1 Throsby St, from about March 1923 to March 1931. She then moved it to a beautiful old home at 17 Spring St, this

premises confusingly being referred to as Ayrshire and at times as Garryowen. It closed in 1935, and the building subsequently burnt down on Christmas Day in 1987.

After Ayrshire closed a private hospital was opened in Elizabeth St, in a home that was given the name Garryowen. This was run by Matron Philadelphia Finlayson and operated from 1934 to 1943.



David Baxter notes that the Garryowen in Elizabeth St was on 4 acres and consisted of 13 rooms. It was the same property rented by the Etienne de Mestre family for a period from 1913, their story being provided in our March 2021 newsletter. When this location became the hospital in 1934 it was owned by Edward Donkin, a flamboyant world-traveller who had moved to Moss Vale to be near his mother.

After 1943 this Garryowen became a boarding house before also burning down, in this instance by a resident smoking in bed, that being in 1977.



Dr Bowern notes that, for a period, another hospital, also known as Garryowen, occupied a dwelling (see above) opposite the bowling green in Spring St. Then, in 1943, a new site was leased in Arthur St, opposite the Golf Links/Dormie House. Also called Garryowen, this hospital was run by Matron Craker.

David Baxter's history has this Garryowen hospital at 47-49 Arthur St where, from the mid-1940s, it was run by Nurse Philadelphia Finlayson along with her sister Margaret Maitland, the wife of Rev William Maitland, Moss Vale Presbyterian minister from 1938 to 1949. An article in the *Moss Vale Post*, 3 August

1945, notes that Garryowen "was the chief maternity hospital for a large district". By May 1947, additions had been made to the building and the phone line connected, but it was a financial struggle to keep up with much-needed improvements and equipment.

Then, in September 1948, with Matron Finlayson not being in the best of health, the possibility that Garryowen Private Hospital might close became a serious concern for Wingecarribee Shire Council.

Note: By this time responsibility for the town as well as the surrounding countryside was held by the Shire Council, as Moss Vale Municipal Council had been merged with Wingecarribee Shire Council in 1933.

Dr Alan Lilley, Chairman of the Hospitals Commission NSW, met with a Shire deputation regarding what to do with the maternity overflow caused by a closure. It was suggested that Bowral & District Hospital take over the running of Garryowen, but it could not due to major staffing difficulties. Matron Finlayson managed to struggle on, running her hospital until April 1949 when, due to the poor conditions of both hospital and owner, it finally closed its doors.

Richard Maitland was the last baby born there under Matron's watch, being delivered on 3 June 1949 (two months after the official closure), a son for Ian and Audrey Maitland and most probably delivered by his step-grandmother Margaret Maitland, Matron Finlayson's sister and co-owner.

The building then lay vacant for almost eight years until Wingecarribee Shire Council decided it would purchase the building and reopen it as a community hospital. This was no easy matter, and the Shire President, Councillor H M May, pushed tenaciously to bring it about. During December 1953 a referendum was held to decide whether the residents wanted Council to buy the hospital and, if so, the cost would be met by a rate levy of all ratepayers. It resulted with 'Yes' having 1285 votes and 'No' 996 votes.

The council purchased the building from Nurse Finlayson for £12,500 (\$25,000) in April 1955 and spent a further £5,000 (\$10,000) on renovations. The building was given a complete facelift by voluntary labour, the Moss Vale Quota Club bought a Humidicrib for £300 (\$600), the North Yarrunga-Werai Agriculture Bureau donated a theatre trolley, and other donors were Moss Vale Rotary Club, RSL, Apex, Rover Scouts and CWA.

The Federal Minister for Health, Sir Earle Page, officially opened Moss Vale Community Hospital on 12 November 1955. He had enjoyed a long career as surgeon and politician (he resigned from government the following year and passed away in 1961 aged 80).

He was the author of the Commonwealth National Health Plan, a ground-breaking scheme to encourage a cooperative partnership of all concerned with the care of the sick. By contributing to the cost of medical and hospital care, and of prescriptions, the Commonwealth significantly increased the value of health insurance for all Australians.



Moss Vale Community Hospital opened November 1955

Sir Earle Page's presence was a considerable boost to the Shire Council's initiative, and a newsreel film of the opening was screened throughout the State. His address included that "the opening of this hospital is tangible proof of the willingness of residents to work together for the benefit of each other and for all persons who will need the help of this hospital".

The Moss Vale Hospital Committee Chairman, Mr T S McKay, in his address at the opening, said that since Garryowen had closed, the residents of Moss Vale and district had to depend on the highly restricted accommodation available at Berrima District Hospital in Bowral. "Some people had the idea that one large hospital was better than several small ones but, as far as he was aware, many had been waiting for some time for the new maternity wing at Bowral."

Matron Catherine Marjorie Porter (known as Marj), in charge of the Blood Bank at Sydney Hospital, accepted the role of manager at Moss Vale's hospital in December 1955. She said she would concentrate on it being a first-class maternity facility as well as a general hospital. She proved tireless in her efforts to make it a paying concern, working up to seven days a week, but even so it never became viable for Council.

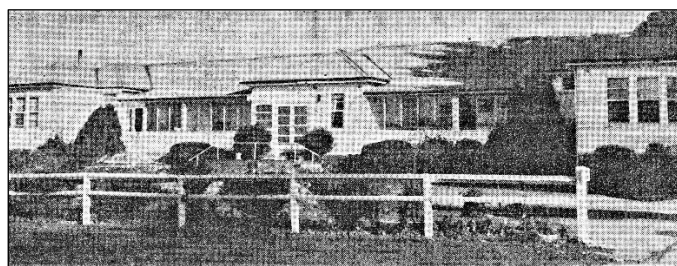
By 1961 the Shire Council had received an ultimatum from the NSW Health Department: if the hospital was not brought up to standard, it would be closed down. Selling was the only option, as renovations would be too costly for ratepayers. In October 1961 Matron Porter bought the hospital herself from Council for a bargain price. She still struggled to make it a paying proposition, but most local community groups, especially the TPI servicemen, who relied heavily on the hospital, desperately wanted it to remain open.

In 1963 Matron Porter married Raymond Cross, a successful Moss Vale businessman, and retired from active involvement in the hospital, handing the duties over firstly to Maureen Dockett, who remained until at least 1963 and was then replaced by Matron Doris Tozer. In 1966 owner Matron Cross *nee* Porter again resumed the controls.

Extensions and improvements including central heating were made in March 1970, and a new nurse's quarters opened. Now a 22-bed hospital, it had a staff of eight nurses, three sisters, four domestics and a handyman. New furnishings and equipment were provided through the charitable work of Arthur and Ethel Mitcherson who raised money for the hospital by holding regular Euchre nights in the town.

Matron Cross then took a back seat and hired other nurses to run the hospital but kept a 'hands on' approach in the hospital's smooth administration.

After she died in September 1976, her sister Mary Smith took over the hospital ownership. Its days were numbered, though, as major upgrades were needed to maintain safety and reduce fire hazards, and modern equipment was desperately needed.



The Moss Vale Hospital, as it was locally known, finally closed in April 1984, leaving a staff of 17 unemployed. It was then purchased by the HCF Hospital Fund. David Baxter states that "this gave hope to the locals that it would again be reopened, but all of the equipment and the 22 beds were sold. This seemed strange that the HCF, a private hospital insurance fund, would buy the hospital and then take the beds away from the area. That was the end of any chance of the hospital reopening."

David concludes his history by saying that "it would be staggering to think of how many babies took their first breaths, how many persons took their last, how many lives were saved and how many people were healed and all because of the services provided by all of our little Moss Vale hospitals."

The same could equally be said of the other local private and community hospitals that existed for a time at Mittagong and Bowral, actively supported by townspeople and devotedly run by matrons, nurses and general staff.

— compiled by Philip Morton

The Hanks Family at Lower Mittagong

In last month's issue the Hanks family story began with convict James Hanks, who arrived at Sydney in 1798 with 3 years left to serve. In 1801 he met Sarah Trapnell, a recently arrived convict.

They lived together, raising seven daughters and one son. James purchased land in Sydney Town and Sarah operated as a dressmaker. Their children were: Sarah, born 1802, Harriet (1804), Mary (1805), William (1806), Elizabeth (1808), Phoebe (1811), Phillis (1813) and Louisa (1814). Though having little formal education, as they matured the siblings successfully mixed with Sydney's wealthy families.

Four of the sisters – Harriet, Mary, Phillis and Louisa – have relevance to Lower Mittagong. The life story of Harriet was provided in last month's issue along with the early life of Mary. Both purchased properties in their own name and married into wealthy families.

In 1844 Mary married solicitor William Henry Moore, who acquired both city and rural properties including 60 acres, portion 88, at Lower Mittagong. Their story continues here, and will be followed by the life stories of Phillis and Louisa.

Why did William, who was an outspoken critic of emancipists and the lower orders, decide to marry Mary Hanks, the illegitimate daughter of two convicted felons? It appears to be a marriage of convenience. Mary gained respect and prestige by the union and Moore could gain access to Mary's properties. It was also obvious from legal documents that he was very involved with the Hanks family members and their partners and offspring, acting as witness at marriages, on legal documents, and offering legal advice on numerous occasions. The day before the wedding Mary had drawn up a complicated legal pre-nuptial agreement with family members listed as guardians of her considerable property portfolio. Following the marriage, the couple lived in one of Mary's properties on the corner of Francis and College Streets, Sydney.

William Henry Moore was declared insolvent in 1843, resulting in the sale of most of his country properties. He died in 1854, leaving the majority of his estate to his sister Ann Cordeaux, wife of the late William Cordeaux. Mary was left £2300 of goods and shares. Mary died in 1871 aged 65.

Phillis Hanks was born in 1813. She married George Riley on 2 January 1837 at All Saints, Sutton Forest, when aged 24. Witnesses to the marriage were Edward J Keith, solicitor of Sydney and Edward Riley

of Sydney, George's brother. Prior to this Phillis had given birth to three children by Riley – George T Riley (born 1832), Edward D Hanks (1833) and Sophia R Hanks (1835). Nine more children were born to Phillis and George following their marriage.

Phillis had married into one of the wealthiest families in the colony. George was the second son of Edward Riley, merchant and pastoralist, who among other properties owned 3030 acres at Mittagong, named Bloomfield, plus 500 acres at the same place. Edward died in 1825. Under the terms of the will Edward's seven children would each share equally in the assets left by their father. George, in need of cash, had taken out a loan, under terms which should he default on repayments he was required to surrender his 1/7th share of the estate.

This legal wrangling over the will went on for years with the case constantly brought before the courts and creating much ill feeling between George and his siblings. Finally, the court appointed G Nichols as Trustee to administer the Bloomfield Estate. George was given permission to occupy his share of the land, 857 acres, and settled down as a gentleman farmer together with Phillis.

George had a love of breeding and racing horses, a passion shared with Edward Keith and George Taylor Rowe. At one stage he kept a pack of foxhounds at Bloomfield. George's obituary stated that he kept a superior dairy with about 100 cows and was also a great breeder of cattle. Phillis died at Bloomfield in 1867 aged only 54 while George died in 1880.

Louisa Hanks was born in 1814 and baptised in 1817 at St Philips, Sydney. She was the youngest of the eight children and only 14 when her mother died. The 1828 Census lists Louisa as living in the Hanks family home in Castlereagh Street with sister Phoebe and Mary's daughter Harriette, aged 3. Both Phoebe and Louisa's occupations were listed as dressmakers.

Following her mother's death, Louisa would have spent time with her elder sister Harriet who was living with Thomas Deane Rowe close by. Also living close by was a young solicitor Edward Keith who arrived in the Colony with his wife Ann in 1825. Though holding no formal qualifications, it appears he had a natural aptitude for the law and was admitted to the bar in late 1825 and worked with William H. Moore for two years.

As with Thomas Deane Rowe and William Henry Moore, Keith prospered acquiring numerous land holdings and living in relative luxury with numerous servants in Sydney. He also became involved in the horse racing industry. Keith continued living with his

wife Ann but by 1831 was involved with Louisa who gave birth to his child, a son, while living at his Liverpool property in 1832, followed by a daughter the next year. In 1836 Louisa gave birth to another son at Keith's Sydney home, while his wife Ann was also bearing his children.

Keith died suddenly in 1837 leaving no will which meant his estate passed to his legal wife Ann, leaving Louisa with three small children and no means of support. Her two eldest children went to live with her sister Harriet at Mittagong and Louisa later joined them. It was here that Louisa met Thomas Troy. Thomas, poorly educated and with little capital behind him, would have been so different to the dashing, articulate, wealthy Edward Keith. But Louisa by then would have appreciated Thomas as a hard-working, steady, loyal companion.

Thomas was the son of Patrick and Elizabeth Troy, born in 1819. Along with his siblings except for the youngest, Thomas was sent to an orphanage after the hanging of his father for the alleged crime of forging a will in 1828. Thomas was nine years of age. The following year he was indentured to Dr Reid, a surgeon who owned 2000 acres at Bungonia. The Australian Dictionary of Biography states that Reid "was considered an efficient pastoralist and one of the best agriculturists." Thomas Troy obviously gained much knowledge during his time with Reid which he applied to his own farming pursuits later on. Reid died in 1840 and it is thought by family historians that it was around this time that Thomas went to work for William and Harriet Sherwin at their property at Lower Mittagong.

Thomas and Louisa married in 1843 at All Saints, Sutton Forest. William Sherwin was a witness to the marriage. Thomas inherited an instant family by becoming step-father to Louisa's three children from her relationship with Edward Keith. That same year Louisa gave birth to their first child, Emily and went on to have another six children of their own.

It was not until 1854 that Thomas was financially able to buy land of his own, purchasing the 500 acres originally granted to William Christie, being Portion 27 at Lower Mittagong. Sherwin had bought the land in 1848 then sold to George Taylor Rowe in 1852. Rowe then sold the 500 acres to Thomas Troy in 1854.

Thomas and Louisa went on to become respected and valued members of the local community. The couple worked hard together to raise their large family with considerable success. Not long after purchasing the land Thomas donated two acres for

the establishment of a church and school building and a cemetery.



Built in 1862, Lower Mittagong's stone school/church replaced an 1853 rough slab and bark roof structure

Thomas successfully farmed the 500 acres he purchased at Lower Mittagong. By all accounts he was a shrewd and generous man. His obituary states "In his early days he followed carrying pursuits successfully. At one time, in the year '54, when the diggings were in full swing, he took a load of flour to the Ovens diggings in Victoria, which realised the enormous price of £10 per bag, and, moreover, the wheat from which the flour was made was grown by him on the Mittagong Range. He eventually ... launched out in the dairying industry, which he successfully carried on for many years. He was all through his long life in the district noted for his quiet and peaceful demeanour, and was an excellent neighbour."

Louisa died on 25 January 1897, Thomas in 1898. They are both buried in Rowes Hill Cemetery.

No doubt readers will agree that the lives of these four Hanks girls make for fascinating reading. Despite the fact that during their early adulthood their behaviour would have scandalised many in the community, they all went on to lead respectable settled lives. Though not well educated, they managed to take advantage of opportunities to better their lives, mixing confidently with the wealthy elite of the day.

Phillis married into one of the wealthiest families in the colony at that time. Both Louisa and Phillis raised large families in Lower Mittagong, many of whom contributed to the establishment and progress of the area. Harriet's son George Taylor Rowe was also a prominent citizen whose name is remembered by the naming of the locality as Rowes Hill.

References (both in BDHS Library):

'Convicts and Currencies: The Family of James Hanks' by Anthony Laffan; and 'James Hanks: Convict and Gentleman' by Keith W Hodgson

- compiled by Carolyn Dougherty

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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