



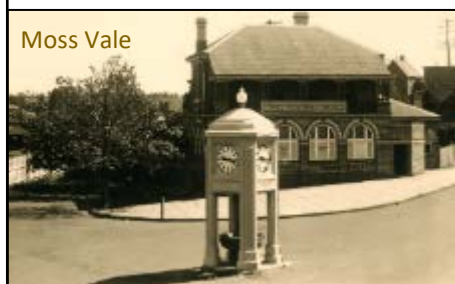
Bowral



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 559 May 2023



From the President's Desk

Welcome to the May issue of our newsletter. Once again Anzac Day has come and gone, and I wish to thank all the volunteers who laid wreaths on behalf of our Society at Mittagong, Bowral, Moss Vale and Berrima.

I will be presenting the talk at the May General Meeting, concentrating on the lesser known facts and personalities associated with the building of Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Also on display will be a range of memorabilia including newspapers of the day, telegram and stamp issues, dishes, cigarette lighter, jig-saw puzzle and many more. See page 3 for more details.

Our annual June luncheon details are on page 3 letting you know of our new approach to catering. The lunch will be held on Thursday 22 June at the excellent Exeter Village Hall. Please add your name to the list at the Archives and pay the cost into our bank account or by cash. Dr Richard Reid will be the guest speaker. Not to be missed!

On page 4 you will read about two new publications produced by our intrepid volunteers. First, the *Early Industries in the Berrima District* book has been revised

and updated by Philip Morton, and the second is *What's in a Name: the Streets of Moss Vale, Sutton Forest, Berrima and New Berrima*.

The latter book is the second book in an ongoing series on the street names of the towns and villages of the Southern Highlands. The first book on the street names of Mittagong proved very popular.

The Bowral Memorial Hall has reopened after a major upgrade during the past two years. Philip Morton has given some background on page 5 including numerous photographs of the building throughout its life.

The final article this month continues the history of the dairying industry in the district. Much of the local dairying industry historic material held in the BDHS archives was provided by our former member Joe Ford, who passed away in 2010.

A dairy farmer at Kangaloon, Joe was associated with the Berrima Co-operative Society and the Bowral Co-op for many years including as Manager. He was also a prominent and well-respected member of our Society who served as Treasurer and Publicity Officer and as President (1992 to 1994), and conducted occasional tours of the district for members. His legacy lives on with this current series on local dairying history.

Ian Mackey

GENERAL MONTHLY MEETINGS and EVENTS

MAY 2023

Speaker

Thursday 25 May at 2:00pm

Ian Mackey our President on a history of Sydney Harbour Bridge

AFTERNOON TEA is served following the speaker

JUNE 2023

Thursday 22 June at 12:00 for 12:30pm

June Lunch at Exeter Hall with speaker Dr Richard Reid

The **Family History Interest Group** meets at the Mittagong Archives on the first Wednesday each month, at 1pm



Moore Memorable Musings



SOME CLASSIC BELIEFS

There are a plethora of superstitious beliefs that have been passed down to us, either religious, traditional or it's just cultural etiquette.

For one, I can confess that when I saw a new moon, I was told to 'turn your money over' for greater wealth. So I flipped over my wallet, next to my lucky copper shoe-horn which travels with me everywhere. I'm still waiting for my fortune to arrive.

Growing up I remember my Grandmother carrying a rabbit's foot in her pocket, to bring her good fortune. Poor bunny, his name must have been Tripod.

My Grandfather had horseshoes nailed to his shed door in a U configuration. He said if they were upside down, all his luck would fall out!

My Grandparents said that if a bird crapped on your head that's lucky. Maybe for the bird, not for the recipient. They threw spilt salt over a left shoulder. They also said that hearing an owl hoot, having itchy palms, breaking a chicken's wishbone are all good signs.

We're not in the least superstitious. No, not at all. I didn't dare see my bride the day before the wedding, in case she chickened out. We had our wedding rings at the ready to slide on the 4th finger of our left hands, since they have something to do with a vein to the heart. Her mother made her wear a family heirloom necklace and a blue garter which I was forced to remove in front of the crowd.

We were lucky enough to have a house and doorway over which I could carry her.

Fortunately it was a Saturday the 14th. There were no weddings allowed on Friday the 13th. It's funny, but the hotel we stayed in didn't even have a 13th floor.

I'm not sure if all this wasn't a tradition. Whilst painting our house, I suggested that the new bride didn't walk under the ladder. She may get paint on her head, which is a lot worse than bird poo.

We made sure we didn't open an umbrella inside, in case someone lost an eye.

As it was, we broke a mirror moving in, but the bride rinsed the shards with running water to dispel any hardship. But it didn't repair the mirror.

I vaguely remember that as kids, we couldn't step on cracks because it would break your mother's back. My Mum only had a sore hip. We had to blow all the candles out on our birthday cake with one breath and on holidays we had to throw a coin into a fountain to make a wish.

I forget what I wished for, probably that I kept the coin.

People crossed their fingers, touched wood and crossed their heart. They said it had something to do with a wooden cross.

My Aunt Lena once had 13 guests arrive for a dinner party and would you know it, coincidentally, thirteen years later to the day, she died! Who'd have thought it?

Bruce Moore

Archives' opening hours

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

NOTICE OF CHANGE TO BDHS BANKING DETAILS

The BDCU Alliance Bank has recently changed its name and banking details to
Community Bank BDCU

BSB: 633000 (Bendigo Bank)

Account No: 200107100

The above account details should be used for direct depositing funds into the Society's account.

BERRIMA DISTRICT MUSEUM

1a Market Place cnr Bryan St, Berrima

OPEN: FRIDAY to SUNDAY

10.00am to 3.00pm

throughout the year including school and public holiday periods.

Groups welcome at other times by arrangement. Ph 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.

BDHS Research Fee

The Society's fee for undertaking a general research request is now \$40.



A celebratory function in February 1926 for the opening of extensions to Bowral School of Arts renamed as Bowral Memorial Hall. See story page five.

May General Meeting speaker

Building Sydney Harbour Bridge

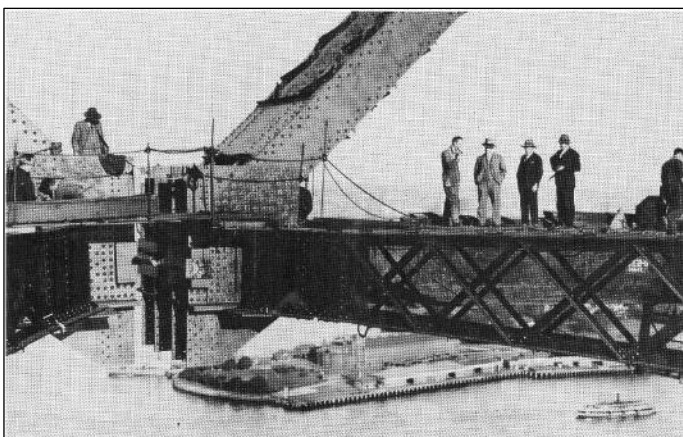
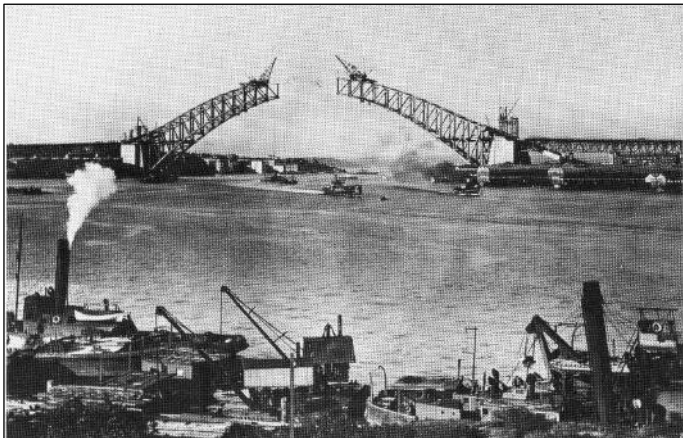
Politics, personalities, construction and celebrations

A talk and slideshow by Ian Mackey

Ian is the current president of BDHS and part of the volunteer team that operate the Research Centre/ Archives at Mittagong.

Ian's first twenty years of working life was in the engineering profession. That experience piqued an interest in engineering marvels, in particular Sydney Harbour Bridge, and as a young person standing beneath the bridge, he wondered how it could be built in an era of dire economic and political times. The construction was, at the time, the largest arch bridge in the world. As a consequence, Ian began collecting and reading information on this iconic structure and today has books, rare telegram and stamp issues, newspapers and many items of memorabilia which will be on display.

The talk and slideshow will be exploring the stories and personalities behind the building of this iconic structure and revealing a few bridge personalities who have connections with the Southern Highlands.



Please tell your friends and come along on Thursday 25 May to learn more about and enjoy this history.

Our June Luncheon at Exeter Hall

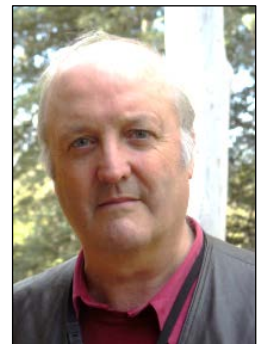
The BDHS annual June Luncheon is to be held this year at Exeter Village Hall. Lunch will be a delicious buffet of home-style hot and cold food prepared by Linda Emery and her team, and Exeter CWA ladies will operate the kitchen, serve and clean up.

With this style of catering, the cost is a mere **\$35** per head. There will be the usual door prizes and raffle. Please contact the archives to book and pay. Funds may be transferred to the BDHS account, see page 2.

Exeter Village Hall is a charming heritage listed 1902 building. Restored in 2002, it now includes a commercial kitchen and is surrounded by a grassed area/carpark.



Dr Richard Reid is guest speaker at the lunch, with a history of Lord Belmore, a governor of colonial NSW who hailed from a leading Irish aristocratic family. Dr Reid states that, as NSW governor, Belmore was once dismissed as one who 'had nothing in particular to do and did it with discretion' and asks



was this a fair assessment of what the Belmores brought to the role of 'first family' in the developing colony? Dr Reid will reveal a more involved, complex and fascinating story of this Irishman of Empire, his family and their contribution to the life of mid-19th century NSW.

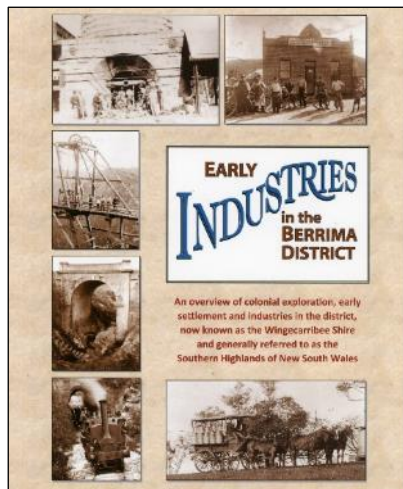
Dr Richard E Reid is a retired historian living in Canberra. During a 41-year career in Australia he was, at various times, a high school English/History teacher, an Australian War Memorial Secondary Education Officer, an ANU Ph.D. student, an Australian War Memorial Historian, an Australian Senate Research Officer, the Senior historian in the Commemorative Branch of the Dept. of Veterans' Affairs and a Senior Curator at the National Museum. He has written and presented widely on the topics of Australians at war, the Irish in Australia (especially Irish 19th century immigration) and various themes in Australian local history. But Richard regards his greatest achievement, for which he is only minimally responsible, to have been born in Portrush, County Antrim, Ireland although he has never regretted his sensible decision to leave that country for New South Wales in 1972.

Two new BDHS publications available

EARLY INDUSTRIES IN THE BERRIMA DISTRICT

First published by the BDHS in 2013, this book has now been revised and updated and is priced at \$15.

The history of early local industries has been compiled by Philip Morton with the assistance of several other BDHS members, and is based on an exhibition of the same name that opened in 2009 at Berrima District Museum.



The book and exhibition explain how the landscape and early explorers' tracks shaped the local district; trace the development of primary and secondary industries and the role of tourism in the district's prosperity; and explain how the district's names came about and changed.

In launching the book in 2013, Dr Ian Jack of the History Department, University of Sydney, concluded by stating that "the importance of Philip's work is that it is ambitious, that it embraces much in a contextual way. It lacks an index . . . but is a highly accessible guide to the economic heritage of the Highlands, which is just as well since it is the *only* guide. I have benefited from reading the book. I urge you all to do likewise".

While lamenting that the book's thematic glimpse gave short shrift to several key themes, Dr Jack did point out that we all have our special interests and priorities and that the great merit of the book is in its forcing us to reflect on the comparative importance of the various types of industry in the Highlands.

The 2023 edition has been provided with an Index and greater coverage is given to a history of shale mining for kerosene at Joadja Creek and of the Maltings at Mittagong and its huge contribution to the district, topics whose lack in the 2013 book attracted Dr Jack's particular criticism at the book launch.

The chapters on dairying and the Fitz Roy Iron Works have been substantially revised to make for easier reading of the complex historical material, and a new section on blacksmithing has been included.

The book is well illustrated with maps and photos.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

THE STREETS OF MOSS VALE, SUTTON FOREST, BERRIMA AND NEW BERRIMA



WHAT'S IN A NAME: THE STREETS OF MOSS VALE, SUTTON FOREST, BERRIMA AND NEW BERRIMA

Book Two in an ongoing series

Members of the BDHS are continuing to undertake research to document, where possible, the origins of the street names in all the towns and villages of the Southern Highlands. The first in the series *What's In a Name: The Streets of Mittagong*, available since 2019, outlines the origins of street names of Willow Vale, Balaclava, Welby, Renwick and Mittagong.

The next in the series, now available to buy, provides the origins of street names for Moss Vale and its surrounding villages. The booklet results from a collaborative project between Narelle Bower, David Baxter, Linda Emery and Sandy McKenzie who undertook the research for the book.

The 60-page, A4-size publication is illustrated with plentiful black and white photographs.

The book begins with 'The Development of Moss Vale' a chapter by Linda Emery, in which she invites the reader to: "Close your eyes and imagine bumping along the Old Argyle Road in a horse and cart in the 1850s. Across the Wingecarribee River, past Christ Church Bong Bong on the left, up and over the hill, before a descent into the valley we know today as Moss Vale. Pausing on the rise, there would be no township but fields of waving wheat, barley and oats and cattle grazing peacefully in the surrounding paddocks. Within twenty years the scene would change, with the genesis of the town that would for many years be the commercial heart of the Southern Highlands . . . The coming of the railway provided the impetus for the establishment of the township, named for Jemmy Moss, an ex-convict servant of Charles Throsby . . ."

Bowral Memorial Hall reopening

Works commenced on the refurbishment of Bowral Memorial Hall in 2021, funded by Wingecarribee Shire Council and the Commonwealth. The project is now complete, and the Hall will open next month.

The WSC website states that the total budget was \$8,425,000. "The refurbishment aims to support Council in meeting its obligations to the community by providing a contemporary environment to serve all. The hall will feature a new ceiling and lifts, an upgraded kitchen and bathroom, and access for all abilities. New air conditioning, sound, lighting, and acoustic equipment will also be installed."

"The Bowral Memorial Hall building is part of a complex of buildings at 20-24 Bendooley St, Bowral. It consists of a number of building elements constructed at various times over its long history. The Hall is fronted by the original School of Arts building – a two-storey Queen Anne-style public building constructed in 1884 with 1913 and 1920s alterations. In the mid 1920s a hall was built behind and incorporated into the School of Arts building to form 'Bowral Memorial Hall'. During the early 1960s a stage wing was incorporated into the eastern end of the hall with an annex along the southern side containing kitchen, amenities and a new entry. The whole building was extensively remodelled and refurbished at that time."

As a tribute to this iconic community building, here from the BDHS Collection are photographic images that document the development of the structure.



After second floor added 1913 and alterations in the 1920s



After refurbishments in the 1960s



Another view after the 1960s upgrade



The building at present, autumn 2023 (Photo: P Morton)

Opposite: photos showing the 1884 building, with signs in windows promoting Reading Room and Lending Library

compiled by Philip Morton

A history of the local dairying, Part 2

The Old Cheese factory at Robertson and the Milk Factory Gallery at Bowral are both prominent, iconic buildings in the local area, fortunately still standing. Once part of the thriving local dairying industry in the Southern Highlands, these buildings now serve other purposes, yet remain as reminders of our history.

Another iconic building that has long ceased to exist was the Mittagong butter factory. As recounted in last month's newsletter, it was established in 1881 by TS Mort's Fresh Food & Ice Company that from 1876 railed fresh local milk daily to Sydney. Known as the Creamery, FF&I's building at Mittagong was acquired in 1895 by the Berrima District Company, a farmers' cooperative that entered the industry at that time.

A more detailed history of this period of the dairying industry begins here and will continue in subsequent newsletters, to provide an overview of developments from the 1880s right up to the 1990s when all local butter manufacture finally ceased. Since then, the district's excess milk output has gone by road tanker to facilities elsewhere. Our present-day dairy farmers continue to contribute fresh milk on a large scale.

Much of the historical detail provided in this local dairying industry series is from extensive research material compiled by the late Joe Ford, who passed away in 2010. Joe was a local dairy farmer and associated with the Berrima Cooperative Society and the Bowral Co-op for many years, including as Manager. He was also a prominent member of our Society, to which he provided an extensive index-card system of dairying information and a large photographic collection.

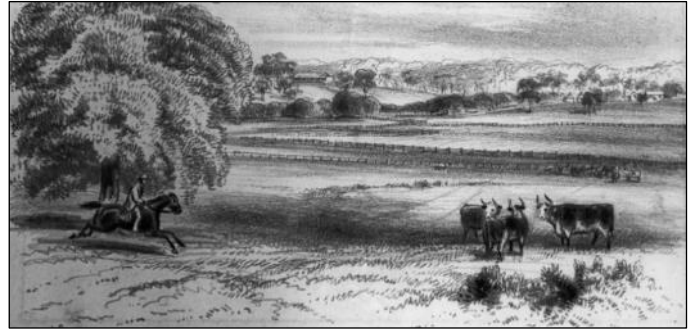


Other sources for this series include *A History of the Berrima District* by James Jervis, *Illawarra Pastures* by William A Bayley and numerous newspaper reports.

The local history of dairying dates back to the earliest days of settlement in the 1820s. James Jervis notes that early settlers had to be self-dependent. As well as keeping cows, pigs and poultry, they cultivated wheat, barley, potatoes and other crops on land they had tilled, with orchards and gardens providing fruit and vegetables. Being prior to the invention of refrigeration, salted meat was generally consumed.

Although Sutton Forest was reported in 1847 as being a fine wheat-growing area, the district soon proved too damp for the crop. Grazing became the

major primary industry, as cattle thrived on pasture that grew luxuriantly from the rich volcanic soil.



A number of dairy herds were kept, it being stated in 1839 that substantial quantities of salt butter were being sent to Sydney from a local property.

James Atkinson, who established the Oldbury estate at Sutton Forest, noted that he kept milk cows shut in a yard at night and fed them on hay, oat, barley and pea straw. They thrived much better than on natural grass and the manure was useful as fertiliser.

As told in the previous article, after the passing of the Land Acts in 1861, the densely forested area around Robertson was opened up by free settlers, many from the Illawarra who undertook some dairying. Their butter was packed in brine barrels and shipped to Sydney, but gross contamination was inevitable.

Once the Southern Railway opened from Sydney to Goulburn in 1869, however, and refrigerated rail vans were invented by astute Sydney businessman Thomas Sutcliffe Mort, the local district's dairying industry was set to thrive, chosen by Mort as a suitable country area to supply milk for city tables. He sought to supply Sydney with fresh, unadulterated milk to overcome a high infant mortality rate, mainly caused by the consumption of contaminated milk. The lack of refrigeration, delays in distribution, and watering down of milk were contributory factors. Mort's object was largely philanthropic, as he could have had a greater return by devoting his capital and freezing invention solely to meat preserving. He visited locally in 1875 and received enthusiastic support from farmers.



He was prepared to accept up to 20,000 quarts of fresh milk a day and would establish a centrally located depot at the rail line, where their milk could be delivered. Mort explained that farmers would cool their milk with equipment he supplied and load it into specially constructed railway vans packed with

ice to keep the milk cooled on the trip to Sydney. He proposed to pay 4 pence a gallon during summer and 6 pence in winter, providing farmers with a better return than butter making. In Sydney, Mort's milk would retail at 4 pence a quart, half the price charged by city milk vendors.

The local farmers rallied to his support, promising him milk from several large herds including one of 500 cows, and his representatives later secured more guarantees. To facilitate the project, organisational changes were made to Mort's ice and refrigeration business and on 1 July 1875 the NSW Fresh Food & Ice Company (FF&I) was formed. Soon after a cold store plant with rail connection was opened at Darling Harbour along with an associated beef slaughtering works at Bowenfels near Lithgow.

On 11 October 1876 local farmers supplied their first milk. The *Scrutineer* reported that 47 gallons were delivered at Bowral by Messrs Bridge, Woodhouse, Loseby and Roberts; and about 82 gallons at Moss Vale by Messrs Atkinson, Nicholson and Woodhouse. The milk was consigned on FF&I's railway trucks in the suppliers' own large, metal cans. "Others have agreed to supply milk and, if the affair is found to work well, no doubt 600 gallons per day will be delivered at both stations."

Two years' later, in May 1878, Mort died at his Bodalla estate. Born in 1816 in Lancashire, England, he had arrived in Sydney in 1838 where, as a clerk, he gained experience in local/international commerce, and then set up as an auctioneer. He soon prospered in general and wool sales, opening a dry dock in 1855 at Waterview Bay (Balmain). At the Bodalla estate he had provided milking sheds and cheese and butter making equipment for tenants who manufactured dairy products of steadily improving quality.

The dairying industry initiated by Mort in the Berrima District continued to prosper as the main supplier of fresh country milk for Sydney. As already described in the previous article, due to increasing demand for all dairy products in Sydney, FF&I decided to build the first butter factory in NSW at Mittagong and equipped it with the newly invented Danish cream separator, which reduced farm labour and improved cream quantity and quality. With a rail siding, depot and cooling room, the factory opened in 1882, situated north of Mittagong station on the Oaklands Estate near the Maltings.

Arrangements were made with farmers at Robertson and along the route to Mittagong to supply their milk to the depot. Cream was separated and churned into butter, which was then packaged and sent to Sydney.

From 1876, farmers around Bowral and Moss Vale supplied FF&I with up to 1000 gallons per day, delivered by horse-drawn cart to the stations in 10-gallon cans, for consignment to Sydney in rail trucks packed with ice. Moss Vale was the furthest point from which milk could be transported and remain fresh on arrival.



According to James Jervis, demand for fresh milk in the city had so increased by the 1880s that nearly all in-between districts on the Great Southern Railway, including Camden and Picton, provided a quota. Three specially designed trucks were sent along the line, five days a week. Two of them contained 24 tanks each of 40-gallon capacity, which were filled at Moss Vale and Bowral. Farmers of the other districts sent their milk in 10-gallon cans. FF&I paid not less than eight pence a gallon from May to end August.

The volume of milk sent from the local district soon increased to 2000 gallons per day. When supply exceeded demand, the surplus was sent to FF&I's butter factory at Mittagong with its imported Danish separator, where cream was churned into butter.

In 1884 one ton of this butter was shipped by FF&I to England, being the first export of Australian factory-made butter and selling for a higher price than butter made on the farm (known as dairy butter).



Prior to railing milk to Sydney and the separator's introduction, the district's dairy farmers had survived by selling milk locally and by sending dairy butter to agents in Sydney. Because of poor local roads, the district's eastern side farmers were unable to join the lucrative fresh milk trade and so remained reliant on selling dairy butter until they collectively built, from 1887 onwards, their own small butter factories with separators, as the next article will outline.

Compiled by Philip Morton to be continued

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
AT PRESENT, OPEN: 10.00am to 3.00pm, Fridays to Sundays.
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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