



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 565 November 2023



From the President's Desk

November is the month for our Society's annual reports and you can find the reports for 2023 on pages 3, 4 and 5.

A special award recognising outstanding service was presented to two of our

Museum volunteers, Sylvia Carless and John Schweers when they received a Certificate of Achievement Award from the Royal Australian Historical Society. A profile of both can be found on pages 5 and 6.

A very busy October was had by the Berrima Museum with four special groups in attendance, firstly an event called *A Taste of Berrima's Treasures* followed by a group of 18 German politicians who were visiting our exhibition *Prisoners in Arcady*. Two other groups were from the *Australiana Fund* and a local home schooling group. More detail can be found on page 6.

Our Christmas lunch will be held at Exeter Village Hall on 8 December at 12:00 for 12:30 pm with bookings now open. The charge is \$35 per head.

In our July newsletter we published an article titled "Good News Regarding Local Heritage". This article by member Dennis McManus was published in good faith for the information of members. In my introduction I should have referred to Dennis as a member of the *Wingecarribee Shire Council (WSC) Heritage Advisory Group*. A report called the "Draft Community Heritage Study" was accepted by WSC on 29 June but has since

been the subject of some critical media comment. On 19 October 2023 Council released a media statement titled *Residents Assured of a Fair Go* and sets out the Council's position and the current status of the study. If any member wishes to read this statement please click on the link below or enter it into your browser.

<https://media.wsc.nsw.gov.au/statement/residents-assured-of-a-fair-go-clarification-of-the-consultation-process-for-draft-community-heritage-study/>

Our October meeting featured Dr Nathan Scudder who to a packed room presented a very interesting talk on DNA Technology in regard to Genetic Genealogy. He works for the Australian Federal Police and detailed some of the cold cases solved with this technology.

On page 7 of this issue, we tell the story of a Pigeon Racing Shield presented in November 1923, 100 years ago, to local man W D Moore.

Finally, this is my last newsletter as President. My term in office has come to an end after 6 years. It has been a pleasure to fulfil this role and I would like to thank everyone for their support during this time. Two other long-term positions, Secretary and Treasurer, also require new incumbents. These have been held respectively by Peg Harvey and Patricia Doris, and I thank them both for their years of dedicated service. Changes to the Society's management will be revealed next month following the Annual General Meeting.

Ian Mackey

GENERAL MONTHLY MEETINGS and EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2023

Thursday 23 November at 2:00pm

Annual General Meeting and November General Meeting, plus a showing of photos with stories by Linda Emery & Frank Mitchell.

AFTERNOON TEA is served at the end of meeting.

DECEMBER/JANUARY

No meetings

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



Moore Memorable Musings



OUR BOOKCLUB EXPERIENCE

I may have mentioned previously about our bookclub, which meets once a month and is strictly for men. That sounds terribly sexist. As most of the members are married, however, our wives come along to the same restaurant at the same time, but sit at their own table, discussing their own book. Separated by an invisible chalk line of course.

A visitor from Queensland launched this idea in the ACT, where we lived twenty years ago, who was appalled at the number of retired men sitting at home in tracksuits and slippers. Some had no interest in anything except to mull over their life's work and sip cocoa at night to wash down a sleeping pill.

It was time to get men off their rocking chairs, senior gym classes and their backsides to mingle with like strangers, who sometimes, strangely enough, become good friends.

The men's bookclub began with the usual simple rules like:

- there's no compulsion to read the designated book,
- one person each month to choose the book and a suitable restaurant to match,
- if you can't read, at least interpret the wine type that you brought to the table,
- if the book is so boring then we can start with the wine and solve any world-threatening issues.

At least if nothing else in Canberra, one can survive by discussing the sex life of politicians. We had an interesting mix of people, as we do today. One accountant who was completely absorbed in his work only read accounting practice magazines and papers. Never a book in his life.

Fortunately, in the ACT we could, almost always, match up the book with the food. For example: "A Gentleman in Moscow" with a Russian restaurant, "Gardens of Stone" (French), "The Quiet American" (Vietnamese), Homer's "Odyssey" (Greek) and so on...

For super busy working folk, it's highly recommended they join a

Pamphlet Club where perhaps fliers can be discussed. Maybe talk about the red-hot Aldi specials of the week?

Bruce Moore

NOTICE

2023 Annual General Meeting

The AGM of the BDH&FHS will be held on Thursday 23 November at 2pm, in the upstairs meeting room at the Mittagong Archives.

Member's email to the Editor

Hi Philip, I loved your article last month on the telephonists. We had a lot to do with Jean Tebay as Martin, assistant manager at Milton Park for King Ranch Australia, always had heaps of trunk calls to different properties around Australia. He would come in at sunset, sit down and get on to Jean and give her a list of calls and she would take it from there and get back to him, usually in the middle of dinner, of course.

He found it a real pain to do the ringing himself when they closed down – all the different time zones and party lines etc. were tricky.

She was great, she always knew where people were – so if you rang a friend or the Doctor or someone she would say "Oh they are over at ??, I will put you through". She knew what the whole town was up to!

Jane Lemann, 12 October 2023

Our Christmas Luncheon

Friday 08 December 2023
at 12:00 for 12:30pm



EXETER VILLAGE HALL

The Luncheon will be a buffet of home style food prepared



by our BDHS catering team with tea and coffee provided. BYO wine if you so desire. The cost is \$35 per person.

There will be the usual door prizes and Linda Emery will host a trivia quiz.

Booking and pre-payment essential so please contact the Society if you wish to attend.

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.



At the October General Meeting, BDHS President Ian Mackey presented RAHS Certificate of Achievement Awards to John Schweers & Sylvia Carless. See pg 5-6

November General Meeting and AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the BDH&FHS will be held on Thursday 23 November following the General Meeting at 2pm in the upstairs meeting room at the Mittagong Archives/Research Centre.

Following the AGM there will be a showing of some recently acquired photographs and associated stories by Linda Emery, including a few glass-plate negatives of early Sydney, and Frank Mitchell will speak about some images of the old Rockley steam flour mill he recently visited, situated west of Oberon.

BDHS President Annual Report

Ian Mackey

I have much pleasure in presenting my sixth and final annual report of our Society. There will be changes to our office bearers at the upcoming Annual General Meeting with the compulsory retirement of myself as President, Secretary Peg Harvey and Treasurer Patricia Doris. I would like to firstly thank Peg and Patricia for the years of service in their respective positions, both essential jobs carried out with efficiency and a minimum of fuss. Also, my thanks to all the members of our Management Committee and the Berrima Museum Sub-Committee. My thanks also goes to Linda Emery, our Archivist, who is such a pivotal person in our success. Her knowledge, understanding and empathy are inspirational.

The Berrima District Museum, managed by John Schweers and supported by a band of dedicated volunteers, has had a very successful year.

One of our feature activities is the production of our monthly newsletter, dispatched each month to our local and far-flung members. Much appreciation goes to Philip Morton for his dedication in producing the newsletter for our members. We also have many individual contributors who are critical to the continued flow of material for publication. Our research team – Frank Mitchell, Carolyn Dougherty and Janet Black – continued to deal with a constant stream of requests throughout the year.

In March, Avoca Public School celebrated its 150th Anniversary and our Society set up an information table in the local hall. A range of our publications were on sale with several hundred dollars raised.

Our mid-year lunch tried a new approach where we self-catered the event at the Exeter Village Hall. It was highly successful with a decision to hold our Christmas lunch along similar lines at that location.

Our Society continues to support Anzac Day ceremonies throughout the district. Many thanks to the volunteers who laid wreaths at Mittagong, Bowral, Moss Vale, Berrima and Exeter.

This year our Family History Group has gone from strength to strength with increasing numbers and interesting discussions. Thanks to Denise Mackey for co-ordinating these meetings.

Wingecarribee Shire Council have again re-ignited the ongoing re-construction of the Mittagong Memorial Hall project. Design work has now been completed and seed funding approved by Council. A visit by local politicians and our Council Administrator affirming the project subject to the approval of government funding. When the project proceeds it will cause considerable dislocation to our Archives with us having to relocate to temporary premises during the construction period.

Museum Annual Report

John Schweers

The end of the Society's financial year provides me with the opportunity to review and report on the Berrima District Museum operated by the Society. I am pleased to report that this year has been both financially and culturally successful. The trading profit for the period to September 2023 is \$6668.44. This was generated from 1548 adults who paid the admittance fee and from donations and book sales.

Since Covid, our weekend attendances at the museum of visitors are down although visitor numbers to Berrima have grown due to events such as *Cars & Coffee* on the last Sunday of the month. Naturally these visitors are more interested in the cars and not the museum but we are countering this by offering second-hand car books and car manuals for sale during this event.

The museum volunteers derive great pride and satisfaction in giving their time to provide the support required to operate the museum. This has enabled Vanessa Dagleish, our roster organiser, to assemble the roster for each month. I thank Brian and Sylvis Carless for their great effort in maintaining the gardens and lawns around the museum.

There have been continuous inquiries from groups about visiting the museum outside of our weekly opening times. These groups help greatly to meet our overheads. The current *Gardens & Landscapes* exhibition in the Williams Gallery has been very popular with visitors, including those from Garden Clubs in and around the Southern Highlands.

This exhibition, with both digital and physical displays, was devised and installed by our member Bud Townsing and he has been updating it over the last twelve months. Visitors find it a rewarding and enjoyable experience.

Attendance figures for locals are still low and I encourage members to continue to put a visit to Berrima and the museum on their *to-do* list for themselves, family and friends.

I thank the Society's Management Committee and Museum Sub-committee and all our volunteers for their involvement and contribution this year. Their efforts are essential to the successful operation of our award-winning museum.

Archives Annual Report

Linda Emery

After another busy year, it is hard to believe that it is Annual Report time again. With the easing of Covid restrictions we are now back to normal operation, although we feel that face to face visits from the public have decreased. This is partly due to the belief of many people that research can all be done online. Researchers who come into the archives are often amazed at what they find in our files.

Accessions this year have included a number of family histories and photo collections. Member Tim McCartney found an album of photos relating to the Beer family of Bowral in an antique shop in Sydney which we are currently cataloguing. The Beer family established the first newspaper in Bowral. A recent box of photos donated by Youth off the Streets although not related to our area has proved to be very interesting. One of the volunteers at YOTS was saddened to see someone's collection of a lifetime dispersed so asked for our help to return it to a family member. The photos go back as far as the late 19th century in Winton, New Zealand and initial research shows that family members still live in the area near Invercargill. We will probably send the collection to the Local Studies Library in Winton.

Our online photo database continues to grow and is the most searched section of our website. More than 7000 images are now online and growing every week. Cataloguing is a slow and meticulous process, a lot more than just uploading images, and I thank our cataloguers who take the work so seriously and do a wonderful job.

The second volume of our street names project *What's in a Name – Moss Vale, Sutton Forest and*

Berrima, was published recently and proved to be a best-seller. The first 200 books sold out within weeks and we had to do an immediate reprint. Mittagong has also sold out and is going to reprint in the coming weeks, complete with the origins of four street names that we had previously been unable to verify. The archives research team is currently working on Bowral and Burradoo streets, a much bigger job, but we hope to have it out by the middle of next year.

The most important part of my report is to thank our team of volunteers for their work. They have all worked hard on cataloguing, indexing, research, filing and cleaning. But as well, we have had a lot of fun and friendship. Our Monday morning tea 'meeting' which started during the Covid lockdown has continued and we regularly sit down with 15 or more, including visitors, to discuss all manner of topics. However, it is a great forum to discuss any issues that may arise in the archives, as well as a way for newcomers to get to know each other. Everyone is welcome and even if you are not a volunteer, come in and say hello. But beware, being an archives volunteer is addictive, so we might hook you in!

Treasurer's Annual Report

Patricia Doris

I am pleased to present the Society's Annual Financial Statement for the year ending 30 September 2023. The Financial Statement should be available at the AGM and a copy will be sent out with the newsletter. Sincere thanks to Auditor, Ross Cowley for the Annual Financial Statement.

The Society has had a good year with income well exceeding expenditure. Our main income sources are membership fees, Museum entry fees, research fees, and sale of books and photos.

Publication Officer's Annual Report

Jenny Frost

We continue to sell our large range of publications relating to the history of the Southern Highlands with 52 titles listed on the Society's website including several new books and out-of-stock titles that have now been reprinted. This year's total annual gross revenue of \$7,838 is considerably higher than the previous year, primarily generated via our museum at Berrima, the archives at Mittagong and our website.

Destination Southern Highlands outlet at Mittagong and the Berrima Court House provide the Society with additional sales outlets for our publications, and we are most appreciative of their support.

Conservation Officer's Annual Report

Denise Mackey

Interesting, busy and rewarding with a sprinkling of challenges thrown in describes the year for the Conservation team. Constructing the four framed posters of Doctor Wise and the other Moss Vale doctors associated with our donated grandfather clock was the first task of the year. After some ups and downs our grandfather clock is now happily ticking away thanks to the patience and perseverance of clock restorer Peter Donnan.

In April the Society acquired a rare map of the Camden District dated 1866. This original map is undergoing conservation and will be stored in a suitable map drawer. A plaque for pigeon racing won by Mr W. D. Moore in 1923 was donated mid-year but required extensive cleaning and restoration. Throughout the year there were the ongoing tasks of cleaning, repair, framing, packaging, labelling and storage of photos, documents, books and newly accessioned items.

The Conservation team is also involved in the research for the latest "What's in a Name" book for Bowral streets.

After an encouraging response to our appeal for missing Highlife magazines our collection is almost complete with only two outstanding copies.

Numerous researchers visited the Conservation rooms with rate books and newspapers unavailable on Trove constituting the main requests.

It has been a pleasure to care for our many treasures and contribute to preserving our history. My thanks to the many volunteers who have generously given assistance during the year.

Librarian's Annual Report

Carolyn Dougherty

This last 12 months has been very quiet on the library front. We have had a few successful sales of surplus books during the year. There have been few donations apart from books published by the Society.

The library continues to be primarily used by our volunteer researchers and members of the Family History Group. With growing interest in this Group, hopefully so too will usage of the library, which continues to be a valuable resource for all members undertaking research and all members are reminded that they too can avail themselves of this resource.

Family History Group Annual Report

Denise Mackey

At 1 pm on the first Wednesday of each month our self-help group of eager family historians, usually numbering 15 to sometimes over 20, gather at the Archives for another stimulating Family History Group meeting.

During the year there was an array of presentations from either one of the group or an outside speaker or the format was a group discussion of a particular subject. What always followed was lively and enthusiastic exchange of ideas. Interest areas included Show and Tell of an item of a bygone era or of special significance and included an 1860 clock, a miniature WW1 tank, a sovereign holder with real sovereigns, Unusual Occupations or Occupations of Forebears and Emigration Schemes of the 19th Century. Irish Family History, Land Search, Wills and Probate, the Society's Newsletter and Writing a Biography also generated much interest and discussion.

A big Thank You is extended to all our presenters for generously stepping forward, organising your talk and sharing your knowledge and expertise.

Any member of the Society is welcome to join the informal self-help Family History Group. The first meeting for 2024 is set for Wednesday 7 February.

Significant contributions awarded

Two of our members are recipients of a Certificate of Achievement Award provided by the Royal Australian Historical Society at its 2023 Conference in Wagga.

Sylvia Carless

Sylvia joined the Society in 2006. Her original interest in joining was to research a branch of her family tree. However, she soon developed an interest in the Society's museum in Berrima and felt she could contribute by volunteering there. Sylvia has lived in the Southern Highlands all her life so has a great knowledge of the area. Her general interest in local history has grown and she often attends the monthly BDHS general meetings.

Since 2007, Sylvia has taken on the tasks of preparing the volunteer roster, training volunteers, beautifying the grounds and gardens of the museum (an arduous task during the last two droughts) and value-adding



to the museum's income by donating home-made marmalade and novelty packs for sale at the museum. Sylvia is also a member of the museum sub-committee and performs regular counter duty and cleaning during opening hours and when needed, to assist with group bookings and functions.

Sylvia has made a significant contribution to our Society over the last 17 years. Her enthusiasm, hard work, local knowledge and cheerfulness makes her both a great front woman for the Society and a person very worthy of praise and acknowledgement.

John Schweers

John joined the Society in 2010 having moved to the area from the Illawarra. His initial interest in joining was to research his family history. However before long he was attracted to Berrima village, its history and heritage and became interested in the Society's museum and its workings. He was particularly drawn to the story of German internees in Berrima during World War I which features in the museum and in the river walk that interprets much of this story. He is passionate about passing on Berrima's historical information to visitors, both young and old.

Since becoming a member, John has undertaken museum management and arranging group bookings and functions, promotions and welcoming visitors.

As Museum Manager he attends regular meetings at the archives and museum. His support of other volunteers is well received as he shows great patience in instructing new members of the team. His good sense of humour endears him to all who work with him. Above all, John's dedication is of merit. Apart from the many hours he spends every week supporting the society, he can be called on to fix or attend to any manner of problems that may arise and can be relied on to get them sorted out in a timely way. John's tireless efforts are most worthy of recognition and praise. John has made a significant contribution to our Society over the last 13 years.

Busy days at the Museum in October

On Thursday evening, 19 October, the museum hosted a function (complete with wine tasting and finger foods) for local businesses. The event *A Taste of Berrima's Treasures* was organised by John Schweers and Rosalind Dale in conjunction with the *Explore Berrima* promotional effort run by Natalie Block, Manager of the Berrima Bakehouse Motel.

Although some invitees were unable to attend, the effort established valuable new connections.

(Pictured here are John and Ros with Philip of the Old Mail Coach Inn; photo courtesy Natalie Block)



On Wednesday morning, 25 October, a group of 18 German politicians visited the museum on their way back from Canberra to Sydney and were most impressed with our WWI Internees exhibition, *Prisoners in Arcady*. The stopover was organised by Ms Hanna, Program Coordinator with the ANU National Security College, who provided us with the photo below.



That afternoon the museum hosted a keen batch of 54 children from a local home-schooling group.

On Friday afternoon of 27 October, the museum was visited by a group of 70 members of the *Australiana Fund* from all over Australia who were in Berrima that weekend for the Fund's AGM.

Organised by Sonya Abbey (seen here with John), the plan initially was for most of the group to do the Berrima River Walk and just some to come to the museum but, as the weather unexpectedly turned windy and cold (no surprise for us locals), the warm ambience of the museum proved to be the more attractive option. The *Australiana Fund* was established in 1978 as an independent collecting body following the encouragement of Mrs Tamara Fraser, wife of the then Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser. She had been greatly impressed during an official visit to Washington in 1976 by the initiative taken by Jacqueline Kennedy in 1961 to acquire American artworks for the White House.



Works of art reflecting Australia's diverse and distinctive cultural heritage were purchased and placed in the public reception areas of the official houses of the Governor General and Prime Minister. The Fund has since acquired a fine collection of glass, silver, ceramics, furniture, pictures and sculpture.

WD Moore Pigeon Racing Shield

A highly unusual timber and sterling silver shield, in excellent condition, was recently donated to the Society. It had been presented to William Moore for winning the Mildura Pigeon Race in 1923.

William David Moore was born in Bowral in 1865, very soon after the establishment of the village. His father, also William, came to Bowral with cattle from the Illawarra in 1863 and when construction of the southern rail line reached Bowral, he began work on it. William Snr purchased land in Bong Bong St, next to the Post Office and he and his wife Elizabeth built Rose Cottage where William was born.

William attended school on the Oxley Estate and after leaving school became an apprentice carpenter, working on many early buildings in Bowral, including the original Brahan Bank. In 1883, he married Maria Forsyth Johnson at St Jude's in Bowral. The couple had four children, three sons and a daughter.

From 1907, the Moores were living at Brahan Bank in Merrigang St and operating it as a guest house, although only leasing the property at that stage. In 1914 the owner, Martha, the widow of Robert Mackenzie, sold the property to Maria Moore for £1,050. William built a second storey on the house at some point after gaining title to the property.

William already owned two acres of land adjoining Brahan Bank, Lots 12 and 15 of the Shepherd Estate purchased in 1912 and Lots 13 and 18 purchased at an earlier date and on which he had built a house. With the purchase of Brahan Bank, the Moore's total landholding was four acres bounded by Merrigang, Una and Shepherd Streets.

The Moore family continued to operate the well-regarded guest house at Brahan Bank for many years. Maria died in 1933 and William exactly 10 years to the day after his wife in 1943. Their daughter Elizabeth (Beth) took over and ran the business until her death in 1952. A pleasant and genial nature endeared her to her guests, and she was known to many adults as well as children as "Aunt Beth".

William Moore was associated with the Bowral Homing Pigeon Society from the early 1920s and his son George (Sandy) was Secretary of the club. The society had been formed in 1906 and held regular local races as well as long distance races from a number of towns along the southern rail line such as Marulan, Cootamundra, Breadalbane and Binalong.

William seems to have been quite successful, winning several races with his birds and, in 1923, the shield

for winning the Mildura race and the best average velocity of birds homing for the season. William's bird flew 468 miles (753 km) from Mildura to Bowral.

Pigeon races from Mildura were held regularly with birds from clubs all over NSW and Victoria competing for the longest distance and fastest flight time. Birds were taken by train to the starting point for release.



Inscription: ARP SHIELD won by WD MOORE, winner of Mildura Race 468 miles with blue cheq Cock ARP 222250, & Best Velocity Average for Season. BOWRAL HOMING CLUB Season 1923

The sterling silver and wooden shield was donated by Mr J B Tennant, the editor of the Australia Racing Pigeon Journal and was presented to William Moore at a masquerade ball held by the Bowral Homing Pigeon Society on 22 November 1923. "The Empire Theatre, Bowral was the center of activity on Thursday night last, when a plain and fancy-dress masquerade ball, organized by the local Homing Pigeon Society, was held to suitably wind-up a successful season. The hall was prettily decorated, and the attendance number tallied 160 couples, representing many parts of the district." (From the *Southern Mail* 27.11.1923)

Subsequent history of the shield. It came into the possession of Tony Strode who had lived at Wildes Meadow before moving to Oberon. Bruce Johnson, a former neighbour, visited him there and noticed the shield which Tony intended to dump.

Bruce brought the shield back with him and passed it on to Garry Virtue, as he knew that Garry's father had been a member of the Southern Highland Pigeon Racing Club in the 1960s. Garry, a member of Moss Vale Men's Shed, mentioned the shield's existence to another member Alan Barker, who is also a BDHS member, and he offered to bring it in to the Archives to see if the Society was interested in conserving it.

Linda Emery decided it had value as an item of local historical interest and it has now been accessioned into the BDHS archive collection.

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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BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY Inc.

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Museum Sub-Committee: Sylvia Carless, Harlan & Lyn Hall, John Schweers, Bud Townsing, Harold Wall, Michele Woods