







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 586 October 2025



From the President's Desk

Whether borne by post, email or in person, thank you for the membership renewal forms raining in on our Membership Secretary, Janet Black's desk. She has left the building tired and smiling having used each form to confirm your payments and make any updates to your contact details.

It is the same Janet whose presentation will lead us through the village of Tallong in time and pictures at this month's General Meeting. See page 3.

Will that community be free of such scandal and dark deeds as Frank Mitchell shared with us in his September dip into Israel Chapman's life as a manipulator of the law in the 1820s?

Closer to our time, our museum's 50th Jubilee, with a seventies theme to bring out the nostalgia of its earliest days, is being prepared. Do you have any memorabilia from around 1976 you may lend us for an exhibition or two?

John Schweers is stepping back from his duties as Museum Manager and so we are offering an opportunity for you to practise your management skills as his successor. If you are more of a creative soul or DIY enthusiast, then our museum is looking for you to help create our next exhibitions. Ring them or our archives to shout your interest.

Well knock me down with a feather as we also need someone to succeed Patricia Doris as Society Secretary. An important post which is not nearly as time demanding as in days gone by. Maybe ease into running our Society by putting your hand up to join either our museum sub-committee or our management committee. Committees are stimulated by new blood and as Dracula said, 'Enter freely and of your own free will and leave something of the happiness you bring'.

Our AGM is next month so plenty of time to consider and decide which position of responsibility or creative opportunity suits your personality. Of course, there will be lots of friendly folk to help you settle in.

Anne Wood joined our volunteers this year as Web mistress and read what a great job she is doing, including setting us up with a new online shop.
See page 2.

On page 3 you can appreciate the activity of one of our volunteers who compiled the index of members of the Southern Highlands Tourist and Travel Association. An effective forerunner of Destination Southern Highlands.

Now in holiday mood you can appreciate the hospitality offered by the guest houses of Bundanoon in their heydays and since. Summer vacations for families, fun and friendships and all within these pages.

Stuart Handley

GENERAL MONTHLY MEETINGS 2025

OCTOBER 2025:	**Thursday 23 October at 2:00pm, Civic Centre, Moss Vale** 'Tallong through the years in pictures' presented by Janet Black
NOVEMBER 2025:	**Thursday 27 November at 2:00pm, Civic Centre, Moss Vale** BDH&FHS AGM (Annual General Meeting) plus a showing of films **AFTERNOON TEA** is served following the meeting and talk

THE Story Centre
BERRIMA DISTRICT MUSEUM

Moore Memorable Musings



TEXT SPEAK

Boy have you noticed how our language has changed since the introduction of text speak?

Today's writing looks more like a secret coded message from Admiral Yamamoto to his Japanese Fleet approaching Pearl Harbour.

The major shift has emanated from copperplate follow-the-slope-card-writing, to proper essays with emphasis on structure ie. introduction, body and conclusion. Now, by the look of it, sentence structure has gone out the window and looks like complete gobbledgook. An example of this is:

Hi Kylie, ATM I'm ATD checking for ADHD (LOL). BTW FYI & IMO AFAIK I've had it for yonks.

I'm OMW to an EMBM JSYK that I've G2G. IMU with TIME & we're still BFF. LOL Kit. Translated this reads:

Hi Kylie, at the moment I'm at the doctors checking for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (laugh out loud). By the way for your information and in my opinion as far as I know I've had it forever. I'm on my way to an early morning business meeting just so you know that I've got to go. I miss you with tears in my eyes and we're still best friends forever. Lots of love, Kit.

This is a bit OTT, however this is the sort of communication our grand-children happen to be using.

I still think of my poor troubled English teacher shuddering over my essays. His red pen underlined suspect words and my prized essay came back to me looking like some uncontrollable 2 yr old deliberately tried to ruin the page. An attachment read: "Please see me, 3/20."

After leaving out my Dad's slang and tidying up some silly comments, he finally let one piece escape into the school magazine with the necessary comment, "Moore, there's hope for you yet, 9/20." So much for decoding the Gen Z language.

With TIME I'll BRB ASAP and now I've G2G because MBICMFD (my bride is calling me for dinner.) BBFN.

Bruce Moore

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Renewals were due 1 October

A Renewal Form was provided with the September newsletter.

We are happy to receive payment by cash, cheque or credit card, OR funds can be deposited to our bank account, details of which are shown on the Renewal Form.

NOTE: If depositing funds to our bank account, please ensure that your initial and surname are used as reference and **PLEASE RETURN YOUR FILLED-IN RENEWAL FORM AND BANK RECEIPT BY MAIL OR EMAIL**, as this helps us keep track of the many payments.

NOTICE

2025 Annual General Meeting

The AGM of the BDH&FHS will be on Thursday 27 November at 2pm along with a monthly meeting, in Moss Vale Civic Centre Theatrette.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

The Society's **Family History Group** meets on the first Wednesday each month**,** at 1pm.
Convenor: Denise Mackey.

The Society's **DNA Interest Group** meets at the archives on the third Thursday each month at 1pm.
Convenor: Robyne McKinnon

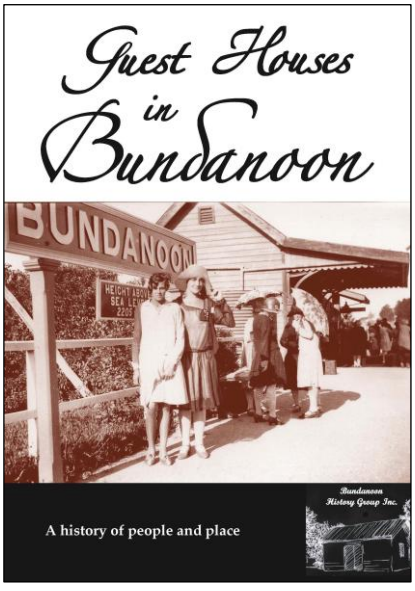
New Online Shop on website

Several months ago, the platform that hosts our website discontinued the Online Shop. As a result, research fees could not be paid via the website nor could publications be purchased.

This has now been remedied, thanks to the expertise of our Webmistress Anne Wood, with the adoption of Square Online, a robust eCommerce platform that makes purchasing easier for us and our customers.

Research fees can now be paid online and our books viewed and purchased, with details provided of the fifty-two publications that we have available.

Stock of one of the books we sell is running low, but we have secured a supply, so we feature it in this issue. (See below and pages 5 to 7).





One of Bundanoon's early guest houses was *Mountain Home*, built in 1884 near station. *Photo: Bundanoon History Group*

October meeting: a talk on Tallong

Thursday 23 October 2:00pm, Moss Vale Civic Centre

TALLONG THROUGH THE YEARS IN PICTURES

A presentation by Janet Black



Janet is currently our Society's Membership Secretary and a member of the Research Team.

In a previous life, she worked as a librarian before moving to a property outside Tallong, with her husband, on retirement in 2009.

She became a member of the Society and of the Tallong Community Focus Group, undertaking the research (and writing several chapters) for *Tallong: A Heritage,* published in late 2010.

Janet is currently writing an update on this first history of Tallong to be titled (tentatively) *Tallong People: A History* and it is planned that this book will be ready for publication by the end of the year.

As all historians will be aware, one of the features of publishing any local history is that old residents come out of the woodwork with fascinating stories to tell and photographs that the authors could only dream of. This new book is an attempt to flesh out (as it were) the original opus.

In the early days of European settlement, the area was called Barber's Creek and the village itself only developed after the extension of the Great Southern Railway to Marulan in 1868, as the creek provided a ready source of water for the steam locomotives. It was not until 1905, because of agitation from residents, that the name of the railway station, and hence that of the small settlement, was changed from Barber's Creek to Tallong.

In 1906, the land around Moss Vale (including Tallong) was incorporated into Wingecarribee Shire which had its headquarters at Moss Vale. By 1954, Tallong ratepayers were petitioning to 'secede' from Wingecarribee Shire and become part of Mulwaree Shire which was later amalgamated with Goulburn to form the current Goulburn Mulwaree Shire.

Janet's talk will cover areas both old and new and include updates that have come to light since 2010.

New database now on our website

In our June newsletter some brief information was provided about the indexes and databases of local history that are available on our Society's website in word-searchable PDF format. These research tools, compiled by our volunteers, are for members and for anyone with an internet connection. One just needs to click on the ***Research Databases*** tab to see a list of the databases, each of which has its own page – click on the tab to go to the relevant index.

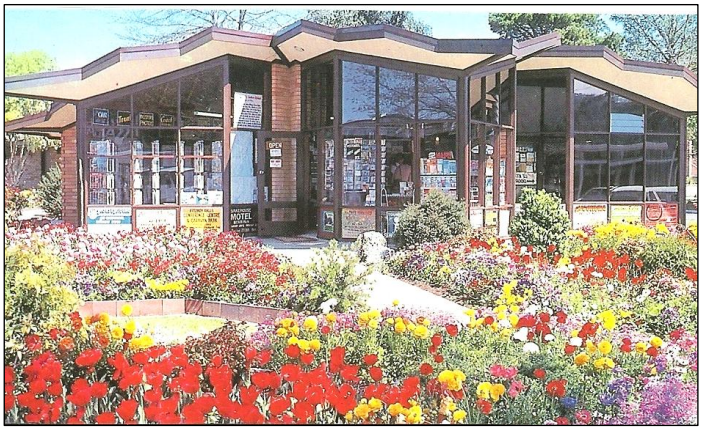
A sixth database has just recently been added to the current five that have been available for some time.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS TOURIST AND TRAVEL ASSOCIATION – INDEX OF MEMBERS

The three local councils in the area, Mittagong and Wingecarribee Shires and Bowral Municipal Council established the Southern Highlands Tourist & Travel Association in 1963 to promote tourism in the area.

A Committee was formed to operate the organisation made up of two Council delegates and six industry representatives. They offered a full range of services to visiting tourists, as well as an agency to arrange Australian and overseas travel for local people.

It was funded jointly by the councils involved, NSW Government grants and memberships paid by local businesses and individuals.



In 1969, a purpose-built Visitor Information Centre was opened in Winifred West Park, Mittagong, a distinctive design in the shape of an autumn leaf, with floor to ceiling windows, largely funded by the operations of the association. The builders were Cornwell and Eccleston.

This index, compiled by our member Ros Dale, lists the members who supported the SHTTA up to its demise in 1988, when its operation passed to Wingecarribee Shire Council. The index provides a valuable record of people and businesses in the area, many of which no longer exist.

Community Heritage Study 2021-23

A recap taken from information on WSC website: Heritage and history experts in the community in partnership with Council prepared a Community Heritage Study that examined the proposed heritage items that were deferred by Council in 2012 plus a significant number of newly identified potential heritage items and heritage conservation areas. The draft study was subject to affected owner and community engagement and public exhibition in the latter half of 2023 and was then peer reviewed by an independent heritage consultant engaged by Council. The Community Heritage Study 2021-23 was adopted by Council on 7 August 2024 following endorsement by the Local Planning Panel.

A Planning Proposal to amend the list of heritage items and areas to include the recommended items and areas from the adopted Community Heritage Study, has been prepared and is awaiting a Gateway Determination by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure. For further details go to https://participatewingecarribee.wsc.nsw.gov.au/community-heritage-study.

Our member Dennis McManus has provided the following update on the Community Heritage Study.

On the 28 June 2025 the Department of Planning gave approval to a final exhibition of a Planning Proposal to implement the listing of 412 items and six conservation areas, being recommended items in the Heritage Study. This third exhibition's importance is that it will give immediate protection to these items.

It is very important that as many people as possible support this Planning Proposal to see final gazettal of the items and areas happen. The three suggested points to include in your submission are as follows:

1. **Support the recommended listings in the exhibition.**
2. **Support the earliest possible heritage processing of 15 deferred items, 9 deferred conservation areas and 20 newly nominated items.**
3. **Call for the early re-establishment of a positive heritage management in the Shire – currently there is no heritage advisory committee, no dedicated heritage officer or free heritage advisory service to assist owners and DA applicants, no heritage local grants program and no heritage local awards program.**

It is understood that the likely 30-day internet exhibition should take place in early October and typically will be on council's internet site with the ability of all residents to comment on the internet site or by emailing council mail@wsc.nsw.gov.au If you wish further information, please contact the Society or dennis.mcmanus3@bigpond.com

Bundanoon Guest Houses: a history

A history of Bundanoon Gullies Recreation Reserve, an area of rugged bushland with waterfalls, leafy bowers and spectacular views, was provided in our July newsletter, and followed in August with a history of Morton National Park, which from 1970 included the Gullies, and is now the sixth largest Park in NSW.

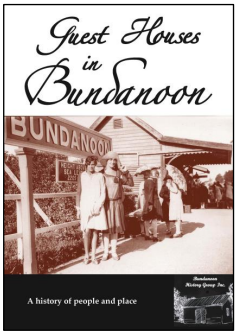
Once the Great Southern Railway opened through the district in 1868, the small village of Bundanoon, being an easy steam-train ride from Sydney, soon became a favourite destination for tourists and holidaymakers, its main attraction being the nearby Gullies Reserve. Local residents made the visitors welcome, providing full holiday accommodation, a range of healthy activities and sightseeing ventures.

Until the 1950s, innumerable holidays, honeymoons and relaxed weekends were spent at the numerous guest houses that opened at Bundanoon some of which eventually accommodated up to 130 guests.

Mittagong, Bowral and Moss Vale, also located on the southern railway, became holiday destinations as well, and offered a variety of attractions and outings. The spectacular natural scenery, however, readily accessible from the village of Bundanoon, was unique in the district and excited much interest in taking bush walks, horse-riding and going on picnics.

In 1989, Bundanoon History Group (BHG) published a history booklet about the unique guest house period and a 2nd edition in 1998 proved very popular with people who could recall spending happy holidays at the guest houses, and also with family historians researching where their ancestors stayed or worked.

By 2012 new information and images had become available including from former guests and owners' families, and from improved historical sources accessible on the internet. In order to incorporate these, a group of BHG volunteers spent considerable time updating guest house information to produce a revised and enlarged 3rd edition. This booklet, *Guest Houses in Bundanoon: a history of people and place* was launched in 2012. It also proved to be very popular and copies sold out by 2017, so a revised and enlarged version was reprinted. A limited stock of this is still available for purchase.



The booklet contains individual entries on 96 guest houses along with an overview of the entire period including descriptions of the copious fresh farm food

provided, of outings and night activities, in a time before the advent of television and widespread family car ownership. Some detailed extracts from the booklet follow here.

The earliest mention of a guest house in Bundanoon was in a *Sydney Morning Herald* 'board and lodging' column of October 1881. *Fernwood Farm* was still listed under Jordan's Crossing, even though the village had officially become Bundanoon in April of that year. The notice stated that "The proprietor having leased the premises from Mr Osborn, is prepared to receive visitors. Bath, piano. Buggy hire."

In 1884 a licensed hotel offering accommodation was opened and several purpose-built guest houses were being constructed. As well, many residents expanded their homes or farmhouses to take in paying guests during the holiday season. Guests arriving by train required transport, giving rise to livery stables, hire buggies and bicycles, and eventually tourist buses.

By February 1890 six good boarding establishments had been erected for visitors. Among the earliest guesthouses were *Mountain Home* (photo on page 2) in Railway Avenue and owned by Henry and Jane Bearman, Thomas Gambell's *Springvale* in Gullies Road, and *Summer Hill* in the vicinity of William and Broughton Sts run by Walter Grice.

During the 1894-1895 season, 800 tourists visited Bundanoon and more applications were refused due to a lack of accommodation.

At Easter 1903 the guest houses were taxed to the utmost with about 300 visitors. Considering the 1903 Bundanoon Electoral Roll had 298 enrolled voters, it seems the population doubled during Easter. In 1925 a building boom was reported when new houses were being constructed and additions made to various guest houses, as the tourist industry had become a major economic generator of growth in the village. Electric light was switched on to Bundanoon on 28 August 1929, a very welcome improvement that was often mentioned in the guest house advertisements of the time. The popularity of the village as a holiday destination peaked in the 1930s. Extra train services had to be scheduled to bring the hordes of people from Sydney who had bookings for the guest houses in the peak summer season.

Guesthouse operators, accommodation, activities

Members of an extended family were often required to operate busy guest houses. The Grice and Gambell families were early examples of this. Often daughters were trained by the age of 13 to carry out daily duties and in many instances older, unmarried daughters were required to run the establishment. It is noted, however, that men of the family were often named as the proprietors when it was, in almost all cases, the wife and the daughters who did all the work.

Considerable effort was required in the kitchens with huge fuel stoves requiring constant attention, and there was little in the way of refrigeration or other conveniences. The constant demand of getting the laundry done would have meant regular washing days with loads of sheets, towels and tablecloths to be dried and ironed. Eventually a steam laundry in the village lessened the burden for the guest houses.

Accommodation was reasonably cheap, the reception warm and friendly, and the food good. Meals were eagerly anticipated. 'Full board' at the guest houses started with early morning tea (if paid for ahead), followed by breakfast with porridge or cereals and a hot dish with plenty of toast and homemade butter. Morning tea was served at 11am with scones, homemade jams and jellies. Lunch was often a three-course meal followed by afternoon tea at 4pm with homemade cake and biscuits, then the evening meal, followed by supper of cocoa and biscuits, possibly more if guests went out to a night spot.

Fresh milk, butter and cream from their 'own cows' (a regular feature in guest house advertisements) were used plentifully as were eggs collected from the henhouse or obtained from nearby poultry farms. Locally grown vegetables were standard in all guest houses and there was a seasonal supply of freshly picked apples, peaches and pears from nearby orchards plus 'wild' food, including blackberries, mushrooms and walnuts, when available. The guest houses boasted spring water and, in colder weather, roaring open log fires.



Bundanoon was mostly a summer retreat, although Easter became a particularly popular holiday period. At Christmas time, the guesthouses, usually at full capacity, offered special seasonal dinners and events.

Teenage groups were often strictly segregated. At *Rosnel*, one of the largest guest houses from 1923, the night-time rule was: boys to one side of the house and girls to the other, and no meeting in the

middle. Cheaper rates, however, were offered to boys who slept on the verandah with their suitcases under their beds, and who changed in the showers.

The Bundanoon guest houses were a favourite destination for honeymoon couples, who frequented the village from around 1910. This trend continued until the 1960s. Often a group of people came up together and mingled with other similar groups of friends from the city who only ever met up when in Bundanoon. New friendships were formed and often this led to a couple meeting and then marrying. They then came back for their honeymoon.

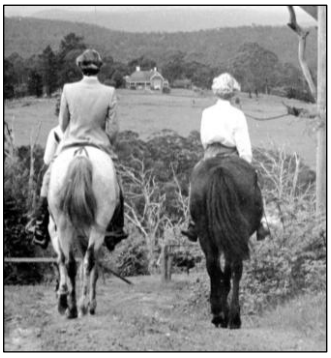
There were plenty of outdoor activities for guests. Bushwalking in the Gullies was a popular activity for those seeking strenuous exercise and adventure. As well, tennis, golf, horseback riding, archery, fishing and day trips by horse-drawn sulky were available.



Going out on a picnic was a regular feature of a stay in Bundanoon. When the earliest visitors embarked on a picnic in the Gullies they would either walk or be taken in a horse-drawn buggy or 'sociable'. It was usual afterwards to walk home up Constitution Hill as it made the load easier for the horses and was "good for one's constitution". Of the many tracks in the Gullies that led to spectacular lookouts and fern bowers, Fairy Bower was a great favourite as it included a beautiful waterfall and rock pools. Bonnie View, Echo Point and the Amphitheatre were other popular spots that rewarded the effort of trekking, cycling or horse-riding to reach them.

A night time visit by lantern light to Glow Worm Glen was the highlight of everyone's stay in Bundanoon. One of only two major glow worm colonies in NSW set in natural surroundings, it is located in walking distance of the village and only accessed by a narrow bush track leading to a small sandstone grotto with a waterfall at one end and creek flowing through. As the visual wonder of the glow worms only occurs after dark, it must have been quite an experience for visitors to prepare the hurricane lamps for the trek to the Glen and then make their way in the darkness back to the lights of the village.

Cycling was another popular recreational activity for young and old. Bicycles were available for hire at the guest houses and several specialist businesses.



Horseback riding was equally enticing, especially to young visitors. In holiday seasons during the 1930s an average of more than a thousand riders a week enjoyed the sport. Four livery stables ran more than one hundred horses for hire.



Golf became a popular pastime at Bundanoon in the 1930s. Four nine-hole golf courses were available including at *Rosnel*, *Park Lodge* and *Lynbrook* guest houses, and one eighteen-hole course, Terry's Royal Golf Links, opened in 1933.

For male visitors other activities included shooting parties organised to hunt kangaroos, rabbits and foxes. For city children there was a taste of country life, as many guest houses kept a cow and ran fowls.

A game of cards or a ping pong tournament would follow the evening meal or maybe a sing song at the piano, or a variety of parlour games. On at least one evening a week there was a dance in many of the guest houses, attended also by the local young people to make up the numbers, followed by supper. Some of the guest houses had sprung-floor ballrooms with music provided by a pianist or a string orchestra.

The local picture show was an attraction on three nights a week, followed by supper at local night spots such as the Bon Ton Cafe, Jane Brown Coffee Inn or The French Inn. There were at least two public billiard saloons available to guests, and some guest houses had their own billiard or snooker tables.

The Knoll, *Rosnel* and *Devonleigh* all employed in-house entertainers to act as master of ceremonies, calling dances and organizing parlour games and sing-a-longs. There were also various card games, housie and dressing-up events.

Guest house proprietors emphasised the hygienic aspects of their hospitality. Spring water, plunge and shower baths, septic toilets and eventually even indoor toilets featured in their advertisements. Some boasted a wood-fired chip heater that provided continuous hot water for the bath.

World War II and the end of an era

During World War II, as ever greater numbers of city people sought to escape to the country, the guest houses also became places of refuge. *Greenways* guest house was taken over by pupils and staff from a Sydney private school. Also, German and European refugees living in Sydney came to Bundanoon, as did families evacuated from Japanese-held territories.

In those years, guest house operators faced several new difficulties including an unpredictable flow of visitors, due to people being forced to snatch a few days leave when they could. There were shortages of food, as local produce went to the armed forces, and obtaining and keeping staff became difficult as well.

Once World War II ended, the hey-day of the guest houses in Bundanoon was over. By the late 1940s many of the buildings were in need of refurbishment. As well, a trend to self-contained accommodation had begun and some guest houses were turned into flats for long-term renters or short-term holidays.

Some of the larger establishments did invest in the future and were able to struggle on until the 1980s but visitor numbers kept declining due to widespread private motor vehicle ownership and the increasing preference of holidaymakers for new style drive-in motels or caravan parks that were more convenient.

Several of the old guest houses have since then been remodelled and upgraded for a new purpose or new clientele, including these establishments:



The Knoll, a grand residence featuring panoramic views over the Gullies was built in 1892 by early settlers George & Dinah Osborn. They opened it to guests from the early 1900s until 1925. It changed hands numerous times over subsequent years and even housed Dutch internees at the end of WWII.

In the 1980s, a fitness centre Solar Plexus purchased the grounds to open ***Solar Springs Health Retreat***, which operated for 35 years. The property, restored and renovated, is now ***Osborn House***, a 5-star luxury, 27-room, boutique hotel named after its founders.



Lynbrook Guest House was purpose-built in 1903 by Joseph and Annie Grice and, updated in the 1930s, continued as a guest house until the 1960s. The Youth Hostel Association acquired the property in 1971 and it served as a very popular youth hostel until 2017 when bought and restored as **Highball House**, now providing stylish accommodation.



Fernfield in Ellsmore Road advertised from 1882 as a guest house. It was rebuilt by William Grice in 1898 and by 1913 had 15 guest rooms. It had numerous owners and operators, being renamed *Killarney* in the 1930s with a second storey added. In the 1980s it included a caravan park and camping ground.

The property is now owned by the **Quest for Life Foundation** which offers accommodation for the wellness courses that it runs, so most likely the property could hold the title of being the oldest, continuously operating guest house in Bundanoon.



Rosnel was built in 1923 by Charles & Nellie Ross and had a ballroom. At its zenith it could take 100 guests. The photo shows youngsters at *Rosnel* about to go horse riding in the 1930s; at the back is Betty Wood, aged 13, mother of our member Geoff Wood. *Rosnel* is now a caring home for people with disabilities.

Compiled by P Morton; photos BHG and BDHS collections

Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc

PO Box 188 Moss Vale NSW 2577 Telephone (02) 4872 2169

email: bdhsarchives@gmail.com web: www.berrimadistricthistoricalsociety.org.au

ARCHIVES: Wingecarribee Shire Council, Civic Centre 68 Elizabeth Street Moss Vale

OPEN: Mondays, Tuesdays 10am-4pm and Saturdays 10am-1pm. Closed Public Holidays.
Library collection contains reference books, journals and a general collection.

MUSEUM: Marketplace, 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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