



The Berry & District Historical Society Inc

www.berryhistory.org.au

email: berrymuseum@bigpond.com

The Shoalhaven Chronograph with Berry Newsletter

November- December 2020

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Dates for your Diary

Thursday 17 December 5.30pm - 7.30pm

Christmas Drinks, for Members and partners, will be held in the rear lawn. Entrance will be via Side Gate, near ramp, and please bring a chair, BYO drink and food. RSVP: berrymuseum@bigpond.com. for Covid 19 tracing purposes. We will have social distancing protocols in place, taking every effort, to ensure your protection.

Annual General Meeting

The Berry & District Historical Society Annual General Meeting was held on 22 October at 2pm in the Uniting Church Hall.

Elections were held for committee members and office holders. The results are:

President – Ros Pollard

Vice President – Sue Davidson

Treasurer - Hilary Brickhill

Secretary - Gail Paton

Committee Members:

Nancy Bevan

Janet Hanson

Margaret Cullity

Brad Sewell

Peter Knevitt



Members of the Committee L to R.

Peter Knevitt, Janet Hanson, Sue Davidson,
Ros Pollard, Hilary Brickhill, Margaret Cullity,
Gail Paton

Several of the Committee Members provided a short memoir of their vivacity.



I am Ros Pollard. I was born and grew up in the Wollongong northern suburbs. Left home at 17 years of age to train as a nurse at Bulli Hospital. Did Midwifery at Crown Street Women's Hospital, met a sailor, married him and came to the Shoalhaven. In 1979 we moved to Woodhill and have been here ever since apart from a few postings but always returned to this beautiful area. In 2010 I joined the museum and I love it



Sue Davidson

I hail from England originally, but have lived in Australia since 1979, and moved to Berry from Sydney after retirement and overseas travel in 2017.

I'm enjoying being a part of the Berry Museum - especially currently being involved in the Linen Room curating team.



Gail Paton

Retired solicitor. Joined the Society in 2011 and became a volunteer on the roster with mentoring by Bev Stevens and Dallas Rogers. Love the Berry rural landscape, heritage and township of Berry."



Hilary Brickhill

I have lived in the Berry and Brogers Creek area since 1972 except for five years overseas and teaching in Charters Towers. I was a high school teacher until retirement in 2012. In 1998 I began studying for a Masters in Accountancy, but with a heavy school workload and many sporting events I took out a Certificate in Financial Management to concentrate on work and sport (first Tae Kwon Do and then Dragonboating which I still take part in today). This leaves just about time to be Treasurer of The Berry & District Historical Society

Margaret Cullity

We have lived in Berry since 2012, having moved from Sydney once we retired, after many years in the IT industry.

I am excited about being involved with the Berry & District Historical Society and hope to get more involved with the technology side of things as well as the general running of the Museum.



Peter Knevitt: I moved to Berry 25 years ago, after spending my working life in Television, as a Cameraman, Technical Director and Lighting Director. I have been a member of the Historical Society for 18 years and have worked with a vast cross-section of people, most of whom, have worked to make the Museum *GREAT*.



Nancy Bevan: I was born in Berry, as was my Father, Alex Morrissey. My Irish Grandmother, Mary Lyons, came from County Cork to live with an aunt in Warrnambool, Vic. Her husband to be, Matthew Morrissey, was born to Irish parents at Emu Flat, near Warrnambool.

Matthew was the Engineer at the newly established Berry Central Creamery when he and Mary were married in 1898. They raised their family of eight children in their home in Princess Street. My Mother, Rene Morschel, was born at Meroo Meadow. Her Mother, Frances Priscilla Purdie, was born at Jaspers Brush, the granddaughter of migrants who came from Scotland in 1841.

Her Father, John Morschel, was the first of his German parents' children to be born in Australia. The family was employed on the De Mestre Estate at Terara.

President, Chris Currey's, Annual Report:

This Annual Report will be much shorter than those presented to previous AGMs. This is because 2020 has been an exceptional year because of the COVID 19 pandemic. The Berry Museum has been closed since March and the Committee has met on only five occasions since the last AGM in November of 2019. Nevertheless the Society has made some significant achievements and faced some challenges. So this report will mostly be a list of those achievements and challenges.

Achievements

Capital improvements

Thanks to Keith Houston repairs to the garage have been completed so that it is now a viable and safe storage area. The floor has been replaced and interior lining of the walls has been done and locks installed. Work is also being done to pave the area outside the double doors. Kitchen cupboard doors have been replaced by glass doors, so they are more display friendly.

Key storage has been reorganised so that keys are now rationally organised and thus easier to locate and more secure.

Improvement and addition of safety shields in linen room to protect items from theft.

Ongoing maintenance and improvement to the garden has occurred.

After Identification of leaks to guttering on main building and flood boat shelter, Council has repaired these leaks.

Collection management

Completion of the mammoth task of archiving the family history files making a great difference to members when searching for information.

The Books and Folders in the Library have been sorted and organised by a keen team headed by Margaret Ogle with the help of Robin Houston and Sandra Berner.

An application for a small grant for \$2000 has been made to purchase a camera and tripod for the museum to Digitise some important items in our collection. We have decided to start with the Linen Room as we have some very good items of 19th Century Female clothing as well as a beautiful Child's embroidered dress and jacket, bequeathed by Daphne Keevers. We would eventually like to have Mrs. Wilson's dress and the child's dress included on the Australian Dress Register. The other items in this collection are being carefully maintained.

This will be my last report as President. My tenure expired a few years ago so it is now time for another member to take over. I will not serve on the Committee as I now must relocate to Sydney. I will remain as a paidup member though and hopefully as a frequent visitor.

It has been a great pleasure working with various committees over the past twelve years and of course with members of the Society in general. The Berry & District Historical Society is a model volunteer organisation and much has been achieved by our members in the years I have been associated with it and of course in the years before that. There is still much to do but the energy and commitment of you all will ensure that progress will continue.

Chris Currey

Copies of our Constitution and our Strategic Plan can be found on our website by clicking:

berryhistory.org.au > About the Museum > Documents

Two members of the Historical Society have been awarded Life Membership

Margaret Stephens came to Berry with her husband from The Shire 20 years ago. Soon after she arrived in town she noticed a call for help from the museum for a suitable person to help with the Linen Room in the Museum. She was/is a member of the Embroidery Guild and the Lace Guild and at that time Margaret was travelling to the Powerhouse Museum every Saturday morning to volunteer as a conservator of their endangered lace collection. At the time of the call for help Noel Windsor was the President of the Museum Committee and wanting to make sure that the person who was volunteering for our linen room was suitably qualified, he called Margaret in for an interview. The rest is history Margaret was accepted and for 20 years she has cared for some very precious items.

Margaret has been dedicated to her field of expertise and very willing to impart her profound knowledge to interested volunteers when asked. Her records of the contents in the linen room collection are exemplary, we have been lucky to have her in this role. Margaret is the reason that we have such a beautiful collection in good condition.

Margaret Ogle has been a member of the Berry and District Historical Society for 12 years and during this time she has been very active in many areas of the Museum.

1. Margaret searches for Relevant books about Local history and the wider area of the Shoalhaven, she makes sure that they are kept in good condition and also does a regular stocktake each 3 months. When you consider the number of books which are usually on the shelves this is no easy feat.
2. Organising the Family files at very short notice, The Men's Shed people turned up with shelves that had been ordered and they were to go into the vault, the family files were in individual files and sometimes they would be put in the wrong drawer. The current system is just wonderful, the old folders have gone and the new well marked file boxes have magically appeared, it only took Margaret and her team a few months to achieve this miracle.
3. In the meantime the outside storage room needed a little bit of organising Margaret stepped up to work with Brad to sort this room out. It is ongoing.
4. Any Social event , Margaret is there helping with the catering. Taking table cloths and tea towels home to be laundered and clearing up.
5. Margaret organises the equipment required to be taken to the Showground for the Annual show, she assists in setting up and closing down and returning the equipment after the show. She also does the Show roster to make sure the site is manned or should that be womanned.
6. If anyone can't make their shift on the Museum Roster Margaret is the go to girl,

Margot Jolly, from Museum Consulting for the remote and regional sector, visited the Museum on 24th September, and reported as follows:

"A full day of working with a great group of volunteers from the Berry Museum. Due to COVID -19 the museum has been closed. This has given the museum the opportunity to look at displays critically. One room that is usually used for temporary exhibitions has become a good workspace allowing us to spread out – a worktable large enough to unpack and look at a group of objects, photograph place move around. While working we were able to discuss issues including repurposing cardboard boxes into acid free storage. Folding large textile pieces into smaller boxes without causing damage to weakened threads. Sandra Berner has researched washing fragile textiles for museums and was able to pass on the knowledge."

"Old Section of the Berry General Cemetery"

Janet Fingleton and Catherine Barlow, two members of the Berry & District Historical Society, have been working on a Conservation Management Plan of the Old Section of the Berry General Cemetery. The Old Section is in a poor state of neglect with nine gravesites impacted by trees, in particular large camphor laurel and gum trees. This cemetery is locally significant for historical, genealogical, archaeological and scientific significance. There are many pioneering names associated with the cemetery – Boyds, Croziers, Agars, Strongs – to name a few. If you are related to anyone in the Old Section or are interested, there appears to be support to form a Friends of the Berry Cemetery group. This group would aim to preserve and protect the historic section of the cemetery through efforts to keep the gravesites clear of weeds, seedlings and branches and by holding Conservation Workshops led by an expert stonemason. If you would be interested in coming to a meeting to form a friends group please

email the friendsofberrycemetery@yahoo.com

The Berry Museum has a publication for sale relating to the history of the Cemetery by June Robson, who did the ground-work for the Conservation Management Plan, titled "Grave Misconceptions A History of the Cemetery in the Country Town of Berry, New South Wales, 2019." \$20.00

In addition the following publications about the Cemetery are available for sale :

1. 100 Lives of Berry compiled by Janet Fingleton, Anita Chalmers, Nancy Bevan, 2012. \$15.00
2. 100 Lives of The Berry Region compiled by Janet Fingleton, 2014. \$15.00

If you would like to purchase any of these books please email berrymuseum@bigpond.com and Margaret Ogle will arrange the purchase for you.

Mention should also be made of Wendy Kuzela, who did a monumental amount of work on the Berry Cemetery (and other cemeteries in the Shoalhaven) and whose volumes are held in the Berry Museum library, but are not for sale. The Berry General Cemetery, circa 1865, vol.1, Book 1 & 2, vol.2, Book 3, Published by the Shoalhaven Family History.

INFLUENZA IN SOUTH AMERICA.

Nowra Leader 25 Apr 1919

WHAT THE REAL THING IS LIKE.

Through the courtesy of Mr. A. Roper, we are enabled to publish the following extracts from a letter lately received by him from a correspondent in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, South America. It conveys an appallingly vivid idea of what the influenza epidemic is like when it gets a firm footing in a community: —

" Dear Mr. Roper — I am sorry I have not been able to answer' your last two letters and I am sure you will excuse me when you hear the reason of my delay. In October last, we were visited by a very bad epidemic called here the " Influenza Hespahhola" but I see in Europe it is called the " **Spanish** Flu." It was very bad indeed in Rio and Sau Paulo; thousands and thousands dying daily. The poor creatures fell down sick in the streets — some dying so.

Everyone was taken ill more or less. "At its worst the shops were shut; and for several days we could get no bread, meat, or milk. The city was deserted, as if all were dead. The doctors fell ill one after the other and many died as well. Food was very hard to get. Here at the college I had 92 boys down sick. I could get no one to help me. All my servants fell sick except the second cook, a washer up of china and two waiters, the rest were in bed and could not move. The school doctors one after the other fell sick and I had to be doctor as well as nurse for days together. I could not go to bed for three nights as some of the cases were rather complicated. The greatest number I had in bed at once was 67 — rather a big lot. Really I cannot tell you how I managed to get through. Happily, I did 'not lose' one boy. As soon as I finished with my last case, I was sent to our other college in Elío to nurse one of the masters who had had a relapse- Ami; poor fellow, when I arrived, I found him dying. He only lived an hour and a quarter after my arrival; but he knew and tried hard to speak. I stayed and prepared him for burial which most fortunately, we were able to get to take place the next day. Here in Brazil bodies are by the law ordered to be buried within 21- hours of death as the climate is too warm for them to remain longer. I say fortunately, because it has been awful work to get the dead buried at all these days. There was no one to dig the graves, no-one to make the coffins and no one to carry the dead or to drive the hearses. In some cases the dead were lying in the houses for five or six days, and at last (owing to the awful stench) had to be put into the streets until they could be taken away. The Government took gangs of prisoners from the gaols to help dig the graves — or rather trenches."

Any Ideas, suggestions or information for the Chronograph please contact Peter Knevitt, dunhevet@gmail.com

