



Berry and District Historical Society Inc

Chronograph

February-March 2021 EDITION

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Date for your Diary:

Thursday 4th March 10.30am.

A morning tea be held in the gardens of the Museum so members can catch up, exchange news and the Committee can update members on proposals, plans, ideas etc. it would be very informal, BYO morning tea and a chair.

MEMORIES OF BERRY WW2

Margaret Dunn (nee Holland)



When war broke out in 1939, I was living at home with my parents, Jessie and Bruce Holland, at *Dundee*, Victoria Street, Berry. I had left school in the March when I turned 14 years of age and was employed by Claude James as a shop assistant in his general store in Queen Street. I received 10 shillings per week. We worked late Friday night, and half day on Saturday. Other girls employed in the shop were Marcia Conway, the bookkeeper, who had an open office in a section of the shop, Jean Bates and Alma Ross Kelly.

When Claude James enlisted in the Army in August 1941, Marcia seemed to take control of the business. Due to the boys being in essential services I commenced delivering the orders. I rode a tricycle with a big box attached to the front of it around the streets of Berry. It held bags of corn, wheat, bacon sides and groceries. I would ride quite a distance on this bike but hated the uphill ride to Host's farm over the bridge.

Photograph of Margaret Holland around 1943
Robyn Florence

My mother was friends with Mrs. Pitt, who lived on the Princes Highway. Her sister-in-law, Mrs Langley, and her sons Colin and John, who were living in Hong Kong were being evacuated to Australia and asked my mother if she would take in a family.

In October 1940 the Jordan family came into our lives. Mrs. Jordan and her four boys, David, Donald, Robin and baby Roger lived with us until July 1945, when they returned home to England. My daughter Robyn was named after Robin Jordan.

During this time dance parties were held in the Berry School of Arts to raise money for Patriotic Funds, Red Cross Society etc. It was usual for card games to be played in the front rooms, in conjunction with the dances. I met many young American servicemen, Royal Air Force pilots and English sailors from the Navy base at Nowra. It was a wonderful time. At these dances I was always chaperoned. My mother would play cards in the front rooms of the School of Arts and afterwards sit in the hall and watched the dancing. I had a wonderful time, the music was wonderful, the dance floor was excellent, and I met some wonderful people.

Around this time Jean Bates was travelling to Sydney to meet her boyfriend, who was on leave from the Army. He was bringing along a friend and invited me to go with her. We stayed at the Catholic Women's Hostel. After meeting up with the boys we went to Cahill's Restaurant and after dinner my new friend Alic walked me home.

A few weeks later I received a letter addressed to Miss Margaret c/- Claude James, Berry. This friendship blossomed and we wrote regularly to each other and eventually he would come to Berry on leave from the Army. By coincidence, Alic met two Berry men in the Army; Keith Miller was in the same unit while Captain Claude James was his superior officer.

In October 1943 I began working at the Berry Clothing Factory. There were about 20 girls employed in the business. We made lingerie and other garments. I was sent to Sydney for training. I loved the job. I learnt so much about garment construction (sleeves and seams and hems) which led to my love for sewing in later life.

The Berry Clothing Factory was housed in premises for years known as "Cheg's" Building, in Queen Street, and was owned by James Wilson. The factory was established by Messrs Lance Raymond Pty. Ltd, and employed girls and women engaged in making Ladies' underwear and night attire. The factory was officially opened on Thursday 20th July 1944 by the Hon. Hamilton Knight, M.L.A. Minister for Labor and Industry and Social Welfare.

Mrs L.A. Horwood was in charge of the factory and spoke highly of the work the girls were doing. *They are all novices of course, but they are proving very adept at the work and are anxious to give of their best and to learn to give the fullest satisfaction to the company. They work 44 hours a week, with no Saturday work, and had morning and afternoon tea breaks. The machines are worked by electricity. The work done here is first-class, and the girls are doing a marvelous job.*

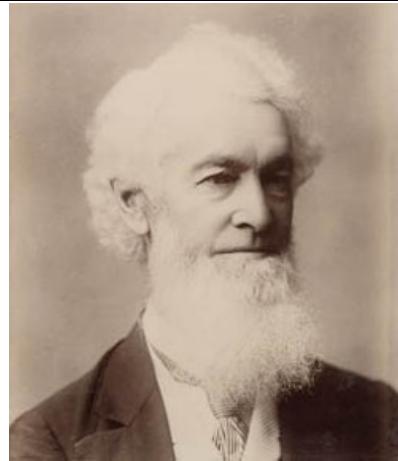
Mrs Horwood left the factory in August 1944 to return Sydney as her husband had been discharged from the services and her replacement was Mrs A. Williams.ⁱ In November 1944 Margaret Holland, Joyce Ingold and Valda Couzens were sent to Sydney to train as house models.ⁱⁱ

In October 1945 the love of my life was repatriated from Army service and some months later he moved to Berry and worked for Jim Ebner in his sawmill in Victoria Street. When I turned 21 in March 1946, I became engaged to Alic Dunn and we were married at the Berry Methodist Church on 15th June 1946 and the bells at the church rang out for the first time.

Robyn Florance

ⁱ The South Coast Register Thursday 27th July 1944

ⁱⁱ The South Coast Register Thursday 10th August 1944



WHO WAS JOHN HAY AND WHY SHOULD BERRY REMEMBER HIM?

BY
JUNE ROBSON

If you are in Berry and look to the escarpment in the north, there is an eminence you will find on the map labelled Mount Hay. If you visit the showground in the north eastern corner close to the children's playground there is a white memorial to Sir John Hay. When you are next in the museum, study the photograph of him with the neat Edwardian beard and ask what kind of man was he? And why should he have been so commemorated?

According to a letter in the Kiama newspaper in the early 1900's, which unpleasantly criticised him, he was a man of "savoir faire" and tact, with an agreeable personality which enabled him to mix socially with the politicians of the day. Mr Maiden, the director of the Sydney Botanical gardens said he was a quiet unassuming gentleman with a great interest in plants and gardening. He had supplied plants to him from Coolangatta and provided specimens of ferns and rain forest plants which were used in the Franco-British exhibition held in England in 1908. John Hay was also responsible for planting many of Berry's heritage listed trees: by definition trees that are more than 100 years old. The large Southern Live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*) tree in the car park near the nursery was one of six ornamental trees he donated to the Berry School of Arts in 1891. In 1896 he made considerable improvements to the showground and planted many of the old trees. An article in the Town and Country Journal of 1903 stated that John Hay had the best-appointed showground in the country.

John Hay was born at Coolangatta in 1840 to Scottish parents, David and Jane Hay. His parents came from Leuchars in Fifeshire to Australia in 1839 and went to Coolangatta seeking work. His mother suffered from a mental illness and died when he was only 3 months old. His father was a shipwright and placed him in the care of George Mathews and his wife Berry's clerk in the Sydney office in George Street for 4 months.

David Hay then went to Newcastle to build houses. When John Hay was 2 years old his father took him to New Zealand with him to seek a better life there. When John was 9 years old his father sent him back to Scotland to be cared for and educated by his grandparents and unmarried uncles. His uncle James paid for him to attend Madras college in St Andrews until he was 15 years old and then John worked with his uncle James in his drapery business.

David Hay settled became a successful cattle dealer. He imported butter and cattle from the Berry Estate. When he reportedly became ill in 1860 his son John and brother Robert sailed from England to join him in Parua. In 1862 David Hay married for a second time to Jessie McLeod a widow with three children. John Hay after spending a short time with his father, quickly decided that he was not cut for a farming life: he joined a cousin of the same age, John Honeyman in Auckland who had also immigrated from Scotland. John Hay and John Honeyman returned to Auckland and with financial assistance from their Uncle James in Scotland and set up a drapery business in Queen Street. It was a very successful enterprise and in 1871 they had made enough money to retire. John Hay then married Jessie Sinclair the niece of New Zealand's first Colonial Secretary, Andrew Sinclair.

John Hay came to Sydney in 1872 to call on Alexander Berry, who was related through the Todd family to them. Alexander had no children; it was possible he considered that John Hay might be his successor. Alexander, in one of the letters he wrote to brother David mentioned that Jane Hay, at the time of her approaching mental illness, remarked that her son would be "Laird of Coolangatta." However, Alexander

decided he really did not like the Hays very much and left his brother, David his estate. However, David Berry always had a good relationship with the Hay family when they lived in Scotland and had many free meals at the Hay's home. James and Robert Hay visited him at Coolangatta. In 1883 John visited Coolangatta and at David Berry's request, left Auckland in 1885 to become David Berry's Estate manager. John his wife and his wife's niece Jessie Bruce took up residence as family members not as employees. David was 88 years old and not in good health; he was a procrastinator and John had the task of dealing with an old man who was still definitely in charge. David wanted to build steamers to service the clients on his estate. John Hay travelled to Scotland to organise the building of the Meeinderry and was later involved with the building of the Commanderry.

David Berry died in 1889 and left an Estate valued for probate purposes at over £1.2 million. He left John Hay, in his will, the steamers and the parish of Coolangatta which included the town of Berry and the farm property at Coolangatta. He also made John Hay one of his executors with the task of raising money by selling land to meet his other bequests.

Now as the owner of a magnificent estate his social standing changed and men like Sir Henry Parkes invited him to their soirees. He took up residence at Crows Nest House in North Sydney but kept Coolangatta as his country house. He bought his half brothers and sisters from New Zealand to live on the farm and appointed Henry Douglas Morton and his brother Phillip to act as his Estate managers.

He sought to increase the value of his property in many ways. Primarily, all the farms were re-surveyed, fenced and tenants' rents increased. He offered the farmers ten-year leases instead of annual rentals. He engaged John Wright, a railway engineer, to build a drainage system to decrease the salinity of the marshy land: rye grass and clover pastures could then be sown. He established a first-class Dairy Stud, primarily of Ayrshire cattle, at Coolangatta by importing stock from Great Britain and elsewhere and employed the most advanced techniques of herd improvement. He thought his tenants should avail themselves of the best animals. He built the Berry Central Creamy in 1895 which was one of the most up to date of its kind and used electricity produced by a generator.

He used his political contacts to ensure the route of the extension of the Kiama to Nowra railway went through his tenant's land so that they would have easy access to the milk markets of Sydney. He helped establish a water supply for Berry in 1901 by agreeing that Coolangatta would purchase its water supply from the Municipality. To fund all this expenditure, he borrowed money using the land as security.

When he died in 1909 at the age of 68 the value of his will for probate purposes was £139,706; David Berry probate value was £1,252,975 10s 2d. The money supply difficulty was clearly illustrated by the problem John Hay had with finding a way to fund the building of the David Berry Hospital. The bequest was made in 1889 and not executed until 1909, twenty years later. However, his friend, the premier of new South Wales, Sir Joseph Carruthers solved it for him by introducing into parliament the David Berry Hospital Bill. The bill was passed, and the Government accepted North Shore land as payment for building a hospital in Berry. In 1889 his title was John Hay Esquire, signifying a man of independent means. When he died in 1909, he had L.L.D (Honorary Doctor of Laws) awarded to him by the University of St. Andrews in Scotland in 1894, after his name; before his name Sir, knight of the realm of the British Empire.

In 1908 after he returned from Great Britain, now Sir John Hay, the people of Berry who were his tenants lined the streets to provide him with a great WELCOME HOME. A large floral arch had been erected in the main street and when his procession left the station and entered Queen Street the crowds sang "Home Sweet Home".

What John achieved for himself and his family was remarkable, his wife was now Lady Hay, He bought a society marriage for Alexander Hay to Florence Burdekin.

The economic circumstances in N.S.W. prior to 1888 of increasing land values and prosperity of the pastoral industry did not continue. In 1890 an economic depression set in with a fall of 17% in GDP. The supply of credit from Great Britain began to dry up; then followed the Federation drought, 1895-1906 which affected John Hay's dream of owning the best pastoral estate in the country. He had to borrow money at the going rate while land values decreased but it seems to him money was no object.

BERRY PIONEERS

Did you know that Berry has a heritage-listed cemetery? Located off Kangaroo Valley Road on the north-western edge of the town, the Old Section of the cemetery holds the remains of our pioneering families.

Some of the names you may recognise – **Boyd, Crozier, Agar, Strong, Tindall** – are some of the early dairying families, many of whom came from Ireland.

The land for the old cemetery was donated by David Berry in 1865, and the oldest headstone is that of Thomas Mawle in 1866. The cemetery was divided into four areas, with “roads” separating the Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and Church of England sections. Not all of the graves have headstones. Not all families could afford it, and some had no family here. Around 1900 the cemetery was said to be full, and a new cemetery was established at Harley Hill, on Beach Road. Burials resumed around 1914.

Unfortunately, the historic Old Section of the cemetery is in a poor state, with large camphor laurel and gum trees causing damage to the graves, and this is concerning as the cemetery has historical, genealogical, archaeological and scientific significance.

The Friends of Berry Cemetery group aims to work with Shoalhaven Council to preserve and protect the historic pioneer section of the cemetery.



A Tindall family grave in the old section of Berry Cemetery.

There appears to be support for the formation of a Friends of Berry Cemetery group. If you are a relative or are interested in joining, please contact Friends of Berry Cemetery via emailfriendsberry@yahoocom. This group will act to preserve and protect the historic pioneer section of the cemetery, and support Shoalhaven City Council in its maintenance.

Janet Fingleton

No.1 Pulman St. Berry



c. 1890s - 1900s



Feb 2021

Congratulations to Moss Street Management and Nick Powell for their adaptation, and exterior restoration, of the former Wilson's Store building (dating from the 1850s) into a modern facility for medical practice. It is, in one respect, a return to the past, as the building served as a hospital in the 1890s up to 1909 (see top photo). The necessary investment in heritage expertise and materials was made possible by the commercial adaptive reuse of the building. There are compromises in such transformations, however this is an effective avenue for conserving the town's heritage and meeting the demands of a modern community and its economy

Kelvin Officer

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