

CHRONOGRAPH

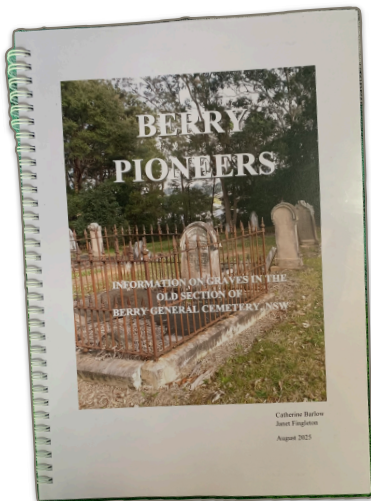
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BERRY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC & THE BERRY MUSEUM

NEW B&DHS PUBLICATION IS A BOON FOR LOCAL FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCHERS.

In 2024 the B&DHS received a grant from the NSW Government to undertake a project that documents information on graves in the old section of the Berry Central Cemetery.

The 200 page document lists the names of those interred, religion, transcriptions and photographs of their headstone, where avail.. It is titled BERRY PIONEERS.

Member *Janet Fingleton*, and *Catherine Barlow* incorporated information and obituaries gleaned by previous researchers into this worthy addition to our local history archives.



We thank the authors for their amazing endeavour, as well the Create NSW Cultural Grant Program and The Royal Australian Historical Society for the opportunity and the production funding.

Copies are available in the Museum's publication section for \$25.



**Notes from
our
President,
Margaret
Cullity**

*Happy New Year
to you all.*

We have big hopes for the Society in 2026 and we invite you to participate fully to help us achieve our goals.

This year we are working to engage our membership more and to harness your unique skills. Storage and display areas will continue to be upgraded by priority of need. Grounds will be improved and maintained according, as far as practical, to heritage principles. Our fund-raising focus is on the finalisation of the restoration of our flood boat and the shelter for this precious craft. Our finances are in a good position thanks to improved visitor numbers, grants and donations. We have a committed and dedicated committee and volunteer base (thank you). The museum heritage building is in good shape and the exhibition collection is impressive, and of interest and relevance to our visitors.

Challenges are (always) compliance and reporting to authorities. Thankfully the Executive and membership base include gifted and experienced legal and financial minds to assist with negotiations and paperwork.

We do need to fill the position of Secretary. The role's responsibilities are not onerous, just constant. Please consider your involvement and let's solve this need as soon as possible.

I look forward to leading you through the year; welcoming new members; and continuing to enjoy the friendship of an amazing selection of minds and personalities.

Best wishes,

Margaret

Our end-of-year function was a happy time.

In spite of the showers our Christmas break-up drinks event was fun.
Great finger food was provided by our guests.
Conversations flowed along with the wine.
Members took the opportunity to inspect NOAH's progress.
and that of the dunny restoration.



Eighty souls in the Jerry Bailey burial ground

From the early 1800s a burial ground existed on the northern bank of the entrance to the Shoalhaven River at the township of "Jerry Bailey", known as Shoalhaven Heads since 1955.

Previously, the area was possibly used for Aboriginal burials. Initially established within the Coolangatta Estate, it is thought to have functioned as a burial ground until 1917. The anglicised name, "Jerry Bailey", is derived from the Aboriginal name for the place - Djerrabalay.

The burial ground, possibly one of the oldest in rural NSW, was used by both Aboriginal people with connections to the nearby sacred Mount Cullunghutti, as well as by non-Aboriginal people, mostly convict workers and their family members from Coolangatta Estate.

The site probably remained undisturbed until 1926, when it was subdivided by Alexander Hay into 30 residential blocks extending south eastwards from Hay Avenue, except for one narrower block clearly marked on the registered subdivision plan as "Reserve for Graves". All blocks were sold relatively quickly, except for the narrower block, which was sold in 1948. The title deed contained no reference to graves, which were still marked by headstones.

Two headstones are now housed in the Berry Museum, of Thomas Greer, and John Weeks, husband of Greer's widow. Greer's headstone is well known, having been lent twice to the National Museum of Australia.

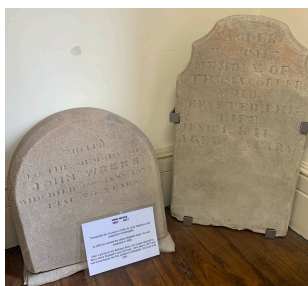
The burial ground's general location can be identified from the local Jerrinja community's oral tradition and early subdivision records; however, its exact extents are unknown. There are currently four lists of approximately 80 names of those known or believed to be buried there.

Community members have approached Council asking that steps be taken to better recognise and manage heritage at this important historical site.

On 15 September, Council formally commenced consultation with those most directly affected

(descendants, landowners/residents and Aboriginal community members) to investigate what action could be taken. Broader community consultation will occur before Council makes final decisions. More information can be found [HERE](#).

People with family members laid to rest at the burial ground are urged to contact Council so their input is considered.





Peter Whitton reports on what's been achieved recently by the NOAH team...

Work on Noah is progressing. The team is currently scraping and preparing the inside for painting, doing minimal repairs that are needed as we go.

The removable floor boards are back at the , still to be attended to. There are three long boards on each side - one central board and two v shaped sections which fit at the bow and the stern. One of the long boards is missing. We will try the Mens Shed to see if they have something suitable. Some repairs are needed to all these floor sections to get them back together and then repainted.

We are still waiting for the oars to be completed, Nick in Sydney is progressing slowly with this job. He is more or less retired now, but still happy to finish off the oars. He knows they are not needed urgently.

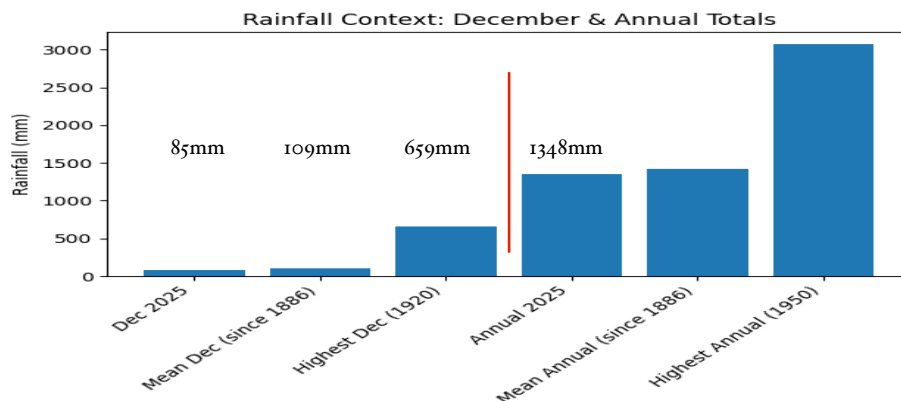
Thanks to the dedicated team of volunteers who support the NOAH preservation project.

Join us if you wish. Email Peter Whitton [HERE](#).

The team meets on site every 2nd Tuesday.

Restoration of this precious relic is our current fund-raising priority. It must be saved and displayed.

BELOW: Left: *Jim Christodoulou*. Right: *Peter Whitton*.



The BOM's official rain gauge for the area is in the Museum's back yard. Results are posted on the BOM website weekly. Peter WHITTON is the coordinator.

Julia Woinarski tells of a new donation regarding David Berry Hospital.

Our David Berry Hospital and its future has been very much in the news lately with the NSW Health Department holding forums, and “drop-ins” to get an idea of what the ratepayers, and especially the Berry Community, wants for its future use.

By coincidence the Museum recently received a donation of a nurse’s dictionary from a former staff member there. She is now in her 90’s and lives in the ACT. She did not want to throw the volume away so sent it to the Hospital who passed it on to us.

The Dictionary has an interesting history. The donor, *June Bunter (nee Brooks)* had started as a ward’s maid at David Berry Hospital in 1948. *Matron Margaret Dillon* * was in charge at that time and encouraged her to do her General Nurses Training, which she did at Bowral Hospital 1952 to 1956. When she left to start her training Matron presented June with her own Nurses Dictionary which had travelled with Matron Dillon all through WWII. June felt that it was her way of saying “travel safely” and June has treasured it ever since.

Now that the dictionary is in our safe keeping, may it help David Berry Hospital “travel safely” into its unknown future.

Bailliere’s Nurses Complete Medical Dictionary by Hitch and Marshall, London. 9th Ed, 1941
Inscriptions: on cover “M Dillon HO A Gill WA 1942”, inside cover “M Dillon NX77156 AAN S A.I.F.”
* Matron Margaret Dillon died in 1954 and her funeral was held at the Catholic Church Berry.

A great background for a museum memento

Jenny Andres visited recently with her grandchildren. She showed them our foyer mural, which she painted back in the late ‘80s.

So many passers bys stop to look and our visitors pose in front, just as Jenny did.

They love the detail of the setting and imagine the hard life of the pioneer family depicted.

We are proud to have it.



Best wishes to a long term, committed worker.

We are losing our most valued Vice President.

Janet and Ralph Hansen are moving away from Berry to be closer to family. Whilst Janet has, thankfully, offered to continue managing our grant-seeking efforts remotely from Sydney, she will step down from the Executive.

The Society is very appreciative of her almost decade of service, her gracious manner and valuable input into guiding the work of the Museum and Society. Thank you.

Welcome to two new members.

RICHARD FIORA and MATTHEW GRAY.

We are grateful for your support and hope you enjoy your involvement.

NOTES FROM OUR LATEST COMMITTEE MEETING

Appreciation was made of our roster co-ordinators and for those arranging helpers to host our stand at the Berry Show - Friday 30 and Saturday 31 January. We love our volunteers.

Treasurer, *Karen Stieper*, reported a satisfying increase in attendance, donations and sale of publications over the same period from last year. Costs have increased substantially as an annoying balance. We do need to upgrade software to update our email system and membership database to a cloud based platform. and have budgeted carefully for the \$200 and annual subscription that is needed. An iPad for our Square system is on hold.

Our advisory team has concluded its negotiations with Shoalhaven Council in arranging a satisfactory lease for the next years. The lease will now go forward to registration. SCC manages hundreds of community buildings such as our ours and really can't distinguish unique circumstances within its generic template of conditions and charges. Frustrating, but President Margaret and her advisers are satisfied they have achieved the best arrangement possible.

Our Heritage Sub-Committee had a very constructive meeting with representatives of the Berry Hotel re-development. Our thoughts were listened to, mostly understood, and accepted. The minutes of the meeting will now accompany the new owner's DA to Council.

An irrigation system will be installed progressively in our gardens by the Museum Bees team. A shout-out this month to Colleen Morris and Kevin Dwyer for their input. Much appreciated.

The next Bunnings Sausage Sizzzzle fund raising day will be on Saturday, 20 March. Can you get along to buy a tool, a plant, and a snag? Say HI and support Karen's team. The cash raised is super helpful for smaller items where a grant isn't available or applicable... such as for garden plants, ink toner, keys etc.

Our comprehensive listing of team leaders and those responsible for activities within the Museum and Society has been updated. If you would like a copy contact Margaret [HERE](#).

LONG SHOT: We are seeking a recent iPad if you know of one that's redundant. It's to be used with a SQUARE payment system at external events such as the Show or at Bunnings.

LONG TERM DISTRICT RESIDENTS - We need your memories.

Our Family History research team is stumped on two matters.
We are seeking information on boot maker Enoch (and Thomas) Cousins
with a reference to Mrs Youngs Shop. Know anything?

The Chronograph is published four times each year.

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Deadline for next issue
20 March 2026

For all contacts please email:
berrymuseum@bigpond.com

PO Box 153 BERRY NSW 2535

B&DHS is a not-for-profit organisation depending on membership and donations. Please support us with a tax deductible bequest.

BSB: 082 435
Account: 175071089
with your name plus 'donation'.
Thank you.

berryhistory.org.au

B&DHS acknowledges the traditional owners of the land and water on which our activities take place.

The Society recognises Australia's First Peoples and their continuous connection to Country.

We pay respect to Elders, past and present, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



The Chronograph appreciates the contributions, photographs and suggestions for this issue from:

Sandra Berner
Jenny Clapham
Margaret Cullity
Janet Hanson
Peter Whitton
Julia Woinarski
Editor is John Edmonds
Email [HERE](#).

Berry Museum Celebrates 55 Years.