

Inflorescence

March 2022

The Newsletter of the Southern Highlands Branch of the AGHS



Events for 2022

Berrima District Museum 1 (A) Market Place Berrima Now open Friday, Saturday and Sundays	Come and see <i>Gardens and</i> <i>Landscapes in the</i> <i>Southern Highlands</i> <i>Then and Now</i>
---	---

Tours and Other Events

Tours:-

- Canberra Coach Tour 5 April has been cancelled
- Kurnell Coach Tour 19 July
- Millthorpe Ramble Coach Tour 4-7 November

Other Events

- Southern Highlands Botanical Gardens Autumn Fair 23-24 April
- Winter Solstice Seminar 5 June at Burrawang Hall
- AGM/Winter Seminar 21 August at the East Bowral Community Centre
- Car Trial 25 September
- Berry Self Drive in October to be confirmed
- National Conference in Tasmania 11-13 November
- Christmas Drinks 2 December

Report from the Chair

Just when we thought we could be less concerned about the Covid virus by taking appropriate precautions the Omicron BA2 variant has arrived and is spreading quickly to challenge our thinking and activities. Please consider wearing a mask in crowded situations especially if anyone has underlying medical conditions.

Despite the temporary setback of needing to close the Berrima Museum Exhibition in early December, it opened again on 4 March! Visitors and locals are starting to learn about the exhibition and come in on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays when the Museum is open to the general public. A formal opening of the exhibition was held on 27 March which was very successful and was attended by 70 people.

For the first time the Southern Highlands Botanic Garden (SHBG) has invited special interest groups (which includes the AGHS-SHB) as well as all garden clubs in the highlands to have stalls, free of charge, at the SHBG Autumn Fair on 23-24 April. We'll be there with some generous volunteer members of the AGHS-SHB to welcome new people not only to the Highlands, but potentially to our society. We are still seeking

volunteers so please consider giving us an hour of your time to explain to people why we are such a great society to join.

The National Management Committee (NMC) of the AGHS has requested that the branches throughout Australia prepare an events program for 2023 with an environment theme. Please send us your recommendations so we can give all ideas their due consideration.

Ray Bradley has prepared an interesting tour for us on 19 July. Please see the tour section for more details. I hope many of you will be able to come along.

As you know despite two attempts to gather at Quindalup to view Deidre Hill's amazing conifer and rare tree garden we were thwarted both times. In this *Inflorescence* we have some lovely photos to share so you can see how the trees have flourished in the heavy rain we've been experiencing.

A sign is in development to highlight the heritage camellias in Bendooley Place (bounded by the Old Town Hall and the Bowral Library). We hope to have this installed by the time the camellias flower. They are all in bud now and are doing very well under the watchful eye of the Wingecarribee Shire Council (Council) horticultural staff who planted them in November 2021. We hope to have a dedication date by the next *Inflorescence*.

Please be careful dodging potholes and eroded sides of many roads in the highlands! Let's hope this unseasonal heavy rain is now behind us.

Looking forward to seeing you at one or several of our upcoming events!

Regards, Ruth

Advocacy

Council has approved the heritage listing of Karingal at 26 Elizabeth Street Moss Vale and the inclusion 2,4, and 6 Myrtle St Bowral within the Bowral Conservation Area. This is an important step in a process which includes Gateway approval from State Planning and going on to Public Exhibition for comment.

BREAKING NEWS

As this *Inflorescence* was going to press we were notified that an attendee at the opening of *Gardens and Landscapes of the Southern Highlands* had tested positive for Covid. Please see page 8 for a copy of the email I sent to all members. We have also cancelled the 5 April Canberra Tour as a precaution.

Projects

Gardens and Landscapes of the Southern Highlands Then & Now by Ruth Bailey

Our joint Exhibition, with the Berrima District Historical & Family History Society (BDHS), *Gardens and Landscapes of the Southern Highlands Then & Now* can now be seen at the BDHS Berrima Museum which is now open on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

We held a very successful official opening of the exhibition on Sunday 27 March. Seventy people attended, half were from AGHS and half from BDHS.

The genesis of the Exhibition was created several years ago under the leadership of the then AGHS-SHB Chair Lyn Barrett to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the AGHS in Australia. However, due to unforeseen circumstances the exhibit was delayed until Bud Townsing took up the mantle and being a member of not only the AGHS-SHB, the BDHS, and a volunteer at the BDHS Berrima Museum was able to work seamlessly with everyone to garner support and create this exhibition.

I encourage AGHS-SHB members to visit the Museum with family and friends over the next six months to learn about our amazing history of gardening, photography, landscape evolution, art and artefacts associated with many people over the past almost 200 years.

The creation of this Exhibition has been a cooperative effort between the groups and people mentioned below under the leadership of Bud Townsing. It has been made possible by the generous loans of exhibits, and contributions of stories, materials, and photographs. I wish to thank:

- BDHS members in particular Linda Emery, Philip Morton, Michele Woods, Lyn and Harlan Hall, Sylvia and Brian Carless,
- *Highlife* Deborah McIntosh and Tony Sheffield,
- AGHS-SHB members Susan Hand, Ralph Suters, Jenny Woodwell, Elaine Musgrave, and Bud Townsing,
- The Bundanoon Photography Group, Joy Brown,
- The Maureen Townsing Collection and the Keva North Collection and The Fitzroy Falls Visitors Centre.

Many people in these organisations are volunteers which are the lifeblood of many communities. This Exhibition has been created with their hard work and cooperation.

Thank you to the AGHS-SHB Committee members and some of the BDHS members for preparing the delicious food to accompany wine at the opening.

I received this email on Monday from Leonie Furber which sums up the responses of many people who attended the Exhibition: *"I feel compelled to write to you as a result of our seeing the Exhibition last evening at the Berrima Museum. What a fantastic exhibition, what incredible history, what a great achievement. Please pass our congratulations to Bud Townsing in particular. Both James and I feel that this is such an important exhibition and wish to send our congratulations for what has been accomplished."*



Ruth Bailey giving the welcome address.



Dennis McManus making some heritage remarks.



Listening to the opening remarks in the Gallery

The great-great-great-great granddaughters of James and Charlotte Atkinson visited our Berrima Museum Exhibition on 16 March 2022.



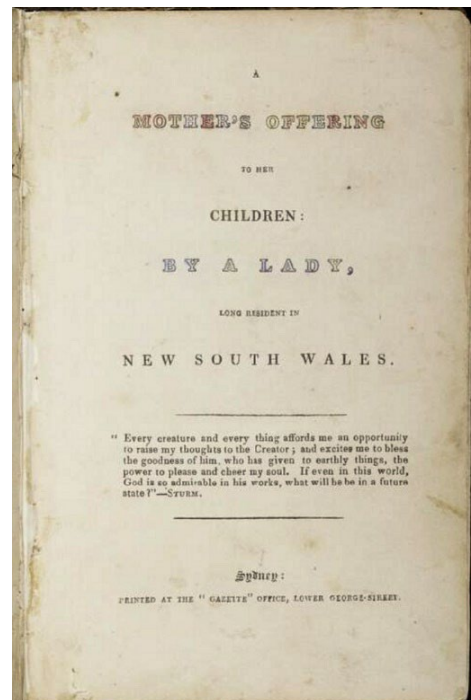
Oldbury was the home of James and Charlotte Atkinson from 1828. This water colour from the NSW State Library is by their daughter Louisa Atkinson circa 1849-1872.



A romantic self-portrait of Charlotte Atkinson (nee Waring) in September 1826, from Charlotte's 1848 sketchbook held in the NSW State Library.



Kate Forsyth, Jenny Woodwell and Belinda Murrell at the Berrima Museum on 16 March 19, 2022. Kate and Belinda are the great great-great-great-granddaughters of Charlotte Atkinson. Jenny prepared the section on Charlotte and Louisa Atkinson and Janet Cosh in our Exhibition at the Berrima Museum.



Charlotte Atkinson was Australia's first children's author, publishing *A Mothers Offering to her Children by a Lady Long Resident in New South Wales* in 1841.

Well known authors Kate and Belinda have written *Searching for Charlotte* the fascinating story of Charlotte Atkinson. It is available from the Berkelouw Book Barn and the Bookshop Bowral.

Update on the Station Street Camellia Garden Beds



The above BDHS photograph of Bowral Station, circa 1939 shows newly planted camellias, the original lighting, and the trachyte walls.



A present-day photograph of Bowral Station and the camellias, significantly overgrown. Remarkably three of the original lamps in the 1939 picture still survive and Wingecarribee Shire Council (Council) will endeavour to retain and refurbish the lamps without disrupting the camellias' root system.

In the December 2019 *Inflorescence* Laurel Cheetham reported on the heritage significance of the collection of camellias in Station Street Bowral. This followed the listing of the Station Street Avenue of Pin Oak Trees and Camellia Plantings by the National Trust and research by members of AGHS, the National Trust, BDHS, Camellia Ark and local historian Nick Corbett, who were trying to find out about the post 1930 plantings.

Despite the former Council being advised of the rarity of the camellia plantings, the "Upgrade" plan for Station Street, approved in March 2021, required six of the seventeen footpath camellias to be removed, to be replaced by one Tulip Tree.

Fortunately, the Interim Administrator, Viv May stopped the Station Street "Upgrade" in May 2021, and on 23 June 2021 approved a program of works including pavement renewal, drainage improvements, pruning works to street trees and the preparation of a detailed plan for the restoration and beautification of the camellia planting, together with a site-specific irrigation system and horticultural maintenance plan. In January this year details of the renewal works were announced (see Council's Your Say website).

Nothing on the ground has happened so far and the camellia plantings are overgrown with weeds and there is a need for radical renovation. Laurel has been advised by Council that there is action "behind the scenes" and that work to restore and enhance the camellias will begin at the end of April. The project is complex as the majority of the work is located on land managed by Transport NSW and thus requires close liaison with Council. Bill Parker from Camellias-R-Us will be working with Council to improve the gardens and health of the camellias.

Update on Berrima Gaol



A community-based group **Berrima Gaol Community Buyback** has put in an expression of interest to acquire the Berrima Gaol.

If you want to find more about the group its website is <https://www.berrimagaulbuyback.com.au>

The group's mission is:

- To protect and preserve the unique historic significance of Berrima Gaol by respectfully repurposing the site as a heritage, education, community and creative arts centre.
- Berrima Gaol to be owned, funded and managed by the community for the people of the Southern Highlands, thereby creating a significant cultural attraction for New South Wales, as well as domestic and international tourism.

The group is seeking signatures for a petition supporting its case to the NSW State Government. **If you wish to sign the petition please follow the links on the Berrima Gaol Community Buyback website.** At this stage the group is not seeking donations.

Quindalup

Three days after the big March 2022 rains stopped Ruth Bailey, Lynda Cowley and Bud Townsing, cameras in hand, went to visit Deidre Hill's garden Quindalup, Bowral. Deidre is a passionate gardener and plant collector and has been modifying and extending her sizeable, ten-acre, country garden since 1972. The garden holds collections of rare conifers, spruces, firs, and shrubs that have been carefully positioned to create a unique landscape

Deidre has written *Gardening in the Southern Highlands* an excellent guide to gardening in this area and it is available from the Bookshop Bowral.



The above photographs are by Lynda Cowley, those on the right are by Bud Townsing

Quindalup



The photographs to the left are by Ruth Bailey and on the right are by Ruth, Bud and Lynda.

Book Review

Mitchell's County Town: Berrima 1831-1841 by Chris Thompson

Some years back a friend in Sydney gave me a copy of Tim Flannery's *1788* by Watkin Tench with the comment "every home should have one". I feel the same about this book in terms of the Southern Highlands as it explains so much about the early history of our area based on a forensic and fascinating look at Berrima.

Chris Thompson explains that: *"While essentially a local history, this study seeks to place Berrima's first ten years into what was happening elsewhere. It illustrates how colony-wide legal, economic and social changes are reflected in a small and relatively isolated community."*

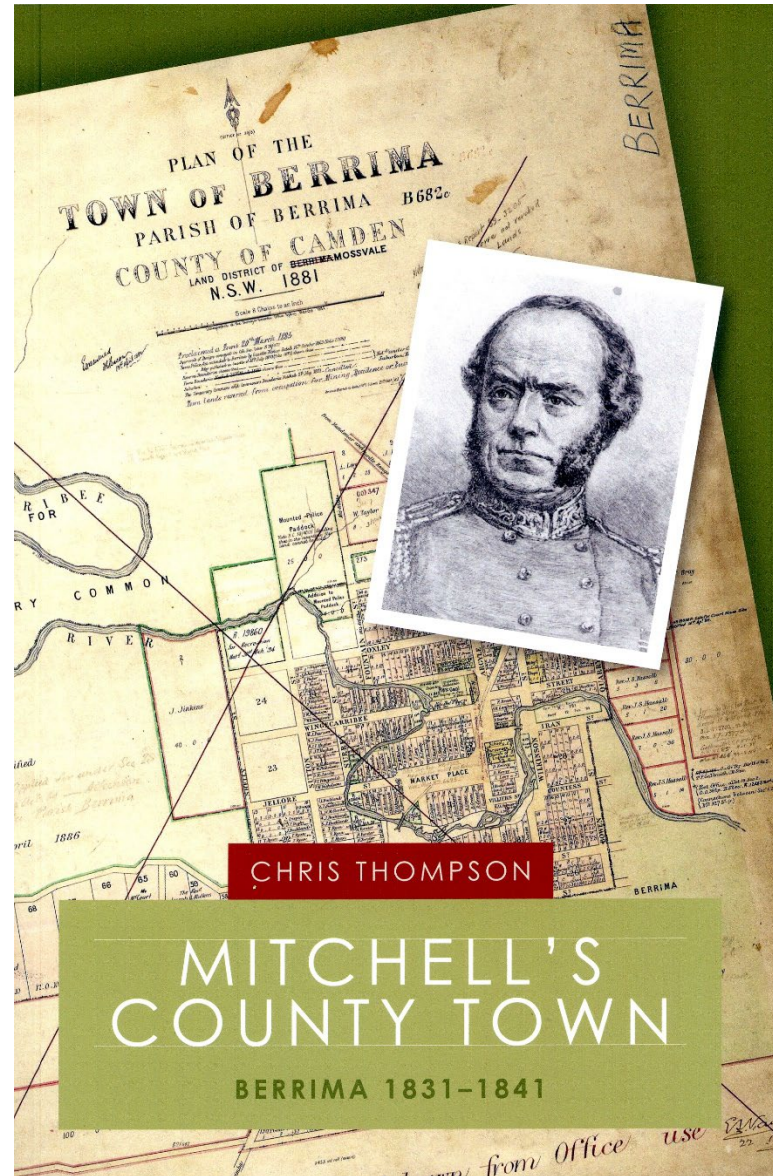
The book is well written, beautifully illustrated and a delight to read. The 15 chapters of the book, in three parts, cover The Place, The People and 1840s and Beyond. A chapter is provided on Convicts and the Community, Military Men, Bureaucrats and Keepers of the Peace, Innkeepers and Merchants, Mechanics and Tradesmen, Mail and Coaching and the indigenous Community.

What impressed me most was how clearly Chris Thompson explains many aspects of life at the time which have been a bit of mystery or unknown. The "rivalry" between Old South Road and Mitchell's Road. The classes of convict which we have tended to lump together. The role of the police, mounted police, the military and the courts. We tend to think that court houses were just that but they were more. And police did a range of work other than what we would call policing. And yes, the military were still here in the 1830s.

The book provides a very clear exposition of Berrima's failure to develop as a major county town as foretold from the beginning by some observers. On a lesser note, the book explains why some early inns had two front doors - ruining Georgian symmetry in the process! You will have to read the book to find out why.

Dennis McManus PSM

Retired NSW Senior Heritage Officer, Honorary Heritage Consultant and Wingecarribee Heritage Advisory Committee member.



New Members

A special welcome to the following new members:-

- Malcolm and Danina Anderson - Kangaloon
- Paul and Jeanna Walsh - Nowra
- Ian Willis - Camden
- Martin Walsh - Moss Vale
- Gwyneth Watson - Moss Vale
- Jan Newby - Tapitalle

Chair, Secretary and Events
Coordinator
NMC Representative
IT Coordinator
Minutes Secretary
Treasurer
Tours
WSC Heritage Rep
Editor/Research
General Member

Ruth Bailey

Lyn Barrett
Jenny Woodwell

Lynda Cowley
Ray Bradley
Laurel Cheetham
Bud Townsing
Penny McKenna

We are seeking extra Committee members. If you wish to become part of the Committee, or think you can contribute in some way, please contact Ruth Bailey on 0409 126 718 for a chat.

Contact us by email at: aghs.sh.info@gmail.com

BREAKING NEWS

A Covid Update

On Wednesday 30 March Ruth Bailey sent this email to all AGHS-SHB members.

"First of all, thank you all for attending the Berrima History Museum Exhibition opening on Sunday afternoon. It is an amazing exhibition and worthy of several visits with friends and family.

Unfortunately, Covid19 variant BA.2 is spreading rapidly throughout NSW with 25,000 cases reported today which is an increase from yesterday. Our chance of contracting Covid19 is becoming higher especially at larger gatherings.

We have been notified that one of our attendees tested positive for Covid19, today Wednesday.

The NSW Government has provided guidance to people who are at different levels of risk of contracting Covid19. Based on the fact that we had 70 people within the museum space at quite close distance over a 2h period, we believe we are all at a moderate risk of contact with the person who tested positive.

Please see the website information on what to do for this level of risk <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/management/people-exposed-to-covid>. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your personal doctor.

I know some attendees brought guests with them. Please make sure these guests receive this email as well.

Kind regards,

*Ruth
Chair, AGHS-Southern Highlands Branch"*

On Wednesday 30 March the Committee decided to cancel the 5 April Canberra Arboretum Tour due to the high incidence of Covid in the community.

The Committee apologises for the cancellation of the Canberra Arboretum Tour of 5 April; however the safety of members was a priority. Whilst the Tour will be rescheduled for a later date there has been no discussion on when this will occur as the Branch has a full calendar of events scheduled for this year. When a date has been confirmed Ray Bradley will contact those who booked the Tour with the details.