

# HERITAGE

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS ASSOCIATION  
OF CULTURAL HERITAGE ORGANISATIONS

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## TURKISH BATH IN MOUNTAINS SURPRISES MANY

Many people are surprised to find a 19<sup>th</sup> century Turkish bath on full display in the small village of Mt Wilson.

The building is listed on the Register of the National Estate as 'an unusually fine example of late Victorian boom style architecture with polychrome brickwork and Italianate details.'

Sydney architect Ernest Bonney built the Turkish bath for Richard Wynne, one of the first settlers to buy land in Mt Wilson in 1875. It is sited within the extensive Wynstay Estate, looking out across the Wollangambe wilderness to the Wollemi National Park and beyond.

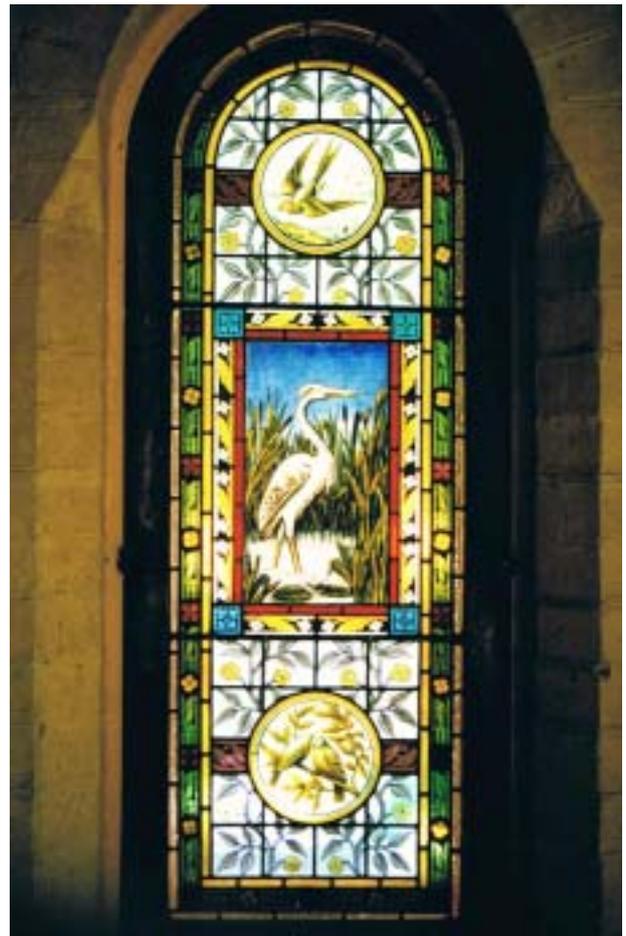
Among the building's many unusual and attractive architectural features, none is more striking than its windows.

Originally nine arched wooden framed ornate windows of stained and hand-painted glass were commissioned by Richard Wynne to be designed and made by Scottish craftsmen in England and transported by ship for installation in this building in the 1880s.

Each window is quite unique in its design, with different patterns on the ornate borders and medallions of stained glass, and each has a central image or scene making a delicate, colourful picture.

Some show large water birds hunting among the rushes, and two are finely detailed scenes of waterfalls. These last two have captions etched in the corners, reading 'Rydall, Westmoreland' and 'Falls of Muick Ballater Scotland'. (The Falls of Muick are located within Balmoral Estate.)

Seven of the windows remain in place in the Turkish bath, in excellent condition. The other two were



replaced by the construction of two doorways when the building was adapted for use as accommodation for stonemasons brought from Scotland to build the present Wynstay house in the early 1920s.

Since 1995 the Turkish bath and its precinct has been leased at a peppercorn rent to the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society who maintain and operate it as a museum of local history.

The museum is open to the public, staffed by volunteer guides, every weekend during April and May.

The building itself, its glorious windows and the exhibitions of local history housed within make a worthwhile destination for visitors to Mt Wilson during the autumn season. ***This article and window image have been kindly contributed by Florence Smart***



**From the president's pen.....  
FINDING NEW WAYS IS REALLY IMPORTANT**

Finding new ways of doing things is really important particularly at a time when our heritage is facing increased environmental, management and financial challenges.

However, looking for new or different ways does not necessarily imply that the way things have been done in the past did not produce good results.

An incredible amount of voluntary work has been devoted over many years by individuals who belong to associations such as those which make up the membership of BMACHO.

Add to this, the work of heritage academics and professionals, we find there has been accumulated, a wealth of material and knowledge of our cultural heritage.

There is no doubt that these heritage enthusiasts are quite adept at interpreting our history.

But to preserve this knowledge and the heritage sites which abound in such a relatively young country as Australia, needs increased government support in the future.

Most arms of government have never been very active in conserving and protecting our cultural, built or natural heritage, particularly when it comes to funding.

In the next decade, government will no doubt blame the current financial melt down for failing to come to terms with the need for Australia's heritage to be adequately funded. If government continues to ignore our heritage then much of our history will be placed at peril for future generations.

It is appropriate at this stage of my report to pay tribute to those volunteers and members of historical societies and other

heritage groups for the outstanding work they have done over many decades.

Sure some may say that things could be done better and probably they could be, in some parts, but these efforts have brought many successes.

Many of the people who provide this effort are older people and we tend to forget, that what we do, is for the love of it, not for personal gain.

I even venture to suggest that often what we achieve is far superior to what the bureaucrats in government and those in private enterprise achieve when it comes to heritage.

Although during the past three years we have achieved considerable benchmarks, there has also been some frustration experienced and towards the end of last year the committee has been looking towards future directions of the organisation.

The incoming committee will need to spend some time examining the level of service BAMACHO can provide.

At the suggestion of Barrie Reynolds, the focus of the program for 2009 will be on communication.

This will allow the association to concentrate a public awareness of the cultural heritage in the region and on the work of BMACHO.

To do this successfully the committee must rely on individuals and organisational members to provide increased input.

**John Leary, OAM - President, Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations**

*(This is an extract from the president's report to the annual general meeting held at Wentworth Falls on March 21, 2009. The whole report is available by request by e-mailing: johnnanette@optusnet.com.au or by telephoning 4758 8584)*

# Money for heritage - huge boost for jobs

The \$60 million secured for national heritage by the Greens as part of the Commonwealth's stimulus package has been hailed as a massive boost for jobs, heritage and Australian history by The National Trust of Australia (New South Wales).

The Australian Council of National Trusts (ACNT), with input from each of the National Trusts across the country, was proactive in discussing the need for heritage investment with the Green Party before the final stimulus package was agreed on February 13.

Executive director, John Neish said, "The benefits of this injection of money will be felt across Australia as we work to conserve our heritage. The National Trust in New South Wales has opportunities to begin works across all of our properties from the Blue Mountains and Armidale to Yass, from Dubbo to Hunters Hill.

"This boost will allow us to create local jobs for local people at short notice. We will be working with the Commonwealth to discuss how some of this heritage stimulus can be diverted to employ skilled and unskilled people to conserve our historic properties."

"The Greens must be congratulated on their effort in helping us continue to keep the fabric of Australian history alive and to create employment across the regions. As an independent charity we are mostly reliant on public donation."

"A man who dares to waste one hour of time has not discovered the value of life."  
..Charles Darwin



# Ancient rain forest saved at Mt Tomah

For the second time in 80 years the same slice of ancient rainforest at Mt Tomah has been saved.

Perched almost 1000 metres high in the Blue Mountains, The Jungle, as it has long been known, is a survivor from 120 million years ago when Australia was part of a super continent called Gondwanaland.

State governor, Marie Bashir recently declared the luxurious forest of sassafras and coachwood trees, and the tangle of pandorea vine, open to the public – 80 years to the day since the last time it was pronounced rescued.

This time The Jungle, now officially part of the neighbouring Mount Tomah Botanic Garden, seems secure.

In the 1920s the farmer who owned the then 280-hectare forest was made an offer by a timber company wanting the trees. Concerned citizens decided to act.

They formed a company, The Jungle Limited, to buy the forest for 5000 pounds half of which would be raised through 25 - 100 pound shares. The rest would be used by using a mortgage to be repaid using revenue from a tea house.

On March 23, 1929 the governor, Sir Dudley de Chair, unveiled a plaque declaring open the Fairfax Walk (the late Sir James Fairfax owner of the *Sydney Morning Herald* had been a major backer of the project). The Fairfax Walk was a track winding from the tea room to what was dubbed "The Temple of Nature."

"It was," said Rob Smith, the head of Mt Tomah Botanic Garden, "a really generous, far sighted conservation investment."

In 1987 the 28 hectare Mount Tomah Garden opened. "When I came here 16 years ago, "Mr Smith said, "I was given instructions to keep an eye on The Jungle in case it came on the market."

Although parts were cleared long ago, for farming, The Jungle still has 10 hectares of pristine warm temperate forest, and several dry sclerophyll.



In the Jungle on the Lady Fairfax Walk: From right: Botanic Gardens Foundation chairman Clive Austin (speaking), executive director of the Botanic Gardens Trust Tim Entwisle (blocked out), donor John B. Fairfax, Governor of New South Wales Professor Marie Bashir, deputy premier and Minister for Climate Change and the Environment Carmel Tebutt MP, and donor Elizabeth Fairfax with staff of Mount Tomah Botanic Garden and members of the community. Photograph courtesy Simone Cottrell RBG.

In 2007, Sir James Fairfax's grand-nephew, John B Fairfax was asked for help. He donated \$1 million. With another \$250,000 from a government trust, 30 hectares from the Jungle have been bought and added to Mt Tomah.

By 2016 a canopy walkway will be added to The Jungle, allowing visitors to explore tree tops 45 metres high, and watch its wildlife, marsupial gliders and diamond pythons. (This is an extract from a report by Richard Macey published in *The Sydney Morning Herald*)

## Experienced team elected at annual general meeting

At the annual general meeting tribute was paid to the many people who had worked on various tasks.

Among these projects was the heritage site review for which a pilot run had been successfully completed. The review at Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine co-ordinated by Florence Smart will lay the foundation for similar reviews across the Blue Mountains local government area once council completes the processing of the 1000 or more site records.

The calendar of events has been ably co-ordinated by Dick Morony while Valerie Holland is co-ordinating the collation of valuable basic administrative financial

information on members societies.

The management committee for 2009-10 was announced at the annual general meeting and is: president - John Leary OAM, vice president - Associate Professor Ian Jack, secretary - Professor Barrie Reynolds, committee members - Jean Arthur (Mt Victoria Historical Society), Ray Christison (Lithgow Mining Museum), Lyn Fowler (National Trust of Australia - Lithgow Branch), Doug Knowles (Glenbrook Historical Society), Kathie McMahon (Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society), Dick Morony (Springwood Historical Society) and Dr Peter Stanbury, OAM (individual member).

# Museums - Teachers of experience

Museums are a means of expression, not only to the community they serve but also to the individuals that serve in them. Volunteering encourages us to communicate and involves us with places other than home, and people other than family. Museums are a doorway to knowledge about past ways of life. The volunteer experience teaches much about the way people interact. An understanding of other people's needs and drives is one of the factors in a museum's success or stagnation.

Cultural differences make volunteering in museums overseas an interesting challenge and a strong learning experience. Organisations such as Australian Business Volunteers that welcome and assign volunteers stress that the aim of the game is skills exchange and capacity building.

For the volunteer concerned, however, the real gain is the experience of having to work with others to obtain results in a given time. Every nerve is attuned to interpreting phrases and customs to break through misunderstandings and obstacles, especially if the language is not one's own.

This attentive attitude can be a refreshing experience when one has known one's co-workers for months or years and can guess their forthcoming comment; or when one has been used to a permanent job, or an unpaid one in a local museum, in which deadlines are elastic.

The results achieved overseas can often be applied to one's own museums after returning home.

The examples that follow are experiences learned while volunteering in Peru, Cambodia and Egypt that may be useful in Australia.

## How do visitors feel as they approach a museum?

Any strange building, even a small one, can be forebidding to a stranger. Visitors need a plan of the building so they can understand the size and layout of the museum.



Fig 1



Fig 2

This can be on paper or better still on a welcoming board as they approach the museum (Fig 1).

Visitors looking at unfamiliar objects (for example, many representations of Buddha or *quipu* – coloured knots in strings that represent Inca accounts, Fig 2) need a who's who of the range of gods, or a simple explanation of the Inca's accounting methods (Fig 3), so readers can appreciate and begin to understand what they are seeing (which is different from just seeing).

## There are many objects - a danger to themselves?

It's a bit like going to the shops and buying luscious fruit, but, seduced by the colour and the unusual size, one buys too much. The bags rub against each other as you walk to the car, move around in the boot and one bag falls as you walk into the kitchen. When unwrapped only a few pieces look like they did in the greengrocer's display and are worth putting in the fruit bowl.

The moral is never crowd objects, especially in storage but also in displays.

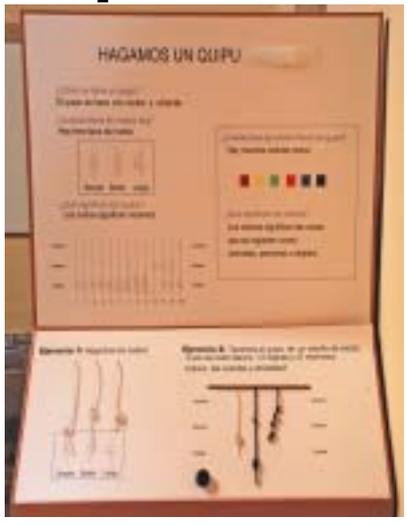


Fig 3



Fig 4



Fig 5



Fig 6

Continued page 5

# Museums Teachers of experience

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An object on display needs space around it to allow the visitor's eye to concentrate without distraction.

Crowded objects in storage are a disaster, damaging each other, attracting pests or rust or tumbling out on the floor when you are trying to locate a specimen.

Figs 4 – 6 show before and after the reorganisation of the storage of silk hip wrappers (Cambodian skirts) in the National Museum of Cambodia.

## Why use complex solutions when simple ones work?

In this technological world we are often unnecessarily tempted into complexity and expense. The walls of Egyptian tombs were decorated to commemorate the achievements of the deceased.

Some of the Theban tombs near Luxor were re-used by early Christians as cave dwellings 1400 - 1600 years ago. The smoke from their fires blackened the wall decorations, covering them with carbon.

Archaeologists were reluctant to excavate these tombs because of the difficulty of removing the carbon without damaging the underlying paintings until it was realised that the best treatment was to repeatedly apply tissues damped with 99.5% distilled water caused the carbon to be transferred to the tissue, leaving the Egyptian paintings intact.

Fig 7 shows how effectively this simple treatment works. The experienced museum volunteer keeps the KISS principle in mind (**Keep It Simple Stupid**).



Fig. 7

*Fig 1 Whether it is an external notice board informing visitors of the layout of the museum or a sign indicating the whereabouts of the toilets the message should attract attention. (Sign at McCrossins Mill Museum, Uralla, NSW.)*

*Fig 2 Ancient quipu in the Centro Malliqui Museum at Leymebamba in Northern Peru.*

*Fig 3 Explanation of quipu: the size of the knots indicate numbers and the colours of the objects being counted.*

*Fig 4 An excessive number (>60) of silk hip wrappers individually wrapped in plastic bags all stored in a large plastic bag. Storage of objects of dissimilar materials in the one space is not recommended because each material usually requires specific, dissimilar, storage conditions.*

*Fig 5 Silk costumes individually wrapped in washed cotton allows air circulation but deters insect attack. Note the specimens are piled no more than three high.*

*Fig 6 shows damaged silk resulting excess pressure and micro-climates in crowded storage: pressure damage to the fibres along a fold and erosion caused by the changes in the dye in a humid micro-climate.*

*Fig 7 Volunteer working in the New Kingdom Tomb 147 at Luxor. The simplest, but painstaking, treatment proved to be the most effective for the removal of carbon baked onto the original tomb decoration (difference between foreground and background).*

**Contributed by Dr Peter Stanbury, OAM a committee member of BMACHO and board member UMAC (International Committee for University Museums)**

“At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace the savage races throughout the world.”  
...Charles Darwin



# MUSEUM DISASTER PLANNING

Natural disasters are very much in all our minds at the present time.

Naturally, we are conscious of what could happen to our own homes and possessions and will have given thought to the precautions we need to take.

But what of the museums and collections for which a number of us are responsible? The risks are mainly fire, flood and theft. What are we doing to prevent or at least minimise these risks?

Besides the obvious precaution of ensuring our buildings are secure, there are a few simple steps that can be taken. These need not be costly nor too time-consuming.

If curators are interested in exploring these in a seminar, please contact Barrie Reynolds at <[barrie.r@bigpond.net.au](mailto:barrie.r@bigpond.net.au)> or on 4757 4727.

## KURRAJONG NOTCHES UP 200 YEARS

This piece is an extract from Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society's newsletter, *The Millstone*.

President Frank Holland writes: This year is very significant for the Kurrajong district as it was 200 years ago in 1809 that the first land grants, close to the site of the current village were made. Of course, it is not strictly accurate as no doubt people were living in the area prior to those land grants. In fact settlement closer to the Hawkesbury had occurred much earlier.

An interesting point about the land grants is that they were made by Johnston and Patterson after the deposition of Governor Bligh and as a result were deemed to be illegal.

However, Macquarie did reinstate the grants after his arrival in 1810.

# From the Hawkesbury/Nepean to the Cudgegong: the Historical and Heritage Character of BMACHO's Constituency

The text of an illustrated presentation by Dr Ian Jack, president of the Royal Australian Historical Society to the annual general meeting of BMACHO on March 21, 2009.



From the very beginning of European settlement, the Blue Mountains have offered both a challenge and an opportunity. Within months of the First Fleet anchoring in 1788, the colonists were aware that a major barrier lay to the west, just beyond the Hawkesbury-Nepean River. For these first Europeans, the Blue Mountains constituted the west wall of the big detention centre on the Cumberland Plain. The building of the first road across the Mountains in 1814-5 by William Cox's convicts and the unlocking of inland Australia which was its corollary had symbolism as well as practicality. The western road was a necessary step in the transition from penal settlement to free colony. And it was the necessary step towards making this country the biggest sheep-paddock in the English-speaking world. The Mountains held out promise: otherwise Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth would not have bothered to cross them in 1813. Otherwise Governor Macquarie would not have recalled George William Evans from Tasmania to mark out an appropriate dray-road. But the Mountains still seemed to be primarily an obstacle after Macquarie opened up the Bathurst Plains to settlement.

To see the mountains as a barrier was, however, a very European construct. For Aboriginal people for millennia before 1788 the Blue Mountains, though a self-evident demarcator, were not so much a divider as a meeting-place. As I remarked on a similar occasion two years ago, the very name the Great Dividing Range is profoundly revealing of an exclusively European outlook.

For the folk who had been enjoying the area for many millennia, the Wiradjuri, the Gundungurra and the Darug people, the mountains were not a divide at all, but a natural point of contact. The mountains lay on the periphery of several indigenous language groups and trade routes inevitably led across the plateau. The result was that there was widespread Aboriginal knowledge of how to attain the table-top from the plains and valleys on all sides, north, south, east and west, and there was detailed information about how to cross the climactic landscape of the table-top without abruptly terminating one's journey. For everyone on the mountains, indigenous or European, travel in the region was at bottom a 'negotiation with the perpendicular', in Martin Thomas's memorable phrase.<sup>1</sup>

But for the indigenous people it was country like any other, and the mountains with their abysses had their fair share of Dreamtime stories of ancestral creation. To the Europeans the Mountains were for a long time an infernal nuisance full of 'impassable chasms'<sup>2</sup>, with the plateau an arid and unattractive area to hurry across to get to the other side. It was only gradually in the 19th century that the mystique of the sublime gathered force and, as Kate Hartig felicitously observed: the aesthetic appraisal of the mountain landscape was cloaked in a romantic image and was expressed by sentiments of exaltation and delight.<sup>3</sup>



Albert Fullwood, 'Ladies on a Pathway Looking across the Blue Mountains' 1888. H. Speirs, *Landscape Art and the Blue Mountains*, 1981, 23.

Albert Fullwood's painting of 1888 with well-dressed ladies admiring the wilderness which was not a wilderness, showing a little daring but not too much, helps to sum up the ways in which artists had been influencing popular European perceptions over the previous half century.

It is during this central sixty years of the nineteenth century, from the 1820s to the 1880s, that the themes were established which give some homogeneity to the heritage of the expansive area of the BMACHO constituency. This Association of Cultural Organisations now has among its members the Mudgee Historical Society, the Cudgegong Museums Group, the Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society and four of Lithgow's outstanding cultural institutions, the Regional

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Thomas, *The Artificial Horizon: Imagining the Blue Mountains*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton 2003, 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Historical Records NSW*, V 726

<sup>3</sup> K. Hartig, *Images of the Blue Mountains*, Department of Geography, University of Sydney, Research Monograph 2, 1986, 43.

*Continued from page 6*

Library, the State Mine Museum, the Small Arms Factory Museum and the local branch of the National Trust. But BMACHO started life within the local government area called the City of the Blue Mountains, and enjoyed from the outset a good relationship with the City Council and its officers, for which we are all most grateful. Institutional membership of the umbrella association was at first restricted to organisations within the city boundaries.

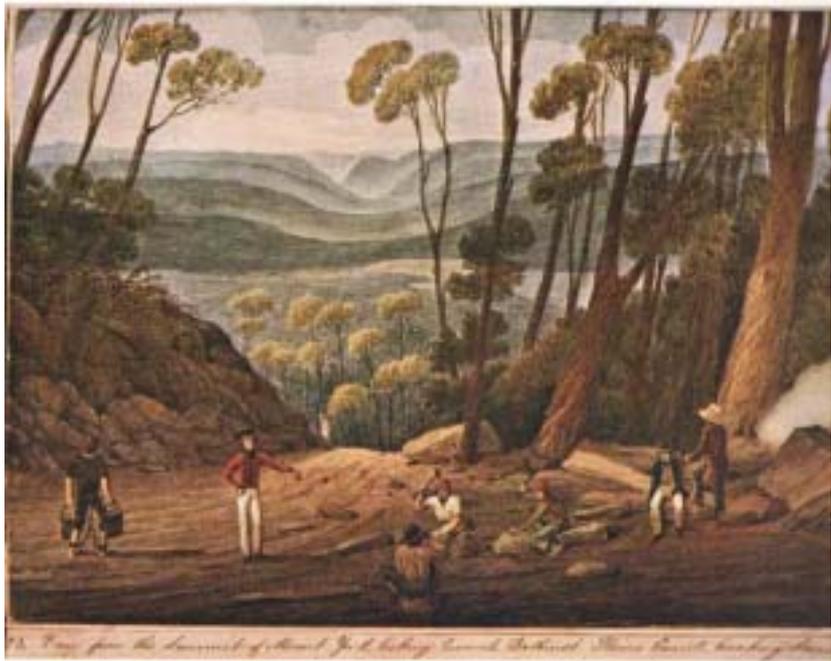
I have had a personally productive relationship with the city administration for more than a decade, but I have always jibbed a little at the term city, though I understand the aspirations of local politicians to outdo a mere shire. The City of the Blue Mountains is, however, the most absurd of names for a straggle of small settlements planted within a World Heritage environment. Those of us who were inaugural members of BMACHO saw from the outset that bureaucratic boundaries did not coincide with historical reality nor with self-evident geographical imperatives.

The lines of communication are not only basic heritage items, but they also by definition break the artificial bounds of local government arrangements. Bells Line of Road, starting from North Richmond, is in Hawkesbury City until after it passes through Bilpin and Berambing, but it is in Blue Mountains City from Mount Tomah to the Darling Causeway and when it descends into Hartley Vale becomes part of Lithgow City's assets.

Of all the heritage assets of this region, the roads, and there are six significant ones, cannot possibly be claimed by one local government area alone.

Coxs Road, the foundation heritage item of the mountains for Europeans, did not stop at Mount York, but went on down into Hartley Valley and on to the Bathurst Plains.

When Thomas Mitchell, the great Surveyor-General, designed and constructed his new western road in the 1830s, he gave scant attention



Auguste Earle, c 1826 View west from Mount York.

to the traverse of the plateau of the mountains: that was the dull and easy part. Evans had already found all the right ridges. What really turned Mitchell on was the challenge of getting up to the plateau from the east and getting off again on the west. As a result, Mitchell's road from Emu Plains to Bathurst has two memorable features, one at each end.

On the way up from the Cumberland Plain there is the elegant stone-arched bridge constructed by David Lennox:

This beautifully proportioned bridge is halfway up Mitchell's Pass, and that pass is wholly within the modern City of the Blue Mountains, but Mitchell's comparable bravura achievement at the other side of the plateau, Victoria Pass, is different.

In 1932 the Royal Australian Historical Society put up a plaque to celebrate the centenary of Victoria Pass. This plaque and the larger monument of which it is a part are within the city of the Blue Mountains.

About a third of the way down the escarpment on this route, there was a frightening gap in the descending ridge, which can be seen best from Coxs Road along Mount York.

To bridge this gap, Mitchell's convicts had to build a causeway, with high retaining walls and buttresses reminiscent of Devines Hill on the Great North Road.

There was a nasty accident on the causeway in 1835, captured in a painting, 'Accident on Victoria Pass causeway, 1835' by the surveyor Govett, whose name is enshrined in Govett's Leap: part of the buttressing and parapet had collapsed soon after construction of the causeway in 1832. Mitchell was apoplectic but the problem was not finally fixed until 1838, so what we see today is not what was put up in 1832.

The scene of all this drama is not part of the Blue Mountains City. Almost all of the causeway is in the City of Lithgow. The lower part of Victoria Pass, including the causeway, is in one jurisdiction (Lithgow), while the upper part, including the monuments, is in another (Blue Mountains).

All this is slightly messy, though not as inconvenient as Mitchell's Old Northern Road, where, as it goes towards Wisemans Ferry, one side of the road is controlled by Baulkham Hills Shire and the other side by Hawkesbury City, which does not make for good planning. At least no one, yet, has tried to build a house or develop acreage along Victoria Pass, and, in any case, the road itself is not under the jurisdiction of either Lithgow or Blue Mountains, but is under the Roads and Traffic Authority, which may or may not be a good thing (though the Hartley Highway Action Group, not yet affiliated with BMACHO, has no doubt at all). *Continued page 8*

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I am emphasising the heritage of the roads because they are fundamental. And they all exist not because anyone in Sydney wanted desperately to get to the Blue Mountains, but because every grazier on the Cumberland Plains wanted to get beyond the Mountains. For the first fifty years of the road system, up to the late 1860s, the trip across the mountain plateau was merely something to be endured. Louisa Meredith summed up a general feeling in 1839 that the Mountain scenery was 'wild, monotonous, ... dreary, desolate grandeur,... a world of desolation'.<sup>1</sup>

So the descent into Hartley Valley seemed to many early travellers as arrival in 'the promised land ... after the wilderness of the Blue Mountains', as Judge Barron Field described it in 1822.<sup>2</sup>

And until the railway in the mid 1860s changed so much on the plateau, the traveller was better served with hostelries once he or she reached the other side. Right at the bottom of Victoria Pass, for example, was the most elegant of Georgian inns, built in 1839, and called, of course, the Victoria Inn.

And if Victoria Inn was not open – it was a private house for a while in mid-century -then there was the Glasgow Arms and its handsome successor, the Royal Hotel, in Old

Bowenfels. Both were built in 1838 by a stonemason, one of Mitchell's road inspectors, a fellow Scot, Alexander Binning, but only the Royal survives: it was originally Binning's private house.

The Glasgow Arms, Binning's inn just across the highway from the Royal, has been comprehensively demolished and replaced by a petrol station, another sort of utility. The Glasgow Arms had been praised by Colonel Mundy in 1846 as 'decidedly the best on the line, with active and obliging people, good plain cookery and clean beds'.<sup>1</sup>

And a string of accommodation houses operated along the roads to Bathurst and Mudgee, at small service centres like Rydal, Capertee or Ilford or just beside a convenient creek.

The provision of reliable and more than reliable accommodation on the mountains had to wait for the coming of the railway and with the train came the city tourist and the wealthy seeking cool summer retreats. Before 1865 there were more residents in Hartley Vale than in the entire Blue Mountains City area. After 1870, because of reliable, cheap transport, there was a growing transient population of holiday-makers and honeymooners in the villages which sprang up along the train line from Springwood

to Mount Victoria. So the phenomenon of the guesthouse appeared and the architectural character of Katoomba and Leura in particular was indelibly stamped with these Victorian and Edwardian establishments, a fair number still in business today. They range from the modest federation house available for lease, like Cheltondale, 314 Katoomba Street, Katoomba, through respectable guesthouses, like Rubystone, also in Katoomba to fairly grand hotels like the first Coffee Palace on the mountains, opened in Leura in 1892, and ambitiously rechristened The Ritz in 1914. And then, of course, there was the really grand hotel like the Hydro Majestic at Medlow Bath and the Carrington, which still dominates the skyline of Katoomba today.

The other determining feature of the way in which the mountain plateau developed quite separately from the plains beyond was the hill-station or the country retreat, where well-to-do dwellers on the Cumberland Plain could seek out a cooler refuge in the heat of summer. Mount Wilson is, of course the supreme example, but Kurrajong Heights, at the other end of Bells Line of Road was also something of a hill-station, and there were private retreats scattered right along the western railway from Glenbrook to Mount Victoria.

All this happened quite late in Victoria's reign up on the mountains. Relatively little heritage had been generated on the plateau by Europeans in the half century from 1820 to 1870. On the other hand, the purpose of building the successive roads, Cox's, Lawson's, Bell's, Lockyer's, Mitchell's, was to populate the plains beyond with men, women and children, heavily outnumbered by cattle and especially by sheep. So while the mountain top slept, new service centres grew up among the new farming properties during that initial fifty years: Little Hartley, with two or three inns; Hartley with a Mortimer Lewis court-house in honey-coloured stone; Old Bowenfels with



Rosedale today. Photograph Ian Jack, 1997.

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<sup>1</sup> L.A. Meredith, *Notes and Sketches of New South Wales during a Residence, 1839-1844*, Murray. London 1849, chapter 8, 73.

<sup>2</sup> B. Field, 'Journal of an Excursion across the Blue Mountains, October, 1822', reprinted in G. Mackaness, ed., *Fourteen Journeys over the Blue Mountains of New South Wales, 1813-1841*, part 2, 1950, Dubbo 1978, 57.

<sup>1</sup> G.C.Mundy, *Our Antipodes or, Residence and Rambles in the Australasian Colonies with a Glimpse of the Gold Fields*, Bentley, London 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1852, I 187.

*Continued from page 8*  
 the earliest National School over the Mountains in 1851. There were Rydal, Capertee, Ilford and Rylstone while, of course, by 1870 Mudgee was a thriving country town, with municipal status in 1860, before the railway over the Mountains was even begun. The graziers modified the landscape over the Mountains long before comparable changes were made to the mountain plateau environment. Despite the distances to the coastal markets over indifferent roads, Hartley, the Bathurst Plain and all the expanse of country out along the Macquarie and Cudgegong Rivers were well settled between 1820 and the 1860s.

There is a wonderful pastoral heritage in the inner Central West, reflecting this first wave of expansion by European animals and European people beyond the Mountains. The earliest surviving homestead over the Mountains was built by John Grant in Kanimbla valley in 1822. Collits' Inn in Hartley Vale gets all the popular interest, but Grant's intensely private farmhouse, which cannot even be glimpsed from any public vantage point, is older and just as significant. Moyne Farm has not only a striking early homestead, but it has outbuildings, archaeological sites and a private cemetery as well, set in a lovely rolling landscape, cleared of most trees for 180 years.

On the Cudgegong, north-west of Mudgee, there are the two Rouse properties, Guntewang and Biraganbil. Although the two-storey homestead at Biraganbil has gone, the Rouses' farm-town of the 1840s survives and the outbuildings are really more important than the demolished homestead. Biraganbil farm-town is certainly far rarer than a decent homestead. I took this photograph in 1985 and I don't know what has changed over the last twenty-four years. But when I was there, the whole square was intact: a wooden store on the front left; in the middle distance shops and huts; in the central foreground the wooden stables and to the left beside the trees the fine brick stables.

The other side of Mudgee is Cox country and George Cox, son of the

road-builder, built up his family's holdings, and made a statement with his new homestead of Burrundulla in 1864. The Central West also contains suites of more modest country buildings. There is a great variety and there is no time to do them justice. Just a few quick examples. The original Suttor homestead at Triambil was built of red-box slabs in 1833.

The wooden house was replaced by a stone homestead in 1851, but the old one was retained. A century ago, the slabs were rearranged horizontally instead of vertically, so it gives a misleading impression of early building techniques.

Slab huts do, however, survive intact with the slabs still vertical. They were built conservatively by their owners, using traditional methods, right into the twentieth century. But to find these one usually needs to go to more marginal land.

My favourite slab hut is the one in Kanimbla Valley built by Peter O'Reilly, and immortalized in his son's book, named, like the hut, *Cullenbenbong*. The beautiful thing about Cullenbenbong today is that the interior is still intact, with tools still hanging on the slab walls and the fireplace waiting for kindling. It is this continuity of purpose and preservation of character which makes some of these special places extra-special.

I have also an extra-special spot for Billy Maxwell's hut in Kedumba Valley. I like this hut because it was built as recently as

1925, but reflects all the techniques learnt by Billy's father, William Maxwell, in the 1850s and we have a wonderful photographic record of the 1890s farm close by. William Maxwell's subsistence holding in the remotest corner of Kedumba is no less complex or extensive than the farm-town at Biraganbil but it represents a different social world.

As well as slab buildings, there are exceptional collections of rammed-earth houses and barns in the area, particularly but not exclusively in Kanimbla and Megalong Valleys. They make an interesting subject for a talk in themselves, but perhaps some other time.

Pastoralism is, of course, only part of the heritage of BMACHO's interest area.

The impact of the train on the land over the Mountains after 1870 enabled access to coastal markets for all heavy goods produced in the west. And as well as sheep and cattle and their by-products, wool and tanned hides, there were minerals over the Mountains: most notoriously gold, of course, but also copper, silver, lead, marble, oil-shale and coal. None of these was exploited in the area which is now the City of the Blue Mountains, except for some coal and oil-shale on both sides of Narrow Neck at Katoomba, as we all know from the enlightened tourism activities of the Hammon family at the Scenic Railway. But I have to omit the rich and vital heritage of the diverse forms of mineral extraction, processing and manufacture just over the mountains.

*Continued page 10*



Wingebelaley, formerly Cullenbenbong. Photograph Ian Jack 1997.

# HERITAGE WEBSITE LAUNCHED



A new Internet website [www.bluemountains.heritage](http://www.bluemountains.heritage) for the Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations has been launched.

The committee towards the end of last year decided to develop a website and sought quotations for this work.

Thanks to a not insignificant amount of work by Barrie Reynolds and a local resident, Peter Hughes who has demonstrated the IT expertise required for this project, a website is now online.

There is still more work to be done for this to be completed with some member organisations not yet having provided information about their activities and objectives.

The home page is a heritage photograph of Katoomba's main street.

BMACHO affiliated organisations will have direct links to their own website while there will be membership and contact details.

There is a page for a brief history of the Blue Mountains region, west to Lithgow and north to the Hawkesbury area.

An icon will open up past editions of **HERITAGE**, BMACHO's newsletter while the events calendar will also be easily accessible

## Character of BMACHO's Constituency

*Continued from page 9*

That exclusion zone, I'm afraid, includes the industrial towns first of Lithgow, then Portland and finally Kandos, with all their rich panoply of workers' housing as well as their industrial complexes and their industrial archaeology. That is another and different talk, very close to my heart.

The relationship of the heritage of the Blue Mountains plateau to the heritage of the land beyond is intense. The two areas have intertwining and inseparable histories.

But the themes are different or develop differently. The pastoralism of the central west in the Georgian and Victorian period has no parallel on the mountain plateau, but was nonetheless dependent for its existence and its success on the roads across the mountains.

The industrial and extractive activity in the west after the railway came in the 1870s and 1880s has virtually no equivalent on the plateau in this later period.

But the railway had a greater influence on the occupancy and exploitation of the mountains than the earlier roads had had, for it brought tourism and all its attendant services.

And tourism in its turn used the roads in the twentieth century on the mountains alongside the continuing use of the train.

The charabancs went on down Berghofers Pass in the 1920s or down Victoria Pass thereafter and brought tourism to the central west: there is a charming photograph of another charabanc parked outside Hartley court-house in the 1930s. Everywhere one looks, one notices that the mountains are enmeshed with the west, and especially with the inner central west. The heritage of the mountain plateau in one way stands alone. The heritage of the adjacent local government areas to the west, Lithgow, Rylstone, Greater Bathurst, Mudgee, Oberon, bears more similarities one to the other than it does to the mountain plateau. But the heritage of the central west is a reflection of the communication system across the mountains from 1813 onwards. The road and the railway had different impacts on the two areas, so there are different aspects to the heritage strengths of the constituent parts of BMACHO. Common interest, common needs and common threats to heritage give our mini-federation a *raison d'être*. We are stronger together than we can be separately and we have all much to learn from each other. May BMACHO flourish.

## WALKS AND TALKS

Glenbrook Historical Society conducts an interesting program of "Walks n Talks" each month.

A copy of the 2009 program is available by contacting Doug Knowles on 4751 3276 (let the phone ring – he's probably in the garden). Doug will provide details for meeting place, time and grade of walk.

The April 22 walk takes in the Glenbrook Lakes precinct, rediscovering early campsites and railway works.

# Unique Darwiniana in the Blue Mountains

2009 is the bicentenary of Charles Darwin's birth and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of *The Origin of the Species*. And for many years tourists have walked along the banks of Jamison Creek at Wentworth Falls (Weatherboard in Darwin's time) to view the stupendous views of the Falls and Jamison Valley. That story will be retold many times this year in lectures and articles across the world.

Darwin is known mainly for his industrious note taking, his books and for his ill health. He was fond of hydropathic baths to alleviate the latter – a curious relevance for Medlow Bath and other institutions of the Blue Mountains health industry.

It is also known that he married into the Wedgwood family – marrying Emma in 1839. It is perhaps less well known that they had 10 children, 6 boys and 4 girls.

The fifth child, George Howard, was born in 1845. George, like his brothers and indeed, his grandfathers, had scientific enquiry in his blood. He excelled at school, winning a scholarship to Cambridge, obtained a first class degree, became a lawyer for a short time before turning his remarkable brain to astronomy. Here's another coincidence – what is 2009 the international year of.....?

But to go back to the time when George was maybe six to ten..... His mother wrote to Catherine, Charles Darwin's younger sister, enclosing a letter from George written in pictogram style (see Fig. 1), a form that has delighted children over the ages and adults such as Lewis Carroll (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson). Can you read it? Here is a start:

Eye (I) ham (am) going to the Crystal Palace (?) next moon



(Mon) day hand (and) the fountains (rain) s r (are) going 2 (to) flowing liquid (pour).....

Later on he says the baby is vomiting and we have sent for the doctor to give medicine to him.....you can work out the rest yourself!

On the reverse of this original letter there is a note signed E(mma) D(arwin) :

My dear Catherine  
 Etty or I will write soon  
 Yours  
 E. D.'

Etty is Henrietta Emma , who was born two years before George. Etty married Richard Buckley Litchfield in 1871. Richard wrote a biography of Thomas Wedgwood, who was a relatively unknown pioneer of photography. Etty, however, not only wrote a memoir of her husband, but also a privately printed two volume collection of her mother's letters published by Cambridge University Press in 1904.

This and another rare item of Darwiniana held in the Blue Mountains will be discussed in the next issue of *Heritage*  
 Contributed by Dr Peter Stanbury, OAM a committee member of BMACHO and board member UMAC (International Committee for University Museums)

## Zig Zag to launch Footplate Experience project

The Zig Zag Railway is planning to launch a Footplate Experience program at the beginning of 2010.

The Footplate Experience would see you driving and firing a steam train for the day.

You will get to experience lighting up the engine and preparing the engine over the pit, before departing up the steep grades that are the Great Zig Zag Railway.

The cost for this once in a lifetime experience will be approximately \$1,000.

The Railway still has a great deal of regulatory and operational work to complete before the Footplate Experience Program can begin.

If you would like to keep informed of the progress of the Footplate Experience to [www.zigzagrailway.com.au](http://www.zigzagrailway.com.au) to register your e-mail address.

Open everyday except Christmas Day the Zig Zag is a full size, narrow gauge tourist railway located at Clarence, 10 km east of Lithgow.

Built in the 1860s, the line was constructed to transport people and produce from the western plains of

NSW to Sydney. It was replaced in 1910 by a 10 tunnel deviation.

The trains, track and rolling stock are maintained and operated by the Zig Zag Railway Co-op Ltd, a voluntary, "not for profit" co-operative.

## Mt Wilson in autumn

To raise funds for the activities of the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society, a market weekend will be held at the Mt Wilson Village Hall during the ANZAC weekend.

The activity will take place between 10am and 4pm on Saturday and Sunday, April 25 and 26.

Books, plants, household items, toys, clothes, china, handmade items, glassware, pottery, old wares, new wares, jams and cakes will be on sale.

Devonshire teas, hot food, cakes and drinks will be available.

For more information, telephone 4756 2063.

## Scandals, crime and corruption

History Week 2009 which will run from September 5-13 will be a wild journey through the dark shadows of our past. Discover the scandals, crime and corruption that have shocked us over time.

Registrations for History Week 2009 are now open and will close April 9, 2009. Free online registration of local events can be made by e-mail to [office@historycouncilnsw.org.au](mailto:office@historycouncilnsw.org.au)

History Week was initiated by the History Council in 1997 to showcase the rich, diverse history being produced by organisations and individuals across the state. With over 200 events across NSW, History Week is about celebrating the best in community and professional history, highlighting its role in our cultural life and inviting people to get involved.

During History Week, community groups, local councils, libraries, archives, museums, universities, cultural institutions, professional and amateur historians across NSW open their doors to present the latest in today's historical research - fascinating stories, artifacts and experiences about both our past and ourselves today.

## School Holiday Family Entertainment -

The Acting Factory will be presenting 'Little Red Riding Hood' in the April school holidays at Norman Lindsay Gallery.

Seven performances of The Acting Factory's 'Hansel and Gretel' were held in the grounds of the Norman Lindsay Gallery during January.

Altogether just over 1,000 people attended the shows, which were aimed at families and many enjoyed picnicking under the trees after the show.

Call Norman Lindsay Gallery on 02 4751 1067 for details of performance

## 'When the Trumpet Calls' -

A new exhibition 'When the Trumpet Calls' - Norman Lindsay and WW1: at the National Trust's Norman Lindsay Gallery at Faulconbridge, open from March to June, 2009 is attracting considerable interest.

Original posters, handbills and recruiting material with a selection of reproductions of cartoons from 'The Bulletin' are displayed.

Norman Lindsay's cartoons and recruiting material of World War 1 were powerful images to encourage enlistment and vilify the enemy.



Image: Australian War Memorial Negative number ARTV00027 Copyright

# HERITAGE SITE MONITORING PROJECT

The Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) has responsibility for maintaining a register of heritage listed sites within the region. In their *Cultural Strategy 2006 – 2016* council stated their intention to develop a monitoring program for heritage listed sites.

At BMACHO's request, in 2007 Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society agreed to undertake a pilot project to develop and trial a mechanism for recording changes to local heritage listed sites as they happen.

It is hoped a simple ongoing record of changes will be useful when a major review is undertaken every 10

years or so to update information on both the BMCC register and the State Heritage Register.

A simple database was established, listing the 44 local sites, using the council's ID number, the name and location of each site and with space for recording any changes.

As a baseline volunteers from Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society were able to use the draft report from Dr Ian Jack's review of heritage sites in 2004.

It has become a relatively simple matter to record changes which have been observed. Volunteers have used lay terms, simply noting

what has happened and what year. The pilot phase of this project is completed and an ongoing record is being maintained.

In due course when council's information on heritage listed sites is available on line BMACHO will negotiate the transfer of current information onto their database and that of the NSW Heritage Branch so that all lists are up-to-date.

"Once the BMCC list of heritage sites becomes available on line, we will happily share what we have done should other groups be interested in a similar project," said Florence Smart, secretary of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Society Inc.

## BLUE MOUNTAINS ASSOCIATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE ORGANISATIONS INC.

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**THE ORGANISATION** Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Organisations Inc. (BMACHO) was established in April 2006 following a unanimous response to a proposal from Prof. Barrie Reynolds at the 2004 Blue Mountains Local History Conference which sought from Blue Mountains City Council the creation of a cultural heritage strategy for the city.

BMACHO in its constitution uses the definition: "Cultural heritage is all aspects of life of the peoples of the Blue Mountains which was later changed to cover Lithgow and the villages along the Bell's Line of Roads. It therefore involves the recording, preserving and interpreting of information in whatever form: documents, objects, recorded memories as well as buildings and sites."

The objectives of the organisation are

- i. To raise public consciousness of the value of cultural heritage.
- ii. To encourage and assist the cultural heritage activities of member organisations.
- iii. To initiate and support cultural heritage activities not already covered by member organisations.

One of the aims of BMACHO is to bring the various bodies into closer contact, to encourage them to work more closely together and to provide a combined voice on matters of importance within the heritage sector.

**MEMBERSHIP** The following organisations are members of BMACHO: Blue Mountains City Library, Blue Mountains Historical Society Inc., Blue Mountains Family History Society Inc., Blue Mountains Tourism Limited, Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute, Cudgegong Museums Group, Friends of Everglades, Friends of Norman Lindsay Gallery, Glenbrook & District Historical Society, Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society Inc, Lillianfels Blue Mountains Resort, Lithgow Mining Museum, Lithgow Regional Library – Local Studies, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, Mid Western Regional Council Library, Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens, Mt Victoria and District Historical Society Inc., Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine History Society (including Turkish Bath Museum), Mudgee Historical Society, Mudgee Regional Library, National Trust of Australia (NSW) - Blue Mountains Branch (including Woodford Academy), National Trust of Australia (NSW) - Lithgow Branch), Scenic World – Blue Mountains Limited, Springwood & District Historical Society Inc., Springwood Historians, Two Centuries of Elegance, Valley Heights Locomotive Depot and Museum, Zig Zag Railway. The following are individual members: Ms Wendy Carlson, Ray Christison, Ms Pamela Hubert, Associate Professor Ian Jack, John Leary OAM, John Low, Professor Barrie Reynolds, and Dr Peter Stanbury OAM.

**COMMITTEE** The committee for 2009-10 is: John Leary, (president) Ian Jack (vice president), Barrie Reynolds (secretary), Jean Arthur, Ray Christison, Lyn Fowler, Doug Knowles, Kathie McMahon and Dick Morony (public officer), Peter Stanbury.

**AFFILIATIONS** BMACHO is a member of the Royal Australian Historical Society Inc.

**HERITAGE** is BMACHO's official newsletter.