

Heritage

*Newsletter of the Blue Mountains Association of Cultural
Heritage Organisations Inc*

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Acknowledgement of Country

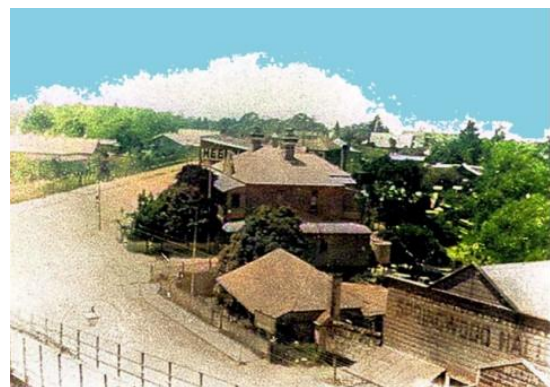
BMACHO acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present and emerging Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Springwood Picture Theatre (Roxy Theatre, Plaza Theatre)

The Springwood Picture Theatre (Roxy Theatre, Plaza Theatre) opened on 27th January 1923 at 288-290 Macquarie Road, opposite the subway that leads from Macquarie Road to Ferguson Road. The Blue Mountain Echo reported that *Springwood is awakening to the demands of progress on Saturday the newly-built picture theatre will be opened to the public. Mr H Williams, who is responsible for the enterprise, is deserving of all credit as a community builder and success for his initiative.* It was originally an open-air theatre (a large shed without a roof), but was soon roofed in due to unrest from the community!

THE BLUE MOUNTAIN ECHO. SEPTEMBER 25, 1909.

The Springwood Hall was again in use on Saturday, when a biograph show was the order of the evening. The pictures were very fair, but could certainly be improved on. The local people are always prepared to pay for a good show, but some of these picture shows are very poor.



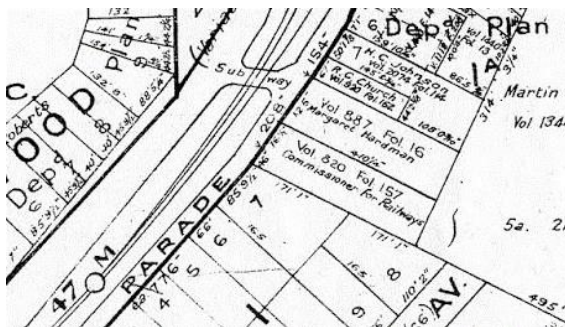
Honeysett Hall at lower right

Initially a 66ft x 30ft weatherboard community hall was built nearby in 1908 on land owned by William Honeysett, next but one to the Royal Hotel (the Criterion Hotel between) and opposite the station. Community events were taking place there by early 1909, including film screenings - which were no longer a novelty, but which were attracting some less than enthusiastic reviews. Springwood Hall, as it was known, was

included among the venues proclaimed on 1st August 1909 under the newly introduced N.S.W. Theatres & Public Halls Act. However, in 1921 a fire destroyed Honeysett's Hall and several other adjacent buildings. Honeysett decided not to rebuild and constructed a garage instead.

The new Springwood Picture Theatre was located on Lot 7 Section 1 on Macquarie Road, adjacent to and almost opposite the railway underpass to Ferguson Road. During World War I the land was owned by the Goldsmith family of Katoomba. They had built a dwelling on part of the land and used the remainder as a wood yard. In 1922 the land was sold to Harry Williams, local publican at the Royal Hotel and cricketer, who erected the first purpose-built theatre, which opened in February 1923, being filled to capacity. It was designed by Bernard Albert Dyer, contained seating for up to 450 people which included the unreserved front stalls, and operated twice a week.

To entertain the population, on Saturday January 27, the newly built picture theatre, seating 450, was officially opened by Councillor Percy Wilson. Unofficially, it opened the previous week with the tennis club's very successful euchre party and dance. Films were planned for Wednesday and Saturday evenings, a dance for Friday nights. The Blue Mountain Echo congratulated Messrs. H. Williams and Jones for their enterprise in building "such an elaborately-fitted hall which Springwood had long needed", replacing the old hall which had previously burnt down. It was "second to none outside the metropolitan area".



Lot 7 Section 1 - centre



Royal Hotel 1900

Films were regularly held on Wednesdays and Saturdays, such as Jackie Coogan's *Long Live the King* in 1925, as well as other community activities such as meetings and exhibitions.

Harry Williams then sold off the cottage and disposed of the theatre to Hubert Richard Saul (Bert) in 1926. Saul had come up from Sydney and upon purchase of the Theatre settled in Springwood with his wife Yvonne. They entered into the community life of the town and ran a successful business until Bert suddenly became ill and died in August 1928 aged 43. His wife courageously took over the Theatre and introduced winter skating to generate further income. She also ran a vehicle to Katoomba to convey people to the talkies there.

However, the Theatre was badly damaged by a fire on 14th July 1930. The blaze broke out shortly after 2 a.m. and flames were first noticed coming from the roof of the theatre, by the driver of a Sydney-bound mail train, Charles Shroeder. The driver gave the alarm by blowing the engine's siren repeatedly in the goods yard. The school bell was also utilized to great effect. Local residents were raised and police organised a bucket brigade (they had no fire brigade). The building was saved, although with serious

damage from both fire and water, the cost of damage being estimated by various sources of between £400 and £800. During the blaze a large timber beam fell, and Constable Kent, who was assisting in extinguishing the flames, was struck on the head receiving slight injuries not requiring hospital treatment.

The fire had started near the player piano at the stage end of the hall, and damage was sustained to the stage, wings, roof and seating. The theatre was repaired and reopened as the Roxy Theatre.



Springwood Hall 1932

SPRINGWOOD—Picture Show, Dance and Concert Hall, Winter Skating, no opposition, easily run business, £400 player piano, great opportunity right person, no goodwill asked. PRICE £1200 (terms), property and plant. **H. E. WEBB, SPRINGWOOD.**

Advertisement by H E Webb 1932

Yvonne Saul found that by 1932 she could not continue and advertised the premises for sale through real estate agent H E Webb. Sale did not immediately eventuate, and she was succeeded in the business by her sister-in-law Lilian Jean Saul. Lilian lived on the Central Coast and, and soon offered the Theatre for sale again, leasing the cinema to a new operator named Alan B. Beale who installed talkie equipment. Finally, it was leased and then bought in 1933 by William (Bill) Woodrick of Haberfield and Watson's Bay, who was already involved in the cinema business.

By this time there were complaints being voiced about the quality of facilities being offered by the theatre, and the Council thought to construct a new theatre on the School of Arts site. Interest waned due to costs and Woodrick offered to renovate the old theatre.

Bill Woodrick redeveloped the theatre as the Roxy in a Continental style, with neon lights and floodlighting, a streamlined interior, a new front vestibule, and six months later installed new Magna-Coustian sound. Around this time, he introduced the name 'Plaza' to the Springwood Picture Theatre, although the name *Roxy Theatre* seems to have continued in use. The architects were well-known theatre designers Guy Crick and Bruce Furse. It was hailed in autumn 1937 as *an up-to-date amusement hall...*

[which] will be the scene of many balls and social functions during the winter

Seating numbers were down to 350, although made up to more with the inclusion of the front stalls. Woodrick was always short of funds – perhaps as a result of a recent divorce in 1936.

Two years after adding the new frontage, Woodrick applied to introduce stadium seating in the rear half of the auditorium and extend the screen end of the building - increasing seating capacity from 350 to 498 (using plans he had commissioned again from Crick & Furse). Government permission was granted in June 1939, however a loan negotiated for the work immediately fell through, and nothing was done.

(3292) Theatres and Films Commission,
Sydney, 10th June, 1939.

IN pursuance of the provisions of subsection (10) of section 13b of the Theatres and Public Halls Act, 1908-1938, the Theatres and Films Commission hereby notifies that it has determined the applications referred to it under the said section as set out hereunder.

NOTE.—This determination is subject to the compliance by the applicant with all the requirements of the Act and Regulations thereunder.

F. GAVEN, Acting Secretary.

| Name and Address of Applicant. | Nature of Application. | Name and Location of Theatre or Proposed Theatre. | Commission's Decision. |
|---|---|---|------------------------|
| Mr. W. Woodrick, 85 Chandos-st., Ashfield | Application for approval of alterations designed to provide additional seating accommodation. | Roxy Theatre, Springwood. | Granted. |

Woodrick's Approval



Crick & Furse architectural sketch 1936

In 1940 the Springwood Soldiers Farewell Association held a social evening at the Theatre. Parcels and gifts were presented to recently enlisted men and also portioned out to others who had sailed out during the previous year.

The Theatre was the regular venue for the local annual Flower Show.

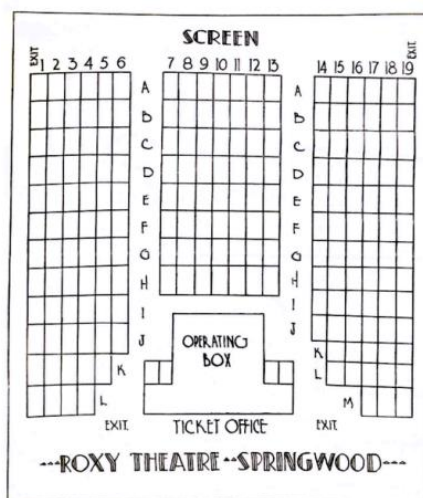
Influenced perhaps by the sudden death of his mother in July 1940, Woodrick decided to move on. In December 1940 a Fred Yardley agreed to purchase the theatre, but due to 'settlement difficulties' the sale fell through.

Then in April 1941 James Arthur Wheeler (1894-1967) bought the Plaza Theatre and remained there throughout the decade.

In December 1949 new proprietors took over – Herbert Henry Martin in partnership with Allan Walter Doolan (who had earlier managed a theatre at Blackheath). The team promptly put in a new screen, upgraded the sound, and made other improvements, including plans for new seating. They had also investigated the possibility of screening at Melrose Hall at Emu Plains, but the committee there rejected the proposal.

In September 1951 Francis Albert Shaw purchased the Theatre.

In the 1950's films were still being staged at the Theatre, including *Up Front* and *Slippery McGee*, and many others. In 1950 a *Back to Springwood* event was held, and refreshments were served at the Theatre. The Theatre was still the venue for community meetings, the flower show and weddings.



Crick & Furth seating plan

ROXY

SPRINGWOOD — Phone 313

THURSDAY, July 31—
 Anthony Quinn, Gina Lollobrigida in
"THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME"
 John Saxon in **"SUMMER LOVE"**

FRIDAY, SATURDAY, August 1, 2—
ANTHONY STEELE in **"CHECK POINT"**
 Richard Egan, Jan Sterling in **"SLAUGHTER ON 10th AVENUE"**

WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, August 6, 7—
RAY MILLAND in **"JAMAICA RUN"**
 William Holden in **"TURNING POINT"**

COMING—FRIDAY, SATURDAY, August 8, 9—
 Dirk Bogarde in **"DOCTOR AT LARGE"**

Roxy Theatre Program 1958

In July 1955 the theatre was taken over by St. Mary's Theatres Pty. Ltd. The company was run by Lisle Freeman Spence and his son Bruce Alexander Spence who promptly set about investing in new widescreen equipment for the building, with CinemaScope launching there on Monday 26th December 1955.

Unfortunately, television arrived in Sydney in 1956, and this soon had a detrimental effect on cinema attendance across the region. *Roxy Theatre* screenings were soon reduced from six days a week to four. Below is the last advertisement for the *Roxy* in known newspaper records. Screenings may well have continued after 9th August 1958 – but with reduced publicity. Later Bruce Spence advised authorities that the *Roxy* had ceased operation by 30th June 1959, and the building stood idle for several years. Spence allowed his screening license to lapse when it fell due 12th January 1961. It was not long after the theatre was formally de-registered, on 17th June 1964.

ROXY THEATRE

★ **SPRINGWOOD** ★

Directed by H. H. HARTER and A. W. DOOLAN.

RESERVATIONS AT THEATRE

Friday, 29th Sept., & Saturday, 30th Sept.

at 8 p.m. at 1.45 and 8 p.m.

BIG DOUBLE FEATURE PROGRAMME

"SWORD IN THE DESERT" (C)

Starring

DANA ANDREWS, MARTA TOREN, STEPHEN McNALLY

Associate Feature—

"SCENE OF THE CRIME" (N.S.C.)

with

Van Johnson, Gloria De Haven, Arlene Dahl, Tom Drake

Newsreel.

COMMENCING FRIDAY, SEPT. 29, at 8 p.m.—

First Episode of New Serial

"MIDNIGHT RIDER OF THE PLAINS," with TEK GRANGER

Also

SPECIAL HOLIDAY ATTRACTION—

Monday, 2nd October, at 2 and 8 p.m.

The Marx Bros. in **"THE BIG STORE"**

also

"SPORTING BLOOD"

Book early to avoid disappointment

Tuesday, 3rd Oct. & Wednesday, 4th Oct.

at 8 p.m. at 2 and 8 p.m.

SPECIAL MATINEE EVERY WEDNESDAY

You'll meet a lot of wonderful fellows in M-G-M's

"BATTLEGROUND" (N.S.C.)

Starring

VAN JOHNSON, JOHN HODIAK, GEORGE MURPHY

ASSOCIATE PROGRAMME OF FEATU'RETTES AND INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Patrons are requested to note that Telephone Reservations may now be made by ringing SPRINGWOOD 92.

THEATRE INFORMATION—Patrons may now make reservations at Theatre on Fridays, 2.30 to 7 p.m.; Saturdays, 10.30 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 2.30 to 7 p.m.

Early Roxy Program

THEATRES AND PUBLIC HALLS ACT, 1908, AS AMENDED.—PROCLAMATION

(L.S.) **K. W. STREET, Lieutenant-Governor.**

I, The Honourable Sir KENNETH WHISTLER STREET, Lieutenant-Governor of the State of New South Wales, with the advice of the Executive Council and in pursuance of the provisions of the Theatres and Public Halls Act, 1908, as amended, do, by this my Proclamation, declare that the provisions of Part II of the said Act shall no longer apply to the public halls specified in the Schedule.

Signed and sealed at Sydney, this seventeenth day of June, 1964.

By His Excellency's Command,
C. A. KELLY.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN !

SCHEDULE

Roxy Theatre, Springwood.

(7374)

License de-registration 1964

In February 1956 a public meeting was held in the Theatre to discuss the formation of the Springwood and District Boys' Club. Equipment and organisers were called for and boys in the Lower Blue Mountains over the age of seven were invited to participate in a wide range of sports. By 1958 the Club had grown considerably and was using the School of Arts building. A Girls' Club was formed about this time using the same premises and they eventually merged into the one club.

As previously noted, the Theatre had closed in 1959 and over the next few years all the cinema equipment was removed. The building was acquired in 1963 by the then Springwood District Citizens Boys and Girls Club, who moved in during 1964. However, by the 1980s it was becoming clear that the old building was inadequate and run down and could not contain the numbers and activities of the Club.



Roxy Theatre 1988

New premises were needed and through vigorous fundraising, government grants and a BMCC loan, a new premises was built at Valley Heights in 1996.

The total demolition of the hall and its replacement by the current Community Health Centre in 1997 have eliminated all traces of the old Theatre from the site.

Patsy Moppett

Note: The reference list is detailed in a separate document issued with this Newsletter.

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From the Editor

Focussing on Springwood this issue we cover a former inn, *The Criterion*, which existed for a short time in the 1870s and then became a residence for the next 43 years. Of course nothing remains to show its existence now. Similarly with the *Roxy Theatre* that stood nearby, which we look at in light of the pending BMACHO Blue Mountains History Conference in May and its entertainment theme. BMACHO has also compiled a list of known purpose-built theatres in the BMACHO region, which makes for some interesting

reading, and will be available at the Conference. Additions and/or corrections to this list are always welcome.

The Editor was asked to undertake an article on Eddy Rock and Lookout at Mt York, and researched this location with interest. It is not just a rock, but now has a twofold reason for recognition, much history being forgotten by us all. So, Mr Eddy has a plaque to honour his particular dedication to the NSW railways system, installed in 1895, as presented by the Mt Victoria community. However, the original story behind the rock's history, and therefore the reason this site was chosen for the ceremony, has no plaque!!!

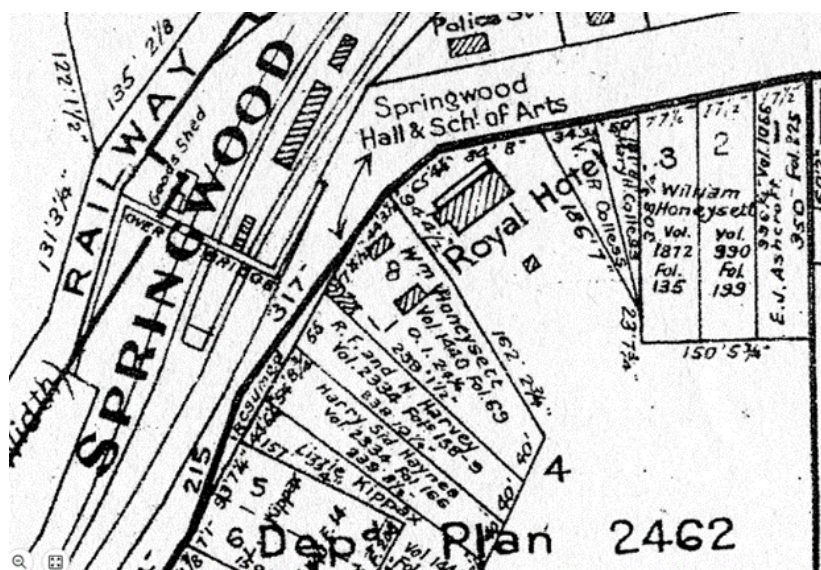
And it is autumn, a prime season for getting out there and exploring our neighbourhoods and region. What better way to do it than with a new book release in your backpack – Keith Painter's *30 Blue Mountains Lookouts* (Eddy Rock included)! You may find places you never knew existed and hear stories that few have ever heard. This book is a must for the bushwalker and historian alike.

With ANZAC Day upon us we pause to remember the fallen of all nations, and those who did return from the various theatres of war and conflict, including many wounded and broken. It is well to remind ourselves of the sacrifice which they all made for our freedom, and the debt we owe them.

Criterion Hotel, Springwood [1876 - 1878?]

The *Criterion Hotel* at Springwood appears to have been constructed by Thomas Boland in 1876, following the closure of his Springwood Inn (Boland's Inn) on Ferguson Road, on the northern side of the railway line. The site of the *Criterion* was across a lane adjoining the south western side of the Royal Hotel. It was described in an advertisement seeking new management in 1877 by licensee John Johnston as including bar fittings and household furniture.

In 1877 Land Inspector Smith was asked by Parliament to address the matter of the old stockade site nearby. In the process of his report, he noted the *Criterion Hotel* had been erected within his survey area, a weatherboard building with its detached kitchen, which he valued at £290. The position of the *Hotel* would have been about opposite the western end of the present railway station.



Criterion Hotel, front of Lot 8

The first publican is uncertain, although *Walking Through History Springwood Town Centre: Blue Mountains Local Studies* suggests it was a John Edwards. However, the 1937 publication *Historical Notes on the Earliest Days of Springwood and District* p.18, suggests that the first licensee was a Mr Smith. This was on advice from Mrs Alice Frawley in 1937, a daughter of Thomas Boland, who had grown up in the town from the age of two. It is possible that she had confused the names, as Land Surveyor Smith was dealing with the property at the time of the Hotel's construction. Around the same time, Thomas Richard Smith (*Red Cow Hotel*, Penrith) was a resident of Springwood. So, speculation is rife!

The Government Gazette of March 1876 details a William Barnard as the next licensee. Although the Hotel appears to have changed hands several times, it remained a popular place for excursions from Sydney, when tourists journeyed to Springwood and other villages along the western railway line for the clear mountain air.



Criterion Hotel 1900

In April 1876 a Grand Picnic took place, with travellers coming via the Zig Zag railway on the Easter weekend (21 crowded carriages!). The event was staged by the Grand Masters' Council of the Grand United Order of Oddfellows. Thomas Haslam was the licensee at the time and advertised in the Sydney Morning Herald that a grand luncheon, hot and cold water were to be provided *refreshments would include wines, spirits, beers and porter, tea, ham and beef, sandwiches, salads etc, provided at the Criterion Hotel, on the grounds.*

Tooth's Tanglefoot beer on draught, and all goods pure as imported.

On the*the delightful grounds....* were to be held cricket, football, *swings and other amusements.....* The Band of the New South Wales Permanent Force were engaged for entertainment. The train left Redfern at 9.30am and returned to Redfern at 6pm.

A few days later *the Evening News* reported on the picnic and the grounds:

..... *The place abounds with cosy picnic grounds, and the Saturday afternoon excursion trains take large numbers to see the magnificent views on the mountains. Various sports, such as cricketing, football, swings, and racing, was indulged in by the excursionists on their arrival, and as an abundance of good cheer was provided at the Criterion Hotel and other places on the ground, there was no cause for complaint.....*

In January 1877 Thomas Haslam was still the licensee. However, by June of that year Mr John Johnston was advertising for a married couple to run the Hotel.

The premises appears to have soon forgone its license. In 1877 Frank Raymond, builder of the Springwood Hotel (now the Oriental), and with concerns for crime in the area, suggested to Henry Parkes that *the Old Criterion opposite the Platform would be a suitable residence for a constable, centrally located so he could watch both the road and the Railway.*

The Criterion became a residence known as Boland's cottage, where Boland lived until his death in 1889.



Criterion Hotel 1918

Royal Hotel centre background, Springwood Hall lower right

On 3rd August 1921 the building and adjacent premises were burnt down during westerly gales and extreme cold on the day, the fire being first noticed about 10pm by Mr Elphinstone, a commercial traveller who lived in the town, in the western end of a row of buildings in the furniture department of Harvey and Melvin's auction mart. Harvey was the senior partner and arrived just in time to save some important papers from the office. Other buildings in the mountains suffered from the wind, with the Springwood School of Arts roof being damaged, and further reports of wind damage at Katoomba. Reports of the blaze spread across the country, from Hobart and Melbourne to Brisbane, from Adelaide to Kalgoorlie, and many places in between. Details varied remarkably! The number of shops burnt down varied from one to nine!

- Office of Harvey, Melvin and Co, estate agents – office and auction mart. The heat of the fire destroyed cash boxes and a safe. They did salvage a sovereign (!) but lost valuable papers and books.
- Mrs A Newman's fruit shop and confectionery, (rented from Harvey) was not insured.
- Mrs Pritchard's refreshment room (she rented her rooms from Harvey, lived on the premises and was uninsured. She was in danger at one point as they had trouble waking her).
- E (A?) Norris's boot shop (rented from Harvey) (drummer of the Leura Jazz Band) was uninsured.
- William Honeysett's Springwood Hall and contents including the piano (built 1908 and was insured).

- Private dwelling of J Anforth, painter and decorator, (owned by William Honeysett – this would have been the former *Criterion Hotel*. One report referred to the dwelling as the old pubbery). Anforths lost almost everything, and the community pulled together to raise some £100 to assist their recovery. A shed at the rear containing Ansforth's tools was slightly charred.

The several small shops were within the larger building owned by R F Harvey. It included a motor garage in which a car belonging to Harvey was stored. It was insured.

Local residents and storekeepers rallied round and some furniture and other property from the buildings was saved. Much of the property being stored for auction was lost, including some belonging to Mrs Evans, but it was all insured.

The value of the loss varied from £2,500, £4,000 up to £5,000. Harvey, Norris and Honeysett were insured but Newman was not. The total insurance was reported to be from £1,250 up to £1,600.

Local volunteer firefighters fought bravely with buckets (the town had no fire brigade) from a scant water supply and were able to save the adjoining brick Royal Hotel, which was partly protected by the separating lane. Some spot fires occurred in nearby yards but were quickly contained. A small dwelling at the rear of the lost buildings was unharmed, but a nearby butcher shop did catch alight, although this was quickly extinguished.

The origin of the fire remained a mystery. The buildings were all weatherboard with iron roofs and never stood a chance.

Patsy Moppett

Note: The reference list is detailed in a separate document issued with this Newsletter.

The Eddy Rock & EMG Eddy

Mt York Reserve

Amongst the plethora of plaques and monuments at Mt York, it is possible to spend several hours wandering around reading this and that, and observing what is there and what obviously used to be there. These days the site is open to camping, and is somewhat overgrown, but still popular with bushwalkers, cliff climbers and day visitors alike. School tours still attend, and bike riders access the site regularly.

Mt York contains memorials to the first nations people, the first explorers, the first survey, the first road builders and the first roads west, and the first Royal mail coachman, among other memorable events and people. It is a peaceful place for remembering aspects of our early heritage.



The Eddy Rock



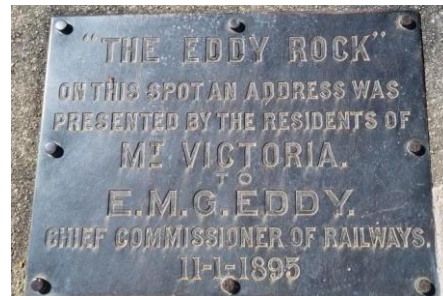
Eddy Rock Lookout

Eddy Rock Lookout

Upon making one's way to the stone archway at the north western corner of the reserve, and continuing on past the Explorers' Wishing Chair (!) the path takes one on to the Blaxland, Wentworth & Lawson/Macquarie Monument. A little more adventuring will take you down some steps a little further to the Eddy Rock Lookout. It is only signposted at the bottom of the steps, so the track is easily overlooked.

Eddy Rock is just that – a large irregular lump of sandstone, long dislodged from the heights above, and balancing on a wide ledge from where an expansive view of the valley below can be seen. Upon the centre top of the rock is a plaque (another one). But it is not remembering the first of anything. It reads:

'The Eddy Rock'
On this spot an address was
presented by the residents of
Mt Victoria.
to
E.M.G. Eddy.
Chief Commissioner of Railways.
11th January 1895



It is an isolated spot, and there are no railways within coo-ee of the site. What must Mr Eddy have thought when the community asked him to attend the presentation at such an out of the way location, and who was Mr Eddy?

Edward Miller Gard Eddy

The Lookout is named for Edward Miller Gard Eddy, Commissioner for NSW Railways. In 1895 Mr Eddy's contribution to the NSW railway system was acknowledged by the residents of Mt Victoria, as the oldest established centre, via the presentation of an illuminated address and an album of mountain views at a ceremony at this location. The presentation was in recognition of his management of the Blue Mountains railway system, and in particular his attention to efficient and punctual railway services to seaside and country destinations. It took place only a few weeks before Eddy left his post as Chief Commissioner of the N.S.W. Government Railways.



The 1895 ceremony, amongst a flurry of umbrellas

A Presentation

The Railway Commissioners were at the time on route via rail to Bourke to inspect the location of a rail line to Barrington. Despite the inclement weather, the trip was paused at Mt Victoria railway station which was suitably decorated with ferns and flags, where they were conveyed to Mt York for the event by a four horse carriage. Many others followed along in drags and carts. No motor cars back then! The Reverend TJ Heffernan made the presentation on behalf of the progress committee.

Mr Eddy found it a most unexpected honour, the acknowledgement being made of good management and improvements to the railways during his term of office. The significance of the site was elaborated upon, that being where the explorers

Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson stood and surveyed the country before proceeding on their exploration of the west..... Mr Eddy graciously accepted the address and acknowledged the many people who had worked with him over his term in office to achieve his goals.



Early views of a pavilion on the rise above Eddy Rock

Background of EMG Eddy - England

Edward Eddy was born in England in 1851 to Edward Miller Eddy, marine engineer. He joined the London and Western Railway in 1865 as a clerk, working his way up and becoming district superintendent of the Chester and Holyhead section in 1875. In 1874 he married Gwen Ellen Lowndes, (nee Roberts), and they subsequently had four children, a girl and three boys.

He became a railway manager, rather than an engineer, and due to his work in improving the operation of the railway to reduce costs and increase traffic, he achieved promotion as Southern division superintendent in 1878. As assistant superintendent from 1885, he became involved in the famous 'railway races' to Scotland.

His wife Gwen passed away and in 1886 he married a second time, to Ellen Wilkinson. In 1887 he was assistant manager of the Caledonian Railway, and the following year he took on the position of chief commissioner of the New South Wales Railways, arriving in October 1888.

To New South Wales

He entered the NSW field under considerable political pressure, which was aiming to make the railways pay their way. Many lines had been built for political reasons but were of no value to the State's economy. He reviewed all rolling stock and made recommendations, but also made staff changes and reductions. He also impressed on Premier Parkes in 1889 the importance of standardization of railway gauge throughout the country. His suggestions were not acted upon, being next considered some nine years later. Even then, with Federation looming, nothing was done.



Edward Miller Gard Eddy

He hunted trade unions out of the railway service and was persecuted by them for his 'unfair' treatment of employees in culling inefficiency. Industrial relations were at a low, and coincided with a series of accidents, which resulted in action being brought against Eddy. In 1892 a Royal Commission was held into the administration of the NSW Railways by Mr Eddy, brought about by William Schey, Member for Redfern. The Commission found that there was no evidence of mal-administration and *that no shadow of suspicion or doubt rests on the honor or integrity of Mr. Eddy, or on the honesty or purity of his action in the management and administration of the Railways of New South Wales.*

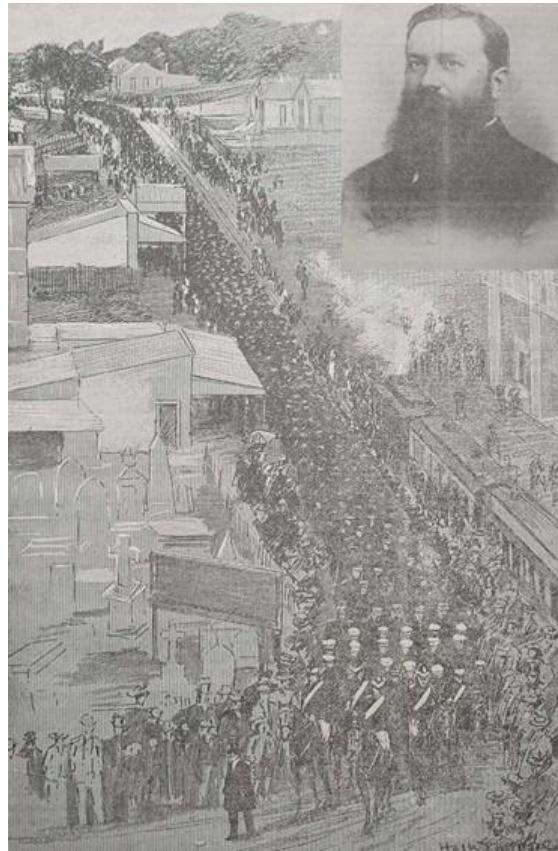
However, his capability for work and organization resulted in the provision of many educational and welfare programs for railway workers and their dependents and was the driving force behind the establishment of the Railway Institute. He reduced staff numbers and increased working facilities without loss of efficiency and engendered a sense of identity among his employees. He introduced more powerful locomotives, better rolling stock and improved facilities at stations. He enlarged the tramway network, trams presenting numerous hazards until he carried out reforms in 1890. He also permitted the first experiments in electric traction. It was Eddy who pointed out that the 1857 suggestion by John Whitton to extend the railway into the heart of the city made sense. It was still some time after Eddy's death that Central Railway Station was built.

His opinions were respected by business, politicians and his staff, who found him diligent but fair in his treatment of those for whom he was responsible. It is said that he excelled in the handling of men and, though a strict disciplinarian, was always just. In 1895 he returned to England on a year's leave and elaborated on his Australian experiences at the International Railway Congress. Despite offers to remain in England, he returned to Australia.

Retirement

However, his health was failing and he was obliged to do away with his sporting activities as a cyclist and his railway responsibilities and to rest a kidney complaint. He and Ellen had made their Sydney home at a large house, *Colebrook*, in spacious grounds on New South Head Road, Double Bay, later owned by James Macken of Mark Foy's. He had retired in May 1895 following receipt of a telegram from Sydney to him in

England advising of the government's inability to grant him a pay rise, as *it would lead to the defeat of the government, and further, place Mr Eddy in a peculiar position.....* His resignation was to take effect upon his return from a trip planned to Queensland.



Sketch of the funeral of EMG Eddy 1897

However, Eddy collapsed suddenly due to heart failure resulting from gout and died on his visit to Wallangara in Queensland on 22nd June 1897, aged almost 47. He was buried at Waverley cemetery in Sydney. He was survived by his four children, and by his second wife Ellen. The awning posts of several railway stations were draped in black and covered with white camellias. The news of his death was received with deep and sincere regret across the community. The public funeral in Sydney was reported to be held in the presence of three thousand railway men, following the procession to the cemetery, forming a well-deserved tribute to his memory.

Eddy had applied for appointment as the chairman of the Board of directors of the South- Eastern Railway Company in England, to follow along from his retirement in NSW, and a unanimous vote of confidence in his abilities and experience had been passed by the Company board. However, it was not to be.

Legacies

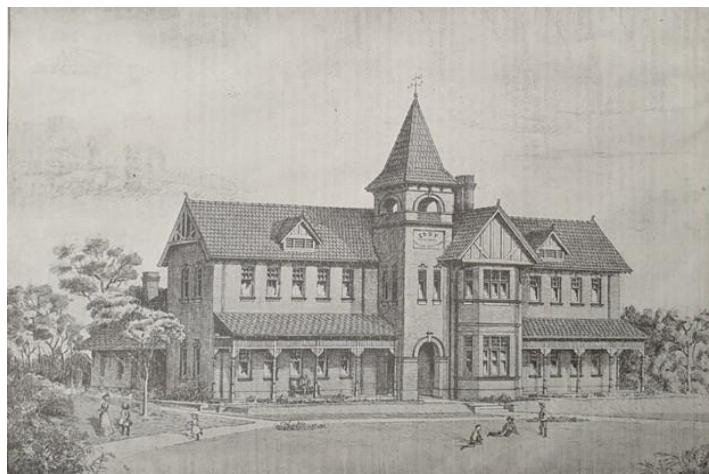
Eddy's legacy was documented as making New South Wales railways:

.....the most efficiently maintained, the best managed, and the most profitable of all the State railways systems of Australasia.

Also: *No abler administrator has ever been connected with railway management in Australia.*

Recognition did not go un-noted after his death:

- **Eddy Railway Orphanage Fund:** On 30 June 1897, a meeting was held of grain, dairy and livestock merchants in order to ‘*formulate some plan whereby some public tribute can be paid to the memory and work of the late Mr Eddy*. Railway employees had decided on the establishment of an orphanage for the children of railway employees, to be known as the *The Eddy Orphanage*, later to be changed to *The Eddy Railway Orphanage*. The board looked for a suitable site for the orphanage having decided on having a purpose-built home rather than altering an existing building. The site finally selected was six acres at Thornleigh, on the Great Northern line in the general area of where Eddy Street, Thornleigh, is today.



Sketch of the orphanage that never happened

This did not eventuate and in place of an orphanage it was decided to retain the Eddy Orphanage Railway Fund in 1904 and for it to be invested as a permanent orphan relief fund, the income being applied for the benefit of orphans of railway men, including scholarships. Variation in the trust for the Eddy Railway Orphanage Fund was sought and obtained and the land at Thornleigh was sold, with the proceeds being invested in the fund. However, by 1948, a report on the fund's operation concluded that very little interest had been taken in the fund by Railway employees or the public. So, neither the orphanage nor the hope for the fund and a scholarship program achieved any lasting memorial for the name of Eddy.

- **Eddy Avenue:** Eddy Avenue in Sydney was built in 1905 during the construction of Central Railway Station.
- **Eddy Street:** This street was named at Thornleigh near the site of the proposed railway workers' orphanage.

Eddy Rock, Blue Mountains: The Mt Victoria ceremony sought to acknowledge Eddy's service to the Blue Mountains in particular, and the NSW railways generally, where he initiated the 'Fish' train, and introduced cheap fares twice a week to encourage travel to the mountains, hence what we now know as Eddy Rock and its Lookout. *Patsy Moppett*

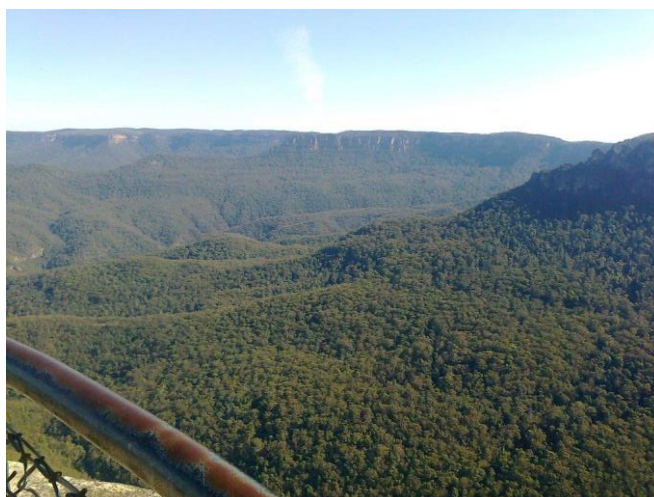
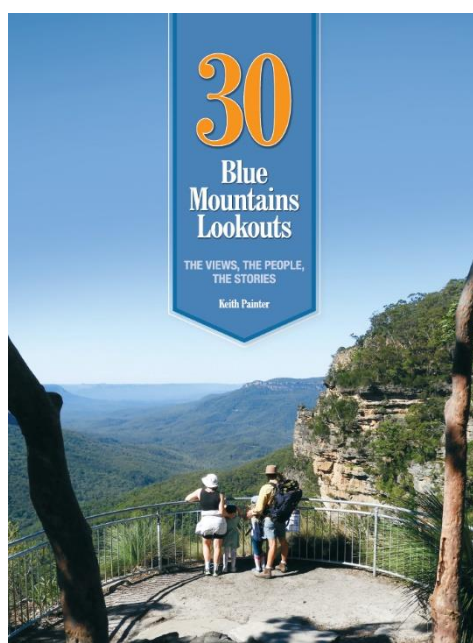
Note: *The reference list is detailed in a separate document issued with this Newsletter.*

Book Release: 30 Blue Mountains Lookouts

By Keith Painter

This interesting new release, a companion to *Fifty Blue Mountains Openings* which was published in 2019, is just as fascinating as its predecessor. If you thought you knew the mountains, think again! Keith advises:

Almost every visitor to the Blue Mountains of New South Wales will visit one or more lookouts. As humans we have this insatiable desire to see more! Let's go to the top of the next hill for a better view! There are hundreds of named lookouts and vantage points in the Blue Mountains. I have selected just 30 of them for you to experience through these pages — and then, hopefully, you will get to visit them one by one. Don't rush! Take your time. Bathe yourself in the beauty of the vistas before you, wonder at the stupendous cliffs and valleys broad or narrow, contemplate the handiwork of the workers who constructed many of these viewpoints. Oh, there is one you can't visit!



View from Sublime Point

The book contains more than thirty lookouts from Mount York to Lapstone with insights into the names, the stories of the people involved, and the nitty gritty of how to get there. During research for this book I have made some interesting discoveries — which I share in the book, for example: who discovered Vanimans Lookout; the people of Abbott Rock; the guy who built a lookout in a tree!

Some of the lookouts covered include Barden Lookout, Anvil Rock, North's Lookout, Sublime Point, Yoogali Lookout, Lyrebird Glen Lookout and of course, Eddy Rock Lookout.

The book is available at a cost of \$40.00 (postage extra) at most mountain bookshops and visitor information centres, and from the author:

Email: kpainter7@outlook.com

PLEASE NOTE THE CLOSING DATE FOR ARTICLES AND NOTIFICATIONS TO THE EDITOR FOR THE JULY-AUGUST 2025 ISSUE OF HERITAGE IS
Tuesday 25th June 2025

Community events & updates

Blue Mountains Rail Trail

The Blue Mountains Rail Trail has been created by Chris Webber of Blue Mountains Historical Society, with sponsorship from Blue Mountains and Lithgow City Councils. It brings together thirteen different sites throughout the Greater Blue Mountains, from Lapstone to Oberon via Lithgow.



The project provides opportunities to walk or cycle old tracks, ride steam trains, visit rail and industrial museums, ride a construction tramway and explore tunnels, along with experiencing glow worms and magnificent scenery.

The Trail features a colour brochure and a website, which provide further information on each site, and links each site via QR code. The website contains limited information at present, but is linked to other Blue Mountains walks, and will be expanded when further information comes to hand.

So start planning for the next school holidays for a lengthy visit into the history of rail in your region.

www.bmtrail.onfo

Show and Tell Presentation

BMACHO staged a half day event in March 2025 to allow people to come together and tell some stories, sharing their own heritage.

Each attendee brought along an item/items and shared with the audience a short story of provenance. This included:

- David Santleben – A framed painting on silk from India presented to him in 1994 in appreciation by a very satisfied customer!
- Kate Santleben – read an extract from her book award winning book of short stories *Crowd Surfing*.
- Terry Dernee – a metal artifact unearthed in her garden at Warrimoo, yet to be identified!
- Fiona Burn – shared a small Harbour Bridge opening souvenir item, in the form of a battery from 1932, and a candlestick holder from 1946.
- Phil Hammon – a cable cradle and piece of rope from the 1886 Bleichert railway infrastructure at Katoomba.
- Jan Koperberg – spoke about her uncle Reginald Lea, a prisoner of war at Sandakan, and she shared a scroll sent to her grandmother from King George VI after Reg died at Sandakan.

- Patsy Moppett – share some artifacts from her grandfather’s time as a prisoner of war in Changi, 1942-1945.



Bleichert cable cradle and rope



Candleholder and Harbour Bridge souvenir



Painting on silk from India



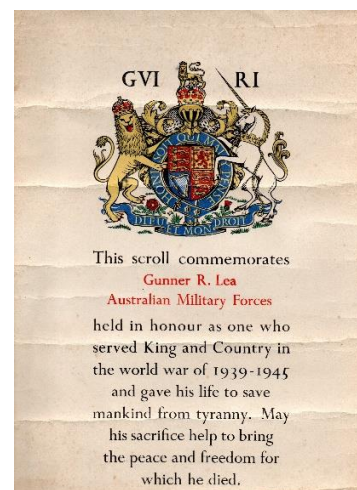
Changi artefacts

Networking occurred over morning tea, and it was agreed that the presentation, despite the small numbers in attendance, was well worth the morning and requests were made all round to hold the event again.

The event was held upstairs at the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub at Springwood, supported by the 2024 BMCC Community Assistance Grant.



Terry's mystery object – can you help – any ideas welcome!!!!



Jan's scroll



Another view of the mystery object

Note: Any thoughts on the mystery object may be directed to BMACHO as per the contacts at the end of this Newsletter.

Blue Mountains Historical Society – Annual McLaughlin Lecture **Paul Sorenson: His Life and Career**

The Society's Annual McLaughlin Lecture was held on Saturday 1st March 2025 at Wentworth Falls School of Arts Theatre at Wentworth Falls.

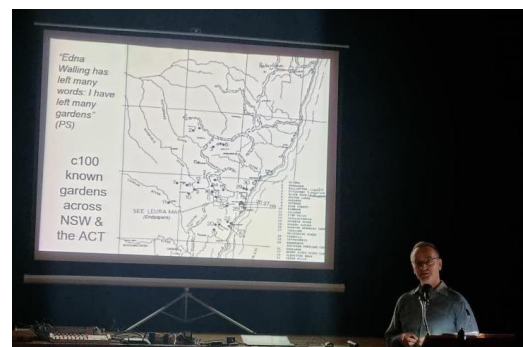


Paul Sorenson

Stuart Read, Senior Heritage Officer, Heritage NSW, gave an illuminating presentation on the life and career of garden designer and nurseryman Paul Sorenson, as well as presenting views of many of his garden designs. This Danish born nurseryman and 'place maker' worked on over 100 private projects spread across NSW over the course of several decades. While best known for his Blue Mountains gardens, he worked on gardens in Canberra, Illawarra, the Central West and on the New England tableland.



Introduction by Society President Phil Hammon



Stuart addresses the group

The Lecture was very well patronized, and attended by about 125 people, many of whom were avid gardeners and familiar with the designer's work. The Blue Mountains Historical Society are to be congratulated on the success of the event.

Woodford Academy Open Days 2025

Open Days at the Academy includes a full guided tour of the building in the entry fee. The events planned for 2025 include:

- 17 May: The Academy's Convict Heritage - Historian Trudi Cooper talks about Woodford's early origins as a roadside Inn and its convict heritage.
- 21 June: Artist in Residence presentation: Joel Lambeth
- 19 July: Hazelbrook Heritage 36th Anniversary - 36 years ago Mary Campbell, Eileen Cranston, Joseph McKay, Neryl Medcalf, Laurel Pracy and members of the Hazelbrook Public School Parents & Citizens Association published *Hazelbrook heritage: a social history of Hazelbrook and Woodford*. This talk will acknowledge the detailed research that went into the project and how it provides a valuable insight into the early history of the Central Mountains.
- 16 August: Artist in Residence presentation: Joel Lambeth
- 20 September: Artist in Residence presentation: Gail Priest
- 18 October: The Building Speaks - Interactive Tour - The history of the Academy as told by the building itself. An interactive tour of the building placing the structure into historical context - the simple beginnings of a roadside Inn, new wealth from the goldfields, the cut price additions of a bankrupt manager, the stylish additions befitting a salubrious guesthouse. This is an interactive tour through the building for a limited number of people.
- 15 November: Artist in Residence presentation: Gail Priest

In addition, you may be interested in the following:

Working bees will be held regularly to assist with dusting, vacuuming and cleaning the building, along with general grounds maintenance and garden care. Working bees are informal and fun and they supply morning tea. Please contact them if you would like to join their team.



Weekly collection management sessions are held every Thursday from 09:30am to 3pm under the guidance of Collection Coordinator, Linsi. Refreshments are supplied but bring your own lunch.

Management Committee meetings are held on the second Wednesday of every month from 11am in the Dining Room. If you have an idea for an Academy event or activity feel free to put together a proposal for the committee's consideration. New ideas are always welcome!

For general enquiries contact <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/join/>

Mothers' Day at the Valley Heights Railway Museum

Get along and enjoy brunch in the Gallery on Sunday 11th May from 10am to 3pm! Yes, brunch all day!

Join the crew for brunch in the Gallery and a ride on the 1890s Sydney Steam Tram.

Available sessions are:

- 10.30am brunch + 12 noon tram ride
- 12 noon brunch + 11am tram ride
- 1.30pm brunch + 1pm tram ride

Or visit the museum, steam or diesel hauled train rides aboard the Valley Heights mixed or the 1890s Sydney Tram. Select a train ride departing 11am, 12 noon, 1pm or 2pm.



Information and online bookings may be had via their website

www.valleyheightsrailmuseum.info

Blue Mountains History Conference 2025

The next Blue Mountains History Conference is looming on **10th May 2025**, with the theme being *'The Show Must Go On!'*, covering entertainment and the arts, theatres and cultural development over the years across the Blue Mountains.

Richard White will be the keynote speaker, presenting the Ian Jack Address.

Other speakers who have been confirmed include Colin Semmler, Kate O'Neill, John Lanser, Lowell Tarling, Lorraine Corne and Robyne Ridge. Most exciting will be a radio play to be presented by Blue Mountains Radio Players!

A raffle with some lucrative prizes will be undertaken on the day! Raffle tickets can be purchased before the event and on the day of the event. The raffle will be drawn just before the close of the conference. Tickets are one for \$5 or three for \$10. Contact BMACHO by email if you wish to purchase tickets before the day.



The venue will be the Carrington Hotel at Katoomba which provides limited onsite parking but with ample community parking nearby, and close access to the railway station for travellers. Considerable accommodation opportunities are available at the Hotel and in the vicinity.

The Carrington, of course has been a premier venue for entertainment and the arts from its construction in 1881-1882 through until today.

Bookings: Available via Eventbrite. Look for Blue Mountains History Conference 2025.

Cost: \$85 per person. Early bird booking has now closed but there a few of tickets left.

Time: Saturday 10th May 2025 from 9.00am to 4.30pm. Registration will open 8.30am-8.45am

Where: The Ballroom, The Carrington Hotel, 15-47 Katoomba Street, Katoomba

*If you are a member of BMACHO and you would like further information, or if you would like to become a member, please email BMACHO at committee@bluemountainsheritage.com.au
For general information about BMACHO, see <http://bluemountainsheritage.com.au>*

Annual General Meetings

Nepean District Historical Society

Meeting held 22nd February 2025

President: Phillip Braham

Vice President: Craig Werner

Secretary: Trish Montgomery

Treasurer: Harry May

Business & Museum Manager: Jennifer Hotop

Site Manager: Tony Grainge

Heritage Officer: Beth Moore

Committee member: Richard Nutt

National Trust: Lithgow Branch

Meeting held 19th March 2025

Chair: Danny Whitty

Vice Chair: Ramsay Moody

Secretary: Celia Ravisi

Treasurer: Ramsay Moody

Committee: Tony Ravisi, Mark Aldrin, Susie Moody

BMACHO

Meeting held 21st March 2025

President: Patsy Moppett

Vice President: Rod Stowe
Secretary: Jan Koperberg
Treasurer: Phil Hammon
Committee: Fiona Burn, Kate O'Neill, Dick Morony

Blue Mountains Historical Society

Meeting held 5th April 2025

President: Phil Hammon
Vice President: Robyne Ridge
Secretary: Fiona Burn
Treasurer: Vacant
Committee: Steve Davis, John Hill, Chris Webber

GLENBROOK & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc. **'HISTORY WALKS' PROGRAMME 2025**

All on Saturdays Walks led by Doug Knowles and Team Member

- E** EASY gradients. Firm underfoot. .
M MEDIUM. Short steep sections, some rough sections.
H HARD. Steep, rough, 4 to 5 kms.

- March 8 1.30 pm "Glenbrook Lagoon Precinct":** opportunities. Includes Gatehouse No.1 (1867) and the Knapsack refuge sidings (1909). **2½ hrs.**
E Early campsite and railway dam construction (1867) for water supply to the first Glenbrook Railway Station. **1½ hrs.**
- March 29 9.00 am "The Descent to the West":**
M **Mt. York.** Short return walks on the three most historic roads to the West — Cox's Pass (1815); Lawson's Road (1822) and Berghofer's Pass (1909). **4 hrs.**
- April 12 1.30 pm "Lennox Bridge":** and the
E old stone quarry, Brookside Creek, Dunn's Steam Sawmill relics and earth dam. **2½ hrs.**
- May 10 1.30 pm "Eastern Zig Zag Railway":**
M This walk on the 1867 Zig Zag Railway and Knapsack Viaduct extends to the first improvement, the Lapstone Hill Tunnel (1892), East Portal only and the 'wash away' section (1906). **2½ hrs.**
- May 31 1.30 pm "Eastern Zig Zag Railway":**
M This walk is focused on the Knapsack Gully stone viaduct — offering good photographic
- June 28 1.30 pm "The Mountain's Murders":**
E Captain Lee Weller's murder site and first grave. Also rock inscriptions. **1½ hrs.**
- July 26 1.30 pm "Lapstone Construction Railway 1910-1913":** and East Portal of Lapstone Hill Tunnel (1892). **2 hrs.**
- Aug. 9 9.00 am "Duck Hole, Glenbrook Creek":**
H Old roadway construction and pump site for railway water supply to Glenbrook Station (1903). **2½ hrs.**
- Aug. 23 9.00 am "Bull's Creek Dam":**
H Railway water supply. Stone dam, pump site, relics. Paradise Pool. Circuitous walk. **3½ hrs.**
- Sept. 20 1.30 pm "Glenbrook Discovery Heritage Walk":** Historic sites, houses and the 1892 railway route to Lapstone Hill Tunnel, West Portal. **2 hrs.**

Adults: \$10 (Cash please.) Accompanied Children under 16yrs: FREE

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL: Phone Doug on **0414 154 695** or **02 4751 3275** for details on meeting place.

Book early: Limited numbers. Good walking shoes are essential. Please bring a hat and drinking water. **(No dogs please.)**

BAD WEATHER ON THE DAY: Excessive wind or rain could cause cancellation due to hazardous conditions.

BLUE MOUNTAINS ASSOCIATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE ORGANISATIONS INC.

Registered office: 1/19 Stypanra Place, Springwood 2777. Ph: 0410 198 737

Email: committee@bluemountainsheritage.com.au or j.koperberg@bigpond.com

Website: <http://bluemountainsheritage.com.au>

ABN: 53 994 839 952

The organisation: Blue Mountains Association of Cultural & Heritage Organisations Inc. (BMACHO) was established in April 2006 after local historical and heritage societies and individuals recognised the need for the creation of a cultural heritage strategy for the local government area (LGA) of Blue Mountains City Council. The constituency now embraces but is not limited to, the LGAs of Blue Mountains, Lithgow, Hawkesbury and Penrith. BMACHO membership includes historical and heritage groups, museums, commercial enterprises with an historical or heritage component in its core business, local government (local studies units, library collections) and a limited number of individual members by invitation such as but not necessarily academics. The aims and objectives of the organisation are:

1. To raise public consciousness of the value of cultural heritage
2. To encourage and assist cultural heritage
3. 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.

Affiliations: BMACHO is a member of the Royal Australian Historical Society.

Registered Charity: BMACHO is a not-for-profit incorporated association and has been added to the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (ACNC) charity register.

Publications: BMACHO's official newsletter *Heritage* is edited by Patsy Moppett. The annual refereed *Blue Mountains History Journal* is edited by Dr Peter Rickwood and Occasional Papers are published from time to time.

Membership: The following organisations are members of BMACHO: Blue Mountain Education & Research Trust; Blue Mountains City Library; Blue Mountains Family History Society Inc; Blue Mountains Historical Society; Bygone Beautys Treasured Teapot Museum and Tearooms; City of Lithgow Mining Museum Inc; Colo Shire Family History Group; Everglades Historic House & Gardens; Friends of the Paragon Inc; Glenbrook & District Historical Society Inc; Hartley Historic Site, NPWS NSW; Hawkesbury Historical Society Inc; Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society Inc; Lithgow & District Family History Society Inc; Lithgow – Eskbank House Museum and Lithgow Regional Library – Learning Centre; Mt Victoria & District Historical Society Inc; Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society Inc (including Turkish Bath Museum); National Trust of Australia (NSW) – Blue Mountains Branch; National Trust of Australia (NSW) – Lithgow Branch; Nepean District Historical Society Inc; Norman Lindsay Gallery and Museum; Penrith RSL Military Museum; Scenic World Blue Mountains Limited; Springwood Historical Society Inc; Valley Heights Locomotive Depot Heritage Museum; Woodford Academy Management Committee; Zig Zag Railway Co-op Ltd.

The following are individual members: Fiona Burn, Philip Hammon, Dr Wayne Hanley, Gay Hendriksen, Adrian Howie, Ian Milliss, Patsy Moppett, Keith Painter, Dr Peter Rickwood, and Dr Robert Strange.

Committee: The management committee for 2025-2026 (from March 2025) is: Patsy Moppett (President and Newsletter Editor); Rod Stowe (Vice President); Philip Hammon (Treasurer and Membership Secretary); Jan Koperberg (Secretary/ Public Officer); Fiona Burn, Dick Morony and Kate O'Neill.

Finance sub-committee: Jan Koperberg, Fiona Burn, Ian Kendall.

Disclaimer: Views and opinions expressed in the ***Heritage*** Newsletter originate from many sources and contributors. Every effort is taken to ensure accuracy of material. Content does not necessarily represent or reflect the views and opinions of BMACHO, its committee or its members. If errors are found feedback is most welcome.