

Heritage

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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

James Watsford: ‘Not of an age but for all time’

Convict, overseer, carrier, Christian convert, Royal Mail coachman, publican, husband and father

A classic example of the convict made good was James Watsford. James was born on 18th February 1787 at Shipley/Brighton, Sussex in England, a son to John and Elizabeth (nee Shoulder) Watsford.

His convict life began at age 24 when he was tried at the Sussex Assizes for stealing a mare valued at 40 guineas from a Mr Hughes. Watsford then sold the horse on to a farmer nearby. He received the death sentence along with one W Langley, which was then downgraded to transportation for the term of his natural life.

The transport ship *Guildford*, newly built on the Thames in 1810, left England in July 1811 with some 200 convicts on board, including James. They arrived in Sydney Cove in February 1812, with a relatively peaceful voyage via Rio de Janeiro resulting in only one death under the leadership of Captain Magnus Johnson. The *Guildford* was used as a convict transport ship for the next 17 years, the first seven voyages being under Captain Johnson, and was finally wrecked at sea near Singapore in 1831, losing all aboard.

Once in the colony James was assigned as a servant. Servants either worked in the government gangs or were assigned to private individuals. His first master was a Captain Coane an officer in the 73rd Regiment, who had travelled out on the *Guildford* also. Coane left the colony in 1814 and by this time he was able to recommend James for a ticket of leave, which gave James the opportunity to seek out his own employment. In that year he found his niche, working for Hannibal Macarthur, John Macarthur’s nephew, and became overseer of Hannibal’s property at Bringelly.

He also wasted no time in settling down, and in December 1814 he married Jane Johns in St Johns Church of England at Parramatta. He was 26 and Jane was 18. Jane was born

in Sydney in 1798 to Benjamin and Catherine Johns. Benjamin had been a sergeant in the NSW Corps where John Macarthur had been a senior officer. James' and Jane's first child, Elizabeth, was born five months after the marriage. Elizabeth was to be the first of their ten children, which included their son, later the Reverend John Watsford. In August 1815 tragedy almost struck down the little family out on the farm at Bringelly. A group of Aboriginal people approached their hut and James had words with them in relation to a stolen blanket. The resulting conflict found James speared above the groin. Jane too was wounded in the foot whilst tending to her husband. Several labourers were detained while the hut was ransacked. James was taken to the hospital at Parramatta hospital, '*..... where he remains with little hope of his surviving the extracting of the spear head*', as reported by the Sydney Gazette. But survive they did, and in 1817 James began working as coachman to John Macarthur when Macarthur returned to New South Wales from England, where James would remain for the next nine years.



Painting of Elizabeth Farm by Joseph Lysett c. 1823

Watsford managed the stables, the horses and the many carriages owned by the Macarthur family. Watsford and his family were clothed, fed and housed by the Macarthurs, and he was drawn into the broader workings of Elizabeth Farm. James appeared regularly in the estate's daybooks, paid £40 per year, with allowances for boots, and in 1822 Jane was paid for her work as a washerwoman. In 1819, Macarthur paid for shoes, and repairs to '*a house for Watsford*'; this was probably located close to the stables, to the north-west of the main house. Over time the Watsfords become close to, and trusted by, the Macarthurs.

However, the impact of the attack at the Bringelly farm had had a profound impact upon James, and he began to heed the preachings of Wesleyan minister the Reverend Samuel Leigh.

Back in 1815, Leigh had arrived aboard the *Hebe*, and initially began preaching at the Rocks, where there was already a Wesleyan presence. He soon moved to Castlereagh, and by 1817, the first Methodist church in Australia had been built there. Further religious facilities were opened in of Parramatta, Liverpool and at Windsor. James Watsford was one of the first converts to Christianity under Reverend Samuel Leigh's ministry in the colony.

His friendship with Leigh resulted in Leigh's advice to purchase a horse and cart to carry passengers and light parcels from Parramatta to Sydney. The additional income would be beneficial to James's growing family.

As time went by, James became known for his integrity and punctuality, and he moved to acquire a covered carriage and stronger horses, and eventually a stagecoach. A group of settlers set him up with a coach and four horses, with harness they ordered for him from England. He also ran a small coach to run to Penrith, which he named *The Tickler*, driven by Jim Nearn.

By 1820 James and Jane and their family were running the *Coaches and Horses Inn* in Church Street, Parramatta.

In 1826 Watsford applied for and received a full pardon, 14 years after his original sentence was handed down. Macarthur supported Watsford in his application:

Your Petitioner ... respectfully solicits that Your Excellency will be pleased to recommend him to the merciful consideration of His Majesty, and humbly trusts that fourteen years of uninterrupted good conduct may be deemed a sufficient atonement to the Offended laws of his Country to warrant the extension to him of a Free Pardon, which great boon he thus ventures (chiefly on account of his Family) most earnestly to implore. And your humble Petitioner, as in duty bound, will ever pray, I do not know a more honest, faithful, affectionate Servant, a better husband, or a kinder parent to his family. He has served me as a Coachman nearly nine years, and I feel myself bound in justice to offer my humble testimony in his favor, and respectfully to intreat the favorable consideration of your Excellency towards the Petitioner.

JOHN MACARTHUR

James left Macarthur's service and set up his own coaching business, which was soon thriving, and in November 1826 an advertisement from Watsford in *The Australian* thanked the public for the encouragement he had been receiving. His coach runs expanded to include Windsor and Bathurst and Watsford's interests diversified. He was soon running coaching inns to serve his coach runs and was selling horses.

The 1828 Census had the family living at Parramatta, by which time they had seven children. James listed himself as a coach proprietor and stated they were Protestant. They were prosperous and had a number of assigned servants. To assist Jane with her growing family, one Margaret Mahoney, washerwoman, was assigned in July 1832. Margaret came to New South Wales on the *City of Edinburgh* and had been at the Parramatta Female Factory.

In 1832, Elizabeth Macarthur wrote in a letter to her son Edward in England that '*our old servant, Watsford, drives a stage coach from Parramatta to Sydney and back again every day in the week*'.

One observer wrote to the Sydney Monitor, wishing Watsford well in his new venture, *will be crowned with success, and that his meritorious conduct will be noticed by our much respected Governor, [Sir George Gipps] for endeavouring to 'Advance Australia'*.

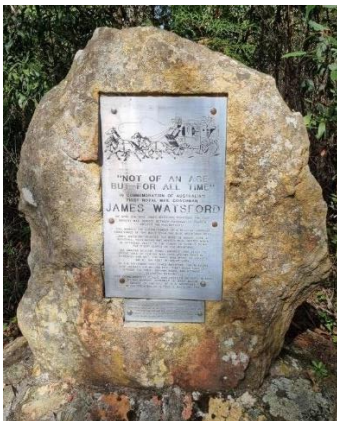
One wonders whether Governor Sir George Gipps did in fact notice our coachman! In September 1833 the Sydney Herald reported that *Watsford, has knocked off running his coach on the Parramatta Road; but in its place, will, during the present month, run one to Bathurst....*

His coaches, carrying the Royal Mail, became a conspicuous part of the Parramatta streetscape. There has been dispute as to whether his was the first to carry the Royal Mail, as it has been claimed that Mr A Beckett may have been in fact the first, running a

coach as early as 1818 from Sydney. Available evidence does not clearly prove either way.

However, James' Royal Mail run had started in 1832 and his run out to Bathurst was via Penrith to Collits' Inn at the foot of Mount York. At the top of Mount York is a monument today which was placed in 1974 that commemorates the initial coach run over the Blue Mountains. The event is particularly memorable due to his incredible journey down the old alignment of Lawson's Long Alley to the Vale of Clwydd after nightfall and in misty weather. The passengers and horses rested at the top while he and the male travellers attached logs to drag behind the coach to slow it down over the steep incline. They spent the night at Collits' Inn and then continued to Bathurst the next day along Cox's Road, approaching the town via O'Connell Plains.

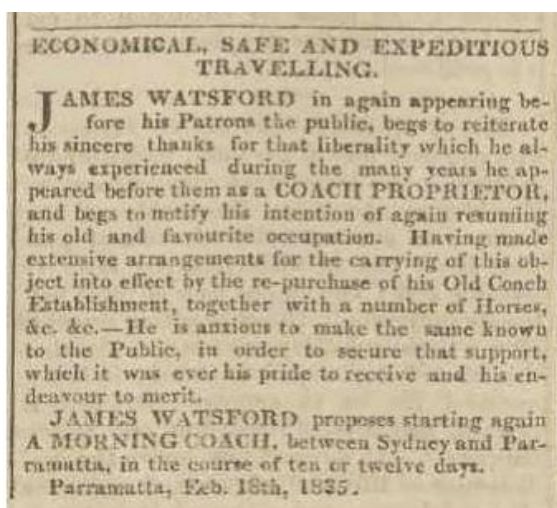
[The plaque at Mt York was unveiled on September 14th 1974 by His Worship, Alderman I. D. Dash, Mayor, Council of the City of Blue Mountains, in the presence of Alfred H. Watsford Esq. The monument is headed 'Not of an age but for all time' and follows on to give an account of that epic first descent of the mountain. The monument is a cairn like structure topped with a piece of uncut sandstone. The plaque is attached to the uncut sandstone surface.]



Monument at Mt York



Royal Mail Coach 1890



James Watsford

In February 1835 James placed an advertisement in the Sydney Times, advertising *Economical, Safe and Expeditious Travelling*.

By 1836 James and Jane were running the *Union Inn* at Parramatta, corner of Church and Phillip Streets. Like many public houses, the *Union Inn* was the scene of many a coronial inquest, such as that of Jane Gorman in 1847 who had fallen from a beer dray. Also held there was the inquest earlier into the death of Margaret Healey in 1844 who had fallen from a dray whilst drunk.



Union Inn & stables 1836

The public house scene in Parramatta had its difficulties, and in running a coach business as well, Watsford had his challenges and enemies. At one period in 1838 rival publicans were known to *plant* female convicts on premises where they should not have been, in order to bring that proprietor's business into disrepute. James junior was a victim here, being accused of having a female convict on the premises at the *Union Inn*. Although he was fined, the jury agreed that he had been set up.

In May 1839 Bent's News and New South Wales Advertiser reported that James Watsford had started:

.... A most elegant light four-horse London-built stagecoach, with superior horses, and a careful driver, to run to and from Parramatta, Liverpool, and Campbell Town, for the convenience of passengers to and from Sydney daily, to meet the steamers at Parramatta....

Later in July the Commercial Journal and Advertiser described the coach as an imported *Tiger* coach:

.... with some superior horses, and all for the accommodation of his Windsor Friends who wish to take a trip to the metropolis by Steam, from Parramatta duly licensed, under the safe piloting of a proved whip and safe keeper.

James himself was described as *Our old spirited, and much respected townsman Mr James Watsford, the great, great, grandfather, as formerly said of all Coach Proprietors in this Colony*

In August 1838 James' and Jane's son John, aged just 18, gave his maiden sermon in the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel. It was reported that with a little practice Mr Watsford would be *an ornament to the society he professes to be a member of.....* James and Jane would have reason to be proud as John went on to become the first Australian to enter the Methodist Ministry, and the first Australian minister to enter into the foreign mission field. Father Watsford, as he was known, missioned in Fiji, and was later posted to South Australia, and Victoria. He died in 1907, leaving a wife and ten children.

So often journalists have a particular and amusing way with words. Such was the description of coach damage after a particularly bad storm at Parramatta in December 1841:

....a coach belonging to Mr Watsford, which was standing near his door, and being unable to withstand the powerful effects of Boreas [the storm], took a thought to make a start, and travel without steam or horse-flesh, and actually travelled thirty yards without a driver, consequently without whip, in perfect safety, much to the amazement and amusement of the eye-witnesses, of who there were many.

James was granted a publican's license at the *Union Inn* in April 1842, and as late as April 1845 he was still being granted the license, although one Edward Drinkwater also held a license for the *Union Inn* from 1835 to 1846 – a different Union Inn, corner of Church and Palmer Streets. It has been recorded that the Watsford family also ran the *Coach and Horses Inn* for a time, although no license seems to have been issued to them. Perhaps they only lived there. By 1845 Patrick Reynolds ran this Inn.



Coach & Horses Inn

In 1842 James lodged a claim with the court of claims for land in Section 9 in the town of Parramatta. It was only 23 perches but had been leased by Sir Thomas Brisbane since 1823 to various persons. James was seeking a Deed of Grant for the land.

We know the family assisted in the coaching business, although not always to the benefit of the community, and 1844 turned out to be a year of misfortune and tragedy. In August 1844 the local court heard an interesting case against James, or his son Henry aged 20:

The offence complained of in this case was for nearly driving over some of the prisoners from the Gaol, as they were proceeding to the Court House for trial, on one of the mornings of the sittings of the Quarter Sessions. As, however, there was considerable difference of opinion amongst the evidence as to the danger the driver of the coach exposed them to, and as the pace at which his horses were moving, the case was dismissed.

On 31st August, James himself was charged with selling liquor to a prisoner of the Crown. The case was proven and Watsford was made to pay a fine. It may be once again, that the family was the victim of persecution, as previously occurred in 1838, as described above.

In October, James' and Jane's son James Jnr died from an epileptic fit at their home, Watsford's public house, apparently according to the doctor, induced by an anxiety of mind. He was aged 28. A jury verdict declared that he died from *the visitation of God*. It appears that he had lately suffered extreme agitation in relation to a newly established coach business in the town, and also that he was concerned for his father's

ill health. This resulted in his coming down with a fever for which he had little regard and he kept working instead of seeking medical assistance.

It is also noted that James Jnr was a noted foot runner and had competed only a few days before in a race at Hyde Park with Sparkes, a Sydney runner. Watsford won the race with four yards to spare, and it was commented that Watsford had not yet been beaten at running.

In November of that year young Henry Watsford and a rival coachman John Smith were racing their coaches up Tavenagh's Hill [sic]. Smith led the way down the other side which was very steep. The court ruled that they were both equally culpable and were given a public warning that they should not allow private animosities to interfere with the lives and properties of their passengers, and in future incidences of this nature would receive a severe penalty.

Over this period James Snr may not have been well and must have been affected by all of the above. He died at Parramatta aged 58 on 8th June 1845 at his home in Church Street, after a lingering illness of over three years. In November 1845 Jane approached the Supreme Court for granting of probate to herself, being the executrix of James' will. In all, James and Jane had twelve children, the youngest being born in 1841, only 4 years before James' death.

James Watsford's achievements show that given the right circumstances, a life sentence need not limit the possibilities for a useful life, although not all convicts had the fortunes of Watsford, which led to his freedom and prosperity. He became a popular Parramatta identity achieving social prominence and success in a world where many convicts were continuing to receive harsh treatment. His integrity is enhanced by John Macarthur's support for his pardon, given that Macarthur was well known for his dislike of emancipists.

The *Union Inn* was located on land probably owned by Richard 'Dick' Webb, a convict assigned in 1813 to John Blaxland until 1819. Surveyor W. Meadows Brownrigg's 1844 Plan of the Town of Parramatta and the adjacent properties show his name on the land. We also know that Richard Webb had a store on the corner of Phillip and Church Streets by 1822. A license was held for the *Union Inn* on the site in 1835-1836 by Edward Drinkwater.



Site of Union Inn, Cnr Phillip and Church Streets, Parramatta (Brownrigg 1844)

The license for the *Union Inn* was then held by James Watsford from 1839 to 1845. James Junior held the license in 1838. After the death of James Senior, Jane ran the inn for a while, but we do know that an Edward Tapp held the license in 1847. From 1853 to 1855 the license was held by Richard Webb and his son Richard Jnr. So Webb had always owned the site. From 1856 to 1859 the *Union Inn* was run by Nathaniel Payten. After James' death Jane went on to run other inns in Parramatta with the help of her family, including the *Talbot Inn* from 1847 to 1848. Jane was one of many lady publicans in Parramatta with most applying for licenses following the death of their husbands. Coaching services were also deemed an acceptable business for women. Jane was a successful proprietor in her own right, and together with her sons, ran inns, stables and the Lion Coach services from Parramatta. An advertisement by Jane in the 1845 Parramatta Chronicle said: "*Cheap travelling, then go by Watsford's four horse coach, one shilling from Parramatta to Sydney coaches from Parramatta at 7:30 pm and 8:30 am from Sydney at 3:30 pm and 4:00 pm.*" Jane died aged 84 in 1882 at Parramatta.

Patsy Moppett

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

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From the Editor

The recent Blue Mountains History Conference at Katoomba was acclaimed a resounding success, bringing together folk from across the entertainment and arts world. Over time, the success of this event serves to share the history of the Blue Mountains and provide networking opportunities for attendees which they may not otherwise encounter. BMACHO looks forward to staging the next conference in 2027. The pending Volunteer Symposium in Sydney should also provide networking possibilities and is aimed at small to medium-sized museums in regional NSW, as well as the workers who support them. The reasonable costs should make this event a must for small museums across the Blue Mountains on strategies for volunteer-run museums, succession planning and other sessions. Members would do well to avail themselves of this opportunity, and details are provided later in this Newsletter.

Our articles of interest in this issue include a look at the mystery of Miss Smithers of Blackheath, and her changes of fortune. In addition, although James Watsford was a native of Parramatta, he was continuously back and forth through the Blue Mountains on his coach runs with the Royal Mail from Sydney to Bathurst. Challenging incidents occurred back in Parramatta involving the family, and the trip down Mt York, which is commemorated on a plaque at the summit, leaves your heart in your mouth.

We look at the quiet location of Linden along that narrowest part of the western ridges and wonder why it was called Seventeen Mile *Hollow*.

The Bush Explorers have been at it again and their latest book is previewed.

We hope this issue provides some absorbing reading as you sit by the fire in this coldest of seasons.

The Mysterious Miss Smithers of Hat Hill Road, Blackheath

Introduction

In 1884 the Sydney based cleric, Canon Hulton Smyth King, bought a large parcel of land (Portion 40) in the northern part of Blackheath on which to erect holiday houses (*Borrisbrook* and *Glenroy*) and he had them placed near to the south-eastern side of Hat Hill Road. Later he had another house erected, c.110m down the slope from Hat Hill Road, which became called *Eythan* and was intended for his third son William Cooper Smyth King (always known as Billy) to occupy after his marriage to the girl from next door Frances (née Symonds) on 10th August 1889. That marriage failed and Frances left with their son Rex on a date as yet unknown but on 14th May 1900 ¹ they were on the ship *Afric* that departed Melbourne for London; in fact, in 1909 the marriage ended in divorce, not that either party ever married again.

With that departure Billy had to fend for himself in a house with primitive facilities and he became lonely and alcoholic until "*an older brother knew of two sisters, who were living alone and suggested that they move to Eythan for company for Billy*" but as boarders. One left without her three children and a "*Miss Spencer stayed as his housekeeper.*"² and brought up those children at Billy's expense. The terms of the appointment are not known but they must have satisfied Alice as she stayed for over 40 years and was there in 1947 when Billy died³.

Miss Smithers

Most of the details of the early years in the life of Alice Smithers remain to be discovered as also is how she happened to get to be in Blackheath in the first place and if she was living in the village before becoming a housekeeper.

Alice Agnes Smithers was born in 1864 ⁴ so although the exact year in which she became housekeeper is not known she is likely to have been aged in her early to mid 40s when she went to live at *Eythan*. She is listed in the 1913 Macquarie/Blackheath electoral roll⁵ so she must have been in Blackheath by late 1912 when that roll was compiled but she is not listed in any of the previous rolls issued in the 20th century. She did not register for the 1903, 1906 and 1909 electoral rolls yet by 1903 women in NSW could vote so that lapse would seem to be out of character (see below). Most probably she was not living in Blackheath by late 1908 and thereby not eligible to enrol and being listed in the 1909 electoral roll but she could have moved to *Eythan* sometime between 1909 and late 1912.

Verbally, the King family are reputed to never having referred to that housekeeper as Alice Smithers only as Miss Spencer and that needs explanation.



Figure 1: Miss Alice Smithers
Photo: courtesy the late Claire White

Alice's parents were married in 1861⁶, her mother Mary Jane (née Miller or Millar⁷) having been born 22 years previously in Londonderry, Ireland⁸ but how and why Mary Jane came to be in Australia at that young age has not been established. William and Mary Smithers had a daughter Elizabeth born in their marriage year⁹ and their second daughter Alice Agnes Smithers arrived in 1864¹⁰. Their mother Mary Jane re-married in 1867 to a William Spencer¹¹ (curiously the marriage certificate¹² has her recorded as a 'spinster!'); that couple provided Alice with six step-siblings viz. Sarah (1868), Hannah (1869), John (1870), Joseph (1873), Margaret (1874) and Mary Jane (1876) all born in the Central West of NSW. When older, Alice MAY have had a lingering resentment of being saddled with the surname Smithers when her mother and six step-siblings were all being called Spencer.

Billy King was often visited by his granddaughter Claire who in later life wrote that:

*"Miss Alice Spencer was the sweetest lady you could ever meet ... she was quite religious"*¹³.

Clearly Alice was very kindly for as well as looking after Billy she is known to have 'brought up' two nephews and a great-niece, Robert (aka Roy), Frank and Ordina Lesley Maude (aka Lesley) Jeffery - some of the children born to her step-sister Sarah¹⁴.

Officially recognised surname

Alice's birth was officially recorded in 1864 in the name of Alice Smithers¹⁵ and she is similarly named in the official record of her death^{16 & 17} in 1953 when aged 88. The recorded details of the unmarked grave in Blackheath Cemetery are in that name too^{18 & 19}.

The land on Section 1, Lot 10 (224 Hat Hill Road) was acquired by Alice Smithers on 12th October 1928²⁰ and it is in that name that the rates were being paid from at least 1934²¹ (collections of copies of rate records prior to that year are incomplete) so as far as both the NSW Department of Lands and the local Council were concerned that was the true surname of the owner and rate payee. The house on that land is, and was, called *Darjeeling* and when in 1934 she paid rates on that property Alice Smithers gave her postal address as "Eythan, Hat Hill Road" which accords with her being known to have

been the housekeeper for William Cooper Smyth King (Billy) at *Eythan*. Billy died in 1947 and a hand written correction to the payee address on the 1946 Rate record for *Darjeeling*²² is dated 1949 which is about when Alice may have left *Eythan* and taken up residence in her own house; the address of *Darjeeling* is 224 Hat Hill Road which is on her death certificate²³. However Alice Smithers, as she was calling herself in the latter part of her life, is listed in the 1951 & 1953 electoral rolls^{24 & 25} as still residing in *Eythan* - another puzzle!

Miss Spencer

When registering to vote and be listed in the 1913 electoral roll the housekeeper lady appears to have renamed herself as the entry is:

*"No.406 Spencer, Alice Agnes, Blackheath, home duties, F"*²⁶

A similar entry is in all subsequent Electoral Rolls up-to and including 1941 but neither Agnes nor Spencer are on the death certificate²⁷.

But in the 1943 electoral roll the elector's name is different being:

*"No.1167 Smithers, Alice. Eythan, Hat Hill road, home duties, F"*²⁸.

so ending a 28 year (1913-1941) use of an assumed surname! In fact the surname of Smithers was used in electoral rolls for the rest of her life the last being in 1953 viz

*"No.1178 Smithers, Alice. Eythan, Hat Hill road home duties, F"*²⁹.

Use of that house name might be thought to indicate that she was still residing in *Eythan* in the year of her death yet the address on her death certificate³⁰, indicates otherwise.

Even though the housekeeper's surname of Spencer was used for decades by the King family, the second 'given' name of Agnes is only known from:

- 1913-1941 electoral roll entries and
- the record of her baptism on 25 December 1864³¹.

The second given name Agnes is not mentioned in the *Sydney Morning Herald* death notice whereas included are both of the surnames she used³² (**Figure 2**)

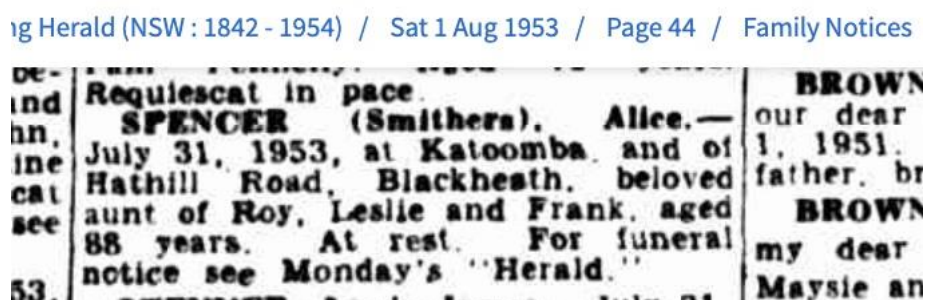


Figure 2: Death Notice for Alice Spencer (Smithers)³³

Conclusion

No legally valid document has been found to indicate that the name change from Alice Smithers to Alice Spencer was officially recognised. And likewise no official recognition is known of the reversal of that change in c.1942.

We can only surmise as to why that lady deemed it necessary to use a different one of her mother's two marriage surnames for separate time spans.

Acknowledgements

Many years ago Robert F. King most kindly shared with PCR the extensive collection of research notes that he had compiled on some of the early residents of Hat Hill Road,

Blackheath. The inspiration for this research on Alice Smithers came from re-reading a few sentences within those notes and seeing the curious notice of her death (**Figure 2**). The late Mrs Claire White, a granddaughter of Billy King, had a collection of family photographs which Blackheath resident and photographer Trish Davies was allowed to scan two decades ago; we thank Trish for recently donating copies of those jpeg files from one of which the image of Alice Smithers (**Figure 1**) has been cropped.

Joan E. Steele & Peter C. Rickwood

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

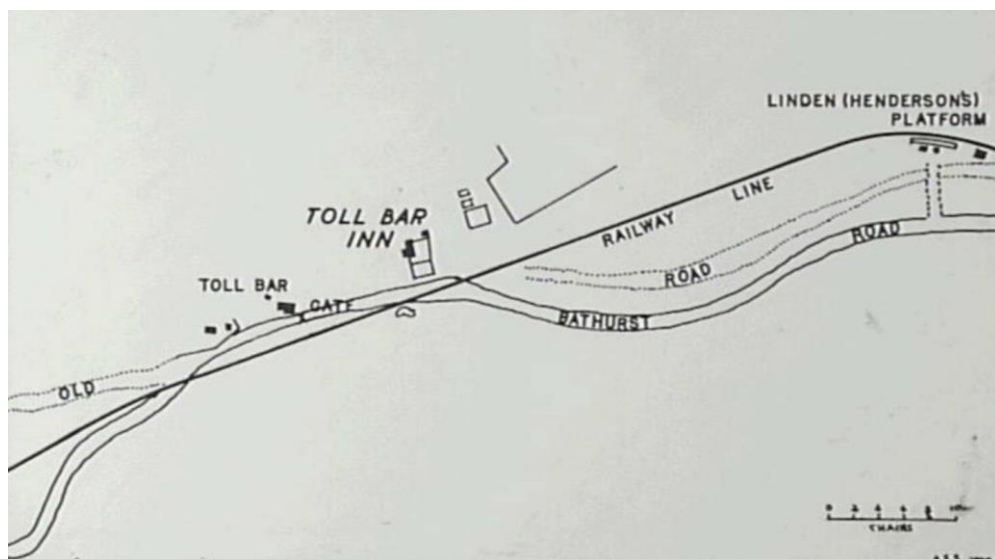
The Toll Bar Inn and Linden Station - Seventeen Mile Hollow

With little but a locality sign to show you have passed through the area, some travellers through the Blue Mountains may not even be aware of the existence of Linden as a village of the Mountains.

The Linden location was first an unnamed camp of Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth in 1813 as they journeyed westward. Following in their footsteps and George Evans' survey, William Cox came through to build his road in 1814. At the Linden locality he was obliged to construct a causeway or bridge across a ravine between two ridges at the narrowest part of the route across the mountains, such structure being 80 feet long and 15 feet wide, costing Cox the labour of 12 men for three weeks. It was known as Bluff Bridge or Ravine Bridge as late as 1829. In the ensuing years a few buildings sprang up in the vicinity, and the locality became known as the 17 Mile Hollow, being 17 miles from Emu Ford on the Nepean River, although it is anything but a 'hollow'.

As the country opened up, tolls became increasingly important as a revenue source for the development and maintenance of the major road systems. Tolls levied varied with the category of traffic, while the cost of a lease depended upon the site and the volume of traffic anticipated.

George Sheppheard held the toll gate lease at Broughton's Waterhole (Mt Victoria - One Tree Hill) from 1852 until about 1866, while his friend, Thomas Ellison, did the same at 17 Mile Hollow for roughly the same period. Both also built inns on land adjacent to their toll bars, tapping extra income from the passing traffic.



Sketch plan of early features in locality

The toll house and turnpike gate were constructed at 17 Mile Hollow in 1849, the toll bar cottage being similar to that which is still standing at Mt Victoria, built the same year. Its site is now buried under the rail embankment just west of Linden station.

Thomas Ellison was born in 1817, the son of John Ellison and Sarah nee Watkins of Parramatta, one of 10 children. John Ellison had been a convict, transported on the *Abermarle* in 1797 to serve 7 years, part of the Third Fleet. Thomas was only 15 when his parents passed away, but he followed his father into the publican trade. John had died in 1832. Thomas's mother Sarah came free to the colony in 1810 on the *Canada*, aged about 22. She and John were married in Parramatta in 1817, and she died in 1832 also. The 1928 Census showed Thomas free by servitude, and he became a publican, running the *Bird-in-Hand* (1817) and the *Jolly Sailor* at Parramatta into the years 1830-31. He had become a publican at the *Native Lass* at Lapstone Hill by 1847, and then went on to become the 17 Mile Hollow toll keeper and publican in 1849.

Thomas acquired 5 acres, Portion 2 in the Parish of Woodford, in the vicinity of the toll gate. He built the *Toll Bar Inn* there in 1857, although it may have been as early as 1854. His business prospered as the road leading to and past the toll house was particularly dangerous. He and his family remained at the *Toll bar Inn* until its demolition in 1863, when they moved to the *Arms of Australia Inn* at Emu Plains.



Old level crossing west of the station

No known images remain of the Inn. Even though it was demolished, although one account suggests it burnt down, some of the stone appears to have been reused. Thomas's son John Thomas settled at Springwood and established an orchard after his marriage in 1871 to Hannah Lees. The house he built there was reputed to be constructed of stone salvaged from the *Toll Bar Inn*. The farm was on what is now the Springwood Golf Course.

In addition, a sandstone block is located in the grounds of the Blue Mountains Historical Society at Wentworth Falls. Known as the Linden Stone, it was apparently originally used in the 1940's to 1950's to mark the sites of the Toll Gate and Toll Bar at Linden. It was possibly also retrieved from the old toll house or the inn. It was sourced by BMHS and arrangements were with the Dept of Main Roads to bring the stone up from Linden, despite protests by Linden residents.



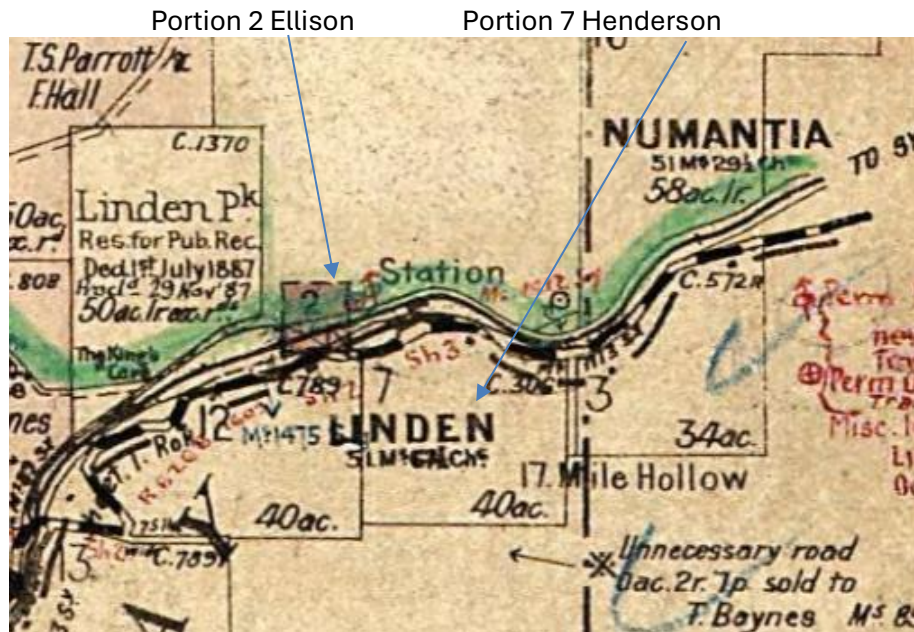
The Linden Stone

The stone was to be utilised for a memorial on the site of the original Weatherboard Hut at Wentworth Falls. The intention was that a plaque be located on the stone, and a design was proposed. The unveiling took place in November 1952, located on site in Pitt Park and the plaque attached. However, some confusion relating to the location of the Hut (near the corner of Blaxland Road and Sinclair Avenue) resulted in the stone being placed in Pitt Park, just off Adele Avenue, which was in fact the location of the Weatherboard Inn, not the Hut. This was subsequently addressed by Council and the stone removed to the BMHS grounds for safety.

So, the *Toll Bar Inn* lived on for a time.



Parish of Linden 1897



Parish of Woodford 1892

Linden itself developed with the coming of the railway, which came through in 1867. Just before this, in 1865, William Jolley Henderson, a prosperous warehouseman, received a grant of 40 acres of land and built his home, *Linden Lodge*, nearby facing the Western Road. The land comprised Portion 7 in the Parish of Linden. Henderson was an Alderman on Waverley Council in 1868-1882, and Mayor in 1874. The residence *Linden Lodge* was possibly named after the lime or linden tree. Henderson was living there by 1876, when he was one of a group of residents who were instrumental in having a public school opened at Springwood. By 1883, the house was well fenced, the garden had been developed with trees already of some maturity, and some outbuildings.



Linden Lodge about 1868

With the coming of the railway and to enable its construction, the toll house, gate and inn were demolished in 1963 and 1965 to make way. When they were demolished for railway construction, Thomas Ellison received compensation of £1,633 for the loss. The first platform was constructed in August 1874 at the request of Mr David Fletcher, who was living at *Linden Lodge* at the time, and the platform was known as Linden Tank.

Then from October 1874 to 1879 it was a private stop known as Henderson's Platform. It became known as Linden from 1879.

Henderson sold the property in 1886 to William Pritchard, who in turn sold to Mrs Stuart in 1905. The Stuarts leased the house to Miss Stocks as a boarding house for railway workers. Miss Stocks also conducted the post office from the Lodge until 1919. In the early 1920s the Stuarts sold *Linden Lodge* to Walter Heath, who lived there with his family and constructed a nine-hole golf-course in the grounds. The Heaths moved out in the late 1930s and a Miss Marva Temple established a school for backward children in 1936, with four teachers and fifteen students. The house then changed hands, was often empty and suffered vandalism until Mr and Mrs Price bought and restored the house in 1979. *Linden Lodge* is a 1 ½ storey house set close to the Great Western Highway. The basement floor of the house is formed by using the slope of the land. The surroundings of the house have been much changed by highway widening.

In 1896 a new 9m timber platform with booking office and waiting room was built at the station. But come 1902 the railway line was duplicated and the present island platform and buildings date from that time. The signal box closed in 1958 when automated coloured light signals were introduced. The platform is reached by a trussed footbridge that was erected in 1901.

A level crossing to Glossop Road was constructed at the toll gate site, but which has now been closed. The current level crossing is located at the west end of the platform and provides access to a small car park opposite the railway station along Burke Road.



Linden railway Station



Original access cutting to Highway



Footbridge

A number of buildings and structures once existed nearby at both ends of the station dating from the early phase operations of the facility, such as sidings, a water tank and a sand bin in 1884, and a Station Master's residence. It is likely evidence of these relics

still remain within the cleared areas. In 1908 the 90kL tank was transferred to Trangie. In 1909 the pumping facilities and vertical boiler were transferred to Marrangaroo. During its early phase of operations, some sidings were built on the Up-side to ease delays in the long section of single line track between Springwood and Lawson, though these have long been removed. There was also a Station Master's residence at this location though it is no longer extant. The early station office was later used as a Church of England meeting room.

The station, which had also provided post office facilities, closed in 1974 due to lack of patronage, but reopened and still operates today. *Patsy Moppett*

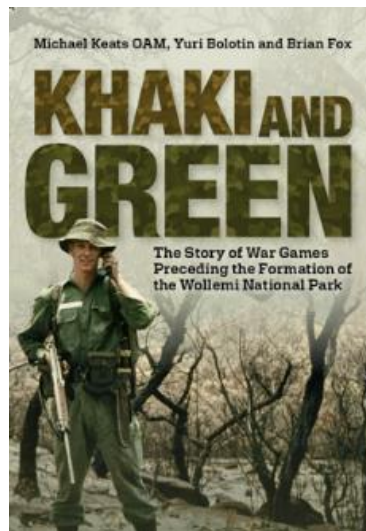
Note: The reference list is detailed in a separate document issued with this Newsletter.

Book Release: Khaki and Green

By Michael Keats OAM, Yuri Bolotin, Brian Fox

The recent launch of the new Bushexplorers' book, *Khaki and Green* was held at the Lithgow Library on 24th May.

A bandolier of expended ammunition found deep in the middle of a magnificent rainforest; used bullets scattered on an open rock shelf; what were these military remnants doing in a National Park? Upon investigation they found startling answers from the authorities, former soldiers, army engineers, other bushwalkers, and recently declassified military archives.



The writers describe how you can discover the explosive story of war games in the Australian bush that were designed to train combat-ready soldiers and the incredible battles waged militarily and politically that ultimately led to the creation of the Wollemi National Park.

This book is a must-read for history enthusiasts, conservationists, and bushwalkers.

Cost: \$58

Free delivery Australia wide.

Order direct or purchase from most book outlets and Visitor Information Centres in the Blue Mountains region.

For further information: www.bushexplorers.com.au

**PLEASE NOTE THE CLOSING DATE FOR ARTICLES AND
NOTIFICATIONS TO THE EDITOR FOR THE SEPTEMBER-
OCTOBER 2025 ISSUE OF *HERITAGE* IS
Tuesday 26th August 2025**

Community events & updates

Blue Mountains Historical Society

Up and coming events:

Presentations

5th July: 10:30am - 12:30pm

The Remarkable Mary Pitt and her Wentworth Falls descendants: Paul Innes will speak about the Pitt Family of Wentworth Falls, illustrated by images from the Blue Mountains as well as from the Pitt Family's original home in England, which Paul visited in his most recent trip at the end of 2024.

Location: Hobby's Reach Meeting Room, 99-101 Blaxland Road, Wentworth Falls.

Cost: \$5.00

2nd August: 10:30am - 12:00pm

The early story of Jenolan Caves: John Lanser will be sharing some of the interesting stories about the early history of Jenolan Caves.

Location: Hobby's Reach Meeting Room, 99-101 Blaxland Road, Wentworth Falls.

COST: \$5.00

Excursions

16th July – *Fire in the Mountains*

This excursion will visit the Fire Museum in Penrith followed by a tour of the Winmalee fire ground and the RFS Station with a guide from the Winmalee RFS Museum. Lunch will be at the Springwood Sports Club.

Cost: \$25.00

20th August – *Wiseman's Ferry, Old Northern Road and St Alban's*

This visit will provide an opportunity to see some of the most important sites in the history of the early colony.

Cost: \$25.00

17th September – *Glow Worm Tunnel and Lost City Lookout, Lithgow*

Weather permitting and roads being passable for the bus, this excursion will visit these geographically and historically interesting locations.

Cost: \$TBA

For further information contact the Society:

Ph: 02 4757 3824 or 0478 291 856

Email: bmhs@bluemountainshistory.com

Volunteer Symposium for Regional and Community-Run Museums

Museums & Galleries of NSW is partnering with Museums of History NSW to host this inaugural unique and comprehensive event on **28th & 29th July 2025** at The Mint, 10 Macquarie Street, Sydney.



The two-day symposium is intended for volunteers who work in **small to medium-sized museums in regional NSW**, as well as the workers who support them. The symposium will feature keynote sessions on strategies for volunteer-run museums, succession planning, First Nations engagement and school learning programs in museums, and will include:

- Volunteer strategies for small museums: from planning to fully engaging.
- Succession planning for small museums: from building belonging to preparing for leadership.
- What teachers want from your museum.
- AMaGA First Peoples: A Roadmap for Enhancing Indigenous Engagement in Museums and Galleries.
- An introduction to the Caroline Simpson Library.
- Caring for archival collections
- Collection documentation: from acquisition to deaccession.
- Creating engaging onsite experiences for children at your museum.
- Creating useful web resources for teachers and students.
- Significance assessment.
- Researching your collection.
- An introduction to the State Archives Collection.
- Storytelling.
- Tour guiding essentials.
- An introduction to AI for beginners.
- Marketing your museum.
- Audience evaluation.
- Creating simple object labels.
- Exploring First Nations engagement.
- Grants and funding.

Cost - ticket includes lunch, morning and afternoon teas:

Volunteers \$50 + booking fee

Salaried staff and consultants \$120 + booking fee

For further information, contact Dale Maxwell-Smith, Training & Engagement Manager Email: dalem@mgnsw.org.au

Blue Mountains Steam FunFest

The Steam FunFest is on again, now in its third year. It will be held on **Friday 11th July, Saturday 12th July and Sunday 13th July 2024** at the Valley Heights Locomotive Depot and Heritage Museum site. This is the middle weekend of the July School Holidays, so bring the family along for a day full of steam fun!



A shuttle bus will be available from Valley Heights station and car park. Tickets include museum admission, tram and train rides, displays of steam powered machinery, and the model railway,

Visit the website to book, as pre-booked tickets are essential to guarantee the rides. Online bookings close at 19:00 (7pm) the night before your proposed visit.
www.valleyheightsrailmuseum.info/news/steam-funfest

Note: If you have not pre-booked you are still welcome to attend and pay on arrival, but they cannot guarantee train and tram rides if you have not pre-booked. Morning rides tend to be fully booked so they recommend that you come after lunch if you want to ride on the steam train and steam tram without pre-booking.

You can contact the organisers by email for further information
publicity@valleyheightsrailmuseum.info

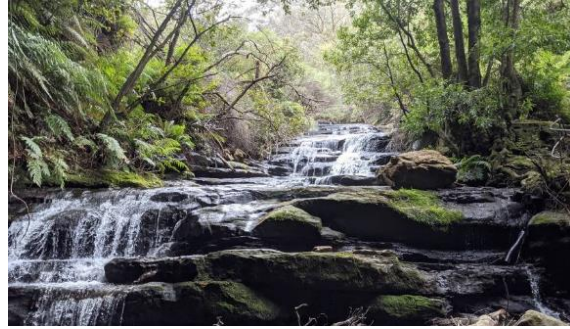
State Heritage Register listing for Chelmsford Bridge & Leura Cascades Reserve

The Minister for Heritage, Penny Sharpe, has, on the recommendation of the Heritage Council of NSW, directed the listing of Chelmsford Bridge (1913) and Leura Cascades Recreational Reserve on the State Heritage Register (SHR). The listing was published on 9th May 2025 in NSW Government Gazette No. 178. The item was listed due to its heritage significance to the people of the state of New South Wales, historically, aesthetically and socially significant, as a valued recreational resource utilised by generations of residents and visitors.

The Leura Cascades and Falls was part of the early 20th century development strategy by Katoomba Municipal Council to develop a linkage between Katoomba and Leura along the escarpment to encourage tourism in the area. Council sought funding from State Government to construct a road linking the two reserves and construct a new road with an attractive bridge (Chelmsford Bridge) spanning Leura Creek.



Chelmsford bridge



Leura Cascades

The reserve comprises a densely vegetated gully at the southern end of Leura Park with Leura Creek passing through to the Cascades and the Falls, and includes an integrated complex of recreational spaces, walks and buildings.

This is a significant listing for the Blue Mountains, which will conserve the nature and use of the place for future generations.

Blue Mountains History Conference 2025

The Blue Mountains History Conference was acclaimed a resounding success on 10th May 2025 at the Carrington Hotel Ballroom at Katoomba. 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, presenters enthralled and entertained us for the whole day!

Richard White was the keynote speaker, presenting the Ian Jack Address, and started the day elaborating on how people were drawn to the mountains by the scenery and the healthy climate, but also how this expanded into tourism and the wider stage of entertainment on a large scale.



Keynote speaker Richard White, with Jan Koperberg



Speaker Colin Semmler



Trudi Cooper and Kate O'Neill



The Maestro, MC Graeme Coss

Other speakers included Colin Semmler, Kate O'Neill, John Lanser, Lowell Tarling, Lorraine Corne and Robyne Ridge, and of course the radio play presented by Blue Mountains Radio Players, on how to discover skeletons in your family history cupboard! We heard about pianos and pianists, guesthouse entertainment and art. We were drawn into the history of the Victory Theatre at Blackheath, and also into the history of the various theatre venues owned and operated by the Corne family. We were entertained by the radio play, by the antics of the community when it partied on New Years Eve and also by the entertaining banter presented by our MC for the day, Graeme Coss!



Blue Mountains Radio Players



Dick Morony and Phil Hammon



Keith Painter and John Brock

Feedback suggests that a great time was had by all! Now BMACHO looks to commencing the process leading up to our next conference in 2027.

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.