

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

Berghofer's Pass

Johannes Wilhelm Berghofer

John Berghofer was a prominent entrepreneur and politician, with connections to Kanimbla Valley, Mount Victoria and Little Hartley, as well as Kogarah and Bankstown. In particular, and of relevance to our region, he initiated the construction of Berghofer's Pass at Mt Victoria to allow early cars a better route down the mountains to the west than was provided by Victoria Pass.



John & Catherine Berghofer



John Berghofer

In 1853 Wilhelm Christian Berghofer had left Germany on board the *Triton*, sailing from Hamburg ahead of his family to prepare the way for settlement in a new land. Two years later his son Johannes Wilhelm Berghofer came to Australia with his mother Anna and four younger siblings to join his father in the Sydney area. Johannes was born in the German state of Hesse in 1840.

The family was seeking a new life and opportunities in Australia to escape religious and political persecution, and four more children were born in the first few years after their arrival. The father Wilhelm soon found work as a farm labourer in the Bankstown area where his family joined him for their beginnings in the colony.

When he arrived in Australia, Wilhelm's son Johannes anglicized his name to John William. At first John William worked as a farm labourer and road overseer around the Sydney area. He also ventured out to the gold fields. In 1867 he married a young German woman, Catherine Spring, aged 16, and became a dedicated Anglican. They managed property in the Kanimbla valley for a time before returning to Sydney. In 1892 they revisited the Blue Mountains, buying the old inn at the foot of Mitchell's Victoria Pass, renaming it *Rosenthal*. Later, because of anti-German sentiment, it became *Rosedale*.



Rosedale at the foot of Victoria Pass 1887

When Blaxland Shire (which included *Rosedale* but not Mount Victoria) was formed in 1906, John Berghofer became its first President. Come WWI, although Berghofer had become a naturalized Australian citizen in 1878, in 1916 he was obliged by war-time legislation to resign from his public office on the Blaxland Shire Council because he had been born in Germany. The *Naturalized Subjects Franchise Act* stipulated that:

...any naturalized British subject of enemy origin shall be incapable of sitting or voting in the Legislative Assembly, the Municipality of Sydney and any Council or Shire

The Act also deprived such naturalized subjects of the right to vote, to officiate as a JP and to hold a publican's license.

In the years following the Great War, John Berghofer withdrew from public life, living quietly at his home in Little Hartley. Berghofer died in 1927, aged 87, and was buried in the family plot in Mount Victoria cemetery. His wife Catherine survived him by 18 years, dying in 1945 at the age of 95 and is buried next to her husband.



Berghofer grave marker, Mt Victoria Cemetery

Today, his legacy is visible in the explorers' obelisk and centenary monument at Mount York, his home 'Rosedale', a store in Selsdon Street, Mt Victoria, and the rental cottages that he built at Mt Victoria.

Berghofer's Pass

Primarily John Berghofer is known to us because of the building of the Pass between 1907 and 1912. As the horse gave way to motor vehicles in the early 20 Century, the steep road remained just as much a problem for early vehicles. Subsequently, and for twenty years, Berghofer's Pass superseded Victoria Pass, until Victoria Pass was eventually improved for motor transport.

Surveyor Thomas Mitchell had designed and supervised construction of Victoria Pass in 1842 using convict labour, that route being intended for horse, foot and coach traffic. The route replaced several early attempts to find a descent of the western escarpment from Mount York, including William Cox's original 1815 road, Lockyer's Road and Lawson's Long Alley.

In 1906 Berghofer came across a ground survey which had been made 20 years earlier, of an alternate route down the escarpment. After a very strenuous search, crawling on hands and knees around the sheer face of the cliff, he at last located the surveyor's marks and illustrated to the Government the great advantage of making the road along this new path, especially with the increase of traffic that was going along the Bathurst Road. He was successful in inducing the then Minister for Works, to favourably consider the matter.

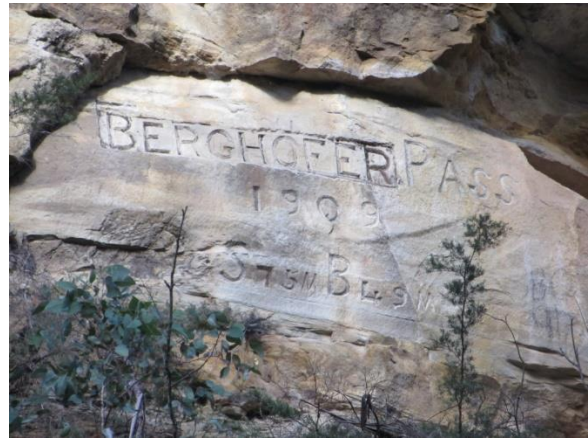
Although it had some sharp curves, this turned out to be an easier grade along the contours which skirted Victoria Pass, crossing Mount York Road and passing below Mitchell's stone causeway with the massive convict-built abutments, to emerge near the foot of the descent.

Construction commenced in 1907 and continued for five years with several interruptions due to funding problems but opened in February 1912. It came into regular use by traffic until the early 1920s, when grade improvements to Victoria Pass and the advent of more powerful motor cars made it redundant. The numerous bends, embankments and culverts required constant maintenance, and it was officially closed to traffic in 1934, although trucks were still utilizing it up until 1949.

The road also has local historical significance for the evidence it provides, in the form of the vandalized Berghofer carving part way down the track, and the temporary change in the road's official name, both due to local anti-German feeling during WWI.



Culvert



Restored rock carving



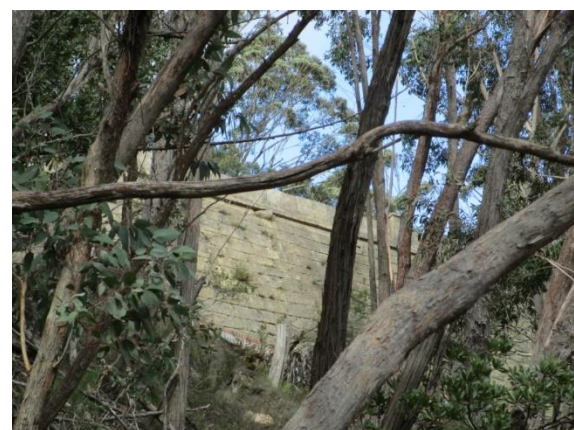
Water troughs



Extensive stone retaining wall



Viaduct signage



Below the Mitchells Ridge viaduct

Until 2022 the road has been a popular walking track with a number of notable features. In addition to the numerous stonework walls and culverts formed during construction of the pass, a water trough for horses and travelling stock was carved into the sandstone near the halfway mark, with a small, lower receptacle at the right height for dogs. Both are filled by natural seepage from the rock and remain a source of drinking water for wildlife and walkers. Other items include blasting powder holes and pick

marks along cliff faces, drainage channels, and remnants of adzed bush timber poles protruding horizontally from the tops of the drystone walling. Views over the Hartley valley are inspiring, and the track remains as one of the earliest handmade roads in the State, prior to the introduction of modern materials and mechanization.

The Pass is part of a larger and complex network of early mountain roads dating from the first European crossing in 1813 to its completed construction in 1912. Together, these roads physically represent the phases of colonial expansion, for they were routes west from the Cumberland Plain. They record the constant attempts to relieve the journey over the Blue Mountains barrier, and they demonstrate conditions of nineteenth century transport, the development of road construction and together with Victoria Pass, its response to different types of vehicles and volumes of traffic within the severe topographical constraints of the site.

In 1979 Berghofer's Pass was included in a network of signposted walking tracks along historic early mountain crossings by the NSW Department of Lands.



Track signage



Horse riding and walking opportunities

The track remains as a monument to John Berghofer, a man whose energy and enthusiasm was always quietly directed towards community works, despite exclusions he and many of his countrymen and women were subject to following WWI.

The future of the track

State Member for the Blue Mountains Trish Doyle has been pressing for the reopening of lanes on Victoria Pass following storm damage to adjacent slopes in July 2022. That reopening was finally achieved in early November this year.

Berghofer's Pass walking track has been temporarily closed, effective since 1st May 2022, due to rock falls and subsidence, as advised by Blue Mountains City Council on their website.

In the interim, in March 2024 Berghofer's Pass and Victoria Pass were added to the State Heritage Register, making funding available which requires heritage permit applications to be lodged for remediation and stabilisation works. (The two roads still exist side by side, a physical record of the road building of different periods, and of the development of road transport.)

Such applications have delayed the reopening of Victoria Pass, and now that it is open, it is hoped that the requisite heritage permit applications have been made and that restoration work on Berghofer's Pass will be undertaken in the near future.

Patsy Moppett

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

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From the Editor

With the reopening of Victoria Pass it now remains to seek recovery of the Berghofer's Pass walking track. The article in this issue presents a little of the history of the Pass and its instigator and the many and varied features to be seen along the way down. By presenting the issue it is hoped that the powers that be, and interested persons alike will generate interest and action.

Looking forward to our History Conference in May 2027, the BMACHO Committee has now determined that the theme will relate to architects/architecture and the built environment of the Blue Mountains. In light of this decision this Newsletter previously presented an article about architect James Barnet, and now follows this to examine Mortimer Lewis and his architectural exploits. They have both left a significant legacy across the Blue Mountains and beyond.

The set of circumstances around the ship *Samuel Plimsoll* make for fascinating reading. Who would have thought that such a range of links could come together since we last visited John Howie back in 2023!

And really! Who would be a teacher, given the expectations and conditions under which they had to operate? Many of these regulations might ring a faint bell with the older generation, both teachers and pupils.

With the holiday season upon us, we hope we have provided some light reading for you in this bumper edition. The BMACHO Committee wishes all a safe and happy New Year into 2026!

Ship Samuel Plimsoll - legacy

We first came across the ship *Samuel Plimsoll* when we investigated the arrival of the Howie family in Australia in June 1879 (*Heritage* No. 89 November-December 2023). That voyage was one of a number of trips the vessel made to Australia between 1874 and 1883.

The ship

The ship was built by Walter Hood & Co of Aberdeen, Scotland in 1873 for the Aberdeen Clipper Line, the owner being George Thompson & Co, and then J & A Brown. It was named for the British politician Samuel Plimsoll and was launched under Captain Richard Boaden.

The ship carried passengers and convicts until she became a wool and coal carrier. During the final decades of the nineteenth century, the newly built clipper was the most modern ship of its time, boasting the shortest journey yet to New South Wales for emigrants.



Ship Samuel Plimsoll

However, she was dismantled in 1898 on a voyage to Port Chalmers in a storm, and she was sold in 1899 for use as a coal hulk and was stationed in Fremantle.

The ship was finally sunk in September 1945 due to a collision with the *Dalgoma*, in the river at Gage Road, Western Australia, on board being a load of coal.

Little progress was made salvaging the hulk until 1947 when James Ball and Sons began work. Using their steam lighter *Agnes*, they raised two winches. By the end of September, the wreck having been cut into 12 sections over a period of 5 weeks, was picked up by the 80ton floating crane *Pelican* and was dumped near Beagle Rocks.

Samuel Plimsoll

Plimsoll was born in 1824 in Bristol. His father was a public servant. When Samuel left school, he was employed as a clerk at Rawson's Brewery. In 1849 Samuel became an assistant to the Mayor Thomas Birks, assisting to set up the Great Exhibition held at the Crystal Palace in London in 1851.

In 1853, he attempted to become a coal merchant in London, which attempt failed and he was reduced to destitution. This situation led him to appreciate the position of the poor in society and he particularly became concerned for the unseaworthy and often overloaded 'coffin ships', many of whom were transporting convicts to Australia, being owned by unscrupulous ship owners.

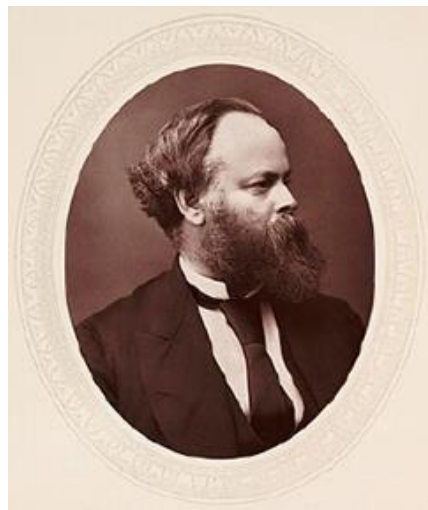
One of the first attempts to get ships to carry loading marks for safety was made in 1835 by Lloyd's Register, who introduced freeboard tables for loading, but these only applied to those ships classed by Lloyd's Register itself. Other ship owners could still do as they pleased.



Caricature 1873



Plimsoll 1874



Plimsoll 1876

In 1867 he became an MP for Derby. Through his actions a Royal Commission of Inquiry was established in 1875, which was followed by a bill which caused much consternation in the House.

Once finally passed this gave stringent powers of inspection to the Board of Trade, and the mark that indicates the safe limit to which a ship may be loaded became generally known as Plimsoll's mark or line. The improvements in safety resulted in less ship sinkings and seafarer deaths, and eventually resulting in the 1930 International Convention on Load Lines. He eventually gave politics away after 1885, feeling that he had no confidence in the government's commitment to shipping reforms. His reforms, however, finally became law in 1894. In 1906, foreign ships were also required to carry a load line if they visited British ports.

Plimsoll had married Eliza Ann Railton in 1858 in Chapeltown, UK. Ann died in Australia in 1882. They had one daughter who died soon after birth. His second marriage was to Harriet Frankish in 1885, with whom he had six children three of whom survived him. He died in Folkestone on 3 June 1898, and is buried in St Martin's churchyard, Cheriton, Kent.

Legacy

When the Howie family emigrated to the colony of New South Wales in 1879, they were obliged to spend some weeks at the quarantine station at North Head due to health conditions on board the *Samuel Plimsoll*. Not only were they confined on board along with other passengers from their departure from England, but they then had to spend additional time with the same group of people at North Head.

How pleasant a journey they experienced depended to a large extent upon the management of the ship and the characters of the captain and senior crew. Migration was a huge step taken in their lives and many were never to see their homeland again, especially convicts. It was a traumatic time, and the potential was there for lives to be lost during the voyage due to shipwreck, childbirth and sickness and disease, amongst other things. Fifteen passengers (including 6 babies) died on that voyage in 1879, one of who was John Howie's little son, William. For those who survived, the experience stayed with them for the rest of their lives, and they often sought ways to remember the circumstances under which they came to the Colony, especially if the journey had been a favourable one, or they had lost family members along the way.



North Head Quarantine Station 1905

The passengers of the 1879 trip, as had migrants before them, undertook to carve their memories in the stone at North head, in this case led by stonemason Howie. The inscriptions were carved offering words from their own individual perspectives of the journey and the quarantine experience, such as names of ships, passengers and crew, dates, diseases which served as a record of their time on the site. Some families took the name of the ship into their hearts and named children after the vessel. Many ships had girls' names, so this made it a simple matter to name their daughters if perhaps they had been born on the ship eg. *Agnes, Mary, Anne* etc.

The *Samuel Plimsoll* might sound a bit cumbersome, but one family at least did indeed give their son the name. Timothy Thornton travelled to Australia on the *Samual Plimsoll* in 1878 with his wife Phoebe, both aged 21. He was accompanied by his father Timothy (aged 47) and his mother Sarah (aged 42). Timothy and Sarah also brought their other children John (aged 14) and Cornelius (aged 10). They came from Stafford UK, Timothy Snr being a wheelwright and Timothy Jnr being a labourer. On the voyage Phoebe gave birth to a son who they named Samuel Plimsoll Thornton. This was actually recorded on the manifest.

SP Thornton

Thornton's family settled at Lithgow and young Samuel Plimsoll (SP) Thornton was first employed at the local ironworks. He also managed the Lithgow Royal Hotel for a time, and was to go on to establish himself, buying out the Lithgow Steam Aerated Water and Cordial factory from Thomas Young in February 1923. Young was established in William Street in Lithgow from at least 1898. He relocated to Main Street opposite the Royal Hotel some time before 1908, into a building where the first newspaper in Lithgow had been printed. At the time of purchase SP Thornton was recorded as having previous experience in the business, and at a local exhibition had *a very neat display of aerated waters and cordials of his own manufacture*

Thornton utilized the innovative codd-neck bottle for his cordials. First designed in 1872 by Hiram Codd in London, a codd-neck bottle (more commonly known as a ramune bottle or a marble bottle) is a type of bottle used for carbonated drinks. It has a closing design based on a glass marble which is held against a rubber seal, which sits within a recess in the lip.

SP Thornton had various interests in the town, including being a patron of the Lithgow Cycle Club. He was a foundation member of the Lodge Lithgow Kilwinning and took an interest in public affairs.



Coddneck bottle

His family experienced ups and downs in the town, such as when his son Richard, aged 13, was hit in the leg by a cricket ball in 1924. This was followed by a fall from a scooter when he aggravated the previous injury. He was admitted to a private hospital in Sydney where doctors determined that he might have to lose the leg due to blood poisoning. The result was not reported.

In 1928 Liquors Ltd took over a number of going concerns, brewers, hoteliers and cordial manufacturers, including Thornton's factory. Following this Thornton worked on a number of other occupations.

In May 1927 the Daily Telegraph published a photograph of the ship *Samuel Plimsoll*, and an article which drew Thornton's attention immediately! The newspaper recorded that back in 1884 Samuel and his parents had revisited the ship when it was in port and went through an interesting ceremony.

The old captain drew a bucket of sea-water out of the harbour, and took the opportunity, in the name of Father Neptune, of baptising the lad 'Samuel Plimsoll'. It is not often that a boy is twice christened but this experience, certainly, can be claimed by the Lithgowite.

In 1938 the Lithgow Mercury recorded another curious occurrence. Following the 1927 publication, a man contacted Thornton relating that he had been a nine-month-old baby some 60 years previously, when SP Thornton was born, when the *Samuel Plimsoll* was on the South African coast on a voyage to Australia. Neither man knew of the other's existence until the publication in 1927. Samuel Griffin advised how his mother had often mentioned the Thorntons and the naming of their baby.

It then came about, that SP Thornton was entitled to an unusual allowance, although he may never have claimed it. During the reign of Queen Victoria, it was enacted that every person born on the high seas was granted a pension of a farthing a day for life, which by the time of the printing of the article in 1938 would have amounted to a tidy sum!! It was not recorded whether Thornton followed up on this matter!

Samuel Plimsoll (SP) Thornton died on the 25th August 1944 after a lengthy illness. He was survived by his wife Anne, sons Richard and Harry, and a daughter, Mrs Frank Prout. It was reported that he was a man of high moral character, well known and

respected by his friends. He was buried at Bowenfels attended by members of his family and friends, and the local Masonic community. *Patsy Moppett*

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

Who would be a teacher????

In **1879** there were Rules for Teachers:

Rules for Teachers

- Teachers each day will fill lamps, clean chimneys before beginning work.
- Each teacher will bring a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's session.
- Make your pens carefully, you may whittle nibs to the individual taste of the children.
- Men teachers may take one evening a week for courting purposes or two evenings to attend church regularly.
- After ten hours in school, you may spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books.
- Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.
- Every teacher should lay aside, from each day, a goodly sum for his benefit during his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society.
- Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool and public halls or gets shaved in a barber's shop, will give good reason to suspect his worth, intention, integrity and honesty.

By **1886**, not much had changed:

Rules for teachers:

Your duties:

- ✚ Wash windows and clean classroom with soap and water once a week.
- ✚ Check outhouses daily (*Plenty of old catalogues are available at School Board office*).

Your Apparel: (forbidden wear in public at all times)

Women:

- ✚ A bathing suit
- ✚ Bloomers for cycling
- ✚ Skirts slit to expose ankles
- ✚ Bustle extension over 10 inches

Men:

- ✚ Detachable collar and neck tie removed from shirt.
- ✚ Shirt sleeves unlinked and rolled.
- ✚ Hair closely cropped (unless bald or have disease of the scalp).

Conduct: (Cause for immediate dismissal)

- ✚ Smoking of cigarettes, use of spirits, frequenting of pool or public dance halls.
- ✚ Marriage or other unseemly behaviour by women teachers.
- ✚ Joining of any Feminist Movement, such as the suffragettes.

By Order Superintendent 15th September 1886

In **1915** rules were still laid down for women teachers:

Rules for Teachers:

- ❖ You will not marry during the term of contract.
- ❖ You are not to keep the company of men.
- ❖ You must be home between the hours of 8pm and 6am unless attending a school function.
- ❖ You may not loiter down town in icecream parlours.
- ❖ You may not travel beyond the city limits without the permission of the Chairman of the Board.
- ❖ You may not ride in a carriage or automobile with any man unless he is your father or brother.
- ❖ You may not smoke cigarettes.
- ❖ You may not dress in bright colours.
- ❖ You may not under any circumstances dye your hair.
- ❖ You must wear at least two petticoats and your dresses must not be any shorter than two inches (5cm) above the ankle.
- ❖ To keep the school clean, you must sweep the floor at least once daily, scrub the floor with hot soapy water at least once a week, clean the black board once a day and start the fire at 7am, so that the room is warm when the children arrive.

Background

When Gov Bourke arrived in Australia in 1830's no school system was in place.

Schooling had taken on a haphazard fashion in the colony, with few children attending the private and church schools that did exist.

Teachers in the colony were often convicts or former convicts, and the education of the children of convicts, soldiers, marines and govt officials was not a high priority for the government.

Eventually it was agreed by the community that financing schools should become the responsibility of the govt, but the question was, who should control schools – government or church. Governor Bourke was followed by Governor Gipps, who also was unable to establish agreement for a common system.

In the 1840s a compromise was reached whereby one Board was established which financed denominational schools and another separate Board was to set up for government schools in areas where the shortage of schools was greatest. So, from 1848 New South Wales had a mix of government, denominational and private schools. In 1867 a Council of Education replaced the Boards and took charge of all government assisted schools. Public feeling against the government financing denominational schools resulted in the *Public Instruction Act of 1880*, whereby only government schools received government funding. It also introduced the secondary school system. The following year another set of rules was introduced relating to teachers' applications for leave of absence.

This system applied until 1963 when the government began again to allocate finance to denominational schools following the introduction of the Wyndham scheme the previous year.

The Rules

The above sets of rules for teachers can be found in a number of sites on the internet, and as no one is saying where they originated, you can choose whether to believe them

or not. Many seem over the top and laughable, but they do fly fairly close to the truth when one reads experiences of teachers, particularly, women, in rural and remote areas.

The rules were set down as a sign of the times and contemporary etiquette. The thought from officials was to cater for all schools, but no consideration was given to whether they were appropriate for country school circumstances, where climate was so different and distances vast. *[Imagine carting a bucket of water or a scuttle of coal if you were coming to school on horseback out at Dubbo or beyond!!]* Even urban teachers would have struggled to achieve a balance between teaching and their private lives and still retain their employment.



Wesleyan Church School, Hill End c 1870s

Teachers were renown for writing letters to the Boards and the Council of Education bemoaning their conditions and tribulations, so the evidence is out there. Complaints about conditions in country districts from reluctant young female teachers were the most frequent. There was a distinct lack of differentiation between their private lives and public work, hours were long and appreciation not always delivered by the community they were serving.



School children and their teacher: Blacklead school 1870s

Most teachers passed through an apprenticeship system as pupil teachers, a system of training introduced in the 1850s and which remained the dominant training system until 1905. Students of 13 or 14 years old who had completed their primary education successfully were taken on as pupil-teachers and worked with experienced teachers. Life for schoolteachers who worked in remote areas of the Australian colonies in the nineteenth century could be very hard. Pupil-teachers in particular led a grueling life, characterised by large unruly classes and long hours.

Many women were sent to bush schools. Women teachers were used to fill unpopular, remote posts because many men, with more occupational choices, were not willing to accept the uncertain conditions of the bush school. Men could stay at the local hotel, whereas women had to board with a local family. Therefore, their private life was in constant scrutiny from the community.

Teachers had to collect the school fees and report if a family had insufficient income to pay fees, a position that must have caused friction in some communities. Parents were often struggling financially, and children frequently came along in threadbare clothing and bare feet.

School buildings were usually crude and not conducive to concentration or learning. They were often made from corrugated iron or wooden slabs, with dirt floors, no windows and dark interiors, children sat on hard benches and had to endure the hot Australian summers and freezing winters.

Even by the 1960s, being a teacher in a bush school was hard work. Having said that, and in spite of all of the above, many teachers survived the rigors of keeping the 'Rules' and found the life to be a rewarding experience.

So, if the kids thought school was hard, spare a thought for the teachers!!!

Patsy Moppett

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

Mortimer Lewis – Colonial Architect

Mortimer William Lewis was the government's architect between 1835 and 1849. Born in Middlesex, England in 1796 to Thomas Arundel Lewis and Caroline Lewis (née Derby). He began work aged 19 as a surveyor and draftsman in 1815.

In 1819 he married Elizabeth Clements on 30th Jan at St Marylebone, Middlesex. Elizabeth Clements was born in 1794 at Brighton, England. In time they had four children in England:

Mortimer William Jnr (1820), Frederick George (1822), Elizabeth Rosa (1824) and Thomas Harvie (1828).

Mortimer Lewis was awarded the position of Assistant surveyor in the surveyor-general's department in New South Wales. So, the family left England in September 1829 on the *Dunvegan Castle* and arrived in Sydney, via Hobart, in 1830.

Lewis was assigned to work under Thomas Mitchell, mapping areas of the Great Dividing Range, 130 km west of Sydney.

Another son, Oswald Hoddle, was born to Mortimer and Elizabeth in 1833. His second name may be significant.

Surveyor Robert Hoddle came to Australia in 1823. His first substantial assignment was to survey the Bells Line of Road route over the Blue Mountains, and from there to explore northwards in the Gardens of Stone, looking for a new route to the Hunter River.

In 1828 he surveyed under the direction of NSW Surveyor-General Thomas Mitchell, including surveying the sites for the towns of Berrima and Goulburn. Between 1830 and 1836, Hoddle made several visits to the rural district now occupied by the Australian Capital Territory. Eventually he surveyed in and around Melbourne.



Mortimer and Elizabeth Lewis

Hoddle would have been of similar age (born in UK 1794) to Lewis in 1830 when Lewis arrived in the colony. Given they would have both worked for Mitchell during the early 1830s, it is likely that Hoddle became a work colleague and friend of Lewis when Lewis was promoted to Town Surveyor, hence Oswald's second name when he was born in 1833.

In 1835 Mortimer Lewis was appointed Colonial Architect. Many public works in New South Wales followed, including court houses, gaols, watchhouses and police stations, schools, churches and other government buildings. He supervised the construction of buildings designed by other architects, and also supervised the construction of Government House, designed in London by Edward Blore and completed in 1845. The Colonial Architect's office was in a building, since demolished, attached to the eastern side of the Hyde Park barracks, and Lewis lived on the premises with his family for a time. Mortimer Lewis had purchased seventeen acres of coastal land in Bronte, where he began building *Bronte House*, which he sold half-finished to Robert Lowe, completing only the dining and drawing rooms before being forced to sell in 1843. Lowe completed the construction in 1845. Lewis then moved on to live at Adelaide Place, Darling Point.

Lewis's necessity to sell may have stemmed from the controversy leading up to the termination of his employment in 1849. His position as Colonial Architect ended sourly after a public debacle concerning the construction of Sydney's first museum. In the late 1840s he began designing the building, which would later be absorbed into the present Australian Museum. The project experienced substantial cost overruns during construction, and Lewis was heavily criticised by both the press and politicians. The museum was completed, but an official inquiry blamed Lewis for the increase in costs and he was forced to resign in 1849.

However, he moved on and in 1850 he built himself a large house facing the Domain calling it *Richmond Villa*, as his private residence, but by the 1870s he had moved to Miller's Point.

Of his and Elizabeth's five children, Oswald, Mortimer Jnr and Frederick became architects, and Lewis went into private practice with Oswald for a time. Finally, after twenty nine years in retirement, he died in Sydney on 9th March 1879 after an illness of two weeks, the result of a kidney ailment. He was buried at South Head Cemetery.



Elizabeth's grave at Camperdown



Mortimer Lewis' grave at South Head

Elizabeth had died at Woolloomooloo in 1865, aged 72, and had been buried at Camperdown Cemetery.

Architectural Projects

There follows below a small sample of the many works undertaken by Mortimer Lewis, in his capacity of Colonial Architect:

Australian Museum, Darlinghurst:

The collection was housed in various buildings around Sydney until Mortimer Lewis designed a dedicated museum building.

Construction began in 1846 on a site in William Street near Hyde Park, and the new museum opened to the public in 1857 with just one exhibition gallery. Some detail about its development is described above. Since then the site has been modified many times to accommodate the growing needs of exhibitions, collections and staff.



Australian Museum 1872



Australian Museum 2024

The Toll House, Windsor

The Windsor Toll House is one of only two intact toll houses remaining in NSW. The other is at Mt Victoria in the Blue Mountains. Tenders were called for a Toll House in 1834 and the building was completed in 1835.

The Toll House, likely designed by William Wardell, with construction supervised by Lewis, is a single storey Regency style stuccoed sandstone and brick building of symmetrical design. The small building has three rooms and a projected bay window, from which the toll keeper could view the road leading to the bridge crossing from both angles, to collect tolls.



Toll House 1935



Toll House 2022 – note the viewing windows, and the VERY worn front step!

In the 1864 flood “ *the waters came up within a foot of the Barrack gate, Bridge-street ; and the Fitzroy Bridge was totally under water. The toll-house and adjoining houses...were entirely flooded*”according to the Sydney Morning Herald. As a result the building was actually shifted from its foundations. It was rebuilt with some alterations shortly after.

Over time the building was damaged by both vandals and more rising flood-waters. The exterior of the building was restored in 1997.

Fernhill, Mulgoa

Fernhill was completed in about 1840 as a residence for Edward Cox and family, son of William Cox, supervisor of the building of the first western road. Its design is uncertain and has been attributed to either Mortimer Lewis, John Verge or Francis Clarke.

William had commenced the building but following his death in 1837, *Fernhill* was completed under the supervision of his son, Edward. In 1843 Edward and Jane Cox moved in.



Fernhill, Mulgoa

Elements of the house suggesting the involvement of Mortimer Lewis include: narrow "slit" side light windows flanking the front door; internal skirting boards with "window-paneling" insets; papier-mâché ceiling friezes and roses, the "Gothic" black marble fireplace in the major room; and the niches and arched vault openings in and off the entrance lobby.

The house appears to have been designed as a two storey building, but the recession of the 1840s is said to be the reason for its unfinished (one storey) state.

St John's Camden

Lewis was quite adept at Gothic revival, in which his most important building was the church of St John the Evangelist, Camden, consecrated on 7 June 1849.

The construction commenced in early 1841 on land dedicated by the Macarthurs for the purpose. First designs were unsatisfactory, and eventually Lewis was appointed supervisor. The exterior was completed in 1842 and was consecrated in 1849 after final works on the interior were undertaken. A Rectory was constructed in 1859.



St Johns Anglican Church, Camden

Hartley Courthouse

Hartley Courthouse was built in 1837. Tenders were called for construction in March 1836, responded to by Coulter and Reddie. They were referred to Mortimer Lewis as the Colonial Architect in April, and a year later the building was underway.



Hartley Courthouse 2025

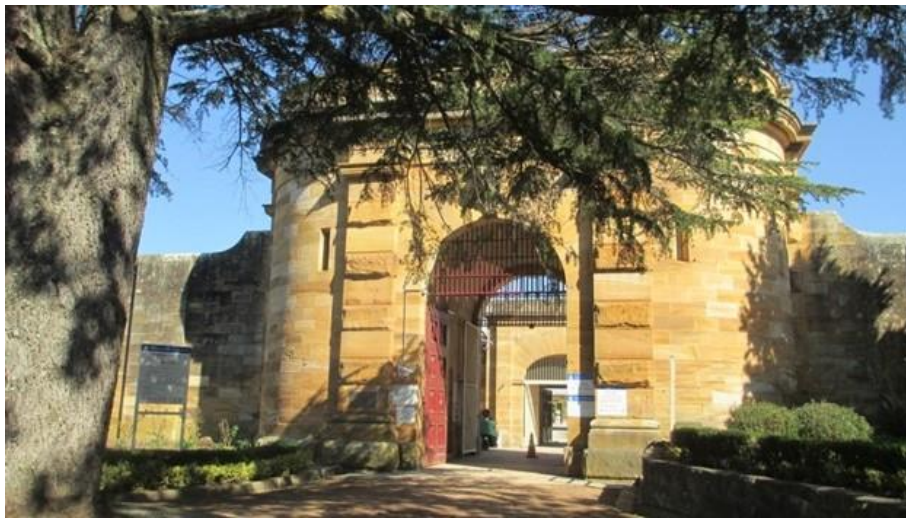
The chosen site was altered to one of three considered, and the current site finally agreed upon. Despite delays during construction due to failing plaster work, the building was finally completed in December 1837.

It is interesting to note that the building is constructed of sandstone, but the underlying rock in the locality is granite. The quarry site has not been positively determined.

Berrima Courthouse and Gaol

The courthouse and gaol at Berrima stand out in a village of numerous significant heritage buildings. Tenders were called for in January 1834, and again in September due to failure by contractors. The foundation stone was laid by Governor Bourke in March 1835. Trouble with unfinished work by contractors occurred again, and the work stopped for almost two years. It was not until June 1838 that the job was completed, to a design by Mortimer Lewis.

Patsy Moppett



Berrima Court House 2016

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

Vale Linsi Braith

In late November 2025 the Blue Mountains lost a treasured member of the heritage and museums community. Linsi's unexpected death leaves a void in the field of research and museums management.

Linsi Braith was a foundation member of the Friends of the Paragon at Katoomba, and museum curator at Tarella Cottage Museum at Wentworth Falls for some 6 years. She was also historian and custodian of the museum collection at Woodford Academy. She was not an individual member of BMACHO but contact with her was often made through BMACHO member organisations, as just mentioned.

Linsi gave her all to preserving the stories and artefacts at each venue, going about this in her quiet way, demonstrating her dedication and strength, recruiting, leading and inspiring a dedicated group of volunteers as she went, in researching, documenting and conserving these collections. *



Linsi's funeral service was held at 11.00am on Thursday 11 December 2025 at Leura Crematorium.

**It should be noted that social media contains a number of more comprehensive obituaries to Linsi.*

PLEASE NOTE THE CLOSING DATE FOR ARTICLES AND NOTIFICATIONS TO THE EDITOR FOR THE MARCH-APRIL 2026 ISSUE OF HERITAGE IS TUESDAY 24TH FEBRUARY 2026

Community events & updates

Penrith RSL Sub-Branch Military Museum

The Penrith RSL Sub-Branch Military Museum was officially opened on 11th November 2025 and is dedicated to the men and women from Penrith who fought in all the wars. It showcases uniforms, weapons, medals and photos of military conflicts and individuals dating back to World War I, while also having items from the recent Middle East conflict. During the RSL's recent renovations, the sub-Branch were provided with 160sqm to provide a space for military memorabilia and storytelling for years to come.



*Jan Koperberg, Alanah, Emily Cullen & Bob Oscar
at the Museum entrance*



Medal display

The Museum was fitted out with guidance from Museum and Galleries NSW, headed by Emily Cullen, Alice and Alanah, and Blue Mountains City Council's Museums and Galleries Advisors, Gay Hendriksen and Rebecca Turnbull. It was the dream of Museum director Bob Oscar and his passionate team of volunteers who have worked so hard to build the Museum to what it is today.

The cabinets were made by a very helpful local Penrith company, and they are purpose built with double glazed, very strong glass, and locked cases due to the weapons being displayed.

The Penrith RSL sub-Branch have launched a GoFundMe campaign to raise funds for stage two of the Museum, which will see the installation of cabinetry to encourage interaction, learning and accessibility within the museum.

The Military Museum at Penrith RSL sub-Branch is now open to the public.

Jan Koperberg

For further information

Phone - 02 4728 5225

Email - memorabilia@penrithrslsubbranch.org.au

Donations can be made by visiting <https://gofund.me/7a347d13a>.

BMACHO Show & Tell

During the 2026 BMCC Seniors Festival BMACHO will stage another *Show and Tell* event, to follow on from the successful event held back in October 2025.

The NSW Seniors Festival is an opportunity to promote a better understanding of seniors within the community and the value they add to our lives. It is also an opportunity to encourage older people to lead active lifestyles and participate at all levels in our community.

BMACHO is set to hold this half day event in 2026 to allow people to tell some stories and share their own heritage. We urge you to drag out the family or town memorabilia and bring it along with a short story describing its provenance. It could be a photo, or an old tool, some jewellery or a doll, a precious book, a certificate or a pipe!

It will be held at Blue Mountains Historical Society on 11th March 2026 at 9.30am, to conclude at proximately 12 noon.



Each speaker will be given 10 -15 minutes to share their tale of days gone by. (The time

allowed will depend on the number of people attending with items and willing to give a talk). We would like to compile a list of items before the day so we might contact you by email once you have booked.

The cost is \$10 per person and bookings can be made through Humanitix – obtain the link from the “Events” page on our website.

This event is supported by the 2024 BMCC Community Assistance Grant.

The event will be accompanied by a Devonshire Tea, and the charge will be \$10 per person.

If you have any enquiries regarding the Seniors Festival Program please contact Prue Hardgrove, Council's Aged and Disability Services Development Officer on 4780 5546 or at phardgrove@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Dr Rex Stubbs Commemorative History Symposium 2026

Priority registrations are now open for the History Symposium!

This year's theme **Water** explores how the Hawkesbury's rivers, creeks and waterways have shaped the region's story - influencing where and how people have lived, worked and built community. Speakers from archaeology, environmental history and Aboriginal history will offer fresh perspectives on the waterways that have long sustained and defined the Hawkesbury.



The free symposium will include:

- Three talks from keynote speakers
- Project updates Hawkesbury City Council's Arts and Culture Team
- Updates from attendant historical societies and groups
- Networking opportunities

A light lunch will be served, followed by an optional Historical Site Tour of Deerubbin Centre grounds including the Old Hawkesbury Hospital Mortuary (\$10 per person).

Priority registrations are now open until Friday 9th January. Bookings are essential and first-in-best-dressed. Register now through Eventbrite to secure your place and avoid disappointment.

Annual General Meetings

Colo Shire Family History Group Inc

Meeting held 11th October 2025

- President: Joy Shepherd
- Vice President: Glenn Townsend
- Secretary: Neil Renaud
- Treasurer: Maree Windress
- Committee: Beverley Collis-Bird, Patricia Carter, Carol Tate
- Public Officer: Jill Renaud
- Newsletter Editor: Greg Upton

Friends of the Paragon

Meeting held 4th November 2025

- President: Robert Strange
- Vice president: Joseph Moore
- Secretary: Carlene Martin
- Treasurer: Robert Trenchard-Smith
- Curator: Linsi Braith
- Chair, Heritage and Building Committee: Roy Lumby
- Hon. Solicitor: Hal Ginges
- Public Officer: Julie O'Keeffe

Blue Mountains Family History Society

Meeting held 14th November 2025

- President: Ann Krasny
- Vice President: Ann Devrell
- Treasurer: Ian Kendall
- Secretary: Helen Allan
- Committee Members: Marilyn Dietiker, Alison Tissington, Tanya Kirk, Christine Wenman

Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society

Meeting held 15th November 2025

- President: Malcolm Reynolds
- Vice President: Vacant
- Treasurer: David Howell
- Secretary: Vacant
- Committee Members: Peter Resanceff, Des Barrett, Peter Raines

Valley Heights Locomotive Depot Heritage Museum

Meeting held 8th November 2025

- President: Alan Holley
- Vice President: Vacant
- Treasurer: Serge Sequen
- Secretary: Grant Robinson
- Collections Manager: Sue Fulton

- Events and promotions manager: Andrew Tester
- Infrastructure Manager: Ted Dickson
- Safety Manager: Graham Smith
- Workshop manager: Terry Matchett
- Honorary Historian: Ted Dickson
- Honorary Librarian: Sue Fulton

Glenbrook & District Historical Society

Held 17th September 2025

- President: Denis Bainbridge
- Vice Presidents: Doug Knowles, Patricia Murnane
- Secretary: David Payne
- Treasurer: Anton von Schulenburg
- Ordinary Members: Ian Dingwall, John Dikeman, Robbie Goehner
- Public Officer: Anton von Schulenburg
- Chief Historian: Joan Peard

Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society

Meeting held 22nd September 2025

- President: David Griffiths
- Vice President: Lesley Bobrige
- Secretary: Jennifer Griffiths
- Treasurer: Pat O'Toole
- Committee Members: Suzanne Smith, Peta Smith, Bryan Wyborn

Hawkesbury Historical Society

Meeting held 23rd October 2025

- President: Jan Barkley-Jack
- Assistant President: Rebecca McRae
- Senior Vice-President: Ted Brill
- Junior Vice-President: Tyler Dehn
- Secretary: Peta Sharpley
- Public Officer: Neville Dehn
- Newsletter Editor: Jan Readford
- Web Administrator: Tyler Dehn
- Facebook Administrator: Peta Sharpley
- Bookshop Manager: Kathy Layton
- Committee: Neville Dehn, Rebecca McRae, Jan Readford, Oonagh Sherrard
- Hawkesbury Historical Society Collection Committee Jan Barkley-Jack, Mariam Abboud

Springwood Historical Society

Meeting held 21st November 2025

- President: Vacant
- Vice president: Doug Knowles
- Secretary: Dick Morony
- Treasurer: Jeff Moonie

National Trust Blue Mountains Branch

Meeting held 23rd November 2025

- Chair: Rod Stowe
- Deputy Chair: Gary Sturgess
- Secretary: Rob Strange
- Treasurer: Michael Anstiss
- Newsletter Editor: Adrien Howie

Committee: Adrien Howie, Mark Standen



Happy New Year!!!!!!

BLUE MOUNTAINS ASSOCIATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE ORGANISATIONS INC.

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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 functions 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.