

Berrima District Historical &
Family History Society Inc.

Walking Guide to Historic BERRIMA

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AREA

Surveyor-General Thomas L. Mitchell in his report of March 1830 gave the permanent water supply as the main reason for his choice of the Berrima site as the new county capital. Instructions dated 27 October 1830 were issued to Surveyor Robert Hoddle to mark out the new town. Hoddle's plan was approved on 31 May 1831.

The town plan centred round a market place. An imposing court house and gaol were built as it was envisaged that Berrima would

become an English style county capital and a busy stop-over on the new Great South road.

Berrima prospered and grew until the 1860s when the town was by-passed by the main southern railway line and Berrima's prosperity slowly declined. While other towns in the area grew, Berrima remained a sleepy backwater. Much still remains from the prosperous early days, to provide the visitor with a rare glimpse of a significant past time.

TO MAKE THIS WALKING TOUR AROUND PRESENT DAY BERRIMA:

- Commence at Berrima District Museum
- Follow the numbers on the map inside this brochure
- Enhance your experience by matching the sketches and descriptions of each feature to its present form. Re-live the history in your own mind as you follow the pathways around the village
- Linger and enjoy the glimpses of a past time in Australia's history.



1. Berrima District Museum

The original three front rooms and the verandah are from a typical workman's cottage c 1910. It was relocated from Moss Vale in 1975 to provide a permanent home for the Historical Society's museum.

2. Berrima House, 1835.

This two-storey sandstone building is one of the earliest houses built in Berrima. Legend has it that bushranger Ben Hall slept on the verandah.



3. Riverview

1830s. A timber cottage once used as a school for young ladies. The present roof covers the original timber shingles.



4. The Berrima Inn, 1834

Opened by Bryan McMahon, this was Berrima's first licensed hotel. Notice the worn sandstone window ledges reputedly caused by serving patrons drinks through the window. More recently operated as the Bantam Restaurant.



5. Coach and Horses Inn c1835

Formerly Mick Doyle's *Mail Coach Inn*. Currently self-contained accommodation.



6. Victoria Inn, 1840. Built as *The Queen Victoria Inn* by Joseph Levy and operated as a traveller's inn and brewery. It became Dr. Lambert's surgery in 1876.



7. The First Bank. This sandstone building was originally a bakery in the 1840s, later it became premises for the Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney. It is now a private home.

8. Post Office, 1887. The Toll House built in 1836 once occupied this site.

Tolls were collected to cross the river. The original section of the present building constructed in 1887 as a Post and Telegraph Office.

9. Surveyor General Inn, 1834



Built by James Harper. The oldest continuously licensed inn in Australia still trading within its original walls.

10. Gaol Superintendent's residence.

This two-storey sandstone building was built around 1898. It was used as a police station in the 1930s and from the 1950s was an arts and crafts outlet for the Correctional Centre.

11. Berrima Gaol

Construction of the gaol began in 1835 and was completed in 1839. Mortimer Lewis was the architect. The gaol was enlarged in 1866 with the front portion added and five feet added to the height of the walls. Paddy Curran was the first man to be hanged there in 1842.



12. Gaol Administration Building

Originally a house for the Assistant Superintendent, it was known as Strone Cottage.

13. Bulls Head Fountain 1877

Set on the northern wall of Berrima gaol. Water from the gaol tanks flowed from the mouth to a sandstone trough to water horses on court days. It is a fine example of cast iron work.



14. Lambie's Well, 1840. Berrima was chosen as the county capital, in part because of the availability of water from the Wingecarribee River and natural springs on the hillsides provided cool clean water for the village before the advent of iron roofs and tanks. The well was named after John Lambie, Assistant Surveyor in Berrima in the 1830s.

15. Court House, 1838

Berrima's finest public building designed by colonial architect Mortimer Lewis and



built at a cost of £2,568. Courts were held at Berrima until 1884. The second trial by judge and jury in Australia was held here. Following repairs, it was opened as a school of arts in 1936. Restoration work was carried out in the 1970s and the building re-opened to the public in 1979. Open daily.

16. Masonic Hall, 1867. Built by James Powell, it later served as the School of Arts and as a convent. Consecrated as a Presbyterian church in 1929, it was named the Finlayson Memorial Church in memory of the donor's family. Now privately owned.



17. Bellevue House, 1860s.

This two-storey colonial sandstone house was named for the beautiful views it commands over the valley. It was built in the classic Georgian style by Richard Mathews. Once operated as a bakery.



18. Harper's Mansion, 1834 Two-storey brick residence. Built by James Harper, who died at the age of 103. Used as a Roman Catholic presbytery and later as a convent.



Acquired in 1978 by the National Trust who undertook restoration work. Currently opens to the public on weekends and by arrangement.

19. Old Well. Located in the school grounds near the Old Hume Highway. It was dug when the oldest part of the school was built in 1869 and was fed by two springs. It once supplied water to the gaol and other buildings. In 1969 the well was restored and a plaque erected to commemorate and honour the pioneers of Berrima.

20. Berrima Public School, 1869

The original sandstone building was opened in 1870 with about 50 students and replaced earlier schools in the township. The people of Berrima raised one third of the cost of the building which is still in use.

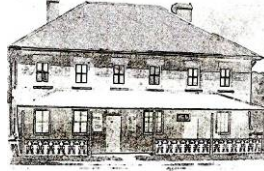


21. Coach and Horses Inn, 1850s

This weatherboard cottage was built by Lewis Levy as an inn. It was the second post office in Berrima, from 1879 to 1887. Became private residence.

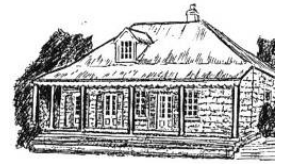
22. Taylor's Crown Hotel, 1840s

Built of sandstock brick, the lower floor at the rear was the cellar, bakery and kitchen of the hotel. In the late 1880s it became the home of William McCourt, speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly who named the building *Courthope*. In more recent times it was well-known as Berrima Galleries and is now a restaurant.



23. Breen's Inn, 1840

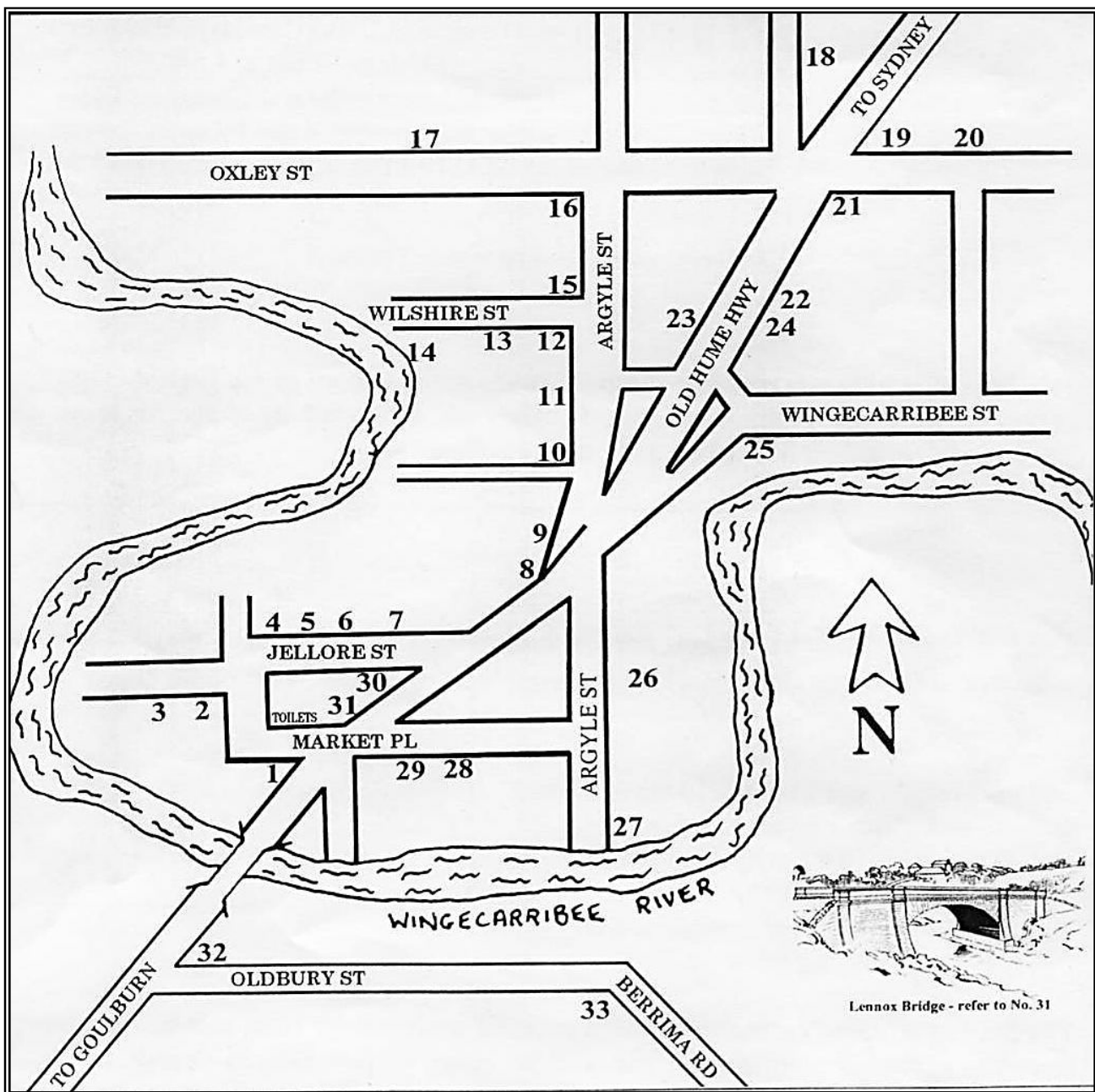
Known at different times as the *Commercial Inn* and the *Colonial Inn*.



The stone steps on the highway were whitewashed every day at 5.30am by Mrs. Breen. This was the last hotel to close. Used today as a restaurant, the building is an outstanding example of sympathetic restoration.

24. Newsagency and General Store

This weatherboard building was the site of the first general store in Berrima and is built on the foundations of an earlier building destroyed by fire.



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25. The Old Bakery, 1850

A two-storey sandstone building containing an old bake oven at the rear. Once occupied by the Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney.

26. Holy Trinity Anglican Church, 1849

Built in the Gothic revival style, it was one of the first churches designed by Edmund Blacket. The stone used was quarried from the banks of the Wingecarribee River behind the church.



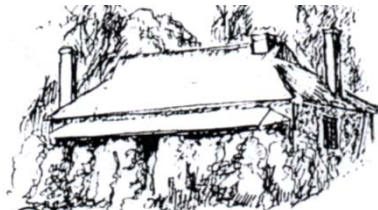
The original shingle roof was replaced by slate in 1904. The

church has beautiful stained glass windows and the font is original. The organ was bought from St. Andrew's Cathedral for £110 in 1892.

27. Stone Quarry Walk

A very pleasant, short walk down to the river bank and up to the centre of town. It was in this area that stone was quarried for many of the structures in the village. The remains of a stone river crossing can be seen when the river is low.

28. Magistrate's House, 1860s



Built by James Higgins, an early Berrima store-keeper and a leading citizen. The house was later leased to the police magistrate.

29. The White Horse Inn, 1830s

A fine Georgian sandstone building, it has a large two-roomed cellar with fireplaces. Once housed the Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney. Formerly *Oldbury's Inn*.

30. Henry Parkes Oak Tree. This tree was planted in 1890 by then Premier of NSW, Sir Henry Parkes MP, who was later to become known as the father of Australian Federation.

31. Market Place. Laid out as part of the original town plan drawn by Surveyor Robert Hoddle in 1831. Military barracks once stood near the south-east corner. The sandstone blocks surrounding the park reputedly came from the Lennox-designed Bridge over the Wingecarribee River which was washed away by floods in 1860.

32. St. Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Church, 1851

Originally known as St. Scholastica, the sandstone church was built on the site of the convict stockade on the south side of the river.



Designed by Augustus Welby Pugin, in the Gothic revival style, it is the most perfectly preserved of all Pugin's Australian churches. The builder, William Munro, also built Holy Trinity Church.

33. Berrima Cemetery, 1830s.

Located a 1.5 kilometre drive along Oldbury St. heading to Moss Vale, the cemetery is on the right-hand side. Burials date back to the early 1830s.



Berrima District Historical & Family History Society

THE STORY CENTRE, BERRIMA DISTRICT MUSEUM

Market Place & Bryan St, Berrima - near the bridge

Open 10am-4pm, Wednesday to Sunday; open daily during NSW public school holidays and on most NSW Public Holidays. Closed Good Friday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day. Groups welcome at other times by appointment.

Telephone: Museum 02 4877 1130 A/h 02 4872 1660 (Manager John Schweers)

Website: www.berrimadistricthistoricalsociety.org.au

E-mail: bdmuseum@bigpond.com

Exhibitions provide a fascinating insight into the social history of the Wingecarribee Shire, once known as the Berrima District and now as the Southern Highlands.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVES & RESEARCH CENTRE

cnr. Bowral Road and Old Hume Highway, Mittagong

Open Mon and Tues 10 am - 4 pm; Sat 10 am - 1 pm; Phone: 4872 2169

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