



Berrima District Historical &  
Family History Society Inc.

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# Walking Guide to Historic BERRIMA

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## 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 flourished until the late 1860s when the Great Southern Railway was built, by-passing the town in favour of Bowral and Moss Vale, and Berrima's prosperity slowly declined. While the 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 former time.

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## 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, 1841** Built by former convict John Jenkins, this two-storey sandstone house was originally named Square Vue and is one of the earliest in Berrima.



**3. Site of Riverview**, an early timber cottage once used by Claude Crowe of Berrima Bridge Nurseries.

### 4. Berrima Inn, 1834

This was the first licensed hotel in Berrima opened by Bryan McMahon, a former soldier transported to NSW for desertion. It was licensed until 1850. Note the worn sandstone window ledges.



### 5. Coach and Horses Inn, 1837

Licensed as the Mail Coach Inn in 1837, it operated as an inn for only a few years before the publican Michael Doyle transferred to the Royal Mail Coach Inn on the other side of the Market Place. Now a private residence.



### 6. Victoria Inn, 1840

Built as The Queen Victoria Inn by Joseph Levy and operated as a traveller's inn and brewery. In 1876 it became Dr. Lambert's surgery.



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

**8. Post Office, 1887** A toll house built in 1861 once occupied this site. Tolls were collected to cross the bridge over the Wingecarribee River.

The present building was constructed in 1887 as a Post and Telegraph Office and residence for the Postmaster/Postmistress.

### 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 house known as Oberon was built in 1898 by Bowral builder Alf Stephens. From the 1980s was an arts and crafts outlet for the Correctional Centre.

### 11. Berrima Gaol

Construction began in 1835 and was completed in 1839. It was substantially enlarged in 1866 when the entrance and surrounding walls were built. Bushranger Paddy Curran was the first man to be hanged there in 1841.



### 12. Gaol Administration Building

Built in 1900 the house was designed by NSW Government Architect Walter Liberty Vernon as a residence for the Assistant Superintendent. During World War I it was occupied by a German internee family, the Hurtzigs.

### 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

Named for the beautiful views it commands over the valley, the two-storey sandstone house in Georgian style was built by Richard Mathews for storekeeper James Powell. A bakery operated at the rear of the house for a short time.



### 18. Harper's Mansion, 1835

Two-storey brick residence built by publican James Harper. Used as a Roman Catholic presbytery from the late 1840s and later as a convent by the Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.



Acquired in 1978 by the National Trust, the house and garden is open to the public on weekends and by arrangement.



**19. Old Well** Located in the grounds of Berrima Public School near the Old Hume Highway. It was dug when the school was built in 1869 and fed by two springs. In 1969 it was restored for the school centenary and a plaque erected to commemorate and honour the pioneers of Berrima.

**20. Berrima Public School, 1869**  
The original sandstone building was opened 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 2nd post office in Berrima, from 1879 to 1887. Became private residence.

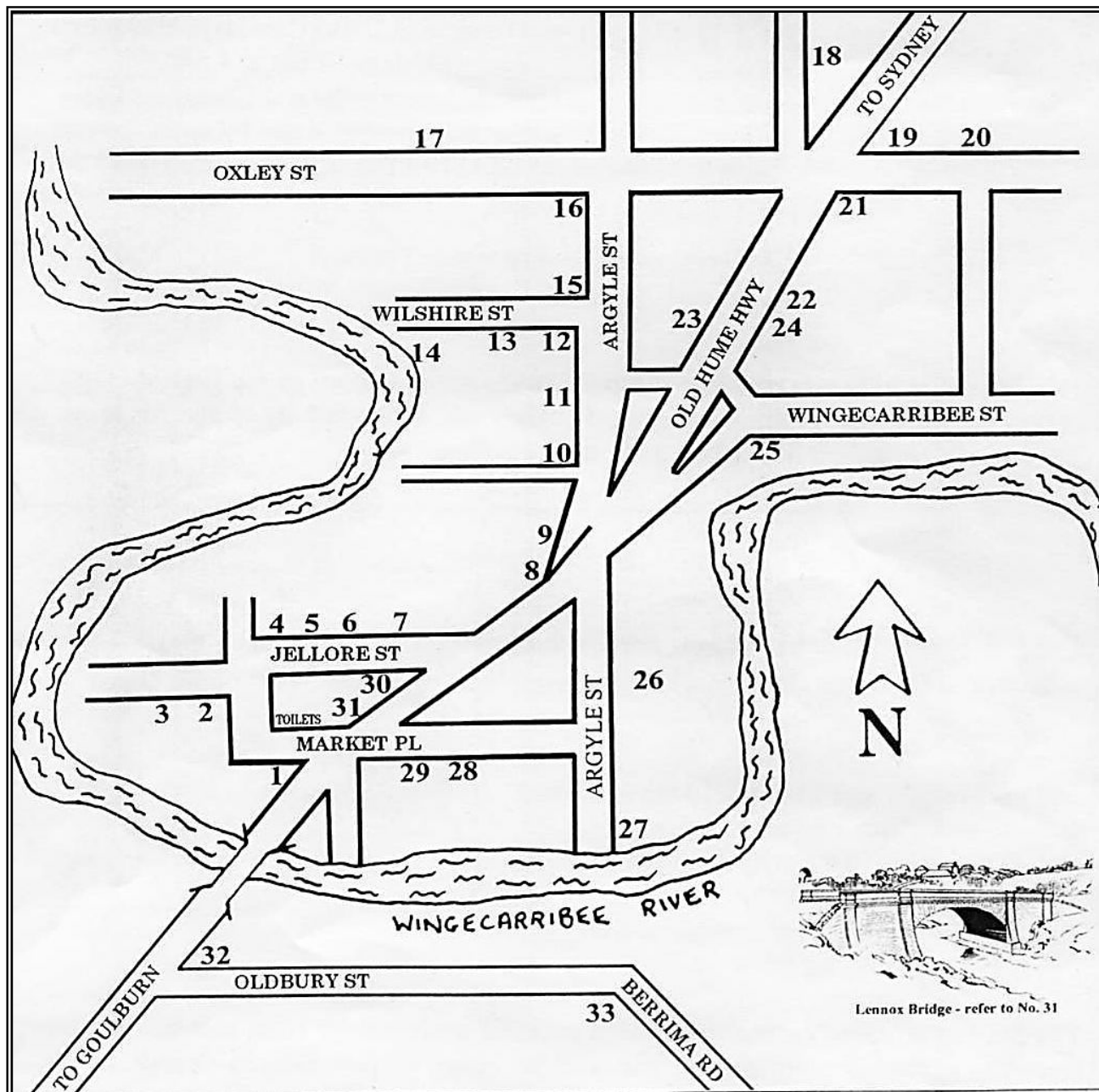
**22. Taylor's Crown Inn, 1843**  
Built of sandstock brick, the lower floor at the rear was the cellar, bakery and kitchen of the inn. In the late 1880s it became the home of William McCourt, speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly who named the building *Courthope*. Owned by Berrima RSL Sub-branch in the 1950s who rented flats to veterans and war widows. Restored in the late 1960s and operated as Berrima Galleries.



**23. Breen's Inn, 1860s**  
Built by Francis Breen in the mid-1860s, the inn was licensed as Breen's Commercial Hotel from 1869 until 1891. The stone steps on the highway were scrubbed every day at 5.30am by Mrs Mary Breen. Now 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, 1870s

Innkeeper Francis Breen built the house in around 1870. Sarah and Henry Allen owned the property from 1893. Sarah conducted a boarding house and her husband Henry operated a bakery in the adjacent building. Originally a two-storey house with a large basement, the upper floor was damaged by fire in 1916 and removed.

### 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

Built by innkeeper Michael Doyle and opened as the Royal Mail Coach Inn in 1839. Became the residence of Ben and Lucy Osborne in the 1870s and later Dr George Lambert and his family, when it was known as Rosebank.

**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

Located 1.5km along Oldbury Street towards Moss Vale, the cemetery is on the right-hand side.

Burials date back to the 1840s and include many of the early settlers of Berrima and surrounding district.



## Berrima District Historical & Family History Society

### THE STORY CENTRE, BERRIMA DISTRICT MUSEUM

1A Market Place cnr Bryan St, Berrima - near the bridge.

OPEN WEDNESDAY TO SUNDAY 10.00am to 4.00pm. This includes during school and public holiday periods. Closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Groups welcome at other times by arrangement. Phone John 0434 623 402.

Museum: Phone 4877 1130 or email [bdmuseum@bigpond.com](mailto:bdmuseum@bigpond.com)

Website: [www.berrimadistricthistoricalsociety.org.au](http://www.berrimadistricthistoricalsociety.org.au)

**Exhibitions provide a fascinating insight into the 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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