

News from the Berry Museum

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The Historical Society recently received a rare gift - the Higgins Family Bible - for which we thank Bob and Carol Lynch. Included in the Bible are records and photographs of many generations of the Higgins family who came to Berry in 1935 as the new owners of the South Coast Register.

Les Higgins and his son Jack were prominent and hardworking members of the Berry community and the Historical Society was just one of the organizations which benefited from Jack's generosity. His gift of file copies of the South Coast Register forms a major part of our archive and his bequest of \$10,000 gave the Society a good financial base.

Do you have precious/much loved/well used books that you would like to preserve and protect in the best possible way? Jennifer Clapham will tutor a **BOOK AND PAPER PRESERVATION WORKSHOP** at the Museum, on August 19, 9.30am - 12.30pm. This is open to any interested person, there is no charge, but numbers will be limited. Phone Jennifer on 44642446, a.s.a.p. to secure a place.

Our short term, (2 to 6 months) displays, 'The Red Cross Society in Berry' and 'Bundles of Joy' with its delicate handmade baby clothes, have earned many compliments. Sneak a preview on our web site and then come in to have a look at the real thing.

June Robson was invited to speak, at a recent Museum Chapter meeting, on why Berry is so convinced that **FREE ENTRY** is the best policy. Appearing elsewhere in this issue is a chart, prepared by our multi-talented Treasurer, Janice Hughes, which was the clincher.

Where do Grandparents take the Sprigs in the holidays? We offered ours a trip to the **FIRST CANAL BUILT IN AUSTRALIA**. Our visit, on the 7th July, coincided with the 182nd Anniversary of the completion of the canal. The young Bevan's enjoyed the Ferry ride and had fun on Comerong Island's ocean beach but were underwhelmed by the history. Perhaps you, my readers, may be more interested?

Alexander Berry and his men left Sydney in a 15 ton cutter, the 'Blanch', on June 21 st , 1822, with the intention of establishing a settlement at Shoalhaven. Strong southerly winds obliged them to return to the harbour but they were able to set off again the next day.

At 6.30am on the 23rd they "saw Cullingatty Hill bearing at SW by W distant about 10 miles at 4(pm) T. Davidson, Kelly, Dunn, Turner and Charcoal went in the boat to examine the bar (entrance to the Shoalhaven River). . .in a short time they were overtaken by the high surf which capsized the boat." Davidson and Kelly were drowned.

The 'Blanch' was anchored in Crookhaven and on Monday, 25th June, "Mr Hume proceeded up the river in the small boat and left 3 men at the isthmus to build a hut and cut a passage".

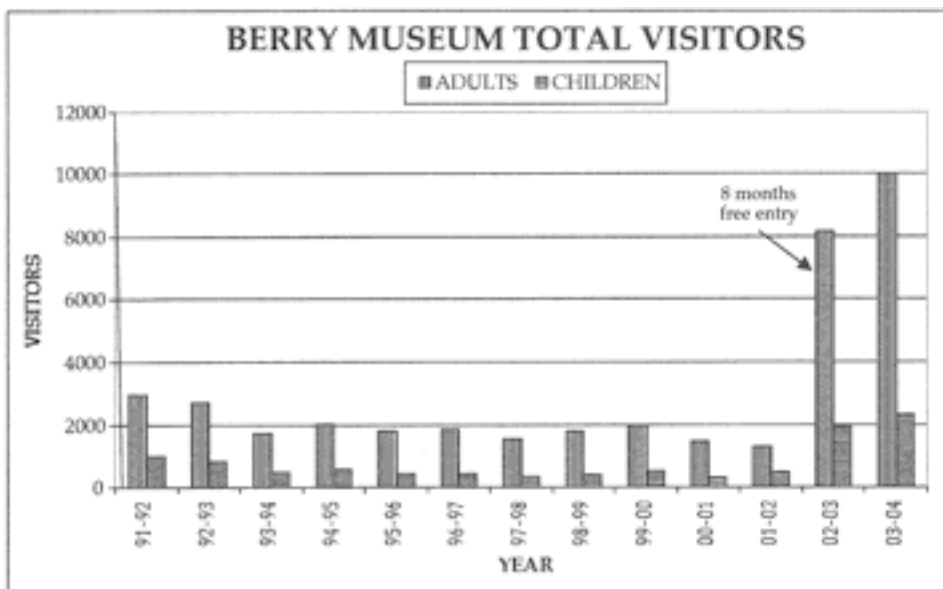
Further entries in Berry's diary record his explorations, selection of site at Cullingatty,

unloading of cargo from the 'Blanch', clearing land and Hume's making a road to the head of the mountains. Much of this was done with the help of the natives.

On the 7th July Alexander Berry wrote "Canal of 209 yards being finished went across and began falling for the stockyards and collecting palm leaves for thatching the huts".

The strong action of the tidal flow had widened and deepened the canal during Berry's lifetime and, in more recent times major works have had to be undertaken to limit the erosion.

Nancy Bevan



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