

Researching your property

Local and Family History

Pathfinder no. 3



Bega Library:	Mon. – Fri., 9.30am – 5.30pm.	Sat 9.00am – 12 noon.	Zingel Place, Bega.
Bermagui Library:	Mon.-Tues., Thurs.-Fri., 9.30am – 5.00pm.		Young Street, Bermagui.
Merimbula Library:	Mon., Wed. - Fri., 9.30am – 5.00pm.	Sat 9.00am – 12 noon.	Main Street, Merimbula.
Eden Library:	Tues. – Fri., 9.30am – 5.00pm.	Sat 9.00am – 12 noon.	Cnr Imlay & Mitchell, Eden.

When was it built? Who built/designed it? Who has lived in it?

✧ Books

Investigate the style of your house – this will help to give you a date of construction. Two standard publications used for identifying house style are:

- *A Pictorial guide to identifying Australian architecture : styles and terms from 1788 to the present* / Richard Apperly. **720.994 APP**
- *Australian house styles* / Maisy Stapleton. **728.0994 STA**

😊 Remember style trends in rural areas can lag several years behind their use in metropolitan areas so you may need to adjust the date ranges given in these publications.

Other publications which can help you include:

- *The National Trust Research Manual : trace the history of your house and other places* / edited by Celestina Sagazio. **994 NATI**
- *Australian houses of the forties and fifties* / Peter Cuffley. **728.0994 CUFF**
- *Australian houses of the twenties and thirties* / Peter Cuffley. **728.0994 CUFF**
- *How old is my house* / Robert Irving. Royal Australian Historical Society technical information service leaflet no. 17. **P IRVI LHC (Pamphlet collection)**
- *Researching old buildings* / Carol Liston. Royal Australian Historical Society technical information service leaflet no. 4. **P LIST LHC (Pamphlet collection)**
- *Historical research for heritage* / NSW Heritage Office. **R994 HIST LHC**

Books specifically on local builders:

- *If the walls could talk : the stories of Staffords' Bricks and Robert Wallis Thatcher (master builder 1883 - 1930) and Arthur Cecil Thatcher (master builder 1930 - 1964)* / Bega Valley Historical Society. **690 IF**
- *Building designer: Mr Robert Wallis Thatcher, 1861-1948* / D. Thatcher. **R690 THAT LHC**

😊 It is also worth browsing local history publications for pictures, photos or descriptions of buildings and houses.

✧ Newspapers

Local newspapers are another potential source of information about your house. Bega Valley Shire Library holds local papers on microfilm dating back to the 1860s. Newspapers include properties for sale along with building descriptions, information about new subdivisions as well as advertisements for hotels, guesthouses, shops and restaurants.

✧ Directories

Business directories, electoral rolls and post office directories are useful for showing occupancy, perhaps ownership and for confirming dates.

New South Wales Family History Document Service database

www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/Community/Library_Services/History/history.htm

This database is available from any of the Bega Valley Shire's libraries. Includes:

- some of the Sands directories
- some electoral rolls
- land information.

The Bega Valley Shire Library holds the following **electoral rolls**:

- Eden District Electoral Roll (Bateman's Bay to Eden), 1859.
- Colonial Secretary electoral rolls for NSW, 1882 - 1863 is available on microfiche.
- Bega Valley – 1991, 1995, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004.

As well as the:

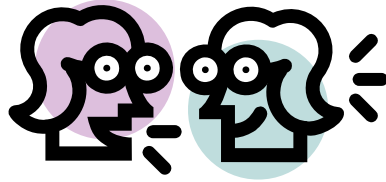
- NSW Post Office Directory 1904 (cd-rom).

Census information

Census information is useful for dating occupancy. Some historic census data is available from the Bega Valley Shire Library. Please refer to the separate guide. NSW State Records also holds census information at www.records.nsw.gov.au.

✧ Other people

It is always worth talking to local people about your house. Spread the word that you are interested in knowing its history and you may be surprised at the anecdotal stories you collect.



✧ Other local sources

Local historical groups

Try the local historical societies as they collect a range of information and they may hold some information on your house, especially if it has some historical significance.

- Bega Valley Historical Society and Pioneers' Museum
www.thebegavalley.org.au/begapioneersmuseum.html

Currently conducting a heritage building survey of the Bega township. This information is being included in an online database of the built environment covering the Shire. Click on the 'Building Survey' link from their website.

- Merimbula Imlay Historical Society
<http://thebegavalley.org.au/mihs.html>
- Bega Valley Genealogical Society
<http://thebegavalley.org.au/bvgenealogy.html>

Hold the **council rate books** for

- Bega Municipal Council 1885-1939,
- Imlay Shire 1907-1958 and
- Mumbulla Shire 1907-1953.

Indexes to the rate books available at the Society and the Bega Valley Shire Library.

Also have the Bega rate notices 1937-1976 and for Imlay Shire 1959-1970.

The Society holds copies of **post office directories and electoral rolls** from around the Shire, some dating back to the 1800s.

😊 Rate books are useful for compiling a house history as they show ownership, occupancy and type of building.

Bega Valley Shire Council

Contact the council to look at Building Applications (BA) or Development Applications (DA). There is no charge for this service and you need to give council officers 3-4 days notice so they can retrieve the relevant files. It helps if you have development plan and lot numbers and any other relevant property information. Once the file is located, a council officer will ring you to let

you know. Please be aware that there is no guarantee that council will have the information you are seeking and that records for older houses are not always complete.

Council also has some information about places listed on the heritage schedules in the Local Environment Plan. Sophie Thomson is working on a Shire wide Heritage Study which will link into the NSW Heritage Database.

✧ Websites

NSW Heritage Office www.heritage.nsw.gov.au

Search the State Heritage Register – over 250 Shire buildings are listed on this register. In particular, have a look at:

“Tips on using architectural clues to date your house”, at www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/heritagensw/mar99/8_art.htm

“How to research the history of your house, focusing on country NSW”, at www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/heritagensw/oct99/6_art.htm

NSW Department of Lands www.lands.nsw.gov.au

Provides access to a variety of land titling records through its online searches facility. Some searches are free, others incur a fee. A variety of searches are possible, including historical search, plan inquiry, old system deed, prior title search.

Check out the fact sheet “Land and property information: a guide to searching New South Wales land title records”.

Digital copies of surviving county, parish, and town and village maps of NSW are available from this website and can also be purchased from the Department. For background information on the county and parish system see NSW State Records, Archives in Brief 80 in the Bega Library or at www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/guides_857.asp

NSW State Records www.records.nsw.gov.au

State Records holds a range of government generated records useful for property research, including public buildings. These records include:

- **Inquests and Coronial Records** – information on house fires, sometimes photos of house interiors useful for finding out about soft furnishings, etc. of a particular period. See Archives in Brief No. 4
- **Probate Packets** – information on assets and property. See Archives in Brief No. 84
- **Maps and Plans** – information on land grants, leases and Surveyor General’s maps and plans. See Archives in Brief No. 63
- **Primary Application Packets** – information on property converted from Old System Title to Torrens Title. See Archives in Brief No. 108
- **Deceased Estate Files** – for years 1880 – 1958 and can include asset lists. See Archives in Brief No. 29.

Use Archives Investigator to help you find other relevant information held by State Records.

Picture Australia www.pictureaustralia.org

Their growing historical (and contemporary) picture collection is always worth a search.

Good luck with your research.
Please let me know what you discover....

Compiled by Linda Albertson, Local and Family History Librarian, Bega Valley Shire Library