



Hon Tony Kelly MLC
Minister for Planning
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister for Lands
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Leader of the House in the Legislative Council

MEDIA RELEASE

24 January 2010

Berrima internment camp remembered on heritage list

The remains of a Southern Highlands camp which housed enemy foreign nationals, including German officers, during World War 1 has been given the State's highest level of heritage protection.

Minister for Planning Tony Kelly said Berrima Internment Group had been placed on the State Heritage Register.

Mr Kelly said the listing includes archaeological evidence (such as stone steps and hut foundations) of the recreational huts precinct of the Berrima Internment Camp at Berrima Gaol, which operated from 1915 to 1919.

It also includes submerged watercraft constructed by the internees and an association collection of moveable heritage including a wooden doll's house constructed by one of the internees and zither (a musical string instrument) owned by another of the internees.

The moveable heritage items are housed in the Berrima District Historical Society Museum.

"The camp site has a unique history as a place where German mariners and enemy aliens lived while interned during the course of World War One," Mr Kelly said.

"For instance, it housed a group of seven German naval officers and crew from the SMS Emden a ship of the Imperial German Navy which had sunk two Allied warships in the early months of World War One.

"During their internship, the naval officers and crew as well as the other enemy aliens at the camp built an extensive recreational precinct along the banks of the Wingecarribee River near the Berrima Gaol.

"The precinct included jetties, bathing facilities, watercraft ornamental and vegetable gardens and a large number of huts constructed along the lines of European summerhouses.

"During their confinement at Berrima Gaol the internees entertained themselves swimming, gardening and racing their watercraft or re-enacting naval battles on the waters of the Wingecarribee River."

"The remaining heritage related to the internment camp provides a tangible link to an important phase of our history and clearly tell the story of the lives of the internees during that period."

The listings mean any major works for the Berrima Internment Group would be subject to decisions or advice from the Heritage Council of NSW as well as Wingecarribee Shire Council.

Additionally, the Berrima and District Historical Society Museum and Wingecarribee Shire Council will now have increased access to State Government heritage funding for conservation and related projects and they will be required to be maintained to minimum standards of repair.

A significant collection of artefacts and photographs relating to the internment of German naval personnel and other enemy aliens at Berrima Gaol still remain.



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With the professional and financial aid of the Migration Heritage Centre, Museums and Galleries NSW, Wingecarribee Shire Council and the German Consulate, the Berrima District Museum has been able to display the moveable collection in an exciting exhibition, *'Prisoners in Arcady'*, which documents the German internees time at Berrima.

The exhibition was launched in February 2009.

Material from the exhibition also forms the basis of the Migration Heritage Centre's online exhibition of photographs and information, *'Prisoners in Arcady, German Mariners in Berrima 1915-1919.'*