
GARRY BARNSELEY, OAM LLB and NERIDA BARNSELEY, OAM

Garry Barnsley has a long family connection to the Southern Highlands, spanning seven generations since the 1860s.

Garry was born in Bowral in 1950, and grew up in Sutton Forest where his parents Geoffrey and Daphne ran the village store and post office.

[Redacted].

Together, the Barnsley family embarked upon a succession of community projects for the Highlands.

Berrima's historic courthouse and museum

From 1972, for 24 years, Garry served as a volunteer office-bearer of the **Berrima Court House Trust**. As secretary under the chairmanship of the late Tom Lewis AO (local state MP, Minister for Lands and Premier), and later as chairman himself, Garry and his fellow trustees oversaw the concluding stages of restoration of the historic sandstone building (circa 1838). The Trust then initiated a museum of Australian colonial-period legal history - furnishing, opening and promoting it. The museum continues to open daily and is a well-known focus of attraction for visitors to the village of Berrima.

The Bundanoon Highland Gathering ('Bundanoon is Brigadoon')

On a Saturday each April, kilted clan-folk hasten to the small Highlands town of Bundanoon – renamed 'Brigadoon' for just 24 hours. The annual *Bundanoon is Brigadoon* Highland Gathering has earned international fame, and is lauded as 'the largest celebration of Scottish culture in the Southern hemisphere'. Over 12,000 visitors gather for a day of Scottish-style music, dancing, games, picnics and family fun – with all proceeds dedicated to community benefit.

Garry and Nerida conceived the idea in 1978 when they lived in Bundanoon and were both members of the Southern Highlands Pipe Band – Nerida a tenor drummer and Garry a piper. Garry served as chairman of the organising committee for the first two years. Brigadoon celebrated its 40th year in 2017.

Nerida's home-baked shortbread was a popular feature of the Gathering over a period of 35 years.

With the support of many hard-working volunteers, the Gathering has raised well over a million dollars for worthy community and charitable objectives.

The Bradman Museum

In 1983, Garry thought up the idea for a museum in Bowral, dedicated to the life and cricketing career of **Sir Donald Bradman**.

The initiative came about partly because Garry was a cricket devotee, whose uncles had played against a youthful Don Bradman in local cricket contests; and partly because he saw the value for Bowral in reminding everyone of Sir Donald's association with the town where the great cricketer grew up: Don Bradman was and remains 'the Boy from Bowral'.

The concept for a Bradman museum was exhibited at the 1985 Australia Day festivities when, from their stall in Bowral's Corbett Gardens, Garry and Nerida stirred local interest and support. The first of many fundraisers began with promotional tee-shirts, screenprinted in the Mittagong garage of Nerida's brother-in-law, Dennis Horton.

The outstanding success of the museum is a phenomenal story, resulting from the dedication and efforts of many people, with Sir Donald and Lady Bradman as generous benefactors throughout. The museum developed through three stages, with the opening of stage one in 1989, stage two in 1996, and stage three in 2011. Today, the museum is home to the Bradman International Cricket Hall of Fame, and is spoken of as the world's pre-eminent museum of cricket.

Garry is a former chairman of the **Bradman Foundation**, and served on the Board of the **Bradman Museum Trust** and the Bradman Foundation from inception until retiring in 2002. He is now a Life Member.

A Little Piece of Scotland

In 1987 Nerida opened a small shop in the village of Sutton Forest. It provided new life for an old commercial building dating from 1895 – originally built by Garry's great-grandfather, and respectfully restored.

Over the next 25 years, Nerida drew upon her Scottish-Australian ancestry to bring into existence a famed showcase for the best of traditional and contemporary craftwares, initially from around Australia, and then from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, from Ireland, and from Scandinavia.

After retiring from seven-day-a-week trading in 2010, Nerida operated her business in smaller accommodation at the Mittagong Antiques Centre until its closure in 2023. Her acclaimed shortbread remained popular throughout.

Among other community projects that Garry and Nerida served to initiate or help develop include **Bowral Tulip Time Country Fair, Sutton Forest Village Hall, Sutton Forest Village Markets, Eve of Brigadoon Banquet, Exeter's Olde English Village Fayre, Irish Day at Sutton Forest, Southern Highlands Harvest Market, Southern Highlands Festival of Australian Bush Poetry, the National Servicemen's and Sea King Memorials at Sutton Forest, the Southern Highlands Pipe Band and The Silver Tassie International Solo Piping Contest (named for the silver trophy awarded to the Australasian Young Piper of the Year).**

Wingecarribee Shire Council

Garry was an elected representative on **Wingecarribee Shire Council** between 1983 and 1987, serving throughout as Chairman of the Council's works and town planning committee.

In 1985, while a councillor, Garry was awarded a scholarship to attend the **Australian Administrative Staff College** (now **Melbourne Business School**) at Mt Eliza Victoria, where he enrolled in the Advanced Management Program – a course of six weeks of intensive study of business administration.

In 2007 he was appointed by Wingecarribee Council as **Australia Day Ambassador**.

Service to community and to business

Garry has rendered service to the Highlands' business community, to **Scouting**, to **Rotary** (becoming a Paul Harris Fellow), to **Legacy**, to the **Scottish Australian Heritage Council**, and to the legal profession.

Through the **Sutton Forest Business Association** which Garry founded, the village participated in the **Tidy Towns Program**, and became identified as the **Village of Australiana Flags** (a **Centenary of Federation** project). In pride of place is the unique **Australian Volunteer Flag**, a legacy of the **International Year of Volunteers** in 2001.

In 1997 Sutton Forest won the Cultural Heritage Management award from Keep Australia Beautiful NSW for a project titled 'Revitalisation of the Village of Sutton Forest'.

Garry was the founding president of the **Southern Highlands Business Chamber** in 1999.

During his two-year tenure of office with the SHBC, Garry joined forces with Bowral bookseller and Churchill Fellow Paul McShane, in identifying the Southern Highlands as **Australia's First Booktown**, a member of an alliance

of booktowns around the world modelled on the famed instigator Hay-on-Wye in the UK. He also initiated the Chamber's project to identify the Highlands as Australia's **Centre of Excellence in Needlecraft and Fibre Arts**.

Garry and Nerida financed the start-up of the popular **Highlife Magazine** in 1996.

Service to the legal profession

Garry graduated from the **University of Sydney** with a law degree in 1972, before returning immediately to enter the practising legal profession in the Southern Highlands. [Redacted].

He has written three legal textbooks in a series titled **Letters for Lawyers** and has published countless papers and articles on legal topics for his profession and for the public.

In 1993 he was retained by the **Law Society of NSW** to draft the **Law Society Lease** in plain-language form. That document has since become the most widely used form of business lease in NSW.

Garry retired from legal practice in 2011, after nearly 40 years as a solicitor in Bowral, including a period as an accredited specialist in business law. He is a past-president of the **Berrima District Law Society** and of the **Southern Tablelands Law Society**. For many years he was an active member of **Best Practice Lawyers Inc.**

Honours and awards

Garry was honoured with the award of the **Medal of the Order of Australia** on Australia Day 2000 for "services to the community of the Southern Highlands".

Nerida's work for the **Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children** was first recognised in 1989 through her nomination as 'Benefactor' in the hospital's roll of honour.

Nerida received the **Medal of the Order of Australia** on Australia Day 2002 for "service to the community, particularly as a fundraiser for the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children and the Children's Hospital at Westmead."

Garry received the **Centenary Medal** in 2003 for "contribution made to Australian society".

Garry was made a **Life Member** of the **Law Society of NSW** in February 2014.

Garry and Nerida are **Joint Patrons** of the **Southern Highlands Concert Band**.

Nerida was made a **Life Member** of the **Moss Vale and District AH&I Society** in 2022 in recognition of her voluntary services as an exhibitor, judge, steward and sponsor.