At Berry, we were looked after by Mary Lidbetter who walked us up and down Queen Street explaining the history of the town and its buildings, a town with unusual beginnings because it was tied to the Berry Estate in varying degrees until 1912.

After the walk we viewed the Museum and had lunch in the grounds. Formerly the E.S. & A. Bank, built in 1886, the building is admirably situated on the highway, adjacent to the Post Office. An impressive collection has been assembled by an enthusiastic Society. The writer, being something of a ‘cedarophile’, was most impressed with the cedar furniture and the floodboat, still mounted on its wooden-wheeled trolley, complete with shafts, needing only the horse to draw it to the water.

After lunch we toured the town in the coach, to see more buildings and absorb more history from houses, churches, school, court house, school of arts and showground, to name but a few. The most rewarding of these was the Anglican Church of St. Luke, where we had a tour of not only the church (1884) but also the rectory (1892) which fortunately for us was empty, pending arrival of a new Rector from Devon. The English style of the rectory should make the new incumbent feel very much at home.

We finished our tour with Wilson’s first store (later the Cottage Hospital) and the place where the Broughton Creek millrace crossed the highway on its way to a sawmill.

On the way home, to get the most out of the beautiful scenery, so fresh after the rain, we detoured through Jamberoo.

SEPTEMBER MEETING: JOHN STEWART, 1810-1896

Our former Vice-President, Bob Taylor, now President of the Harden-Murrumburrah Historical Society, provided us with interesting insights into the development of veterinary practice in early New South Wales through an account of the life of John Stewart.

Stewart, a highly qualified veterinarian who was Professor of Veterinary Medicine at the Andersonian University, Glasgow, at the age of 28, arrived in Sydney in 1841. He immediately established a veterinary practice in Sydney, believed to be the first in Australia, and ran it in conjunction with a horse market at the corner of Pitt and Liverpool Streets. Horses came from all parts of the colony, but the best from the Berry Estate at Shoalhaven, famous for its rich pastures and superior stock. The Beatson family on the Macquarie Rivulet known as Terry’s Meadow did an extensive business through Stewart’s agency in Sydney.
There were many Illawarra horse breeders in those days, the prominent ones being:

Osbornes of Marshall Mount  
McGills and Westons of Albion Park  
Hindmarshes, Millers and Grays of Gerringong  
Robbs, Marks, Waughs, Woods and Dr. Menzies of Jamberoo  
DeMestres, Grahams, Monaghans and Hyams of Shoalhaven, and  
Wardens of Ulladulla.

John Stewart's business was in full swing when the goldmining era commenced in the fifties and it yielded him a handsome profit. He retired from the horse business in 1852, shortly after the golden era had set in. The following year he left Sydney for the Illawarra, having purchased the Keera Vale Estate a short distance north and west of Wollongong. With his family he occupied a fine two-storey residence erected earlier by Mr. Roger Therry (subsequently Mr. Justice Therry) who was then M.P. for Illawarra, then part of the Camden electorate. The home, now known as Therry's House (in Bukari Street) was later occupied by the Carbury family. Stewart had left Scotland for his health. He now stated that his reason for leaving Sydney was to bring up his family in the country rather than in contact with city life in their early years. He expressed a 'decided aversion to the pomps and vanities of society in the gilded sense'.

Being a close and intelligent observer of passing events and entertaining advanced views on politics, he was not long in Illawarra before he became a prominent figure in public life. He was an able and ready press writer, a caustic stirrer, and wrote many leading articles for the Illawarra Mercury in the 1850's. He was a magistrate for a time, Chairman of Central Illawarra Council in 1860, and the main promotor for the Wollongong School of Arts and the Albert Memorial Hospital.

Feeling the taste of politics, he stood for the Legislative Assembly seat of Illawarra in 1860 and lost. Re his political stance, the Illawarra Mercury said 'he presents a firm front, a hard hitter in discussion and argument. He has decided convictions and the courage to maintain them'.

Stewart contested Illawarra in the Liberal interest in 1862 and was defeated by Robert Hayworth; and again in 1864 by Patrick Osborne. He stood again in 1866 and was successful by a large majority. Shortly after the election he moved to Sydney - Summer Hill - his family now grown up.

As a parliamentarian he was too independent for party politics, sometimes voting against measures that his constituent supporters approved of, so he was defeated in the next election by James Osborne. In 1872 he was elected unopposed to the adjoining electorate of Kiama.
However, in 1872 he lost this seat to Captain Charles, and in the same year recommenced veterinary practice in Darlinghurst Road. He ceased practice in 1882.

In 1877 Sir Henry Parkes offered him a seat in the New South Wales Legislative Council which he accepted. He served in this chamber till 1894, when failing body and mind impelled him to resign. He died at Summer Hill in August 1896, aged 86 years, leaving a widow and family of four, none of whom followed veterinary pursuits.

As the Illawarra Mercury reported on 6 August 1896: ‘John Stewart was a man of strong and unbending opinions. Whatever he supposed was right he went straight for it, regardless of who or what was in the way. He was kind-hearted, honourable and true to his actions. An Illawarra Veteran’.

TULLIMBAR GOES WALKABOUT

Old Tullimbar sometimes found it necessary to go walkabout, particularly when an irate husband, with spear at the ready, was on his tracks(1); but there seems no reason for his name to have gone walkabout on the map.

The Society’s Research Officer recently received an enquiry about Tullimbar House, said to have been the property of William Moles. No reference to such a house or property has been found except: (a) a statement in an article (based, at least in part, on information supplied by the late D.L. Denniss) in the ‘South Coast Times’ of 25 April 1963 that ‘the name Tullimbar was applied first to a farm situated high on the ridge and to the back of what is now (i.e. in 1963) Tullimbar Public School. Later it was changed to ‘Hillcrest’ because the wife of a holder (unnamed) did not relish an aboriginal name; and, (b) a transcript, apparently by the late A.A. Armstrong, of an obituary notice (undated) of Mrs. William Moles, which referred to ‘Tongarra House’, where the (Moles) family resided until recently. Latterly, the Moles retired from farming life and became located with their family on a beautful spot which he secured at Tullimbar, near Albion Park’.

But in the course of looking for Tullimbar House, it was found that strange things had happened to the name of Tullimbar itself. According to the ‘South Coast Times’ article, ‘Tullimbar today is a rural area in the vicinity of Tullimbar Primary School, a couple of miles west of Albion Park town. An early settler, Mr. William Moles, gave the name Tongarra to his farm, but later this was applied to the whole neighbourhood’. But, according to the same article, an early map shows Tullimbah as the name of ‘the area about the foot of Macquarie Pass’.

Cousins in ‘The Garden of New South Wales’ (p.44) states that ‘next