

# The Oaks Historical Society Inc

Est. May 1979

The Oaks Historical Society Inc.  
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## Newsletter

July 2024

## Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

# THE ROTOLACTOR-A REVOLUTIONARY MILKING UNIT

For many years the Camden Park Estate had marketed Camden Park Special Pasteurised Milk through the agency of the Dairy Farmers Co-op Milk Company. This special milk distributed in gold foil sealed bottles was required to comply with special conditions prescribed by regulations under the Milk Act. The narrow-necked milk bottle pictured was introduced by Dairy Farmers' in 1935 as a more hygienic alternative to the older wide-necked bottles. The new bottles had a foil top and Camden Vale Special Milk used a distinctive gold-coloured top, supported by the tag-line 'the milk with the golden cap'.

The milk had been produced on some eight model dairies located on the Estate. These dairies had been worked by families, whilst all necessary farm grown fodder produced by other employees of the Estate. Despite the apparent, almost ideal method of handling some 1200 cows producing 2000 gallons daily, difficulty had been experienced in securing adequate and satisfactory labour. Lieutenant Colonel Edward MacArthur Onslow, General Manager of the Estate, in an effort to overcome the labour problem and at the same time produce the milk more economically, submitted to the Board in August 1949, plans for the establishment of a Rotolactor at Menangle. A rotolactor is a dairy that uses a rotating platform to milk a large number of cows in a short time.

The Camden News of April 1953 reported....The machine has been in operation at Camden Park since September last year (1952). Because of experimentation in operation and general technique, few details have been released to date. Work began on the rotolactor early in 1950 and it is the only one of its kind in Australia. There is only one other of its size, located in New Jersey, USA. At present, the machine, with a staff of 13 men, milks 425 cows twice daily. These cows are the combination of the dairy herds run



on four farms on the estate. However, these farms have been closed leaving only five others on the estate. Eventually the company will close down the farms and will rely solely on the rotolactor for milking requirements. The aim is a milking herd of 1500 cows, which will be milked twice daily. There are 1200 milkers on the estate now, and all could be handled by the rotolactor.

Concentrate feeding, an integral part of the rotolactor system had played a leading role in the increased output of milk at Camden Park, Mr McArthur Onslow said last Tuesday, during the first inspection by the Press of the £80,000 rotolactor. Availability of concentrated feed at the moment however, is restricting capacity use of the machine. System in operation at present calls for the feeding of concentrates during milking. Roughage is fed in adjoining yards before and after milking, but generally after. Feeding is controlled to 32lb (14.5kg) dry matter intake daily. This includes a basic concentrate ration of 8lb, containing a 16 per cent concentrate. The concentrate ration varies according to a particular



cow's production. If she lets down more than 25lb. milk per day, she receives a greater concentrate ration. Pictured is postcard of the rotolactor c.late 1950's Continued page 4.....



## President's Report

Trish Hill

My how time flies, here we are half way through the year and past the shortest day, though I've yet to notice any marked evidence of that.

Hope everyone is keeping warm and well as I'm sure we've got some colder weather to endure before we see improvement.

Last month our 'history of television' newsletter story attracted some excellent comments and I have included one of those further on in the newsletter. If you have an interesting story to tell please send it through to me!

On a sad note, several days ago I received an email advising of the passing of Helen Dalitz (aged 96) who was our first pharmacist here at The Oaks.

This month our local member Judy Hannan MP has advised we were successful in our Community Building Partnership funding application for an upgrade to the machinery building exhibition space.

Due to visitor feedback and member requests we are investigating a shelter cover and for our BBQ area to guarantee it can be utilised as an all weather area.

Next week, July 4th our volunteers are undertaking First Aid

training to update their qualifications.

This week our visiting school was our own The Oaks Public School. One of the visiting children featured in the cottage with Shirley is a great grandson of our dearly departed Eileen O'Brien.

Enid Roche who was a valuable member of our volunteer team for many years will celebrate a major milestone next week and we wish her all the best for her 90th birthday ■



## Schoolies Report

Bev Batros

Our busy term is nearly at an end. Our volunteers survived having two buses visit from Moss Vale. We surprised ourselves that, with half an hour break after the first bus, we were ready and refreshed to do a second. It was made easier by the fact the children were in Year 3 / 4 and were very interested.

St Francis of Assisi School from Warrawong came recently, quite a long trip of one and a quarter hours. We were told its one of their favourite excursions because of the interesting activities the children undertake. On 27<sup>th</sup> June we have Year 2 from The Oaks, who visit every year. Finally, we end the term with a first aid course, which many of our schoolies will attend. Then holidays!

Best wishes to Bruce Brown, one of our regular volunteers, who managed to do significant damage to his arm. Bruce has been responsible for a new initiative, of giving each child a small

sample of coal. The kids really like it and often ask "Is it real coal?" and we assure them that it is. It is also good to see regular volunteer Shirley Carlon back on deck after a few weeks off.

Welcome to new reserve Laura Windred who spent the last 3 weeks with us and is already showing her competence and enthusiasm by taking a full session in the cottage with Pam McVey last week.

The cottage often has the most interesting answers from children about what some of the old things are. However the soap from the laundry (pictured), also gets some interesting responses. It has been suggested that the large one is a phone (it does look like an old Nokia), a knife, dried poo, a masher, stale bread, a fossil, dog food and a cow horn. If you look hard enough you can see why the children might think that. I certainly don't think I would have guessed soap ■





# Family History & Local Archive Report

Sue Davis

We recently had a visit from cousins of the Small family. They were sharing their connections with each other and deciding where members fitted on the branches of their family tree. They hope to eventually produce a Small Family History to help each other and their descendants and are collecting stories along the way. Our files had some information as did the wonderful publication, *'From Timberland...to Smiling Fields- A History of Orangeville and Werombi'* by Nell R Weir. In that book we can learn that... "One of the first men to buy land at Bobs Range, Mulgoa Forest, was Thomas Henry Small, known as Henry. He was born in Brede, East Sussex in 1799...Henry married Harriet Mauser at Northiam, Sussex on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1822... They had 11 children while still in Sussex and another 2 sons after their arrival in Australia in 1839. By 1850 Henry had moved to Cobbitty and soon after to Brownlow Hill where he managed George McLeay's dairy". The journey of the Small Family in Australia had begun. (Mulgoa Forest later became known as Orangeville.)

Pictured c1865 is William Small (1836-1867) c1865 1836-1867, the 10th child of Thomas Henry & Harriet. William married Susan Ditton.

When you have a family tree, the best part is to come when you can 'dig deeper' and find out more. Some ideas you can use are:

- Electoral Rolls – list people eligible to vote in federal, state and local government elections. They will provide an address where your ancestor lived. In Australia the first federal election was held in 1901 using a combination of the existing state electoral rolls. The first Commonwealth Roll dates from 1903 and lists males and females over 21 years of age.
- Local History sources – when you know where your ancestor lived you can investigate the local history of the area to learn what their daily lives were like and what challenges may have impacted them. These sources can be found at local or regional libraries and of course from local museums and Historical Societies.

Online, the National Library of Australia search engine called TROVE will provide a wealth of information about people and places from their scanned newspapers from 1803 to 1954!

A huge date range! In early days people were reported in newspapers quite freely and entries can provide some interesting stories to add to your collection.

If you would like some help in your family history research then please contact us on [tohs1988@bigpond.net.au](mailto:tohs1988@bigpond.net.au) or call in on a Saturday morning and I can try and help you! Call first to make an appointment 02 46571796 ■

Happy researching!

Sue Davis, Local Archives and Family History.



Pictured below from our collection is a marble tablet – *'In memory of Sister Esther Small who died April 11, 1892. Aged 57 years. Erected by Sincerity Lodge I.O.C.T.'*

G.W. Cleveland  
Camden



William's photo sourced from Family Search.

## THE ROTOLACTOR - A REVOLUTIONARY MILKING UNIT *Continued.....*

To facilitate this, each cow has an identification mark on her neck, allowing easy identification on entering the rotolactor. She is then given feed according to her production. Production figures of each cow are recorded on three different days each week. Individual production can easily be assessed on the rotolactor, through a device which retains a cow's output in a glass, measured container. The rotolactor accommodates

50 cows for one revolution of the machine, which takes 10 minutes. Mr. Macarthur Onslow stated that this was ample time for any cow to be milked. Experts had said that any cow could be milked within 5 minutes. If a cow did not let her milk down within 10 minutes, it became a cull point and she was removed from the herd.

All cows are inspected on the rotolactor for disease. Any unhealthy cow, on leaving the machine is drafted in to a special clinical yard adjacent for veterinary examination.

Maintenance of hygiene is a most important feature of the rotolactor system. Each cow before entering the machine, is subject to a foot wash consisting of two ground sprays installed the length of the entrance alleyway. Just prior to entering the machine, each cow is sprayed to remove flies. As an added precaution, a powerful electric fan is strategically situated to blow any flies from each cow's head and back. Mr. Macarthur - Onslow pointed out that flies, especially this season, had proved a problem. Every effort was made to ensure the rotolactor was free of flies. However, present anti-fly methods were more or less experimental. No particular breed of cattle is run. When the machine was first operated, cows of the various breeds were tested to determine their adaptability to the machine, both in body, size and temperament. Waste water and manure is drained into a near-by concrete tank, from where is pumped to

irrigate adjoining resting paddocks. On leaving the machine, cows receive their ration of roughage and are then camped in well-grassed resting paddocks. Mr. Macarthur Onslow stated that the estate consisted of 9000 acres. When the plan to eventually close all the farms on the place came into operation, grasslands would be used to carry a herd of 500 dry cows and about 1000 young heifers. The latter would be used for

milking herd replacements. About 3000 acres is devoted to cropping, mainly of lucerne for hay. Once the milk is taken from the cows, it is pumped about 180 feet, through stainless steel pipes to the milk receiving depot. There it is cooled and pumped into stainless steel, water-cooled holding vats. From these tanks, it is loaded direct on rail into bulk milk trucks.

The rotolactor was regarded as an Australian icon. In the 1950s and 1960s up to 2,000 visitors a week travelled to Menangle to see it in action and one estimate puts the number of visitors during its 20 years of operation under Macarthur ownership at over three million people.

The rotolactor closed in January 1977 and was unused for several years until Cork Investments sold the block of land on which it stood to a dairying family that traded as Halfpenny Hobbs Pty Ltd. The Halfpennys renovated and modified the rotolactor before reopening it for their own dairy. It finally closed about 1983 ■

Pictured top -Cows entering through a foot bath of lime water.

Centre—The Menangle Factory

Bottom— Camden Vale Special Milk produced by The Rotolactor Method at Camden Park Menangle

Information sources; Trove/Google/Milk Board Journal 1953



## MEMORIES OF THE HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN TELEVISION by Dennis Ashton

In the last Newsletter was a great story about television in Australia. At Thirlmere in 1956, children were taken to watch TV at Middleton's Shop and I can remember 'Hopalong Cassidy' and the McWilliams wine



add (little old man cartoon character). We were inside the shop watching, I think after hours. I remember in 1975 when colour television came to Australia Cheryl & I went to Les & Bron Payne's place at Tahmoor to watch "Happy Days" (the blokes after a few beers-Dennis says).

Featured in the article (and repeated) was an ad for W. S. Hughes, Television for Picton, phone Thirlmere 84 or Picton 119. The photograph is Bill Hughes TV & radio shop still standing at Thirlmere→ where he had a glass display area in front (now covered in) and he also repaired both TV and radio's.

The Radio, and later TV licences that were required just to listen to or watch, were abolished after Gough Whitlam came to power in 1974 ■



## ARCHIVES FOR EVERYONE-COMMUNITY DIGITISATION AND INDEXING PARTNERSHIP

The State Archives Collection at MHNSW is vast, comprising over 14 million items related to the history of NSW, its environment and the lives of its people. Museums of History are partnering with groups or societies that have an interest in history and in making the State Archives Collection more accessible.

This project aims to digitise and index a set of records from the State Archives Collection that will showcase your local area and enhance our digitisation efforts.

The project will involve the digitisation of Small Debts Registers from the former courts of petty sessions (now local courts). The digitisation process not only involves scanning the registers, but also creating an index to ensure the digital content is accessible and discoverable over time.

Small Debts Registers were created by the courts of petty sessions throughout NSW. From 1846, these courts had the authority to recover small debts (defined as debts of up to £10). The registers contain infor-



mation such as the name of the plaintiff, name of the defendant, the cause of the action, amount of the claim, costs, the judgement and amount of the judgement. These records are all about people taking other people to court to recover debts. So they may contain information about your local community that cannot be found in other records. The State Archives Collection holds over 375 Small Debts Registers, with the volumes arranged by court/locality. Approximately 70 locations around NSW are represented in the records. The number of volumes per court/locality varies and the list included volumes for Yerranderie (1) and Picton. We registered an expression of interest as did Picton Society and we have both begun the process. Our volunteer Janet Howe has been working through the Yerranderie Small debts register and I'm hoping Janet will be able to share some feedback and comments in the next newsletter. Pictured recently Yerranderie Police Station & Courthouse in right of photo ■

## Glenmore Churches-an extract from *The History of Glenmore* by Rowan Moore

By 1860 the Moore families had established themselves in Glenmore and being very Christian and devoted to the Wesleyan form of Methodism, started holding religious services in the Homestead of Robert Moore. On the 8<sup>th</sup> June 1859 a meeting was held to consider the best plan to establish a chapel on part of the land of the original Glendiver Estate given by Edward Moore. Joseph Moore conveyed by way of a trust, a portion of his land to the trustees: Edward Moore, Joseph Moore, James Moore, James Edward Moore, Robert Moore, Rev. William Clarke, Jacob Ward, Steven Gardiner and Robert Ditton.

The property, being of one acre, was duly transferred on the grounds that 'Within a reasonable time erect and build a chapel or place of worship to be used as such by the congregation of Protestants of the Society or people Denominated Wesleyan Methodists'.

The building was opened on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 1860, with the foundation laid by Elizabeth Moore, wife of Edward. The porch was added some time later. In 1978 became known as the Glenmore Uniting Church. The church became part of The Methodist Parish Circuit of Camden with services held on a regular basis at 11am each Sunday. Preachers both consecrated Ministers and Lay preachers attended and many of these lunched with the Moore families prior to moving on to Oakdale, Orangeville or even Picton by horseback at first and then later motorised transport carrying out their Christian duties. One local preacher Torrington Bensley wrote several poems about Glenmore. The church was built by Mr Jas. Rogers from Picton with the first minister being Rev. Steven Rabone.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> October 1910 the church celebrated its 50 year anniversary with the Rev. JW Moore, son of Joseph, conducting the service. On the following Wednesday a special public meeting and tea was held in The Oaks School of Arts Hall with the Rev. presiding. Another report of the church in 1931 speaks of frequent renovations to the building, including at least three new ceilings with no debt on the building. Services were held in the church on Sundays and weeknights with ongoing Sunday School. Mention is also made of the current local preachers namely J. Pollis, Gilks, Jas. Rogers, J. Nash, John Wilson, M. Marrack, Haynes, J.Kelsey, W. Trussett, S. Brown and B. Proctor. Other names mentioned are W.H. Bellingham, S. Moore, Mr Ralph, J. Peters, S. New, Miss Sidman, Mrs A Whiteman, Miss Wasson and Mrs McWhister.

A history could be written just on the people who preached, worshipped, were married, baptised or laid to rest in the Glenmore Church. As a child, I can personally recall memories of having to attend church every Sunday at 11am. I recall the length of time of the sermons and some of the home discussions even in the presence of the preacher who often came to lunch before moving on to Orangeville or Oakdale. Father used to talk of the preacher attending on horseback and then riding to Picton for an evening service, going across country through Vanderville and Long Gully.

One notable local preacher was Mr Torrington Bensley, who I remember due to the fact we were out of church in 45minutes. One preacher Dr Parr, a politician, went on for one and a half hours.

A record book of the members of a church scripture group giving names and accounts dated 1872-1878 includes the following names: James Moore, Griffin Brooks, Sarah Brooks, William Loomes, Mrs Loomes, Robert, James, Maria, Joseph and Ellen Moore, Joseph Butler, Mrs Butler, Mr Kemish, Honoria Moore, Mary Stringer, William Crick, Martha Loomes, John Drennan, Emma Drennan, Mary Jane, Emmaline and Julia Moore, Harriet & Susanna Butler.

A cemetery and burial ground began prior to the opening of

the church. The first burial taking place in 1859 was that of infant Elizabeth Whittaker, two years of age. From the records of burials at Glenmore many family names associated with the church come to mind-refer *History of Glenmore Cemetery* by Marlane Fairfax-1995.

It may come as a surprise to some that Glenmore had a second church. The Church of England owned five acres of

land on the corner of The Oaks Road (Burraborang Road) and Sawyers Road (Big Hill Road). The land appears to have been donated to the church by the Rev. Thomas Hassall who owned adjoining areas. The land was known as 'Parsons Hill'. A wooden chapel was built on the land maybe even before the Methodist Church. It is said Thomas Hassall was a preacher at the church. The grant of land was not to the local Anglican churches but to the Sydney Diocese.

The chapel was destroyed by fire in 1890 and never rebuilt. The church much later sold the land which became a private residence. The foundation stone is part of the Anglican Church at The Oaks ■

Pictured is Glenmore Church today.



# Reminders, News & Info

WEEKEND ROSTER	
JULY	
Debbie & Allen	Saturday, 6
Kaye & Jim	Sunday, 7
Sue & Helen	Saturday, 13
Bev & David	Sunday, 14
Doreen & Ben	Saturday, 20
Marlane, Cheryl & Kate	Sunday, 21
Colleen & Kathy (Working Bee)	Saturday, 27
Marlane/Cheryl/Kate	Sunday, 28
SUPPER ROSTER	
July	Bev & Colleen
August	Debbie & Pam S



## General Meeting

Monday, July 1st 2024 at 7pm

Meeting followed by supper/ All welcome

Guest Speaker is Vicki Madeley talking about Maureen Whyte's Carnival Glass Collection and the Collectors Exhibition Series

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The District Reporter in conjunction with The Oaks Historical Society are offering a living history experience from Back Then.

Hop on a coach and learn how the past shaped the present.

It all happens on **Wednesday September 25th**

For \$40 visitors will be taken on a coach tour from Camden

(beside Camden Sports Club) departing 9.00am and The Wollondilly Heritage Centre The Oaks at 9.15am) for a guided tour within Wollondilly and of the new Western Sydney International Airport. The Back Then tours offer readers an opportunity to see sites that have been written about in the well-read historical page. Some of the sites have changed over the decades, while others are still recognisable. It's a great day out for history buffs or anyone interested in learning about this vast area we call home. The cost includes morning tea and a short presentation at the museum before heading off – a light lunch will also be provided before returning to The Oaks and Camden at 3pm. Money raised assists The Wollondilly Heritage Centre – which is run by a team of dedicated volunteers.

To find out more and to confirm your booking call Trish on 0432 689 034.

Payments can be made to: **The Oaks Historical Society Incorporated**

Reference payment: **Back Then Tour and your surname**

BSB: **062 516** Account number: **00 90 40 93**.



### FINAL REMINDER

**Membership Fees 2024/2025 are due**

Single- \$10.00 / Family -\$18.00

Newsletter postage is an additional \$16.50 /

Emailed newsletters are free.

Our Bank details below are for direct credit & please use your surname for the transaction reference.

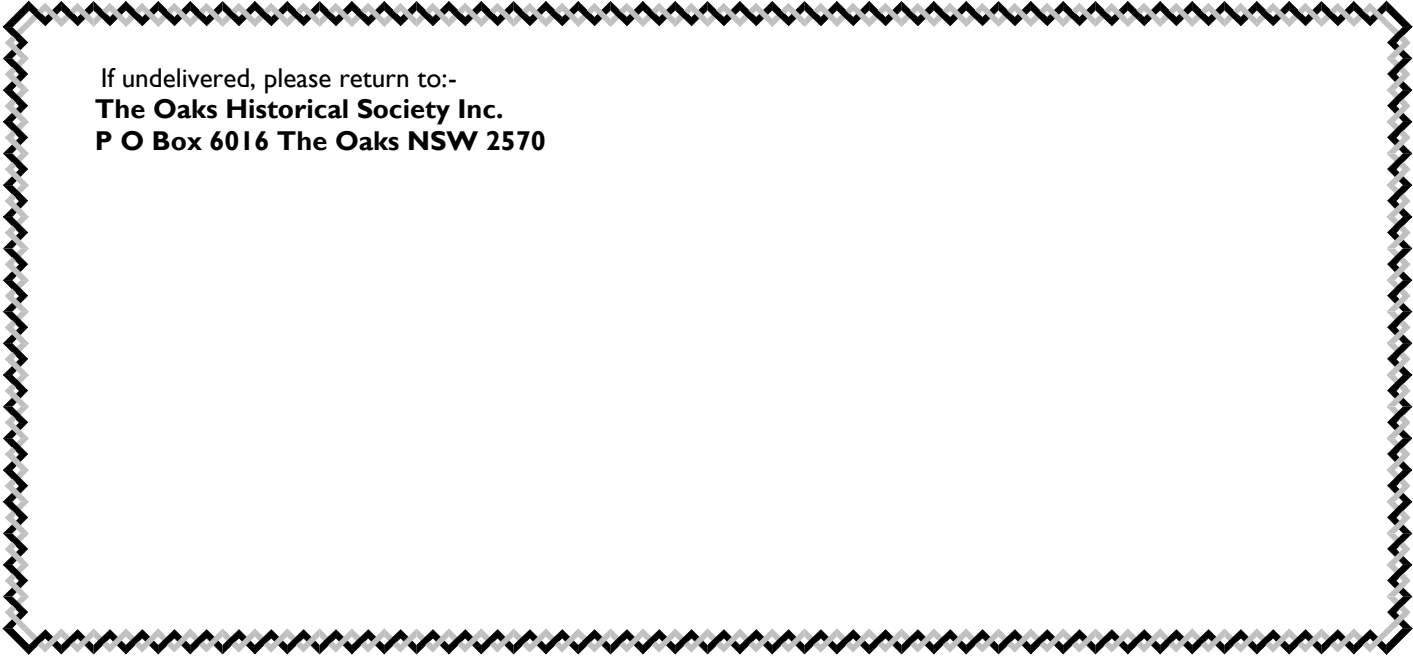
**Account Name:** The Oaks Historical Society Inc.

BSB: **062516** Account # **00904093**

Images below from The Oaks Public School visit last week



**MONTHLY MEETINGS:** The Oaks Historical Society Inc. holds its meetings on the first Monday of each month (except January) at the Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum, 43 Edward St. The Oaks starting at 7.00pm. The next meeting is our General Meeting on July 1st 3rd followed by our August 5th meeting. Our patron is Judith Hannan. The Oaks Historical Society Inc. takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the articles, papers or reviews that appear in this newsletter. The statements made or opinions expressed are not necessarily those of The Oaks Historical Society Inc. Copies of the minutes are available.



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