

The Oaks Historical Society Inc

Est. May 1979

The Oaks Historical Society Inc.
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Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

Newsletter

March 2024

OUR LOCAL AIRCRAFT NAVIGATION HISTORY

By Dennis Ashton

From the early 1960's there had been an aircraft navigational aid near Oakdale. Pictured below and located about two kilometers generally south of Tumbledown Trig which is about two and a half kilometers southwest of Oakdale township. Its access along Tumbledown Ridge was one of the first of what would be a designated Water Board fire road in the area, W9.

It had a power line that ran from Burragorang Road near Leo Rideout's orchard (Portion 159). It was located on Crown Lands managed by the Water Board and was a Permissive Occupancy for the Department of Civil Aviation (DCA).

However, it seems that the DCA were looking for a more suitable site and by 1964 were starting to build and upgrade sections of a road that had been put through the area first

by Clearys of Camden to get to the Red Cedar in the area, initially only going to about Mt Shivering from Twin Peaks. Later Gardner Brothers and Neville Lang formalized access to their properties from the west basically along the old Colong Travelling Stock Route (TSR) that was gazetted in the late 1800's. They had obtained compensation for 'loss of access' from the Water Board on the completion of Warragamba Dam and the inundation of Burragorang, thereby cutting off the access from the east.

In a press release statement (in part) from the Hon. R. W. Swartz, MBE, ED, Minister for Civil Aviation, Canberra 27 April 1966...."The Department of Civil Aviation will install a major mountain-top radio navigation aid at Bindook, in the Blue Mountains, 55 miles west of Sydney."

The new aid – a very high frequency Visual Omni Range (V.O.R.) would provide track guidance and act as a marshalling point for all aircraft operating on the western and southern air routes into Sydney.

This area needed the highest quality navigation aid available to help pilots and air traffic controllers maintain safe, regular airline schedules.

Air navigation aids provided pilots not only with essential track guidance, but with positive "fixes" in flight and with invaluable help when landing through low cloud.

A V.O.R. radiated signals in such a manner the 360 courses were available.

Omni ranges were located at major en-route stations and at major terminal airports.

Mr. Swartz said "the first stage of the more than \$60,000 Bindook Project – an access road to the mountain-top site was almost complete and work would soon begin on a building to house the equipment."



Up until the early 1960's

the road did not go through the Langs Bindook property but rather went north towards Grimshaw Hill and followed Bindook Creek to its junction with Back Swamps Creek (Batch Camp) and to the east of Morai Tops and Noorat Mountain and the Travelling Stock Route (TSR). It then generally followed the TSR to the Mount Werong end.

The new section of road went on a far better ridge top route over the Bindook Range from Back Swamps Creek and to the west of Mount Morai into and through Bindook then rejoining the TRS thus bypassing several creek crossings and wet areas.

According to local lore it was most likely a route that Neville Lang had proposed as it was he who knew this area very well and would benefit him as it went through his property. Later this section of road would be re-routed and rebuilt to the north of the Bindook property which then formed part of the public road that now connects Yerranderie and the surrounding private lands to the west. Cont...pg5



President's Report

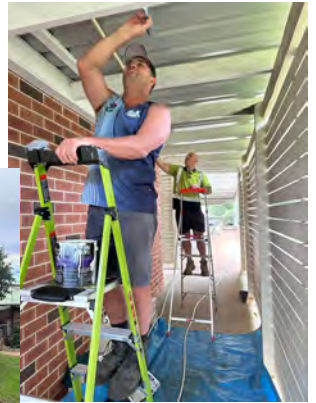
Trish Hill

Following on from our Store 1 compactus installation we've had new filing cabinets installed in our archive area and well done to Sue and her team for transferring the files across in a speedy manner. We are absolutely thrilled with the outcome and the difference it is making for accessibility. Thanks again to CREATE NSW for funding our project.

Thanks to our new marketing officer, Vicki Madeley for stepping into her new role with gusto. Congratulations Vicki! A few group bookings have been added to our calendar in recent days so our marketing officer is off to a good start.

Recently we had a crew from Tahmoor Coal (pictured) at the museum for two days doing maintenance work. They managed to get through a backlog of jobs includ-

ing mulching the machinery area, clearing gutters and downpipes and painting jobs. Thanks to Tahmoor Coal and the team for the great support to our museum.



Family History & Local Archive Report

Sue Davis

We had a busy day earlier in the month when we moved the research files to the new filing cabinets. The cabinets are a real asset in research as we no longer need to fight with drawers that are hard to open and files that won't stay in place. Thanks go to all involved in various stages of this happening and taking away the old cabinets.

Recently we welcomed a new volunteer to our team. His name is Steve Devitt. Steve is very familiar with The Oaks area where his ancestors came from and where his family hold regular reunions. Several years ago, I had the pleasure to represent The Oaks Historical Society in presenting a talk about the *Devitts at The Oaks*. In return Steve gave me a publication he had written, *From County Clare to The Oaks - History of The Devitt Family in Australia*. We often use this book to help others with their family history research. Steve is using his research skills to help compile the information for a publication to complement our Dairy Industry Exhibition that is currently being constructed.

Steve found a picture of some of his ancestors on our website in the Roy Dowle Collection. He has been able to identify some of the Camden Rams Rugby League Team of 1936

(pictured below) to add to our resources. It is wonderful to see our resources grow to provide more information of the past for researchers of the future! Another evidence of our Mission Statement in action. Here is a reminder of this statement that was reviewed at our recent Strategic Planning Day...



MISSION STATEMENT

Volunteers from The Oaks Historical Society Inc. manage the Wollondilly Heritage Centre to collect, research and interpret the material culture and local history of the Wollondilly Shire and Burratorang Valley, in co-operation with other organisations and the community, to better appreciate the present by an increased understanding of the past.

Our recent research requests are about the following families: Ada Mary Carlon; O'Briens of Sheeys Creek; also Patrick Joseph Kelly, his wife Ann and

daughter Ellen.

If you have any information that might help then please contact me on tohs1988@bigpond.net.au

Happy researching

Sue Davis, Local Archives and Family History ■



Acquisitions Report

Allen Seymour

Store 1 is complete with just a couple of minor things still to do but the compactus is in and all working well. A few teething problems initially have since been fixed and it's now looking great with everything back in.

We have had quite a few donations already and first off on loan from my own collection is an Alfa Laval Separator Oil tin for the dairy display. Also for the dairy display is an enamel billy can and matching plate used by Ned Hanger's family dairy at Spring Creek to take milk to the house in the 1930's and 40's. From Peg McEntee are three glass baby bottles.

There is a large aerial photo capturing Burragorang through to The Oaks and from Shirley Carlon some electrical insulators from Burragorang, an old style coat hanger that was Joe's and a hot plate lifter for a fuel stove that will be used in the cottage.



Other items include a letter that was sent to Gordon Small from The Oaks Jockey Club in 1947 complete with tickets to the race meeting, a program. A parcel of correspondence that belonged to Colin Parkin includes letters from the Nepean River County Council, the Water Conservation Commission and the Pastures Protection Board.

A child's high chair donated is believed to date from the 1860's and was used by a family at Picton. Marie Ewing-Terry has donated a couple of paintings of Glenmore House that were done in the 1970's.

From Bruce Brown a set of Crusader Cloth cards. These were actually put out by

Stamina who produced the well-known Men Of Stamina cards. These cards are around double the size of a normal Stamina card and show the various processes involved with producing the material used in Stamina trousers. Oddly they don't mention Stamina. Also a CFMEU calendar from 2000 (depicting a demonstration of Oakdale miners), and a very old round metal food cover.

It's been a busy start to the year with further donations since I started this report ■



Schoolies Report

Bev Batros

Our Schoolies are back at work and we started with our planning meeting on February 15th. We had 16 people in attendance and there have been a few changes worth noting. Thanks to Bruce Brown for stepping in as a regular in the mine in place of John Mainwaring. We are fortunate to have two people with their knowledge to undertake this role. Bronwyn Hayter has taken time out to mind her grandchild. She has been a regular and committed reserve for many years and we thank her for her time. Administration and teaching methods were on our agenda at the meeting before we spent a lot of time on First Aid. Capably led by Pat Rawnsley, we explored some possible scenarios that might occur in various parts of the centre and how to deal with them. Finally, we celebrated Shirley's 88th birthday, which happened to fall on the day! Shirley is our longest serving volunteer in the Schools' Program with over 30 years of dedicated service.



We are consistently booked until the end of June, with a few dates taken in Term 4. Our schools in Term 1 are Narellan Vale (a regular), St John the Evangelist (new) and Mt Hunter who only need to visit every few years because of their smaller numbers!

Our reserve list has become smaller so please consider coming down one Thursday to see if you would enjoy the program. Our hard-working volunteers need some time off for holidays or appointments so we must have a core of people who can fill in. Usually you get a week's notice and sometimes more and if you can't help that day it is perfectly ok to say no. You work with someone else until you feel confident and there are sheets of information that have been developed to assist you with what to say. The same information is repeated to 6 groups, so you quickly become familiar with it. Give me a ring on 0409 913679 if you are interested ■



Marketing Officer

Vicki Madeley

New to my role I've been busy touching base with various people relevant to Marketing and I have focused on the following;

Our pamphlets distributed to-Camden Information Centre, Picton Information Centre and 3 Libraries-Camden, Narellan and Picton.

Phone calls to Wollondilly Council to Kersti and Amanda- Digital Marketing Officer- who have been very informative and helpful. Information passed onto Trish, Sue- Facebook admin, Doreen and meeting with June our webpage coordinator.

I've looked at standardising our logo so we have a quality consistent logo across all platforms.

Updating of our calendar to add to webpage is in progress...

Discussion at business meeting for next month social media

posts and any other promotions that are needed for advertising. We will be increasing our webpage and Facebook presence as well as implementing an Instagram site, so watch for future posts.

I have contacted the District Reporter to add a story to the Back Then page-Trish to send article from Newsletter by Tuesday 13th Feb with meeting dates and repeat this each month-add to calendar so we don't forget. Trish has email contact with Lee Abrahams. I have developed a Questionnaire for visitor market research and will collate the results after 3-4 months. Volunteers to distribute to all visitors to survey as many as possible in this timeframe. Sue to put on Facebook and June to put on webpage ■

FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY –LETS CELEBRATE OUR VOLUNTEER PAT RAWNSLEY

Both my parents moved to Wollondilly when they were young children and attended school locally, my father at Oakdale and my mother at Mowbray Park.

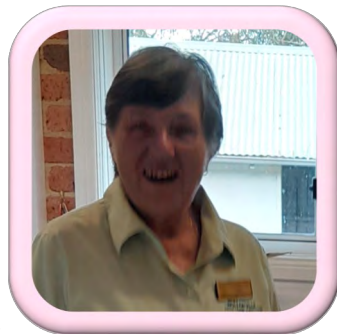
I was born in Sydney and came home to my grandparents' house which was along Oakdale Road (Barkers Lodge Road). My Grandparents had an orchard, 'Waratah Orchard' where they grew apples, peaches, plums and later grew gladioli for the Sydney markets.

We moved into our house when I was about 3 months old just after my father and grandfather finished building it. Our house was just up the road and was originally part of my grandparents' property. We also had a small orchard as well as apples we also grew potatoes, swedes, pumpkins, peas and beans for the markets. My parents, Jean and Stan Thompson lived in that house for the remainder of their lives.

My father had many jobs, he worked on the orchard, carted produce to the markets in Sydney then to Flemington. He cut wood and delivered it to some of the stores in Sydney for their furnaces, and he also cut mine props. He drove trucks and helped move buildings out of Burratorang valley before it was flooded. He drove coal trucks for Clintons, he was also an owner driver, and later drove my brother's truck. He was also a miner in the Valley Coal mines.

My mother worked outside all her life, mainly on my grandparents' orchard, but also other orchards at Lakesland. When my grandparents' property was sold, she also worked in a commercial flower garden, picking and packing flowers for the markets.

Growing up I spent a lot of time with my grandparents waiting for mum to finish for the day and also helping out. I attended school at Picton before completing General nursing and



Midwifery training at Liverpool Hospital. I worked at Queen Victoria Memorial home, Camden, Campbelltown and later Bowral hospitals.

The first few years after I was married we moved around a lot before building and settling in Belimbla Park where we raised our 3 children. I still live in the same house.

Both my parents were involved in Volunteering. Both were involved in Lakesland bush fire brigade, my father being Deputy Captain and my mother received a lifetime award for her

involvement in a support role. My mother was also the leader of Oakdale Girl Guides. Hence my volunteer involvement over the years in Brownies, Boys Brigade, Cub Scouts, Little Athletics, NSW SES and also the Heritage Centre.

My Involvement in the Heritage centre came about after I was talking to Phil and Laurette Hughes after church one day and they mentioned they were volunteers. I knew about the Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum but never visited. I like visiting museums, I have always had an interest in family history as well as 'old stuff', so decided to visit and they showed me around. We also talked about the Schools program and I thought it was something I might be able to do so spoke to Trish Hill about it. I had not long retired so in 2020 I decided to join the Heritage Centre and the Schools program. Even though I was brought up on an orchard, after walking around and observing all the sections of the schools program, I felt more comfortable working in the laundry rather than in the shed, I think it brought back memories of helping my mother as a child. I have been part of the program ever since. I also assist with morning teas for visiting groups and provide other assistance when I am able ■

OUR LOCAL AIRCRAFT NAVIGATION HISTORY Continued

In the Annual Report by the Minister for Civil Aviation for the financial years 1967-1968 it stated "The V.O.R. previously installed at Burragorang (Oakdale), was replaced by a V.O.R. at Bindook about 20 miles from Burragorang to obtain improved performance".

So, it seems the Bindook V.O.R. was completed and in operation at least by 1968.

The new and upgraded road was suitable first to get materials into the Nyanga Mountain area then after construction of the site to transport the diesel for the generators that powered the equipment, regularly trucked in, even during inclement weather. Unlike the site at Tumbledown/Oakdale, where a power line was able to be

erected along the route, the Bindook site was quite a lot more isolated with no town power supply and located within the Warragamba Catchment Area, was monitored for any possible water quality issues by the Water Board. Later as transfer of land management occurred, it became located within the Blue Mountains National Park.

For many years this section of road was well maintained and those who drove it, especially during the winter snow periods, appreciated the orange guide posts that identified where the road was and this was also handy in rain and fog.

Like its counterpart at Oakdale, the Bindook Aircraft Navigation Aid was to be replaced but this time with very modern technology which made this site completely redundant. Around 2018 the site had all materials removed, rehabilitated and returned to nature. The DCA site at Tumbledown was utilized and repurposed but the current state is unknown.

This very important piece of safety infrastructure within Wollondilly Shire served the aviation industry for over 50 years and yet probably not many knew of it.

Although the Bindook Aircraft Navigation Aid at Nyanga Mountain in the Bindook Highlands has gone, what does remain is an important road with its own history. We should recognize and thank those who put so much into its construction and maintenance that we still benefit either to and from the private lands in the area, to and from the township of Yerranderie for recreation and tourism and for use by emergency services as required.

Prior to the TSR in the late 1800's, miners and stockmen found their way along this route by foot and horseback to access the area and later timbermen would also exploit its many riches, some would settle the area and others moved on and a couple of local families put in a good effort and made a road to the west after their access from the east cut off, one wonders if it

were not for the DCA to choose a location on Nyanga Mountain for a V.O.R. and upgrade the road that they had put in, what state would it be in now. The TSR was revoked and is now incorporated within Blue Mountains National Park. The Colong Stock Route road, however, remains a public road and is the legal access to Yerranderie and private lands within the area■



←The DCA facility is in the centre of the photograph featuring Langs Bindook Station property in the left of the photo with the Colong Stock Route traversing from top left.

Below Ranger Fred Morris at one of the water holes on the plateau nearing the DCA facility.



←And nearby, a Travelling Stock Route marker emblazoned into the rock face alongside the Colong Stock Route which is today's public road.

A £1000 PROMISE

Following on from the December 2023 Newsletter 'A Plague of Ants' the Minister for Public Instruction, John Perry, had been true to his word. He had thought the case put to him for a new public school at The Oaks had ticked all the boxes .

A year later on Friday, September 19, 1902, he paid his first visit to the growing settlement to open the splendid new school building with space for 76 children. Built on concrete foundations, the walls were brick with dressings of a darker tone. With much concern about the health of the pupils, the exterior walls featured a two-and-a-half inch cavity to prevent damp while ventilation was provided by inlet and exhaust tubes. The teacher's residence boasted five rooms, a washhouse, pantry and bathroom. The work had been completed on the two-acre site on the corner of John and Burragorang Streets in an impressive six months by local builder, Jimmy Taylor, for the sum of £1,028 16s 6d including the fencing.

The Oaks turned out in force to welcome the Ministerial party who arrived as the clock struck 1pm with 250 people gathering at the school grounds. Accompanying Mr Perry were John Kidd, Minister for Mines and Agriculture and Member for Camden, William Daley, a solicitor and Member for Sydney (Gipps Division), Mr Wigram, the chief architect and Mr Wells, the clerk of works. The first stop was the new premises where a large number of children had gathered under the eagle eye of Patrick Kenniff, the teacher, and Miss Kenniff, the needlework instructor. After inspecting the building, Mr Perry was presented with an illuminated address by Jessie Moore on behalf of the children. A few words to the gathering from the

By Geoff Howe

school verandah; the Minister urged parents to use their home influence in the education of their children.

A sumptuous banquet had been laid on by Michael and Margaret Hennessy of the Sanatorium Hotel at a marquee erected in the school grounds. It was a good effort with the 20-something landlord only recently recovering from a bout of ill-health. Responding to the Royal toast, Mr Perry said he would pay high compliments to the district. Education should not be neglected; the Government must spend money in that direction. He would rather see £20,000 spent on schools than £1,000 on jails. At the conclusion of the proceedings, ornamental trees were planted in the school grounds before the official party departed for Sydney.

Public education had a lengthy record at The Oaks with a denominational school opening at the Roman Catholic Church

hall in 1864. The Public Instruction Act of 1880 transformed it into a public school, still operating in the hall which was leased by the Department of Public Instruction. Enrolments had steadily climbed from 36 in the first year to 62 in the last quarter. The campaign for a new school building was launched by The

Oaks Progress Association in 1898 culminating in the successful delegation to Mr Perry in 1901 ■




Photograph above taken c1910 with Clara Dunk, daughter of Arthur & Lucy Dunk of The Oaks, featured in the front row.

Left - School photo presented in the shape of Australia 1938. Teacher was Mr Weissel.

Editors note: At March 1st 2024 the are currently 332

students enrolled at The Oaks Public School.

Reminders, News & Info

WEEKEND ROSTER	
MARCH	
Pam & Margaret	Saturday, 2
Vivian & Bob	Sunday, 3
Sue & Helen	Saturday, 9
Debbie & Allen	Sunday, 10
Colleen & Kathy	Saturday, 16
Marlane & Cheryl/Kate	Sunday, 17
Doreen & Ben	Saturday, 23
Trish & Kevin	Sunday, 24
Laurette & Phil (Working Bee)	Saturday, 30
Vicki & Linda	Sunday, 31
Doreen & Ben	Easter Monday April 1st
SUPPER	ROSTER
March 	Pat & Linda
April	Sue & Jan
May	To be determined



General Meeting

Monday, March 4th 2024 at 7pm

Guest Speaker is Diana (Musgrave) Smith talking about family and life growing up at Nattai.

Meeting followed by supper/ All welcome



A DAY JUST FOR HER

Celebrating International Women's Day with Pampering and Positivity

Join us for a day of self-care, pampering and empowerment!

The Camden Wollondilly Domestic Violence Committee invites all the amazing women of Wollondilly to celebrate International Women's Day at "Wollondilly's A Day Just for Her" pamper event. This free women-only gathering promises a range of selfcare activities, including:

- Haircuts | Massages | Psychic and numerology readings | Bath salts and body scrub making workshop | Empowering art creation | 2 x gentle Yoga Circle classes

Indulge in morning tea and beverages while enjoying the company of other incredible women. Plus, take home a fabulous goodie bag filled with candles, a \$30 Shop the Dilly gift voucher, a native plant, and more surprises! Don't miss out on this opportunity to invest in yourself.

We can't wait to see you there!

DATE | Thursday 7 March 2024 TIME | 10am - 1pm
 LOCATION | Wollondilly Shire Hall, 52 Menangle Street, Picton

PLEASE NOTE: This event is for women only (no children as we are unable to offer childcare). Please wear leisurewear/gym wear or comfortable clothing.

Wollondilly Shire Council CAMDEN/WOLLONDILLY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COMMITTEE

Motor Show for Multiple Sclerosis

24th March 2024
10am-3pm

Campbelltown Steam and Machinery Museum.
86 Menangle Road, Menangle Park.

For more info Email- msmotorshow@outlook.com
 Or visit Motor Show for MS on facebook

All proceeds will go to MS Australia to fund research to improve the life of people living with multiple sclerosis and hopefully find them a cure.

Open to all classic, muscle and custom cars, bikes and trucks.

- Trophies
- Raffles
- Kids amusements
- Market Stalls
- Food and Drink

\$20 per vehicle
 Spectators Gold coin donation

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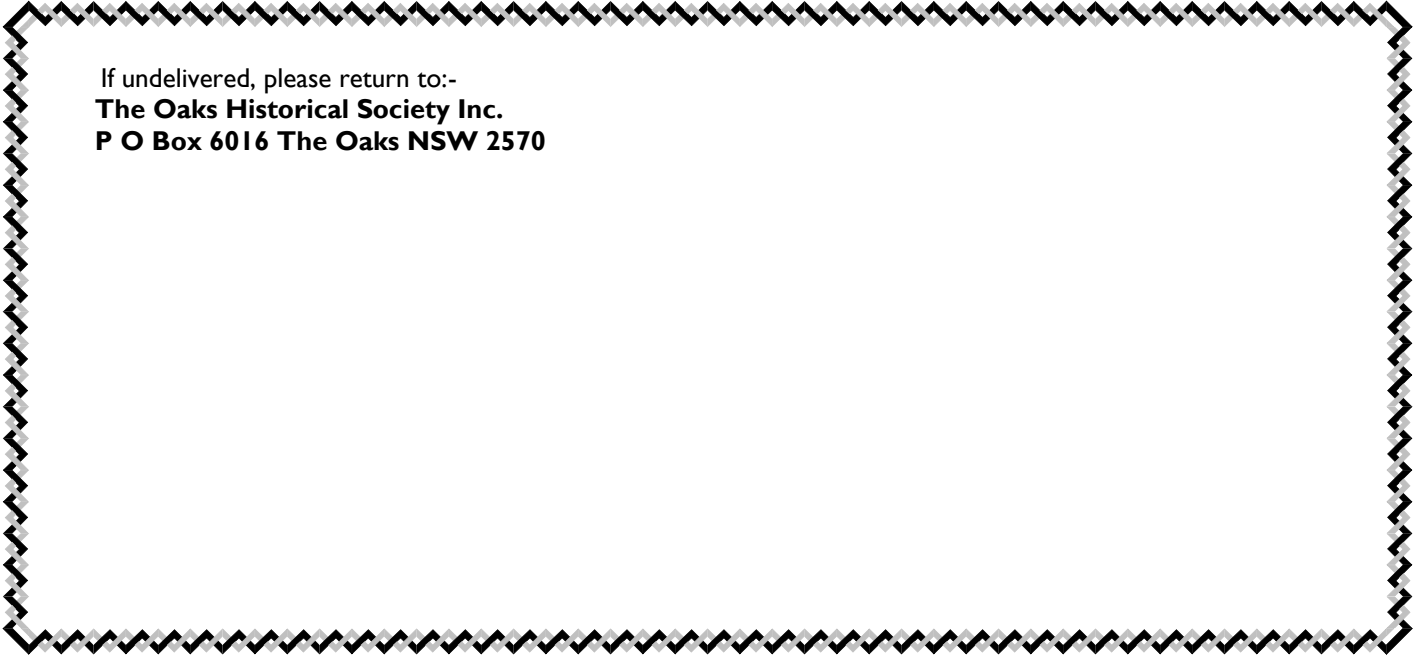


REMINDER- DONOHOE FAMILY REUNION

A Family Reunion will be held for the Descendants of Thomas and Jane (nee Madden) Donohoe on the first weekend of May 2024.

The Reunion is to be held at the Oakey RSL, which is about 15 minute drive west of Toowoomba, Qld. Further details are available at [Cecilia Donohoe](mailto:Cecilia.Donohoe) at: cv.donohoe@bigpond.com [Angela Weber](mailto:Angela.Weber) at: moggysmum@hotmail.com [Frank Donohoe](mailto:Frank.Donohoe) at: ad_donohoe@hotmail.com

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 Monday March 4th 2024 followed by the General Meeting on Monday April 1st. 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.



If undelivered, please return to:-
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