

The Oaks Historical Society Inc

Est. May 1979

The Oaks Historical Society Inc.
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Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

Newsletter

May 2024

HEADMASTER DALEY COMES TO BURRAGORANG

An extract of notes by Headmaster Frank Daley

As a small school teacher it was my appointment from the school in Cotter River where the building of the Cotter Dam for the supply of water for the future city of Canberra. After spending two years at this Centre loaned by the New South Wales Education Department to the Federal Government, I received my appointment to Burragorang Valley, vaguely directed from the terse telegram to take charge, whether it was a railway centre or what to me it sounded a railway terminus.

I left Cotter River and went by bicycle to Queanbeyan railway station to catch a train to the nearest centre to Burragorang Valley which I was advised at the time, to Picton. I was lucky to be travelling by rail at all, for a railway strike known as 'the big railway strike' was on and every station was filled with police and railway officials. Arriving at Picton on August the 14th 1917, I made enquiries about Burragorang Valley and to my questionings everyone seemed ignorant that such a place existed. One small fruit shop helper said her friend's husband who was a Church of England Clergyman visited Burragorang Valley each month for service and said that his people lived on the way out to Burragorang Valley, mentioning a certain house I was to call at the foot of the hill leading out of Picton. Having had no sleep the night before, I was a weary traveller on my way and probably didn't make too much of my inquiries that morning. Climbing the winding hill on to the tableland I rode onto a place called Oakdale where children were at play and their teacher was with them supervising in the playground. When I rode up, to my great delight was a teacher who trained with me five years previously who gave me a wonderful welcome and took me into his home attached to the school and we had a long chat and I was directed on my way. The road was shock-

ing, big heaps of sand stretched all along the way making it very difficult to often ride at all. After riding uphill for an hour I came to the top of Burragorang Mountain and the road pointed down hill twisting and turning showing in places for a distance but mostly blocked out with foliage of huge gum and box trees. I began the descent but found the pedalling so steep in places that I got off and walked, wheeling and walking my bike. At last from a very winding road I came to what was known as 'The Bluff', an awe inspiring sight that its beauty and depth, probably a thousand or more feet of a vertical drop. The sight I'll never forget, something the beauty of which will remain in my mind forever. There beside the drop was a vast stretch of water called the Nattai River which



wound for miles where it got lost in the distance. Over on the other side were vast hills and up the Valley were walls of the mountains just as if they were chopped down the side by some giant hand. The view was supreme and so awe inspiring that nothing could be said only a sheer gasp at wonder and delight. Continuing my very tired journey I wound down on a dirt road not bad but cut away or eroded through rain and weather for another two to three miles and incidentally I met a gang of workmen doing up the mountain road. One of them named Carlon I was to meet later in my career. Arriving at the bottom of the five mile descent I began to ride up the Valley on a shocking dirt road often filled with sand and

ruts. First I had to cross a shallow ford of water over the Nattai River. Riding along I eventually began passing farm after farm with boundaries within a mile to a few hundred yards to the Wollondilly River. As I rode, both sides of the mountains as I mentioned earlier was seemingly cut down with a giant hand each side averaging probably about five miles. *Continued page 5....*



President's Report

Trish Hill

Annual Report

This month The Oaks Historical Society celebrates an important milestone, our 45th year of operation. The Oaks Historical Society is the sum of many different parts and there are many different individuals who contribute. Some contribute sparingly, some generously, some humbly, some with a louder presence, some more hands on, some delve into plans and ideas however everyone is contributing to make us successful and each individual needs to be acknowledged for their contribution that helps us flourish. So my generous thanks to each and every one of you.

The committee have worked very productively throughout the year and again this commitment and use of time by busy people is appreciated and acknowledged. I am very aware of how much we are indebted to the generous contributions by committee members. It is generally the committee that moves the ideas that float around into action. Our 2023/4 achievements flow from the calm, fair and friendly discussions, and open communication within committee. Keeping communication channels between all parts of our organisation is a constant need and priority for an organisation to stay connected.

We have had a busy year and I feel we have run very successful programs and events. Our regular calendar events plus new initiatives have demanded a lot from our volunteer team and office support. All groups need more support to sustain this energy and we look to our members to respond when and where they can and always welcome new volunteers and members on board.

Thanks to our Patron, Judy Hannan for her great support and giving readily of her time.

Some highlights for the year and more detailed committee reports can be found further on in the individual reports and will help you gain an understanding of what we have achieved. This past year our membership has increased and we post out 50 hard copy newsletters and email 140 for the 11 months.

Simec/Tahmoor Coal, Keith Polsen/CPE, Create NSW, Museums & Galleries and Veolia are some of the funding sources and supporters that have assisted us in the past year, making a difference to our organisation, our community and our visitor groups. Again my thanks to our great team ■



Family History & Local Archive Report

Sue Davis

ANNUAL REPORT: 2023-24

The past year has seen requests for research come more from online enquiries than face to face enquiries with 26 online, through our website and emails, and 20 from visitors to the Heritage Centre. The types of enquiries are a mix of local family history to that related to property and events.

Our Thursday morning team of Helen Perry, Judy Murdoch, Steve Devitt, Janet and Geoff Howe, Tony Jackson, Sharon Ihlein and myself have been continuing to navigate our way through cataloguing and organising of Liz Vincent Collection, newspapers, Family History and Local History files as well as researching enquiries. Tony's mammoth task with the organising of the Liz Vincent Collection is getting closer to being added to a data base. Geoff's indexing of the newspapers will be invaluable. Steve has been helping with the research for a Dairy Industry publication to go with the exhibition. The team is often joined by librarian, Vivian Allen, who adds her history wisdom along the way.

In August, 2023 we joined in with National Family History Month and gave researchers free of fee research time. In September, 2023, we participated in the History Council, History Week of "Voices from the Past". Our event was called "Voices from the Kitchen". It involved looking at recipe

books from our ancestors and a sharing day of recipes and stories. These are currently being compiled for publication in the History Week of 2024.

As part of our Standards Review, we were given a Conservation workshop with a consultant. This was extremely valuable in helping us understand how to better care for the artefacts in our collection.

In October, 2023, I attended the RHS History Conference in Wagga Wagga, to obtain understanding of new practices and ideas to add to what we do at the Wollondilly Heritage Centre and Museum. A full report is available on request as delivered to the General Meeting of November, 2023.

We were grateful to receive new filing cabinets at the beginning of 2024. These make physical retrieval of resources very much easier.

In April/May, 2024, our event with the National Trust Australian History Festival was "Connections ". These involved tours of the old St Matthews Cemetery (Guide, Sue) and St Aloysius Catholic Cemetery (Guide, Trish). Stories were shared around the theme of "A Peep at Pioneers." They were well attended with a total of 25 visitors. Appreciation was given to the research carried out by the guides to conduct the tours.

Continued overpage.....

Family History & Local Archive Report continued

This is repeat information but I often use this website to verify information and hope readers will find it useful....In helping one of our recent researchers, I have accessed the NSW Government website for Births, Deaths and Marriages, <https://www.nsw.gov.au/births-deaths-marriages>. I was able to find the ancestor's full set of records for birth, marriage, death and also their parents' names. All very useful information to proceed in finding more! The records of course are for people where these events occurred in NSW. Other states also have records where these events occurred in their state. Once you find the record you can request a copy of the original certificate, for which you will need to pay about \$35 per certificate. You can't see the full details of the certificate without purchasing it.

A birth, death or marriage certificate is an official copy of an entry in a register kept by the central registering authority. Certificates usually provide considerable information about a family and might be useful in beginning your family history records. A death certificate can contain some records of 3 generations such as the person, their parents and the children. However, you must realise that information on certifi-

cates is only as reliable as the informant and could be inaccurate, especially in older certificates in the matter of age. As with all family history it is best to check a variety of sources to verify details.

There are registered transcribers who can find a summary of details for you at a smaller cost, such as <https://joymurrin.com.au/our-services/new-south-wales/> The content of certificates varies from state to state and over time. It is important to know that certificates can only be sort for Births more than 100 years ago; Deaths more than 30 years ago; and Marriages more than 50 years ago.

You could be lucky to find a death certificate in a probate packet at the NSW State Archives and then it could be photographed or photocopied. Some certificates could also have been shared by historians on websites such as myheritage.com or ancestry.com

If you are ready to get started then here is the website to help you...

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/topics/family-history-search>

Happy researching! ■

NEW SOUTH WALES
BIRTH, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION ACT 1988
BIRTH CERTIFICATE

REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1906/014566

1. DATE: 23 Aug 2008
2. SEX: Male
3. PLACE OF BIRTH: John Hunter Hospital, New Lambton Heights
4. CITIZENSHIP STATUS: CITIZEN (SOUTH AUSTRALIA)
5. REGISTERED ADDRESS: 11 South St, Sydney 2000
6. REGISTRAR: Greg Curry, Registrar, 23 Aug 2008

NEW SOUTH WALES
BIRTH, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION ACT 1988
DEATH CERTIFICATE

REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1906/014566

1. DATE OF DEATH: 24 Apr 2008
2. NAME AND OCCUPATION: David Alexander
3. AGE: 79
4. PLACE OF DEATH: 11 South St, Sydney 2000
5. REGISTERED ADDRESS: 11 South St, Sydney 2000
6. REGISTRAR: Greg Curry, Registrar, 24 Apr 2008

NEW SOUTH WALES
BIRTH, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION ACT 1988
MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE

REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2536402014

1. DATE OF MARRIAGE: 20 Aug 2014
2. PLACE OF MARRIAGE: 24 Regent Street, Chippendale, NSW, 2008
3. GROOM: John Arthur
4. BRIDE: Mary Anne
5. REGISTRAR: Amanda Innes, Registrar, 20 Aug 2014



Acquisitions Report

Allen Seymour

The past twelve months has seen 150 Mosaic entries. This means the actual number of items will be higher than this as some entries have more than one item. This also applies to the number of items in the collection, which is close to 5500 Mosaic entries.

The audit of the collection is not yet finished, I've still got to check items that are in the library and archives. With the new compactus now organised we will be experimenting with

replacing some of the heavy boxes with two smaller boxes which will make handling them easier.

Among the recent acquisitions are a diary, new testament and badges from Russ Johnson's father, Keith Johnson, who was in the RAAF during WW2. From Christine Parkin comes a registration form for a Friesian bull, and this will be used in the dairy display. We have also received a lot of dairy information from Rowan Moore, and this is being reviewed to determine what will be used in the display ■



Schoolies Report

Bev Batros

Annual Report

2023 was a record equalling year for our Schools' Program with 31 weeks filled. This was last achieved in 2016, with some lean years in between due to COVID. 2024 is shaping up to be a bumper year too with 22 weeks currently booked and plenty of time to fill the remaining weeks. Over 1300 pupils took part in the program and approximately 180 teachers and parent helpers accompanied them.

The program cost remains at \$6.60 per child with adults free. We have only increased our entry by 60c over the last 8 to 10 years. Unfortunately, bus costs are very high, so our low fee is very much increased by this factor.

We are very proud of our program and visiting pupils and teachers rate it very highly. The reasons for its success are varied. One is the dedicated, pleasant and informative

volunteers but the other vital point is how many "hands on"

activities the children take part in. It has to be a great day when you paint boomerangs, beat cream to butter, do the washing with a mangle wringer, grade apples, try slate boards and experience the life of a miner, just to name a few.

In 2023 the program was run by 11 dedicated volunteers who attend every Thursday. There were also 11 reserve volunteers but that number has dropped in 2024 to 8, some of whom have limited availability.

Schools visiting for the first time in 2023 were Oakdale, St Pius Unanderra and Bundanoon, with St Pius probably being the school to come the furthest. It was great that local schools Oakdale, Mt Hunter, The Oaks and Cawdor have all attended over the last few years ■



Marketing Officer

Vicki Madeley

Annual Report

Being only in this position since January 2024 and it being vacant for a few years it has taken a little while to become familiarised with all the various networking systems that are available to promote the Centre.

Achievements Thus far:

Increased Face Book posts and followers

Added an Instagram site-increasing our social media following.

Updates to Web page.

Networking with Aged Care facilities and speaking to their Leisure and Lifestyle co-ordinators. Seniors pamphlet made to hand to these facilities.

Conducting market research with a questionnaire for feedback.

Researching a cashless alternative so the members could make the decision to go with a cashless alternative... which one is yet to be decided.

Joining the new Council 'Tourism Connect'.

Connecting with Lee Abrahams of the District Reporter to advertise meeting dates and 'Back Then' articles for back page.

Connecting with Council for mentoring and advice- Amanda- Tourism Officer and Kirsty-Digital Marketing Officer.

Subscribing to Business E-Newsletter and Visit Wollondilly.

Continuation of 'Destination Wollondilly' full page add sponsored.

Marketing White board initiated to see a snap shot of years events and to keep on track with what's coming up next.

May Report

Our online presence is increasing as we regularly post highlights, upcoming events, bus trips and general activities involving the Heritage Centre Facilities. We have increased our numbers of people and organisations that are engaging with our posts and this is being reflected in numbers through the door.

The Questionnaire is proving a valuable source of feedback and is very positive. It shows that what we do is working, volunteers are doing a fabulous job in guiding and welcoming people into the facilities and around the grounds. People are very impressed with all the exhibits, grounds and buildings. The only asking point has been for an Eftpos alternative to be on offer. More pamphlets are being printed and distributed in the community and at the door as people like to tell others where they have been and like to take a pamphlet with them on leaving. This is also helping to spread the word of the Heritage Centre location and activities ■

DEAR ANCESTOR

by Walter Butler Palmer

Your tombstone stands among the rest, neglected and alone
The name and date are chiselled out on polished marble stone

It reaches out to all who care, it is too late to mourn

You did not know that I exist, you died and I was born

Yet each of us are cells of you in flesh and blood and bone

Our blood contracts and beats a pulse entirely not our own

Dear ancestor, the place you filled one hundred years ago
Spreads out among the ones you left who would have loved you so

I wonder how you lived and loved I wonder if you knew

That someday I would find this spot and come to visit you ■

HEADMASTER DALEY COMES TO BURRAGORANG Continued

The first woman I spoke to was a Mrs Bernard Carlon Jnr nursing a baby called Leslie, who directed me along the road to the nearest hotel. By this time I was dead tired and sleepy and felt I was let down in my search for accommodation. However I went to a place called 'Clifton House' where Mrs Mike Quig informed me I could stay at her house on condition I shared a room with someone else. Probably in my sleepy mood I left here and went back to a house called 'Killarney' owned by a Mrs Jack Quig who gave me a room all to



myself, so begins really my forty years of residence in Burragorang Valley, years which had their up's and down's and laughter and sadness that made them interesting and enjoyable.

I found there was an Irish beginning to the life of the families in which I was privileged to teach. Education had been varied and mixed until the New South Wales Education Department granted them a Public School which I opened on the 15th August 1917. I said Irish as I called the names Quig, Carlon

Donohoe, Wintle I was informed their religion was Roman Catholic and they had attended a Convent School until it was burnt down. Run by the sisters of St Joseph Order, there was a priest living in the neighbourhood and a Catholic Church and hall. That day there was service and I had no pupils as they were all at Mass. This happened so often that one school inspector told me to close the school and go to the service too. Burragorang Valley was divided into three sections, each having their own characteristics-Lower Burragorang or Coxs River, Central Burragorang and Upper Bur-

rorang. The school site was given to the Department by Mr Bernard Carlon senior. You couldn't find twenty yards of a playground without logs, stumps and rubbish. This had to be cleared away bit by bit right up to the school wall by the big boys and myself in fires. Looking back today dangerous and hazardous to the school.

Ed Note- Frank Daley married Stella Quig in 1920.

Stella was the daughter of Michael and Ellen Quig who had offered accommodation to Frank on his arrival in Burragorang Valley. Headmaster Daley was the teacher until the school closed c1957 for the clearing of Burragorang. Pictured top is Headmaster Frank Daley with Stella outside Killarney with their first child Bede in the left of the photo c1923 and below Headmaster Daley in the School



A PEEP AT PIONEERS

On Saturday May 20th our National Trust event (pictured) saw us conduct a tour of our local Cemeteries, St Matthews and St Aloysius. Although a little on the chilly side it was a very successful event with our group learning about some of the pioneers of our area



Farewell Harlan

By Doreen Lyon

Ben and I were unable to attend the celebration of life for Harlan Hall at Berrima Museum because we came down with Covid – but Lyn had arranged a streaming service for his family is USA and here in Australia so we were pleased to attend online.

Harlan and his wife Lyn were long time friends of our Museum and happy to offer advice in their selective knowledge of graphic design and digital display and we were sad to hear of his troubles with Parkinson's disease over several years. He will be sadly missed by many people.

Harlan was born in Nebraska with an interesting family history. His parents were of German descent and came from Russia. Apparently Catherine the Great (1762-1796) admired the German people and culture so much that she invited them to live in Russia. However the Czar Paul her son – who succeeded her set about undoing Catherine's legacy including the reception of German migrants. So many of them including Harlan's parents, migrated to the USA.

He came to Australia as a young man and an engineering degree where he met Lyn and persuaded her to sail to America with him. This they did and she met his family of one brother and 'several sisters' and lived in Boston before returning to Sydney to make their home. He worked at the Power House before becoming manager at the National Maritime Museum in Sydney where he is remembered for his fund raising to restore the James Craig sailing ship. His long association with museums and business were significant to the development of Berrima Museum

when he and Lyn moved to live in Berrima and joined the Berrima Historical Society.



One of the invited speakers, Susan Conroy, former Executive Director of Southern Table land arts said

"On succeeding in gaining the funding for development and extension of the museum to establish The Story Centre, with capacity to develop and host digital exhibitions, the museum, was propelled into the 21st century through a contemporary, climate-controlled exhibition space. Harlan conceived of the

idea of 'cloud stories,' a way to engage with contemporary audiences offering different pathways into museum collections, celebrating the people, stories and places of Berrima and the Wingiecarribee Shire."

Other friends and colleagues added to our knowledge of this quiet, gentle, man who was always courteous and willing to share his knowledge. He was named Wingiecarribee Citizen of the Year in 2015 and he and Lyn were awarded the OAM in 2017 and he received Museums and Galleries NSW IMAGinE

Award for his Outstanding Contribution as an Individual Volunteer.

A visit today to the Story Place in Berrima Museum will confirm of the unique qualities of this forward-thinking man and he has offered a challenge to museums to present their stories in new ways.

We send our sympathies to Lyn and his family and friends ■



Treasurers Annual Report

Debbie Seymour


At the AGM a full and comprehensive report will be tabled however this is simply an overview. While the figures show an overall decrease the main reason being a decrease in building expenses. There was a increase in plant and equipment. This was due to funding for our new lateral filing cabinets in main office, 2 new fabric display cabinets soon to be in use in the Federation building and new compactus in store 1 and just as important our new addition to the family 'Daisy the Cow' in the Agricultural building. Income was slightly down this year. Successful Grants in 2023/24 include: -Museums & Galleries Stipend Grants, Create NSW – Filing Cabinets & Compactus, Veolia– balance of grant from 2023, Create NSW – Covid 19

Grant Rescue & Restart and Tahmoor Coal.

Nothing that the Heritage Centre has achieved throughout 2023/24 would have been possible if it wasn't for our volunteers. It is not only the elected committee members that make things happen it is EVERY volunteer. All the things we do not only ensures our Centre will continue to grow and be here for future generations, but it also shows that we are more than that - we are a community hub and actively assist or participate wherever we can.

I always feel as if thank you isn't enough but thats all I have – THANKYOU ■

Reminders, News & Info

WEEKEND ROSTER	
MAY	
Doreen & Ben	Saturday, 4
Bev & David	Sunday, 5
Pam & Helen	Saturday, 11
Marlane/Cheryl/Kate	Sunday, 12
Colleen & Kathy	Saturday, 18
Vicki & Linda	Sunday, 19
Laurette & Phil Working Bee	Saturday, 25
Sue & Judy	Sunday, 26
SUPPER ROSTER	
May	 Maria Ewing Terry
June	To be determined



Annual General Meeting

Monday, May 6th 2024 at 7pm

Meeting followed by supper/ All welcome

General Meeting June 3rd

Guest Speaker is Andy Macqueen –Author of ‘The Frenchman’ -Francis Barrallier– Life & Journeys 1773-1853

Locally Owned

Est. 1997

The District

Reporter

Independent

02 4655 1234

Back then... Live Tour

BOOK NOW - Seats limited

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, May 29.

For \$40 visitors will be taken on a coach tour from Camden (beside Camden Sports Club) at 9.30am and The Oaks (The Wollondilly Heritage Centre at 9.50am) for a guided tour within Wollondilly and of the new Western Sydney International Airport.

The Back Then tours offer readers an opportunity to see the 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.**



Saturday 11th May 2024

Reunion of Burratorang Coal Industry & Truckies & Assoc Industries

FAMILY DAY FOR ALL

FROM 10AM

\$3 entry

Enquiries to
Kevin Wintle
0407 274401

Tea & Coffee available
Drinks/BBQ sausage sandwiches
with
BOOKINGS REQUIRED FOR
CATERING

Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

The Oaks Historical Society Inc. PO 6016, 43 Edward Street The Oaks 2570 NSW



Membership Fees 2024/2025 are due

Single- \$10.00 / Family -\$18.00

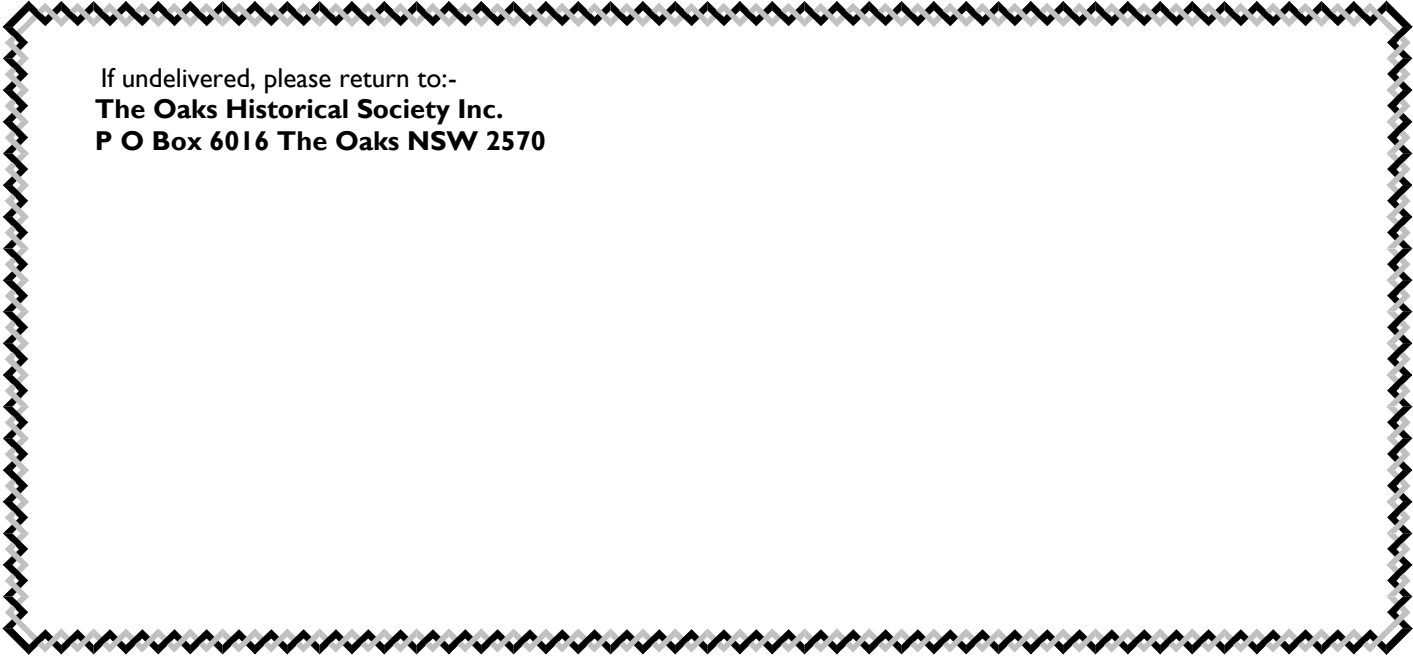
Newsletter postage is an additional \$16.50 / Emailed newsletters are free.

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

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 Annual General Meeting on Monday May 6th followed by the General Meeting June 3rd. 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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