

The Oaks Historical Society Inc

Est. May 1979

The Oaks Historical Society Inc.
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Newsletter

April 2022

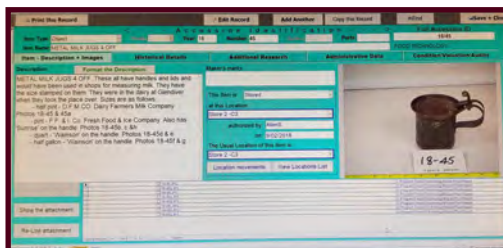
Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

Behind Closed Doors

A glimpse behind closed doors at the Wollondilly Heritage Centre and Museum reveals a most amazing collection of Wollondilly's history. This collection has grown since we began, through donations of historic objects by Wollondilly residents. The collection includes original and paper based documents, photographs, apparel, household wares, industrial objects just to name a few. Criteria for accepting donations is that they have provenance



to the Wollondilly LGA and a form is completed on arrival with the donor's details and as much information about the object as is known and is then signed by the donor. All of this information is entered into our collections management and is invaluable when we are developing an exhibition and compiling a history to support the exhibition. These secure areas are usually only accessible to museum staff and their contents are located through our Mosaic Collections Management Program. We have successfully used this system now since 2000, it works well for us and periodically we do have upgrades. So how does this system work and how do we locate objects? Imagine we are commencing a new exhibition and need to find exactly what we have in our collection that relates to the topic and so for example I'll use 'Dairying', which incidentally, is the one we are currently working on. In short, we enter the relevant words/terms into our program and these can be words such as 'dairy', 'farm', 'milk' and pictured right is a view of one of the screens /information. We are also able to use a donor's surname to search the system and this can be handy when we know they may have operated a



dairy. We then have the option to print out a comprehensive list of the objects that may become part of our 'new exhibition' as we do the research and design and this is the general process we follow each time we develop a new exhibition.

← In our main building we have 'Store 1' where the paper based objects and

fabrics and the more sensitive items are stored. Pictured → is a look at the contents of Box 8, which is 'Original Documents'. A section of the machinery shed houses 'Stores 2 and 3' where the solid household and larger more industrial type objects are stored.



Mosaic indicates currently that we have about 5500 stored items. I would point out also that at any given time all of the objects that are viewed in the various buildings as part of exhibitions are from our collection.

Our extensive collection of photographs, documents, archives and other files located in our admin office also lends support to our exhibitions. These are more readily accessed by local and family history researchers

and sometimes authors searching for or checking historical facts. Continued page 3...



President's Report

Trish Hill

A month has passed by so quickly and the rain continues and unfortunately caused us to wisely cancel our March meeting. For our April meeting on Monday night we are using our admin Jim Whyte Room rather than the Drill Hall and hope to see you there.

Our thoughts are with those communities who have suffered immeasurably and continue to as does the rain. This has been a fairly busy month with additional schools, bus group bookings and enquiries.

Thirlmere Festival of Steam was postponed and is now rescheduled for the weekend of June 25th & 26th so come along and say hello at our stall on Sunday 26th .

I would like to thank our team of volunteers for their great work. Ben and Doreen for their work in developing the new Indigenous Exhibition, our team who work tirelessly at work-

ing bees and supporting our organisation in general and the uniform team for their dogged determination in selecting our new uniform under adversity. Thankyou All!

We are always keen to welcome new volunteers to our team so if you think you would like to give it a go please don't hesitate to give us a call. There are many and varied tasks throughout the Centre that may appeal to you and we do a great morning tea.

Friday April 1st we're hosting a Seniors Festival Event from 10am in conjunction with Council to launch their Lifestyle Booklet and bookings are essential.

Finally, a couple of reminders for upcoming dates-

April 24th- Burraborang Reunion from 10am

May 2nd- AGM

May 28th-Truckies Reunion ■



Family History & Local Archive Research Corner

Sue Davis

Organised by the National Trust, the Australian Heritage Festival, the country's largest community-driven heritage event, returns 1 April – 31 May 2022, celebrating the theme 'Curiosity'. We are celebrating our part in the festival using Facebook postings from 26 April to 8 May. Our virtual exhibition will be called, *How Curious Is That?* Visitors to the Wollondilly Heritage Centre and Museum will also see objects in a 'Cabinet of Curiosities' in the front area of the main exhibition building and receive answers in a booklet available at the front desk.

How Curious Is That? Will showcase curious objects from our collection. Guests will be encouraged to nominate the name and use of the object before it is revealed.

Curious objects will be original items from the past as used in the Wollondilly Shire or Burraborang Valley. They could be representative of daily life or industries that are no longer used or may have changed when in modern use. Facebook users will have 24 hours to guess the identity of an item before it is revealed.

Browse for other events on the National Trust Website...

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/ahf/>



Here are a couple of curious objects from our museum. Do you know what they are, where they are displayed and who used them?



Happy researching! Sue Davis, Local Archives and Family History.



Acquisitions Report

Allen Seymour

Busier this month with quite a few items. First off is a framed photo of Australian soldiers in New Guinea in World War 2. Next is a hand operated mincer. There is also a bed warmer. This consists of a brass pan on a long handle, the sort of thing you see in old movies. On August 25th 1958 the Daily Telegraph published a supplementary magazine on Australian industry and commerce and we now have a copy of this.

If anyone is planning to get married, we have the ideal thing, a guide on what to do at weddings, 28th edition.

There is also a Collins Australian Atlas, I think we all had one of these. This is a 1965 edition.

A larger item is a pushbike, ridden by Jim Goff when he was a young man, Don't know the age or the make, but it has a wooden rim on the rear. Another item from the Goff family is a set of kitchen scales used by Jim Goff's mother. There are also a couple of indigenous stone axe heads and an Arnotts biscuit tin.

Our thanks to all who have donated ■



Schoolies Report

Bev Batros

Our school program has had a roller coaster ride over the last few years due to COVID, as of course has every activity. So it should not have been a surprise when our 2022 training day and leisurely BBQ was cancelled because of rain and floods. An extremely shortened training session then had to be squeezed in before our first school on 10th March.

After a not surprisingly slow start with bookings, we now have 16 weeks filled in the year. Schools include St Peters Anglican, William Carey, Narellan Vale, Robert Townson, The Oaks, Eschol Park and two home school groups.

Once again we have an extremely dedicated group of volunteers who give of their time every Thursday. Our regular team is Shirley Carlon, Margaret Battam, Jacquie Finley, Kevin Wintle, Glenis Pride, Pam Stephenson, John Mainwaring, Pam McVey and Pat Rawnsley. A special mention also to our very efficient Booking Officer Sue Davis who spends hours organising our paperwork, keeping track of bookings and negotiating dates with schools, in addition to

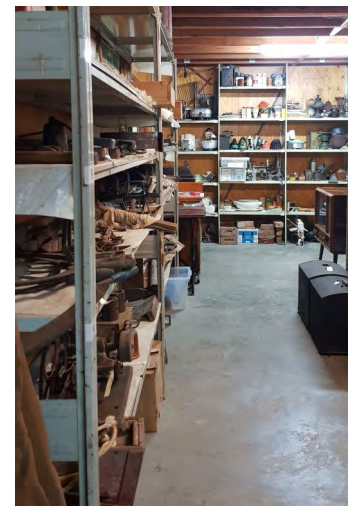
her other work for the centre.

A few volunteers need a special mention. First, best wishes to John Mainwaring for a speedy recovery after his operation. John is one of our long term volunteers with special knowledge about mining, running that section of the program. Shirley Carlon is another long term member who has given over 30 years to the schools' program, yet her enthusiasm and love of the job never wanes. One of our volunteers Pat Rawnsley is also an SES volunteer and has worked really long hours in the operations team during the recent floods. Thank you Pat for all you offer to our community. Lastly a mention to Kevin Wintle who quietly spends hours of additional time at the Centre doing maintenance work, especially during the recent rain when he needed to deal with our overflowing drains.

In every part of our volunteer organisation we have incredible people who just keep giving of their time to ensure the centre functions as well as it does. Thank you everyone ■

Behind Closed Doors continued.....

The photographs show a glimpse of Store 2, the way objects are stored there and the variety of our history that is catalogued. As you see it is a much more industrial area of storage with a vast number of objects in our collection. The screen photo of the catalogue program depicts a stock brand which is stored in this section. As our Dairy research grows we will source some of these objects from our collection to build the exhibition ■



Cemeteries of Burragorang Valley Part Two....

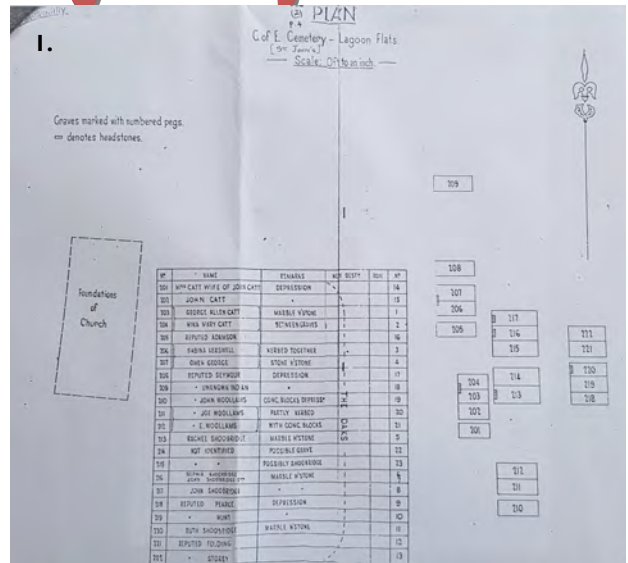
There were twenty three graves removed from the Anglican Cemetery of St Johns at Coxs River and they came to The Oaks to be reinterred at St Matthews Church Yard and Cemetery and are depicted in the photographs.

Again, the documentation and photographs are from our archives and the transfer is documented in the plans.

The grave recorded as the 'unknown Indian' is highly likely to be that of M.D. Boota who was killed in 1903 when his wagon capsized in the Coxs River. Apparently after some discussion he was interred in the Church of England Cemetery at Lagoon Flats as noted below in the extract from the Camden News 6th August 1903(Trove)

1-3. Plans of the Church of England Cemetery of St Johns, Lagoon Flats and register of the burials

4. Sign at St Matthews noting reinterment location and order of graves

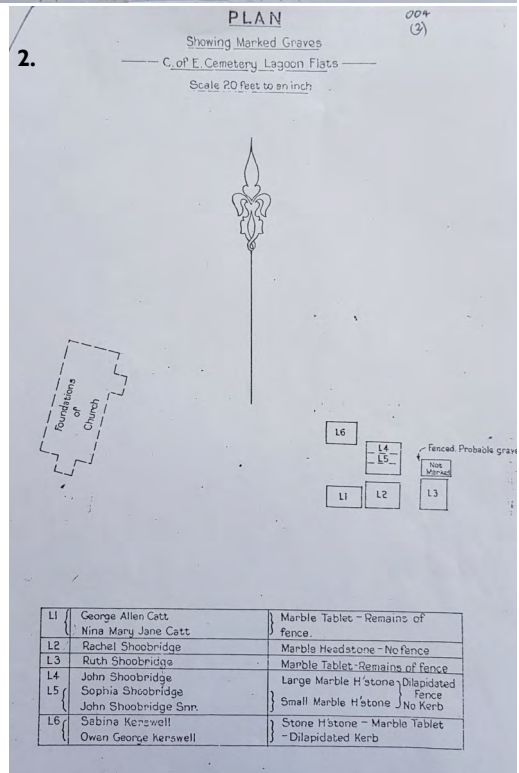


3. METROPOLITAN WATER SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE BOARD. WARRAGAMBA CATCHMENT AREA CEMETERIES ACT, 1952. REGISTER OF BURIALS IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND BURIAL GROUND, [St. John's] LAGOON FLATS, LOWER BURRAGORANG VALLEY.

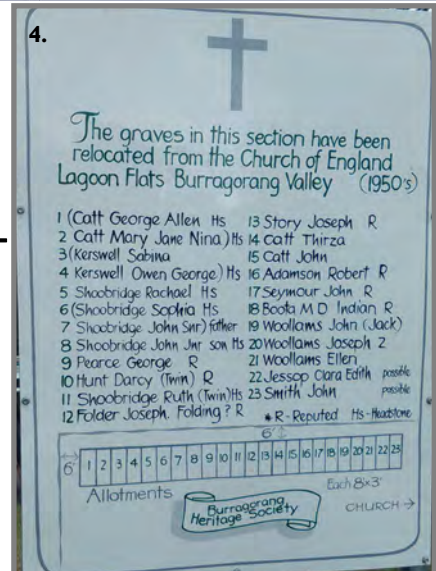
REF. NO. TO GRAVE ON PLAN	NAME	DATE OF DEATH	AGE AT DEATH
L.6	KERSWELL, Sabina	August, 1919	54 Years
L.6	KERSWELL, Owen George	August, 1919	13 Years
L.4	SHOORIDGE, John	November, 1908	73 Years
L.5	SHOORIDGE, Sophia	May, 1880	
L.5	SHOORIDGE, John, Snr.	November, 1872	
L.3	SHOORIDGE, Ruth	March, 1907	6 Years
L.2	SHOORIDGE, Rachel	June, 1885	
L.1	CATT, George Allen	March, 1908	3 Years
L.1	CATT, Mina Mary Jane	December, 1898	11 Months

REPUTED BURIALS IN UNMARKED GRAVES.

Mr. WOOLLAMS
Mr. ADAMSON
Mr. SEYMOUR
One unknown Indian
John CATT
Thirza CATT



necessity of helping the farmers on this river has been struck off the memorandum of the Work's Department. It was on the road up this river where the sad accident causing the death of Boots occurred, and even since then have accidents, such as a capsized taken place, through the neglected state of the road. The death of this unfortunate fellow caused quite a sensation on the river, and long will be remembered the burial of the body; although the police had the matter in hand and ordered the interment at the nearest burial ground, objection was taken to the body being laid to rest at the Catholic cemetery, and still greater objections being raised at a grave being dug on the so-called public road; so it became that the interment took place at the C. of E. cemetery at Lagoon Flats. The enormous



Remembering Our Anzacs

PHILLIP JAMES SMITH # 3454: 1890-1918

Phillip Smith (pictured on the right in photograph) was born on the family farm at Coxs River in Burratorang Valley and went to the local school.

During WW1, Phillip enlisted at Wentworth Falls on 22 November 1916. His next of kin was given as his father James Smith of *St. Elmo*, Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls. He was 26 years and 8 months old. He sailed on the *Anchises* on January 24th 1917 and spent most of the time on the ship in hospital with measles.

After training in England, Phillip joined the 35th Battalion and spent some time sick in the field hospital. He had three weeks leave in England and re-joined his unit in April 10th 1918 and spent a short time in hospital affected by gas. He was back at the front for the Allied attack on the German-held Hindenburg Line which claimed so many lives. Phillip was killed at Accrocher Wood, Hamel, a strategic battle on the Somme on 10th August 1918.



His father James was sent his effects consisting of 1 disc, 1 wallet, 1 YMCA wallet, 1 notebook plus cards and photos. The photograph shows Phillip with his hand on his father's shoulder and family and friends. It also has evidence of a bullet hole on the left. This bullet also pierced other photos and birthday cards he had kept in a wallet.



PRIVATE HAROLD LANCELOT STEVENS # 7839:1897-1918

Private Stevens preferred the name Lance from an early age. He was born at The Oaks on 26th March 1897 to Albert and Grace Stevens (nee Loutitt), the second of three children; William born 1892 at Mulgoa, Olive born 1899 at Oakdale. The family lived a rural life on several properties at, and near The Oaks. He moved with the family first to Minto then Auburn where the job prospects were greater than those in The Oaks.

Lance took his military oath at Granville NSW, aged 20yrs and 9 months. On the 28-2-18 he embarked from Melbourne on the *Nestor* with the 26/4 Battalion bound for Liverpool, England. Once in England he was transferred to a Training Battalion in Sutton Veny, 211 miles south east of Liverpool. Approximately 28 days into training Lance contracted Measles which meant a month of isolation in hospital.



Orders came on the 7-7-1918 for Lance's Training Battalion to proceed overseas to Le Havre France via Folkstone. The day before orders came to march out to Folkstone, Lance was found away from camp and fined one day's pay plus admonishment by his commanding officer.

Being in France brought new challenges to Lance as he was to face the enemy in May 1918. Sadly in August 1918, Lance was killed in action near Poyart, France where he was buried close to the battlefield. After the war he was exhumed and finally laid to rest at Heath Cemetery 1- 1/2 miles north of Harbonniers and 7- 1/4 miles south east of Corbie France. Lest We Forget !

Stories researched by TOHS from 'Boys From Burratorang & Beyond in WW2





Exhibitions Development

Doreen Lyon

The new display Gurangatch & Mirragan – the Creation Story of Wollondilly is now finished and complements and completes the story of Burratorang Valley. We are fortunate to have this story of how our river systems began documented by R.H. Mathews from the Gundungorra people of his time. This story joins many others to form a web of creation stories across Australia which First Nation people are researching today from archival and oral sources. The story features significant waterholes in the river made as the fight progressed. They can only be identified today from old maps and from memories because most of them are under the waters of Lake Burratorang. So it is important that we share them through photographs and recorded stories. We are also fortunate to have Jim Smith's book *The Aboriginal People of Burratorang Valley* to continue the story. I recommend you consult his work for any questions you may have from the display and also from the booklet we plan to produce for the display. Unfortunately, when the previous display was taken down we had to lose some of the content due to lack of room for everything. The photos are all in our collection and library and can be found in Jim's Book and also in Dianne Johnstone's "Sacred Waters". Other objects are returned to the collection.

The collection of objects in the new cabinets have all been sourced from our collection or from some donations and are not intended to relate to the story of Gurangatch and Mirragan.

I would like to thank Kazan Brown and Taylor Clark and other Gundungorra people for their advice and time in

putting this together. And to Trish and Debbie, Kevin and Ben and anyone who has contributed to the research and installation. We can now look forward to sharing it with the public at a special ceremony ■



Wingecarribee and Wollondilly Rivers at the start of the Journey, this photo shows the head of the serpent Gurangatch in the mountain landform and the river he created



←The Creation Story Exhibition and supported by stories on a touch screen located adjacent to the exhibition.

WEEKEND ROSTER

APRIL

Debbie & Allen	Saturday, 2
Maria & Betty	Sunday, 3
Doreen & Ben	Saturday, 9
Sue & Paul	Sunday, 10
Pam & Margaret	Saturday, 16
Kaye & Jim	Sunday, 17
Vivian & Bob	Monday, 18
Sue & Helen	Saturday, 23
Debbie & Allen	Sunday, 24
Working Bee	Saturday, 30

MONTHLY SUPPER ROSTER

April	Bring a plate
May	Marie & Debbie
June	Doreen & Ben



Annual General Meeting

May 2nd

7.00pm

A reminder that membership fees are due at this time

Memberships Fees

Single - \$10.00

Family - \$18.00

Note: For Newsletter postage please include an additional \$10.

Emailed newsletters are free.

Bank details below for direct credit with surname as reference

Account Name:

The Oaks Historical Society Inc.

BSB: **062516**

Account #00904093

Reminders, News & Info

VOLUNTEER

Give us a call if you would you like to join our team of Volunteers?

0432 689034

Truckies Re-Union

from 10am

Saturday 28th May 2022

\$3 entry
Enquiries to **Kevin Wintle**
0407 274401

FAMILY DAY FOR ALL! ANYONE INVOLVED IN COAL TRANSPORT, PRODUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

Tea & Coffee available
Drinks & BBQ sausage sandwiches

NOTE: BOOKINGS PREFERRED FOR CATERING

Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

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

Dear John you were a great helper.
I Learnt a lot about coal.

Bella John

from Aiden 2S.

Aiden from 2S at St Peters Anglican School enjoyed visiting us with his school. In particular he enjoyed the mine and sent this picture for John Mainwaring.

Thanks Aiden!

Burraborang Reunion

Wollondilly Heritage Centre at The Oaks on Sunday April 24th from 10.00am

See displays of Burraborang before the flooding, when it was a community with farms, post offices, schools and guest houses. Get together with friends and view the photographic displays, archival material, B&W film footage, machinery and utensils that were a part of daily life in Burraborang.

Enquiries: phone Trish on 0432 689034

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. Next meeting is Monday 4th April 2022 followed by Monday 2nd May 2022. 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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P O Box 6016 The Oaks NSW 2570

