

The Oaks Historical Society Inc

Est. May 1979

The Oaks Historical Society Inc.
43 Edward St The Oaks 2570
(PO Box 6016) T: (02) 4657 1796
E: tohs1988@bigpond.net.au
www.wollondillymuseum.org.au



Newsletter

June 2021

Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

REUNION OF BURRAGORANG COAL FIELD OPERATORS

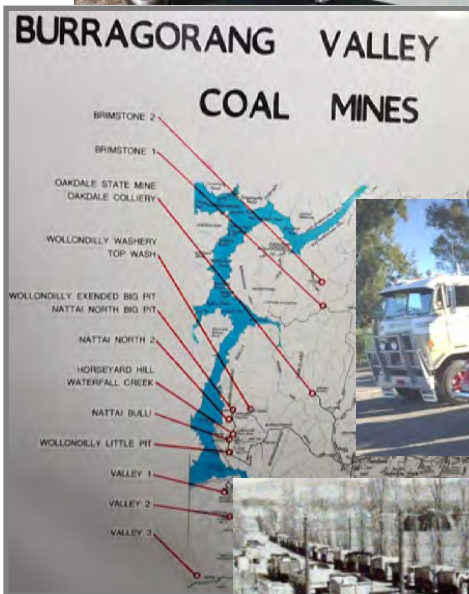
Saturday 29th May, the Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum hosted the third bi-annual reunion for those involved in the local Burragorang Valley Coal Field coal production. Some eighty odd gathered and shared memories of a rich period in our history and one of great unity and camaraderie amongst the workforce. For some, their love of trucks has today, generated a hobby or interest in 'boys toys', pictured → and they were an added attraction on the day. The oldest operator attending was Snowy Kronen and at 101, enjoyed catching up with his younger workmates.

The locals today, residents of the western and southern sector of our Shire would have no concept of productivity of this era of mining and indeed how much this area relied on this industry for it's survival. Nor would they know how intensely busy the local road system was in the quest to transport both employees to their place of work and the coal to the various terminals. Both Burragorang Road and Barkers Lodge Road was a constant trail of coal trucks back and forth from 4am-10pm, Monday through to Friday. Additionally, the local bus company serviced the mines and transported miners to and from the mines for work for at least 3 shifts daily and some miners car pooled and drove.

The Burragorang Coal Field for many years was one of great productivity which flowed on to the mineworkers and transport operators and the locality in general.

The business centres of Wollondilly, Camden and beyond were well supported by this thriving industry and in times of industrial strife those centres also suffered. If there were miners strikes and problems at the Harbour at Port Kembla the cash flow in the area reduced significantly.

Much of this coal history has been documented by Ian Welsh, author of the *Valley of Wealth* publications, *A Burragorang Coal Story* and *The Brimstone Story*, both available



at the museum. Ian developed the reunion concept initially and was one of the transport operators for Clutha and the subsequent ownerships ■

Centre pic- map of the mines on the Burragorang escarpment

S&M Fox Fleet trucks parked for meeting at Camden Showground Sept 1973



President's Report

Trish Hill

Well we're officially into winter and it's not my favourite season so I'm hoping it is a mild one. We work very comfortably now in our still new admin extension with air-conditioning but I'm sure we all recall the previous cramped and fridge like conditions of our office space in winter. How fortunate are we now?

Our AGM saw no change to the executive and broader committee and with bookings very positive we look forward to a great year.

Thank you to our members who have renewed their memberships and just a reminder for those who have not yet renewed, our bank details are on the back page along with lots of other interesting information.

Sunday, May 16th saw the conclusion of our Heritage Festival Art

exhibition with the presentation of awards to the children (pictured) from participating schools. Volunteers manned some of the activities to present a *Look At What Life Was Like In The Olden Days*. It was a very successful event and the artworks that proved most favoured in the voting stakes were Burragorang scenes.



Last weekend we hosted the Coal Transport Reunion and again it proved to be a popular event with around 80 in attendance. There were some great comments from those who attended and there is some discussion as to whether we trial it as an annual event. Watch this space! Thank you to all of our volunteers who helped to make this event the success it was ■



Exhibitions Development

Doreen Lyon

We are starting on the small display about The Oaks this week. It will be in the cases next to the kitchen where the Cycling display is currently located.

I have also suggested making a start on the history of the dairying industry in Wollondilly, using the research docu-

ment suggested by Euie Havilah to give a pathway. I am hoping Betty will lead the group and that we can create a document to use to mount a display in the Farm to Table gallery. Please think about joining the group – none of whom have done this before! ■

Changing faces of the Wollondilly Council Building at The Oaks



Wollondilly Council Building at The Oaks featured in earlier newsletters left and below, an Allan Baker image .



New photos from Eric Heise right and below show him demolishing the last section. The bottom pic shows the old fire shed and the view down the original Burragorang Road to the airport.





Family History & Local Archive Research Corner

Sue Davis

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! I have written about the site before but I think it is time to revisit. 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. I am currently waiting for the birth and death certificates of one of my great grandmothers so that I can confirm the names of her parents.

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 chil-

dren. However, you must realise that information on certificates 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 sought 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

I have included some sample images below.

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

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

NEW SOUTH WALES
BIRTH, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION ACT 1995
REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1906/014566
BIRTH CERTIFICATE

1. CHILD
Identify Ann: (SP) (Sister of David Ann) (Sister of David Ann)
Date of Birth: 28 August 1908
Place of Birth: [redacted]

2. MOTHER
Identify Name: MOTHER (Full Name)
Name: Mrs. [redacted]
Date of Birth: [redacted]
Place of Birth: [redacted]

3. FATHER
Identify Name: FATHER (Full Name)
Name: [redacted]
Date of Birth: [redacted]
Place of Birth: [redacted]

4. MARRIAGE TO MOTHER
Date of Marriage: 02 March 1906
Place of Marriage: Sydney, NSW

5. PREVIOUS CHILDREN OF REGISTERED FATHER

6. REGISTERED FATHER
Name: [redacted]
Date of Birth: [redacted]
Place of Birth: [redacted]

7. REGISTERING AUTHORITY
Name: Greg Curry, Registrar
Date: 28 Aug 2008

Before accepting copies, register original. The original has a coloured background.

REGISTRY OF BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES
SYDNEY 24 April 2008
Greg Curry

NEW SOUTH WALES
BIRTH, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION ACT 1995
REGISTRATION NUMBER: 233640/2014
MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE

1. MARRIAGE
Date: 07 February 2002
Place: Registry of Birth Deaths and Marriages, Chippendale, NSW

2. BRIDE/GROOM
Family Name (Green Name(s)): Citizen John Arthur
Occupation: Singer
Place of Residence: 34 Regent Street, Chippendale, NSW, 2008
Congregational Status: Never Validly Married
Place of Birth: Sydney, NSW
Date of Birth: 01/11/1928
Age: 82
Father's Name: Bruce Citizen
Mother's Name at Birth: Mary A. Citizen

3. BRIDE
Family Name (Green Name(s)): Smith Mary Anne
Occupation: Singer
Place of Residence: 34 Regent Street, Sydney, NSW
Date of Birth: 02/02/1928
Age: 82
Father's Name: John Smith
Mother's Name at Birth: Mary Smith

4. CELEBRANT
Name: Nigel Thomas

5. WITNESSES
Marriage Act 1961

6. WITNESSES
Name: Anne Johnson
Name: David Washington

7. REGISTERING AUTHORITY
Name: Amanda Isaacs, Registrar
Date: 28 August 2014

8. ENDORSEMENTS
Not Any

Before accepting copies, register original. The original has a coloured background.

REGISTRY OF BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES
SYDNEY 28 April 2014
Amanda Isaacs

NEW SOUTH WALES
BIRTH, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION ACT 1995
REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1906/014566
DEATH CERTIFICATE

1. DEATH
Date and place of death: 20th December 1948
Name and occupation: Laura Stevens
Sex and age: female 19 years
Cause of Death: Accidentally drowned
Description of fatal illness, medical attendant, when first seen, treatment and last seen, (documentary evidence of cause):
(1) Respiratory infection (2) Not known
(3) Not known
(4) Not known
(5) Not known
Identified by: P. Harris
Deputy Coroner: [redacted]
Wagga Wagga

2. REGISTRAR
Name: [redacted]
Date: [redacted]
Place: [redacted]

3. REGISTERING AUTHORITY
Name: [redacted]
Date: [redacted]

Before accepting copies, register original. The original has a coloured background.

REGISTRY OF BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES
SYDNEY 24 April 2008
Greg Curry



Acquisitions Report

Allen Seymour

It's been a huge month with over 50 donation items coming into the collection. Among them Ambrose Dwyer's long service medal. As mentioned previously, we had the paperwork for it, and now have the medal as well. Thanks to Bev for her help. From ex-Brimstone miner Peter Harvey, we received his helmet, light, belt, battery and knife, as well as his enamel drinking mug and an adjustable measuring rod for checking heights for mine props. From a different type of mining, a replica gold washing cradle/rocker box that was used at Warragamba Public School. Whilst on Warragamba, we also received some colour slides of the dam under construction, taken by a visitor and they had already been scanned and came with a disc of the scans. From one of our group visitors, we received some more photos of the dam. These were used by the Water Board display unit and include a photo of the weir under construction in 1939 and the overhead cableway that carried the sand and gravel from Penrith to the dam site. These photos have already been copied and are in the File Management directory. There was also a publicity brochure for the dam.

We received information on the Totterdell family that were at Tahmoor. We are trying to trace members of this family so the information can be returned to them.

An item I've not seen before was a scroll commemorating the death of a soldier in WW1. It appears to be an official document with George V's name on the top. The soldier in question was Private Stanley Gordon Wood from Marrickville, and we've yet to establish if there is any local connection. There are also some pages from a 1933 Camden News, and an advertising brochure for Elaine Gorman's house at 3 Russell Street, The Oaks. This is very detailed with interior views as well as exterior and provides a good record of it.

From Jacquie Finley comes an aerial photo of The Oaks, taken in July 2009. This was part of our Heritage Festival art exhibition and is now a permanent collection item. Dawn Penny has provided us with a large number of items from the Dunn family. The most outstanding of these is a gramophone. This piece of furniture is about 2 foot square and stands about 4 foot high. It is called "The Pooley" and is made by the Dooley Furniture Company of Philadelphia. It would have been the centrepiece of the home in its day. Other items include slide and movie projectors, a 1940 Readers Digest, a collection of woodworking planes, both wooden and steel, one of which is still in its original box.

Another unusual item is a small hurricane lamp – a Deutz Sport, made in the USA, and is less than half the size of a normal lamp. There are some other kerosene lamps, one of which is a wall mounted unit, some blowlamps and an old style black wall phone.

Additions to our militaria collection are a 1907 bayonet and a practice hand grenade. The latter is perfectly safe, definitely no explosive in it!!!

Another extraordinary item is an apple juicer produced by Fowlers Vacola. This came from a sale at an old apple orchard site at Deitz Lane. It resembles a meat grinder but has an extra outlet for the juice. Thanks to Maurice for this.

From my own collection comes a Numbers text book from the 1940's, used for teaching mathematics to young children. included are some exam papers for the Intermediate and Leaving Certificates from the 1960's as well as a brochure on Denbigh homestead at Cobbitty, from an open day there in the 1980's. My mother used to make scrapbooks, and one of these I've donated contains a lot of photo pages from the Macarthur Advertiser in the 1970's. There are some very interesting items among these, one a 1910 photo of the Percival wagon we have, taken in Campbelltown, carrying a load of hay.

We are also in the process of retrieving some items from an old dairy at Buxton and will report more on this next month ■

Glass cabinet displaying new Donations/ additions located next to our awards →



YERRANDERIE MEMORIES

From our archives-written by Maurice Cowan. Continued from last month.....part three is about the people, buildings and landmarks.

I remember a butter factory in the Valley (pictured) as a brick building on the right hand side of the road going towards Yerranderie. Roy Quig told me that his family used to make cheese. The cheese was

put into metal cake tins with the lids tapped down and when the tins began to rattle from the 'hoppers' within, the cheese was ready to eat. Was he having me on?

The house rented by my grandmother during the war was at Lot 5 in Nugent Street. It was

weatherboard and pretty basic but I can't remember who owned it. There was furniture, again basic, but it did include a gramophone and a stack of 78 records. Sad to relate there was also a large quantity of old wax cylinder records. My grandmother was told to use these as firelighters. Still, had she not, I suppose they would have gone the way of all flesh in the subsequent clearance. There was one stipulation about the rental, this being that the shed/garage was out of bounds. This was strictly adhered to. It was full of the owners goodies and what goodies there were to be seen through the gaps in the sagging doors. To a youth's eyes the principal goody was a heavy calibre lever action rifle, a Sharps or Winchester with an octagonal barrel; just the thing to have across your saddle-bow if you were out on the prairie looking for buffalo. I wonder who finished up with this?

In the house at Lot 13 Kerry Street lived a boy with the given name of Aubrey and the family name escapes me. They had a pet magpie and sometimes when Aubrey was playing with my cousins, "Aubrey come home" would sound out. Off he would troop and back he would come. The magpie had his mothers/grandmothers voice to a tee. Which reminds methe war years were a time of terrible drought. Every day currawongs would come to the back door for scraps, I've never seen them so tame.

It never occurred to me that Yerranderie Streets had names nor can I remember the terms East and West Yerranderie. There was Yerranderie and then Newtown beyond the Courthouse and it seemed to me there were more houses than shown in recent publications. Lots 7 & 8 Mervyn Street must have been the site of the Burkes house. There was a stable on the lane and a detached kitchen at the rear of the house. Once when riding from the pub to the post office, nearing their house, the saddle began to slip. I was able to free my feet and the saddle finished up under the horse's belly. I'll get a wiggling if Jim sees this, I thought, but before I could dismount, a woman sitting on a verandah (maybe Lot 13) yelled out "Stick to him, young'un". My gaffe became common knowledge. I had saddled up with the horse 'puffed up'.

Arthur Mealing, previously mentioned had been a winch driver and a story told about him was that in a cage moving in a shaft a miners coat became entangled and could have dragged him out. Arthur 'felt' this on his controls and stopped the winch. I can't remember where

he lived but I seem to recall he was always fully dressed, no tie and maybe no shirt collar but always with suitcoat and trousers, waistcoat too probably.

The then track to Colong Caves took you down to the Tonalli before climbing to The Mootik and Tonalli Gap. You passed a house with

fruit trees. Someone lived there or at least had the use of it and may have been Lennie Norris.

Jim Burke once took the Martin boys, bill Patterson and myself to the Wollondilly to fish. It was summer, so suitable for sleeping out overnight. I think we rode down the



road until we could easily get to Jooriland Creek/River to follow it down. There were no skimpy bedrolls at the back of the saddle as in western films. Each horse had two hessian bags slung across its withers. These had our tucker, bread mostly, blankets, billycans and grain in nosebags for the horses. Fishing poles were cut at the river and lines tied to the thinner end, a 'Ned Kelly' rig according to my father. The lures were 'wobblers'. These were hand carved from wood, beetle shaped with hooks underneath. You jiggled the pole to make the wobbler 'swim'. Live bait, if any was to be had, was obtained by throwing river bank soil into the water and picking up any crickets that tried to swim to shore. We didn't catch any fish nor any eels overnight. Saddles, by the way, make lousy pillows.

Until reading *Yerranderie, Story of a Ghost Town*, I always thought that Walter Gruce's name was Druce. One Christmas when Henwood and I were camped near Bluebush Point on the Kowmung, Walter came along heading for Yerranderie via Church Creek. He was alone and there was the distinct impression that we were intruders. We had firearms of which he disapproved, but they weren't for fun. We were both interested in marksmanship but we would have had maybe 30 bullets between us so that there was no shooting at targets. Ammunition was very scarce in wartime. We supplemented our rations with rabbits. You learned to take a rest, take your time and since the rabbit was to be eaten, hit it in the head. The rifles we had use of were both single shot bolt action .22's. When approaching 'civilisation' a firearm was dismantled, rolled into your groundsheet and stowed across the top of your rucksack. About bushwalking, with Walter Gruce in mind, we were of that ilk described as 'Miles Dunphy, swag & rifle' and not (but not opposed to) the 'Paddy Pallins'. Every bushwalker was more or less dependant on Pallin for maps and gear. We did some walks, weekend trips, mostly around Katoomba with members of the Sydney Bush Walkers Club but their approach was not quite our cup of tea, clocking themselves on certain stretches and suchlike. However we were no less mindful of bush etiquette. Burn, bash and bury were strictly adhered to.

More on the people -continued next month.....

PLAYING MUSIC - by Phillip Scarlett

I started playing the piano accordion when I was about 15 years old and I was contract ploughing for a couple of blokes in the Burragarang Valley, Bill Rigby and Harold Garbutt. Bill was a brilliant musician and had been taught at the Conservatorium. He could play mandolin, piano and piano accordion. He used to play every night after tea.

I always stayed in Bill's boss's house while I was away from home ploughing. It was built like an American log cabin. I remember asking Bill if I could have a fiddle with the accordion and he agreed. I'd sit up till 1am trying to play it and each night after tea he'd show me a different bass note. I could already play the treble side. Eventually by the time I'd finished the job I could play quite well so I bought my first second-hand accordion, a Rauner. I played by ear of course because I couldn't read music. From then on I was over playing with Bill Rigby and the rest of the band for dances. Before that I'd only fiddled with the piano too but because I'd now taught myself so much about keys and chords on the accordion I went back to the piano and ended up being a reasonable pianist.

Every fortnight we had a dance and I played but I also loved dancing, so it was a challenge doing both. My sweetheart Coral and I were as good dancers as you'd find in the Burragarang Valley. When we lived at Locksley, before we moved to Burragarang in 1946 Mum and Dad used to hold dances in the woolshed every fortnight to raise money for the Red Cross during the War so I was dancing from the time I was seven.

People from all over heard how good our dances were at Upper Burragarang and people started coming out from Camden. It was a case of

ladies bring a plate (supper) and men pay a silver coin donation at the door. The music was supplied by Bill Rigby, Thelma Drummond who played the piano, Mark Humphrey who played all the wind instruments, sax, clarinet and trumpet. Another fellow also played the accordion, he was a ten pound pom. Any three of us would play a song so the other could dance, I had the rhythm in me. If I wasn't playing, Coral and I would always get up and get the set dances like Barn Dances, Pride of Erin and Gypsy Tap started otherwise they'd start in the wrong place.

When I went into National Service I took my accordion with me and I ended up playing in the band. A radio host called Terry Dear ran a regular show called Australia's

Amateur Hour and he sent someone out to audition at Holsworthy Army Base where I was training. I auditioned and won a spot and another man who played a Cello auditioned too as well as a singer. We all went to the radio station studio at 65 York Street Sydney and the army sent us in the back of a panel van. I ended up coming third playing *Under the Double Eagle March*. I'd only heard Bill Rigby



play it so I practised what I remembered. I had the ability that if I heard a song a couple of times I could sit down and play it. The only thing I knew about music was how many b's it had. Mum would say "You've got to play it there". I didn't like those noughts and crosses things which I found out later were sharps. I accompanied Mum on the violin. I ended up playing everything with three flats which was the easiest place to play. A mixture of black and white notes and you'd always know where you are ■ Pictured Phillip LHS with Brian Phippen at Jooriland



Volunteer Profile

Pam Stephenson

Pam Stephenson is our second longest serving volunteer in the schools program, with about 15 years service and she is a great asset to our schoolies team.

She is extremely capable in her current role explaining Aboriginal life and guiding children in painting a story on their boomerang.

Pam's life has been dedicated to serving, very often through the Church. In the mid 1960's, she travelled to Papua New Guinea with Australian Volunteers Abroad using her training in early childhood to help local teachers, moving around the country by Land Rover, bus, canoe and on the back of a copra boat



laden with provisions.

In 1972 she went to Arnhem Land to teach Aboriginal children in the local preschool and assist with Bilingual Education. Later she taught teenagers with severe intellectual disabilities in Darwin.

In recent years she has been involved with the Sisters at Theresa Park, visited people at Carrington, organised Seniors activities at Church and become involved with Rescue Dogs, one of which you will see her walking around The Oaks regularly. Her life has been a testament to her faith and service to the community ■

Reminders, News & Info

WEEKEND ROSTER	
JUNE	
Sue & Helen	Saturday, 5
Doreen & Ben	Sunday, 6
Colleen & Kathy	Saturday, 12
Bev & David	Sunday, 13
Vivian & Bob	Monday 14
Debbie & Allen	Saturday, 19
Marlane & Cheryl/ Kate	Sunday, 20
Laurette & Phil Working Bee	Saturday, 26
Maria & Betty	Sunday, 27

Memberships Fees
Reminder
Single-\$10.00
Family-\$18.00
Newsletter postage is 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

Thirlmere Lakes Research Program (TLRP) Community Science Day 2021

Find out the most recent results from the Thirlmere Lakes Research projects including:

- ✓ Lake water balances
- ✓ Underlying geology
- ✓ Lake ages and sediments
- ✓ Surface-water groundwater interactions
- ✓ Lake chemistry
- ✓ Lake ecology

DATE: Wednesday 16 June 2021
TIME: 8.30 am Registration (9.00am start)
VENUE: Picton Bowling Club
10 Cliffe St PICTON NSW 2571

Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea provided (please advise of any specific food requirements in your RSVP)

RSVP by Monday 1 June 2021
 Joanne.ling@environment.nsw.gov.au

In collaboration with:

MONTHLY SUPPER ROSTER	
June	Doreen & Ben
July	Colleen & Bev
August	Debbie & Pam
September	Shirley & Trish
October	Vivian & Pam McV
November	TBA
December	Please bring a plate

June Meeting
 Monday 7th

At the conclusion of the meeting we are taking a look at some of the recent additions to our collection as described by Allen in his Acquisitions Report

Pictured is the gramophone donation.



ROBIN DAVIES Memorial Planting

Wednesday June 9th
 10am-2pm
 Picton Botanic Gardens
 RSVP June 1st
nursery@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au
 4677 1100

SEW IT, MEND IT, FIX IT

Picton Library
 Monday
 07 Jun 2021
 10 am - noon

Do you have a hem to mend or a button to sew on?
 The CWA ladies are here to help!
 Fixing small sewing repairs and offering hands-on lessons and demonstrations

FREE EVENT
BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL
www.library.wollondilly.nsw.gov.au/Adults
 *covid safe conditions apply

Wollondilly Library 4677 8300
www.library.wollondilly.nsw.gov.au

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 Monday June 7th followed by the next general meeting on Monday July 5th. Our patrons are Judith Hannan and Richard Booth. 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:-
The Oaks Historical Society Inc.
P O Box 6016 The Oaks NSW 2570

