

The Oaks Historical Society Inc

Est. May 1979

The Oaks Historical Society Inc.
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Newsletter

October 2022

Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

ST ALOYSIUS CHURCH THE OAKS

The Roman Catholic Church of St Aloysius is located in Merlin Street The Oaks and was built in 1864/65 during the incumbency (at Camden) of Father John Rigney (1861-68). Although not quite complete it was opened in November 1865. The Church today is an impressive part of our local



history and our community and St Lukes Anglican Church Complex is located across the street. The following extract from Freemans Journal of Saturday 4th November 1865 details the opening event....*On Wednesday, the 25th ultimo (last month), the Church of St Aloysius at The Oaks was opened for divine worship by the Venerable Archdeacon McEnroe. The church is in an unfinished*

state but as the congregation required it imperatively for the exercises of the Jubilee next week, the Archdeacon knowing all the circumstances kindly consented to open the building at once with the Benedictio loci address at mass in recognition of the

zeal the people had manifested in raising a creditable structure. The day was favourable with a large attendance even the Burragorang Mountain did not prevent whole families from that distant district assisting at the ceremony by their presence and generous contributions. The large sum of £87 19s was collected in aid of the building fund on the occasion. The church is a neat Gothic building of white freestone con-



sisting of Aisle, Chancel, Porch and Vestry of dimensions to accommodate 200 persons.

It is substantially built throughout and neatly slated, the site particularly suitable, commanding a magnificent prospect and yet seated in the midst of the people. The land is the gift of Mrs Wild to whom the congregation feel bound by a debt of

gratitude. The estimated cost of the building completely finished is £375 and the sum expended to date was declared to be £248 14s 6d. The contractors Messrs Stokes and Kealy have done their work faithfully and have established for themselves competent mechanical skill and sterling honesty in their work. At the close of proceedings the Archdeacon was

entertained by the committee at a cold luncheon prepared under the shade of the adjacent trees. His reverence sat down amidst a company of 300 guests and I doubt he ever enjoyed a festive scene more heartily. No intoxicating drinks but a profusion of all kinds of wholesome food and endless sup-

plies of delicious tea. Thankfulness to Almighty God for the favourable day and for his manifest blessing to the building.

Since then the church has undergone some changes both internally and externally to keep up with the changing needs of the community ■

Pictured -Laying of the Foundation Stone and St Aloysius Church today.



President's Report

Trish Hill

Thanks to a donation from Tom at Shop Fittings Direct we have a new glass cabinet which has replaced a couple of our older style timber ones in the Yerranderie exhibition. Once re-configured with exhibition items it will have completed the upgrade of the Burragorang/Yerranderie exhibition area. Thanks again Tom!

This past month we have had visits from Wollondilly Garden Club, Legacy Wattle Group and an Austin Car Club and thanks to Les Watton for his expertise as the museum guide for the Austin Club.

Wednesday, October 5th we have our next Back Then Live coach tour with a local history experience. Seats are still available and all booking details are on the back page. Col-

leen and I attended the Wollondilly Tourism Association after 5 event this month held at Warragamba Workers Club, an enjoyable evening and well attended■



Photographs courtesy Frank Kaiser Lauterbach



Family History & Local Archive Research Corner

Sue Davis

In 2014 we helped a student, Ned Mulholland, from St Gregory's College in his research of a soldier listed on the Theresa Park War Memorial. Ned had followed up his assignment by being a member of a school excursion to the Battlefields of France. We were very pleased to meet up with Ned and his parents at the centre later in that year when Ned presented us with his complete research to add to our collection. During September, this year, we have been corresponding with a researcher and sharing resources about Brownlow Hill. Our researcher shared a newspaper report from 1921 that would have helped with Ned's research! Now the War Memorial is just over one hundred years old I thought our readers would like to learn more about the Theresa Park War memorial...

Camden News, Thursday 1 December, 1921, page 7... BROWNLOW HILL

The picnic and concert in connection with the Sunday School anniversary was held at the Methodist Church on Saturday, November 19. The Soldiers' Memorial was unveiled during the afternoon, and quite a large number of people gathered for this ceremony. After partaking of afternoon tea with the teachers and scholars of the Sunday School, all proceeded to the monument, which is of Glenmore stone, and stands on a portion of the Brownlow Hill Estate, just past the church. It bears the inscription, "Erected to the memory of all those who gave their lives for King and Coun-

try in the Great War, 1914-1918, and especially Victor Hansen, Frank Paul, Eustace C. Peverell, Hector Small who lived in this neighbourhood."

The monument was unveiled by Mrs Downes Senr., and short address was given by General G.M. Macarthur Onslow, Mrs E.H.K. Downes, Rev. G.C. Percival, Rev. C.J. King and Mr J.A. Porter, hon. Secretary of the movement, to whose initiative and perseverance a great deal is due.

Mr Porter thanked the members of the Downes family for their offer of a site for the memorial, those who gave so willingly towards the expenses, the men who worked so whole-heartedly, and also the ladies who provided afternoon tea for the workers on each occasion.

The concert in the evening was held under difficulties. The attendance was so large, and the evening so warm that it was decided to hold it outside. About nine o'clock it became so stormy that most of the people, who had not come prepared for bad weather and most of whom had a long distance to travel, decided to go home...

Pictured is the memorial from Ned's assignment.



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

Silverdale School Days (an extract) by Donald Patrick Tilley (1943-1952) from the book -
Warragamba Public School -50 years Celebration

School days for me began in February 1943 and as I was born on 22nd April 1937, I was almost six years old. This was not unusual for those days as there was no school bus service and you started school when you were big enough and strong enough to walk the country miles to and from school daily. This distance in my case was about three miles each way if we used to cut across, four miles if we went around the road. If you were lucky (or unlucky depending how you looked at the situation) to live near the school you would have to start as soon as you turned five years of age. This was not much of an advantage for as there was no preschool or kindy you went straight into first class. Therefore if you started too young you usually had to repeat a class somewhere along the way. I can still remember my first day in school, our teacher was Arthur Patrick Miller. When he asked me to stand up and tell the class my name I said Donald Patrick Tilley, Mr Miller was delighted to inform me that his second name was also Patrick. I thought to myself "I'm right here, I will be his little white haired boy". Unfortunately that was about the high point of our relationship and I don't think Mr Miller ever made reference to our name sharing again.

The two largest families attending the school in my time were ours, the Tilleys and the Bewleys. Each family numbered eight, all of whom attended Silverdale School. That must be a pretty good head count as the school roll in my time was always somewhere between twenty and thirty.

I should point out for those who have only attended large schools that Silverdale School was a one teacher school. Although you may well understand what one teacher means you may not be aware that it also meant ONE room school in which the whole enrolment sat for lessons. The room was only about 7metres x 7metres with desks arranged in three rows like steps of different sizes. You progressed up these steps as your scholastic ability increased or you outgrew the desk and the school spanned from 5 year olds in first class to 15 year olds in 8th class. Years 7 & 8 were done from correspondence papers but still in the same classroom. Very few went on to higher education because of the distance and difficulty travelling to the nearest high school. My memory of the first person to go high school from Silverdale Primary was John Gibson and I think it was 1944. Anyone would have thought John was going to the moon the way Mr Miller lined us all up and in solemn tones made his farewell speech to his first graduate on his last day at Silverdale School.



I suppose the one feature that sticks in my mind, although a minor thing it did distinguish my schoolroom from that of my children's and was 'The Ink Well'. Just as slates and books distinguished my parents school days from mine, the little white inkwell with a small cork to prevent evaporation set into the centre of the desk beside the pen slot and blotting paper, characterised the classroom of my time. This was the dreaded era of pen and ink. The trademark of most pupils (except for the very neatest of scribes) of those days was the dark blue-black stain on the pointer and index fingers. If you were very messy as I was, the thumb was inked as well.

The ink was delivered along with the annual school supplies from the Education Department. It arrived in powder form in a tin or jar. Each month two of the most trusted senior students were selected to mix a certain proportion of ink powder with water to produce ink of the required strength and quantity to last for the next month. Again, if you were a 'messer' this could be a very hazardous operation. Ink powder was very fine and the least breath of wind could send a black cloud of dust over everything. If you spilt any of it on your hands or clothes you were in really big trouble. When you tried to brush it off you only succeeded in brushing it in and washing it off was a complete disaster. You ended up with blue-black hands that took days if not weeks to wear off. It was a daily duty of one of the selected senior students to make sure the ink wells were full at the start of class. One of Mr Miller's favourite punishments for wayward students was to keep them in after school and make them fill all the inkwells. Pencils were used until fourth class and by then you should have acquired the necessary skills to master what I always found to be that most uncooperative instrument, the pen and it's equally evil accomplice the ink well.

I remember the great rear guard action fought by Mr Miller to defeat the introduction of the ballpoint pen into our school. Lola Ackley led the forces of the ballpoint pen wholeheartedly supported by her tiny but fiery mother. One day Lola arrived at school proudly displaying this new revolutionary device in writing which her parents had bought her. It was a revolution alright. Mr Miller arranged on one side declaring that it would be the ruination of all artistic expressions in hand writing. On the other hand, Lola backed by her mother were defending her right as well as the right of all the children to freedom of choice and the right to take advantage of all modern technologies to make school work easier. "Well we all know how that battle ended!" ■

Bryan and Ann Carolan: A reflection

Forty years after the first edition of *Carlton's Town: A History of the Carolan/Carlton Sept and related Irish pioneer families in NSW*, Damian Gleeson reflects on the lives of Bryan (Bernard) Carolan and his wife Ann Reilly, natives of Moybolgue, County Cavan, who were among the early pioneers of the Burratorang Valley. This article, without seeking to recite the well-known Carlton history, addresses three central questions that continue to attract the interest of family members.

- A. Was Bryan's transportation politically inspired or a criminal offence?
- B. How did Ann and her two (known) children Patrick and Margaret Carolan overcome the stigma of Bryan's transportation?
- C. Why was Bryan's death unrecorded?

Despite recent growth in online historical sources, the amount of information about Bryan Carolan's life in the (then) province of Ulster remains meagre. According to ages cited in later church and state documents, Bryan was born in 1780. His parents' names are unknown, but if, as it appears, Patrick Carlton (1807-1883), was his eldest son and Irish naming convention occurred, Bryan's father's name was likely to have been Patrick. The Carolans lived in the parish of Moybologue, also known as Bailieborough, which was close to the border of Counties Cavan and Meath. The ancient graveyard at Moybologue (pictured) in the townland of Relagh Beg, reputedly visited by St Patrick, contains many Carolan graves. Bryan would have been a young teenager when the Defender movement began to gain currency in the early 1790s. The Defenders were a lower-class nationalist group aimed at protecting Catholics and their properties from Protestant vigilante bands — known as *Peep-O-Day* — who raided Catholic homes at the 'peep of the day'. While the Defenders had some similarities and cross-membership with the non-sectarian 1798 United Irishman movement, the Defenders retained almost exclusive Catholic membership.

By 1815 Bryan Carolan was a member of the 'Knights of St Patrick'. The 'Knights' history in the north of Ireland had linkage to the earlier Defender movement and some Irish historians believe the 'Knights' were also called the 'new Defenders'. The *1801 Act of Union* that had cemented British occupation of Ireland fuelled tensions especially in northern regions between descendants of the 'plantation generation' and Gaelic families. Discrimination against Catholics was at its peak and their ability to be landlords was significantly constrained. In this context,

County Cavan, was a tinderbox, awaiting new insurgencies.

In about 1806 Bryan Carolan, aged 26, married Ann Reilly, aged 18. Ann's youthful age was consistent with age at first marriage in eighteenth and early nineteenth century Ireland. Unfortunately little of known of Ann's heritage, except she was likely a sister of Robert and Thomas Reilly who were tried, convicted and transported with Bryan Carolan. A latter cousin, Ann Reilly, the daughter of Terence and Rose Reilly, married Philip Carolan and they settled at Wagga Wagga in the early 1870s.

By Irish standards, it is unusual that Bryan and Ann had only two children: Patrick b. 1807 and Margaret, b. 1811. Perhaps other children died in infancy, but there is no evidence of any other surviving children. As a member of the 'Knights of St Patrick's, Bryan risked his life and jeopardised his family. The 1815 murder of a gauger (agent collecting taxes) was an unspeakable crime. After three

years on the run Carolan and his Reilly in-laws were caught, convicted and transported. The three principal offenders received the death penalty. Unlike during the 1798 rebellion era when some Irish who had committed fatal crimes were simply listed as 'political rebels', Carolan and the Reillys were convicted

of 'conspiracy to murder'. But to a large degree, their involvement reflected a political protest against oppression and discrimination.

Life would have been difficult for Ann and her two children. She proved to be a stoic mother, compulsorily separated from her husband for more than 13 years. Many Irish convicts viewed transportation as the end of a marriage: Bryan remained loyal and petitioned the government for a free passage for his family to reunite. Such approval, before Bryan had gained a ticket of leave was rare, and due to combination of hard work for Sir John Jamison and the latter's influence.

Nevertheless, it would have been a highly emotional reunion for the Carolans in 1828.

Why do state and church records contain no reference to Bryan's death, burial or Last Will? Does this reflect coincidence or a more deliberate reason? Bryan Carolan (Carlton) was literate and was still signing financial documents, including loans to a stepson, William Denis of Picton in August 1861. Bryan Carolan died between that date and the death of Ellen Murphy, his second wife, on 14 November 1862. *Continued overpage.....*



Bryan & Ann Carolan: a reflection continued.....

Aged 81 or 82 years, Bryan had lived more than double the life expectancy of a person born in the late 18th century.

Notwithstanding the relative isolation of Burragorang, the absence of a death record is surprising as compulsory registration of deaths in NSW had commenced in 1856. So, too, there is no burial record. The absence of a will is most puzzling given the Carlons were educated, and Bryan was not a pauper when he died.

Most Irish-Australian families in 19th century NSW proudly recognised their ancestors with headstones –as a mark of respect regardless of financial success. It is believed that Bryan was living in a small house close to his son's house when he died, so on that basis he likely was buried with his *first* wife, Ann, in the Catholic graveyard at Burragorang (on land donated by her son, Patrick).

Yet, nothing was recorded on Ann's headstone. A view that the Carlons were too poor to record Bryan's death is not supported by this writer. Yes, Patrick and Mary Anne Carlon (nee Purcell) had seven children to feed, but the Carlons were established farmers. Bryan had been a landowner in Burragorang for three decades, during which time he provided loans to family members. Bryan would surely have understood the importance of a Last Will as he had been a witness to the Will of another pioneer Irish settler, Luke Gorman.

Could the absence of an identifiable grave been a simple oversight? That is possible, but less likely given the importance of the Catholic Church to the Carlons. A more controversial suggestion, without evidence, is that there was an intentional decision by the Carlon family *not* to acknowledge Bryan, stemming from his decision at the age of 65 years to remarry a serving convict. The marriage register records no Carlons as the witnesses to Bryan's marriage to Ellen Murphy in 1845, an unusual occurrence for Irish marriages.

Colonial society sometimes divided along fault lines between came free (CF) settlers and born in the colony, versus con-

victs and emancipists. Patrick Carlon's wife, Mary Ann, was born in the colony and both her parents – most unusual at their time of migration in 1806 – had been free settlers. It was indeed with some risk for the Purcells to marry into the Carlons, and given Mary Anne's young age, parental permission would have been required. [Curiously, Patrick and Mary Anne's marriage was not recorded, which was probably due to Fr John Therry's haphazard record keeping].

A quarter of a century after arriving in the penal colony – and with a conditional pardon – life had much improved for Bryan Carlon. His children were doing well – daughter Margaret had married into the successful (O'Rourke) family and Patrick was prospering in Burragorang. By contrast, Ellen

Murphy of Cork City reflected everything the Carlons may have hoped they had left behind. Ellen, and her three daughters and one son, had been transported in 1839 for robbery. In 1845, the Murphy status was quite dissimilar to the Carlons.

Fast forward to Bryan's death in 1861-1862, does any of this make sense? County Cavan men were well known for being spendthrift. It may be that before his death Bryan gave Patrick his money? Land records are

complex and written in excessive legalese. Nevertheless, it appears that most of the Carlon land holdings in Burragorang were in Patrick Carlon's name. This might have negated the need for a Will, except that Bryan was independently well off, by the standards of the time.

We will probably never know why Bryan's death and burial were not recorded, nor a will. Regardless, there is currency for descendants to erect a memorial plaque for Bryan Carolan (Carlon), who in the words of Keith Patrick Carlon was a 'great rebel, pioneer, faithful Catholic and patriarch' ■

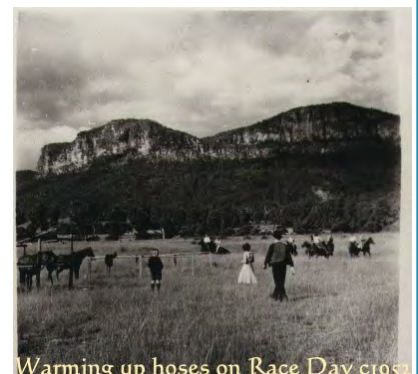
The photographs featured are of the ancient Moybologue Graveyard, (they are not called cemeteries in Ireland) where the Carolans were buried.

Photographs credited Moybologue Historical Society



**ANNUAL OCTOBER
BURRAGORANG REUNION**
SUNDAY 16TH OCTOBER FROM
10AM AT THE WOLLONDILLY
HERITAGE CENTRE & MUSEUM
All welcome /bring a picnic lunch

Tea & Coffee available



Warming up hoses on Race Day 1951

The Lych Gate at St Johns Church Camden

The Lych Gate, a quaint little building at the road entrance to St John's Church Camden was one of the points of interest on the recent walking tours run by Camden Historical Society. Not having any knowledge or understanding of the significance of this structure, I found it interesting and in fact on the day we were able to shelter there briefly from the imminent rainfall. Lych Gates typically were gable or hipped roofed, often with benches where mourners could sit or with a lych-stone or trestle upon which a coffin could be rested. The purpose of the Lych Gate was so that the funeral/hearse horse team could park the coffin under cover from extremes of weather whilst awaiting the funeral or indeed before proceeding to the designated cemetery.

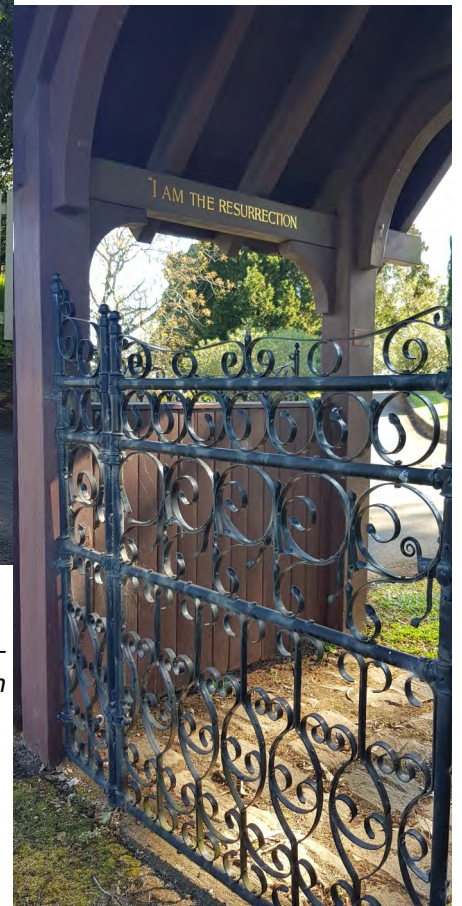
The Camden News had several mentions of St Johns Lych Gate and in June of 1912 they reported 'On Sunday afternoon last the dedication service of the Lych Gate, erected at the entrance to St John's Church grounds facing Menangle Road in memory of the late Mrs Macarthur-Onslow, was largely attended. The Rector, Rev C.J. King conducted a short service in the church after which, standing within the porch of the gate the Rural Dean, Rev Canon Allnutt duly conducted the dedication service, the choir singing to appropriate music. The unveiling of the memorial tablet revealed 'This tablet was erected by the Parish in memory of Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow, 1912.'

In June 1919 Camden Municipal Council reported on a tree planting initiative in the town centre with one section described as follows 'The planting of a line of trees along Menangle Road from the Lych Gate at the Church yard to a point opposite Camden District Hospital. The Committee recommends the carrying out of these works provided the council

obtain the sanction of the Government to defray the cost thereof out of the special grant given to the employment of returned soldiers.'

Mentioned again in September 1924 when 'Ald. Davies asked that the Works Committee inspect the road opposite the Lych Gate at St Johns Church. During a recent funeral there was a regular sea of mud here and he thought the Council should do something to improve the roadway.'

Pictured is the Lych Gate with its shingled roof and a closer view of the interior -Ed■



Newspaper information sourced from Trove/Camden News.



Acquisitions Report

Allen Seymour

It has been very quiet this month with the only accession a booklet from the opening of Cordeaux Dam in 1926. It is a little damaged and missing a few pages but has some great photos of the construction of the dam as well as statistics for the dam and plans of the other dams in the Nepean sys-

tem. I've scanned this in and it's located on the File Management drive under Mosaic Photos/Cordeaux Dam.

The audit is still proceeding and I'm up to the Machinery Building and store 2 which means there is still a lot to do ■

Reminders, News & Info

WEEKEND ROSTER	
OCTOBER	
Pam & Margaret	Saturday, 1
Kaye & Jim	Sunday, 2
Trish & Kevin	Monday, 3
Kathy & Bev	Saturday, 8
Vivian & Bob	Sunday, 9
Trish & Kevin	Saturday, 15
Kaye & Jim	Sunday, 16
Sue & Helen	Saturday, 22
Debbie & Allen	Sunday, 23
Laurette & Phil (Working Bee)	Saturday, 29
Pam & Margaret	Sunday, 30


MONTHLY SUPPER ROSTER	
October	Vivian & Pam
November	TBA
December	Bring a plate



NAIDOC DAY
 October 22nd
 Burraborang Lookout
 11am
 Family picnic day
 BBQ lunch
 All welcome
 Please register at
 kazanbrown2@gmail.com



BOOK LAUNCH
BARGO—TWO HUNDRED YEARS IN THE MAKING
 by Marjo Hallowell



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2022 BETWEEN 10AM-2PM
AT THE BARGO SPORTSGROUND HALL
STALLS, FOOD, FACE PAINTING, COMMUNITY INFORMATION STANDS

Back then ... Live Tour

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

A Mystery Tour, Wednesday, October 5. **Book now.**

For \$30 visitors will be taken on a coach tour from Camden (besides Camden Sports Club) at 9.30am and then The Oaks (The Heritage Centre at 9.50am) for a guided tour within Wollondilly. The cost includes Morning Tea and Presentation at The Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum followed by a guided Mystery Tour. A light lunch is also on the schedule before returning to The Oaks and then back to Camden at 3pm.

For Bookings, make your payment to: The Oaks Historical Society - Reference payment: Back Then Tour and your surname. BSB: 062516 Account name: The Oaks Historical Society Incorporated Account number: 00904093

All monies raised go to the The Oaks Historical Society. Phone Trish 0432 689034 for more details and bookings.

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 October 3rd followed by the next general meeting on November 7th. 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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