

The Oaks Historical Society Inc

Est. May 1979

The Oaks Historical Society Inc.
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Newsletter

DECEMBER 2018

Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum



Christmas 1947

In 1947 when Eileen Holohan (O'Brien) was just 18, she met movie star, Chips Rafferty. The photo shows her face alight with admiration for the very tall Chips Rafferty. She probably met him at a dinner dance following completion of the film. The movie, *A Bush Christmas*, featured him in a villainous role when he played a horse thief tracked by five kids spending Christmas in the Blue Mountains and the beautiful Burratorang Valley.

The film opened in Sydney in December 1947 and ran for eight weeks. Writer and director Ralph Smart, although born in Britain (to Australian parents), had worked in Australia from 1940-45 making shorts for the Department of Information and Royal Australian Air Force. The film offered many exotic and curious elements for British children. Aboriginal actor Neza Saunders, did a great job in showing the children how to find and cook bush food.

Chips Rafferty's real name was John William Pilbean Goffage, born 26 March 1909 at Broken Hill. He died of a heart attack at 62 in Sydney.

Sadly we lost Eileen O'Brien recently. Eileen lived at her Moore Park property in Burratorang until being forced from her Valley home in the fifties when it was cleared and flooded, something she always resented.

Eileen is pictured with one of the ponies she was so fond of.



Dear volunteers, We hope your Christmas is happy and joyous

President: Trish Hill 0432 689034 ■ Editor: Jenny Wood 0431 241518 ■ Museum Bookings: Trish Hill or Sue 0414 703204



President's Report

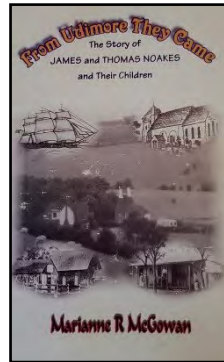
Trish Hill

Our Centenary of Armistice event on Sunday 11th November was a resounding success. Under the direction of Betty Villy,



our volunteers brought to life some of the material from our collection in the form of letters and diary entries from our WW1 soldiers. Visitors and guests were engaged as the soldiers' personal stories unfolded, as well the effects on the families at home. This was a remarkable tribute to our World War 1 soldiers, thank you to everyone involved.

During a recent visit Howard Noakes donated a copy of *'From Udimore They Came, The Story of James and Thomas Noakes and Their Children'* by Marianne R McGowan for our reference library. It is a comprehensive history of the Noakes family from their origins in England to Australia.



The Centre will close on December 23rd and officially reopen on Australia Day, Saturday 26th January 2019 and this will be noted on both our website and the front gate. If we are contacted by potential visitors and can arrange a mutually convenient opening time we are happy to do that.

Congratulations everyone on a great recycling effort with bottles and cans, currently having raised \$330.

A reminder that our Volunteers Christmas Party is Saturday 8th December, commencing at 6pm. For catering please RSVP by phone or add your name to the list on the front counter.

Our volunteers are highly regarded and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your work and support throughout the year and wish you a Merry Christmas.

Vale George Eden, our thoughts are with Eden family in their recent sad loss. George's son David, submitted a story on Georges life but unfortunately it couldn't fit into this newsletter. We look forward to reading it in the February edition. ■



Family History & Local Archive Research Corner

Sue Davis

Adding to your Family Tree Knowledge at Christmas Time

Each year at this time I like to remind you of some perfect times to build on your family history research over the festive season. This is often a time when we travel and catch up with family or they visit us. We share conversation about family gone before us. This is the time to ask questions and get new leads on family stories. Here are some points that might help your thinking at this time:



Where to find clues, in addition to talking with extended family members:

- Begin with yourself and work back one generation at a time.
- Look for certificates of birth, death or marriage; family bible; old photographs; medals; birthday books, address books; letters. Online searches. Remember to check TROVE.

- Don't throw out unopened boxes. You never know what treasures may be inside.
- Visit the local studies section of your local library.
- Visit your local museum.

Things to be aware of:

- Online family trees may not be accurate so confirm with formally records. Good researchers always list their source.

If you are not convinced of family information given then thank the relative politely and check later with births, deaths and marriages records of your state. We don't need to upset people!

Help needed. We have been asked for information about Dunroman Cottage in Coevon Road, Buxton. Can anyone help? If so please contact me on mobile 0414703204.

Enjoy your family history journey over the Festive season. ■



Marketing & Bus Visits

Louisa Singleman

November Bus Tours

November has been a quiet month with only four bus tours visiting our museum. Visitors came from Towradgi, Moss Vale, Harrington Park and Macarthur Gardens Retirement Village. We often receive thank you cards from visiting groups and this month was no exception with Harrington Park Over 55 sending a lovely card thanking our volunteers for such a wonderful day.

I would also like to welcome Margaret who has joined our group of hostesses to assist in welcoming our visitors and providing morning tea. Welcome aboard, Margaret.

At this stage we do not have any bookings for December. I would like to wish all our volunteers and their families who have helped throughout the year a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and look forward to your assistance in 2019. ■



Schoolies Report

Bev Batros

Our school program finished last week after a busy year, with 28 weeks filled. By comparison 21 weeks were filled in 2017, 30 weeks in 2016 and in 2015 there were 17 weeks filled. Our weekly numbers are consistently between 50 and 60 pupils, with occasional groups over 60. That equates to more than 1500 children. That is a pretty amazing statistic!

This year we had a number of schools that have never been before, at least not in the 4 years of my records. They are Appin, Ingleburn, Beverley Hills North, Camden South, St Francis of Assisi Warrarong and St Michaels Thirroul. Some of these new ones travelled quite a distance as you can see.

Amazingly some schools have come every year for the last 4 years. They are William Carey Christian School, Broughton Anglican, Macarthur Anglican and The Oaks. We must be doing something right!

We received a very nice comment from Mt Annan School who were here for 4 weeks. They complimented us on the excellent excursion, saying the children had not stopped talking about it.

Our sad moment was losing Eileen O'Brien, a tireless volunteer who worked in the schools program for over 25 years. Some special anniversaries were celebrated for Shirley and Joe Carlon (60 years) and Glenis and Alan Pride (50 years). We welcomed 2 new members to our team in Margaret Battam and Bronwyn Hayter. Both have shown how capable they are so it is great to have them on board. So we now have quite a long rest so we can recharge our batteries for next year. Happy Christmas to everyone! ■



Acquisitions Report

Allen Seymour

A bit busier this month. We've received some minute books from one of the mining unions covering Old Wollondilly mine from the 50's and 60's. There are also some old tins, The Oriental Tea Company, Sugar of Milk and Aunt Mary's Baking Powder. A stone bottle of ginger beer, and Aeroplane Parisian Essence Bottle, a brass cooking thermometer, some snap-on screen door patches, a basket flask, a razor strop (strap) and an Australian made Lane's Primus.

From out of our own stores come two wood burnings of buildings at Yerranderie, done by Paul Mills, and a World War II plan of The Oaks aerodrome. The new version of our Mosaic program is now installed, but not yet usable on the other computers. ■



Our Christmas Party

Saturday, 8th December at 6pm

Don't forget your cutlery, nibbles & drinks

RSVP to Trish Hill on 0432 689 034

or Debbie on 0417 782 065



30 YEARS OF THE WOLLONDILLY HERITAGE CENTRE & MUSEUM

PART 5— UP TO THE PRESENT

The year 2011 started off at a hectic pace, with stalls at Australia Day in Picton, Steamfest at Thirlmere, the Oakdale swap meet and a display at Tahmoor for International Women's Day. As well as this, in February the Wollondilly Tourism Association had a meeting at the centre, and in March the Museum's Australia Southern Highlands/Illawarra Chapter also met at the Centre, with representatives from ten museums attending. Seniors Week saw the centre again liaising with Wollondilly Council to organise the Apron Strings project. This encouraged

seniors to come along and talk about an apron that had some special purpose or significance. Some 70 people attended the event which was filmed by ABC Producer Sean O'Brien. If



this wasn't a busy enough start to the year, there were 10 bus trips in April as well!!!

April also saw the launch of Betty Villy's book on The Old Razorback Road in Camden. Back at the centre, the digitisation of the Yerranderie/Burraborang scrolls was complete and a decision was made to purchase a computer with twin screens to view them on, and they were installed by June. Plans were also being made to extend the archives to include the Liz Vincent and Val Lhuede collections. This resulted in the library as it is today and required a rearrangement of the display area, creating a new Burraborang display.

April 24th saw a ceremony at Yerranderie to mark the centenary of St Senans church and the official handover of Yerranderie by Val, while a family history seminar took place in Camden on April 30th. The Burraborang reunion took place as usual after Easter on May 1st. Appin celebrated its Bicentenary on May 20/21st and we were represented there. We had a new sign at the bottom of Edward Street, courtesy of David Campbell, and out at Burraborang Lookout, a new sign was finally in place there too. This latter sign was done in conjunction with the Burraborang Heritage Society and had to meet the NPWS standards. The project was initiated in April 2010.

September saw some 80 people attend the launch of the Apron Strings book. In October we attended the Picton Music & Harvest Festival, and the year finished on a sad note with the passing of Audrey Rideout, another long-time member.

Picton's Australia Day, the Oakdale Swap meet and Thirlmere Steamfest again started the year off. Doreen Lyon was Wollondilly Senior Citizen of the year, and long-time member and researcher Colin Sproule passed away in February. His legacy remains in the Boer War Honour Board and all the research he did. We also found out that Cynthia and Noel Collinson were

moving to Wagga Wagga. Their legacy remains in the indexing cards and the Yerranderie/Burraborang Scrolls, and Noel's amazing work in documenting the cemeteries of the Wollondilly area, which he donated to us when they left.

The theme for Senior's Week in 2012 was 'A Moment In Time', where seniors were encouraged to bring along a photo and tell the story behind it. Wollondilly Council supported the day and did the filming of the 15 stories that emerged.



Another successful Back to Burraborang day was followed in May by the arrival of the bell from St Paulinus's church in Burraborang. The bell had been down at Wollongong for many years and required some cleaning before it was ready for display. On the coal mining front, Ian Welsh brought out

a new book, 'Brimstone – A Burraborang Coal Story', while Kevin Wintle, John Hyland and their helpers restored the coal skips that were sitting outside the drill hall and erected the fence behind the cottage.

A new display in the Federation Building was Threads of History & Culture, and this opened on September 16th. There were displays by other organisations in the Drill Hall, and we saw Jeanette Pilt, Robyn Gill and Jenny Wood looking great in period costumes.



Ray, Robyn and Sue went to Rouse Hill for a collections management workshop, and we received an award from the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage in the cultural heritage section for "recognition of your contribution toward heritage advocacy in your local area". With the coal skips now restored, it was decided that it would be nice if there was a roof over

them, thus our 'Mines and Men' display was born. A grant of \$12,000 pushed the project along with lots of help from the Retired Miners Association, and by December the framework was up and the roof was on.



Jim Whyte was Wollondilly Senior Citizen of the year in 2013, the 25th anniversary of the Centre. The usual stalls were held at Australia Day and Steamfest, and in February we hosted a meeting of the Illawarra/Southern Highlands Chapter, with some twenty museums attending. For Seniors Week on March 11th we kept the silver theme going, with 15 silver objects being brought along with some 60 people present. It also saw the release of the book, 'Moments In Time' from the 2012 day.

To celebrate our 25th anniversary, an open day was held on April 27th, with vintage cars, quilts, organic foods, a blacksmith and other activities. The day was well attended, and to thank the volunteers for their efforts over the years, a high tea just for members was held on May 18th. At the annual general meeting, Ben Lyon stood down from the position of President after twelve years, and Trish Hill took over the position, becoming just our fourth President in 25 years. *Continued ...*

30 YEARS OF THE WOLLONDILLY HERITAGE CENTRE & MUSEUM

PART 5— UP TO THE PRESENT

Continued

We hosted a Wollondilly Tourism after 5 meeting in May, and had a stall at Picton for the 150th anniversary of the railway station. Plans were being drawn up for an extension to the main building and café blinds were installed on the back verandah (a great idea indeed), and research was beginning for a new display for the centenary of World War One. In September the retired miners in conjunction with us sourced a suitably sized pit pony for the Mines & Men display. This came unpainted, and Jim and Kay Cuthell did a great job of painting it (five years later we finally managed to get the correct sized collar for it, thanks to Eddie Gall).



November saw us holding a car boot sale to raise funds for the proposed extension, and a book launch was held for Pacita Alexander's new book

"My Dearest Ellen". Both were successful days with the car boot sale raising over \$800. The year finished with a silver theme for the Christmas party. During the year there were 64 buses carrying 1634 people, and these were handled by just 16 volunteers.

2014 saw us involved in an ongoing project with the Camden Museum and the Powerhouse museum where individual objects are assessed for their significance. It also involved a photographic workshop later in the year.

With the World War One centenary approaching, the theme for Seniors week was an obvious one – Music and Memories of World War One. It was again sponsored by the Wollondilly Shire Council, and over 100 people attended on the day, with a dozen telling stories. In between stories we were entertained by Sheila Stratham and Preston McIntosh, with music from the period. The book 'Silver Memories' prepared by Jenny Wood from the 2013 day was also released.

In April the Back to Burratorang day went on as usual and on April 30th, we went for a guided bus tour over Razorback with Betty Villy. At the top of the mountain we were met by Mick Fairfax who showed us a model of an advertising globe Castrol used to have nearby, and we found out that he and Larry Wood had also made a half size model as well, which was stored in a garage. By September we had decided to erect the globe at the Centre. These bus tours were organised by Betty in an effort to raise funds for the proposed building extension, and another one was held in November to the Mt Kembla Mining Museum.

Sue Davis spent time working at the State Archives near Penrith, arranged through Museums and Galleries. This was to provide valuable assistance in her role as Archivist and Family History researcher. A three day Mosaic workshop was held in

July at the Centre, with attendees from a number of other museums.

Another fund raising effort in August was a film night, showing 'Miracle of The Mountain' and 'Sons of Matthew'. On a very hot November day (23rd) Betty Villy's latest book—'The Racing Doctor'—was launched. This was supposed to be in the hall, but with the air-conditioning not functioning properly, it was moved into the main building instead.

The Christmas party this year was a colonial theme, with outdoor games such as horseshoes, quoits, and steel hoops.

The new year of 2015 started with work underway on the new display cabinet in the drill hall and lots of research was done by Ray Gill on the Burratorang Boys. We again attended Australia Day, Steamfest and IlluminARTE as well. Theme for the Seniors Day on March 16th was 'My First Home When I Got Married'. Some 28 stories were coaxed out of the visitors and the book 'Music & Memories of WW1' with the 2014 stories was released.

May 2nd saw a truck drivers reunion organised by Ian Welsh. This saw a big attendance of drivers and vehicles, with seven ex-coal trucks attending, three from Victoria, a really great turn-out indeed.

The annual report in May revealed that in the previous twelve months 1528 people visited on bus tours. This amounted to over 1500 scones and 3000 slices!!! Two more fund raising activities were a bus trip to Berrima and a film night showing the 'Dalfram Dispute' about Pig Iron Bob Menzies. There was also a tour of Picton, and later in the year we also had a trip to the Female Factory at Parramatta.

There was more sad news with the passing of Vic Boardman and John Martin, both members and supporters of the Centre. We also had a visit from the Wollondilly Shire Councillors and their staff.

November 8th was the big day, with the opening of the new Boys From Burratorang and Beyond exhibition, and the launch of the book. A large crowd attended and heard the Picton Harmony Singers as well as diary readings and many other activities. The new glass display case took up an entire wall of the hall, and was only possible with the help of a number of grants, which covered most of the cost of the display case and the story boards.

The Christmas party was a welcome relief after a hectic year, but there was no rest over the holiday period, with work proceeding on the next stage of the war exhibit – 'Her War – Red Poppies and White Waratahs', scheduled to open on March 13th, along with the release of the corresponding book, written by Betty Villy.



The day saw another large crowd and the official duties were done by Dame Marie Bashir, who described the book as "a gift to the nation", a huge wrap indeed.

—Allen Seymour

Final chapter continued next month

OAKDALE NEWS 1941

Opening of New Hall

The Oakdale Public Hall was officially opened on the 3rd inst. By Cr. E.H.K. Downes, and the ceremony was a pronounced success, there being some 250 people present. Apologies were received from the President of the Wollondilly Shire, Cr. S.R. Prosser, Cr. J.T. Carroll and Mr. H.H. Crakanthorp, Shire Clerk.

The President of the hall committee, Mr. C.W. Sharp, extended a hearty welcome to Crs. E.H.K. Downes, Eric Moore and R.V. Moore also to the many visitors who had come along to help the Oakdale people make the evening such a grand success. He assured all that their presence was much appreciated.

After explaining the arrangements entered into with Mr. G. Heise to build the hall, Mr Sharp said the building had been handed over at a cost of £390, and he was in a position to say that had it not been for the voluntary help given by Mr. Heise and local residents, the hall could not have been erected under £500. As the constitution provides for the hall to be controlled by a body of subscribers, an appeal was made to all local residents to join that body.



Official supper for the opening. Seated 2nd from the right is Cr EHK Downes. Standing back centre is Clem Sharp, Hall Committee President.

In introducing Cr. Downes, Mr Sharpe explained that during the past eighteen months the Oakdale people, who had previously held their functions in the little school or private homes, had raised £160 for War efforts, £40 for the P & C Assn. and £50 in subscriptions for fittings, etc. for the new hall.

Cr. Downes apologised for the unavoidable absence of Cr. Prosser, who would have liked to be present, but was detained in Sydney on business. The speaker said he was very pleased to have the opportunity of declaring the hall open. He thought Oakdale should have had a ball declaring the hall open. He thought Oakdale should have had a hall long ago, the district was an old one and the products of Oakdale had made a name both locally and overseas. The fact that so

OAKDALE PUBLIC HALL

Grand

OFFICIAL OPENING

at 8pm on

FRIDAY, 3RD OCTOBER, 1941

Dancing from 8pm

Ashcroft's Orchestra

Buffet Supper Provided

TICKET 2/-

G. HEISE

(Children 6d.)

Hon. Secretary

much money had been raised without a hall is deserving of great credit. "What ever you do keep the War Effort going," said Cr. Downes. He referred to the fittings and furnishings of the hall and supper room and was pleased to see everything so up-to-date. He referred to the lighting arrangements as splendid. In congratulating all concerned Cr. Downes said it gave him much pleasure in declaring the hall open.

Mr. A. Hughes moved a vote of thanks to Cr. Downes, and assured him that his action in coming along to officially open their new hall was much appreciated.

At this stage of the evening Mr. Sharp invited Mr. and Mrs. G. Heise to step forward and receive a little token of appreciation of their work. Cr. Downes made the presentations. To Mrs. Heise a necklet and bouquet of flowers, and to Mr. Heise a wristlet watch from residents of Oakdale. Both Mr. and Mrs. Heise suitably responded. All present then sang "For They are Jolly Good Fellows".

Supper followed and dancing continued until about 4a.m.

The office-bearers of the new hall are:-

President: Mr C. W. Sharp

Vice President: Mr. F. Moss

Hon. Secretary: Mr G. Heise

Hon. Treasurer: Mr. L.A Gapes

Trustees: Messrs M. Harley, Ern Longhurst and J. Ditton.

Source: Camden News, Thursday 23 October 1941 p.1



Reminders, News & Info

WEEKEND ROSTER

| DECEMBER | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Colleen & Kathy | Saturday, 1 |
| Ben & Doreen | Sunday, 2 |
| WORKING BEE | Saturday, 8 |
| Trish, Kevin & anyone else from team | Sunday, 9 |
| Debbie & Allen | Saturday, 15 |
| Maria & Betty | Sunday, 16 |
| Bev & David | Saturday, 22 |
| Trish & Kevin | Sunday, 23 |
| CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS | |
| Colleen & Kathy | Sat, 26 January |
| Bob & Vivian | Sunday, 27 |
| MONTHLY SUPPER ROSTER | |
| December | Please bring a plate |

LARGE FRUIT CAKE

2lb mixed fruit, 1/2 dates, 2 cups brown sugar, 1/2 cup rum, brandy or sherry, juice of 1/2 orange. Soak above ingredients overnight. Next day add 3 beaten eggs, one at a time. 2 tabs marmalade or treacle or syrup, 1 teasp mixed spice, 1 teasp. nutmeg, 1/2 teasp bicarb soda. Melt 1/2lb butter and 1/2 cup milk over gentle heat (don't boil). Add to mixture, then add 3 cups plain flour, 1 teasp. lemon essence, 1 teasp vanilla. Cook in slow oven for 3 1/2 hours.

Supplied by Jenny Wood's grandmother, wife of a pastry cook

YESTERDAY STORIES

Date: 11th December | Time: 4—5.30pm

Workshop Location—Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum
Have you got a story to share? Would you like a particular story of your area told? Yesterday Stories video history.

RSVP info@yesterdaystories.com.au

MUSEUM CHRISTMAS CLOSING

The museum officially re-opens on Saturday, 26 January 2019

Centenary of the Armistice of World War I

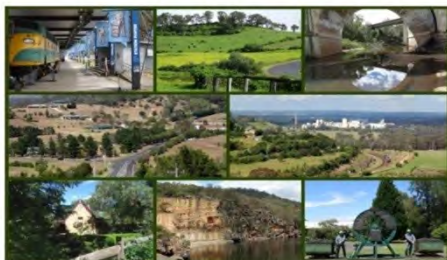
FABRIC OF WAR EVENT—11 NOVEMBER 2018



Actors, volunteers, guests and the Picton Harmony Choir



Image from the opening of the WWI display in 2014



Book Launch..... "Wollondilly in Focus"

Wollondilly in Focus by James Whitfield

The launch will be held at the Wollondilly Library View Room, Level 1, Picton on **Thursday, 13 December at 4.30pm**. Proceeds from sales of this book will be donated to the Macarthur Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service
Email: jameswhitfield@bigpond.com
Light refreshments provided.
For bookings please call Wollondilly Library on (02) 4677 8300



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, 4 February 2019. Our patrons are Luke Johnson 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.



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