

# 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

FEBRUARY 2017

## Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

# The Menangle Sand Mining Company Ltd



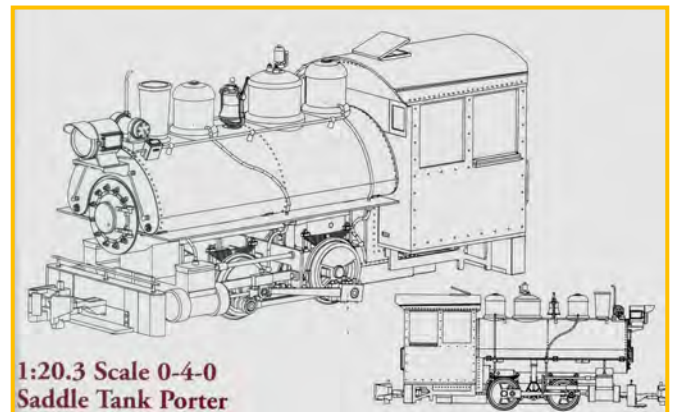
Our society regularly receives requests for research on a great range of topics. An interesting one came last November from an archaeologist researching the tramway and sand mining relics at the Nepean River at Menangle.

The Menangle Sand Mining Company was registered in June 1929 with a capital of £10,000. It dealt in sand, gravel and road metal limestone and was expressly set up to supply high quality sand for the manufacture of concrete for the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Mining at Menangle began in late July 1929 and petered out sometime after the opening of the bridge on 19<sup>th</sup> March 1932.

To convey the sand from the Nepean riverbed the company constructed a 2ft wide tramway to Menangle railway goods yard following a circuitous two mile route as it skirted farmlands and the butter factory and terminating at the cattle siding. (The rotolactor shown on the map was not built until later.)

There it was transferred from the colliery type box-shaped skips to rail wagons. The sands' final destination was sidings on the bridge approach then to concrete mixers.

Who was employed during this period or how much sand was excavated from Menangle is unknown but the Camden News reported in April 1930 that the weekly output was between 400 and 500 tons. As well as supplying the bridge builders, the company also sent sand to the Berrima Cement works and it was used in the concrete on the northern

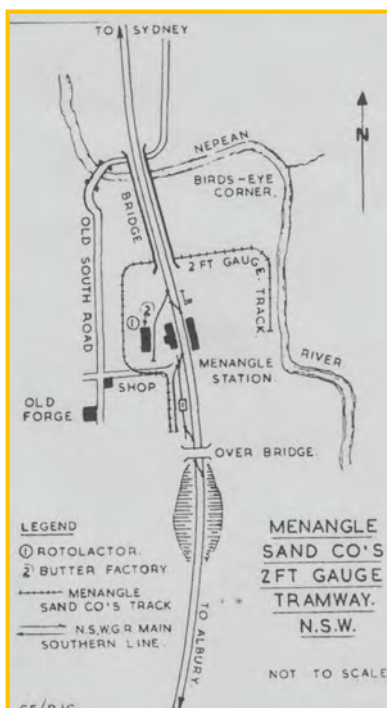


1:20.3 Scale 0-4-0 Saddle Tank Porter

part of the Hume Highway between Narellan and Liverpool. The Menangle Sand Company bought two small 0-4-0 Davenport saddle tank locomotives which had been built by the Davenport Locomotive works in Iowa and imported in 1917 by the Department of Public Works for use in the construction of the Cordeaux Dam. The Department gave them the road numbers of 65 and 64. The latter received the nickname Alice while 65 became Lulu.

The company ceased operations at Menangle mid-1932 and it seems that a Charles Paisley continued sand mining but used road haulage instead of the tram system. In 1935 employees of Wollondilly Shire pulled up the rails and used them on the Morton Road by-pass, paying £12 to the Camden Park Estate. Sand mining at the site of the Menangle Sand Mining Companies site petered out as other, more profitable mines opened.

Today the long abandoned tramline can still be traced through the grass. As for the locomotives, they rusted away at a corner of the Rotolactor yard until 64 – Alice – was dismantled and her boiler and saddle sold. Lulu was sold in 1936 to Quarries Limited at Kiama but was withdrawn from active work before WW2. It is believed that a number of parts from this engine were used to repair another Davenport engine used by the company. ■ Betty Villy



# President's Report



**Trish Hill**

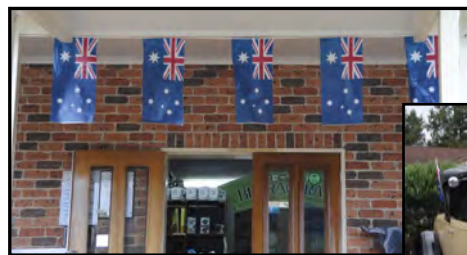
Happy New Year Everyone, I hope it is a great 2017 and all of our volunteers had a good break over the holiday period.

The museum re-opened on Australia Day and we had a great day with visitors aplenty and also quite a lot scheduled in the coming months. Louisa, Jan and Aileen represented us at the Australia Day ceremony once again with a successful stall at the Picton Botanic Gardens. Thanks Louisa and team.

Our first bus group for the year is next week with several other bookings following and a couple of school bookings as well. There is a new roster imminent and should be completed in the coming week.

We have the 'Castrol Globe Open Day' on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> February which will officially launch the replica globe installation at the museum. The following week, Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March we host our Seniors Week event with the theme *Frock Up & Rock Up to Our Tea Dance*. Congratulations Doreen for a successful funding application that will enable us to run this event.

The following day, Tuesday is our Metal Conservation Workshop sponsored by the Powerhouse museum. We still have a few vacancies if you would like to attend (see details back page). We are currently undertaking an upgrade of the interior mining exhibition with a view to tell the story of the Nattai Bulli banner, how it featured in the union and what it represented. Last week Robyn, Ray, Kevin and I went to Lithgow State Mine Heritage Park where Ray Christison expertly guided us, giving us lots of ideas for our museum. ■



Above: Australia Day at the centre



Above and right: Lithgow State Mine Heritage Park cage and union banner with workers in front.



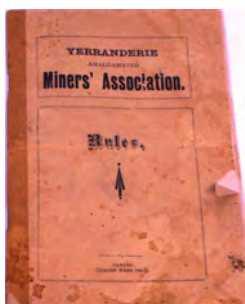
# Acquisitions Corner



**Allen Seymour**

There hasn't been much of a break over this period, with the pulling down of part of the mine display, there were quite a few items there that weren't in the system, and I have also been going through the six boxes of the Ron Mills collection that are in store 4.

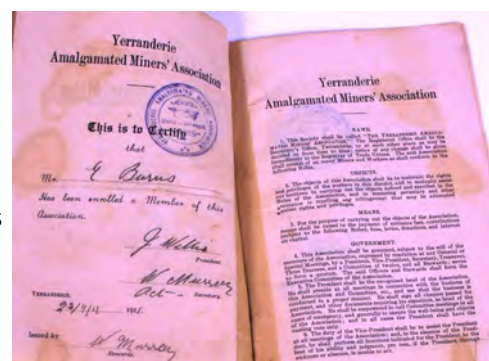
This collection has now been detailed on spreadsheets and a number of items have been put into Mosaic. This includes a timetable for Higgletts Camden-Burraborang-Yerranderie bus service believed to be about 1948. Does anyone know if they used full-sized buses on this service?



There is also a Yerranderie Miners Association Rules booklet, dating from 1911, and also the rules of the Amalgamated Metaliferous Affiliation. There are a couple of early maps showing parts of the valley, as well as a framed photo of Charles Kerry, who was involved with some of the mining leases at Yerranderie which has a street there

named after him. There is also a WWI postcard and a book on the First Fleet – *Eleven Ships Came Sailing*. Other items we received are a Clutha cap from Brian Pippin and from Wally Puckeridge a weekly work record from Valley 2 mine. There is also a model replica of the old Lakesland school house that was done as a school project by the granddaughter of the land owner. This is on display in the schoolroom.

From our President Trish is a report from the 1980's on proposed changes to Warragamba Dam, a 1970's flyer on Camden, a brochure on the Rotolactor and a book from the 1960's on Camden Park. There are a number of other items that have come in this week but haven't been processed yet. ■



# Display Officer's Report



**Doreen Lyon**

The focus is about the changes to the display *Of Mines & Men* in the main exhibition area. My reason for dismantling the old exhibition was to avoid duplication with the mine behind the Drill Hall.

We have removed all the objects for possible use in other displays but have retained the Nattai-Bulli banner. I am of the opinion that this is an important and significant object which could be used to tell the stories of the development of the Unions to address the concerns of the miners versus the mine owners. I would like to see this fully researched by someone who knows far more about the history of the CFMEU etc, than I do!

In the meantime, we need to replace the objects with something so I am calling for a few people who have opinions to meet at the next working bee to share their ideas and opinions. I do not want to see our museum entirely devoted to the coal mining industry – however important this may be—but I would like to see the history and stories adequately covered. There are several people who have made a study of this and I would encourage them to come forward with ideas and the knowledge which I can never achieve without months of research!

Meet at the next working bee at 11.00am. ■

# Family History & Local Archive Research Corner



**Sue Davis**

Welcome to 2017! I hope you found out some interesting Family history during gatherings over the Christmas and New Year break! You may have been given some artefacts from family members and wonder what you should do with them. The National Archives give some advice in their book, "Keeping Family Treasures," ...

*...To gain the most from family records, you need to know where they came from or who owned them. The background information is known as their provenance. To retain information on provenance for future generations, it is important to keep original documents and photographs intact....this may mean that you: Keep old photo albums*

*intact rather than dismantling them or taking the photographs out; keep records in their original order and retain old inscriptions and labels...: include sources of information and dates, for example when you use magazine and newspaper clippings, remember to include the name and date of the publication; ensure the rarest and most important items receive the best care; and use copies, rather than originals of photographs or documents in displays and scrapbooks.*

Happy researching and never just throw things out, you never know what you might find and who might be interested in it! ■

# Bus Visits & Marketing Report



**Louisa Singleman**

Here we are into another year and our bus tours are starting to roll in. Unfortunately a few of our regular bus tour volunteers are out of action for a while so we wish them a speedy recovery and hope they will be back on deck in the near future. Therefore, I am looking for some volunteers who feel they would be able to give a ten minute talk to a bus group and put on the DVD on the Burraborang Valley. I will give you some training if you so desire. Please give me a call on 4680 8358 or 0408 6692 87 or email on [lsinglem@bigpond.net.au](mailto:lsinglem@bigpond.net.au). I shall be away on holiday from 8<sup>th</sup> Feb -16<sup>th</sup> Feb. February's Bus Tours are as follows:

Date	Group	Volunteers
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> February	Activus Transport	Trish / Pam
Tuesday, 14 <sup>th</sup> February	Dapto Combined Probus	
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> February	Activus Transport	Vivian / Bob / Poppe

**Australia Day** in the Picton Botanic Gardens was a great success with the Wollondilly Shire Council supplying us with a gazebo, a table and chairs which was greatly appreciated. They also supplied flags and plenty of water. We sold a few books and encouraged many people to visit our museum. Many thanks to Jan Noakes and Aileen Davies who assisted on the stall.

## **Thirlmere Steam Festival Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> March**

Once again we will be having a stall at this great event. If you would like to give a hand for an hour so turn up on the day. We are usually just outside the Thirlmere Post Office or Steve's Pizza shop in Oaks Road. ■

# BIG INDUSTRY COMES TO A TINY TOWN

Extract from *The History of Blue Circle Southern Cement, Maldon NSW, 1948 Onwards*—by Bill Featon 1995

## Early Recollections

During the early days of the 1940's, the traveller would turn off Menangle Road, cross through the railway gates with Maldon railway station on the right, a gatekeeper and station attendant's cottage on the left, then pass two more cottages on the left after which the Maldon suspension bridge was crossed and so the journey continued to Wilton, Appin or to the south coast if desired, via the Wilton Road.

Let us return to the second cottage on the left, as this cottage and the grassy hill beside it will play an important part in our story. The property belonged to a man named Mr Wes Maunder and little did he realise at that time his property was to undergo a massive change. Mr Arnold S Taylor, the man who was about to create a cement producing plant, found this particular site ideal for his plans.

Although the limestone would have to be transported 113km from Marulan and the coal at that time about 50km from Medway, this site was 5km inside the classified limits of what was considered in 1948 as the "metropolitan area of Sydney". This was to make the future haulage exempt from the heavy road tax that applied at that time.

Mr Arnold S Taylor persuaded the then Federal Government to provide him with a loan of \$US1,190,000 to buy the Detroit plant and then floated Metropolitan Portland Cement Ltd with a capital of £1,500,000 and closed the deal with Ford. Mr Maunder's property was purchased and surveying and leveling began in readiness for the construction of the factory. The work provided by Metropolitan Portland Cement was indeed a boon to the local community at that time, both as a source of employment and the resultant increase in business for the local storekeepers. Many and varied were the type of jobs available. These included carpenters, electricians, plumbers, fitters, ironworkers, boilermakers, riggers, tinsmiths, blacksmiths, painters and a large workforce of labourers, crane drivers and truck drivers, some of the latter providing their own trucks.

Transportation by bus was arranged by the Company and so they ran from Mittagong, servicing both the Hume Highway and the Loop Line, Wilton and Campbelltown areas.

A great deal of overtime was available at that time. What is referred to as a "doubler" today was called a "darkie" then and at the end of a long shift the workers without their own transport returned home via the back of a truck, equipped with a canopy. Meals were brought to the plant from Picton for those working back of a night and arrived on plates with a metal cover to retain the heat. Many a worker enjoyed a famous Bill Temple steak and kidney pie on a cold, Maldon, winter's night.

A number of tents were erected adjacent to the original farmhouse and a galley for cooking was provided. The original canteen stood a short distance south of the present amenity block and was operated by a Mrs Harry Young from Hill Top with the help of her daughter, Judith and Betty Matters. Clothing was supplied by the employee and felt hats and army disposal shirts, slacks and berets were commonplace.

A road was constructed to a point above the river at the rear of the plant and a pump was installed to provide water for

industrial use on the plant. It was pumped to a concrete holding pond when it was pumped to the points of use.

Much of the general office is original except for interior alterations and additions. The original

store stood near the old weighbridge, later to become a garage before it was demolished. The original blacksmith's shop stood a few yards east of the old store where a Mr Ted Sharpe carried out the smithy work. The blacksmithing was moved a short time later adjacent to the old fitter's shop that stood close by the powerhouse building. Les and Len Turner were blacksmiths after Ted Sharpe and at the tender age of nineteen, I commenced work in this shop as a striker. Later I was employed as a night watchman and gatekeeper, patrolling the works, 4pm and 12 midnight with a mean Dalmatian and huge black dog of doubtful parentage.

During this time I camped in one of the tents at the site mentioned previously.

Messrs Arnold and Roy Taylor would sometimes visit the plant during the night. Often, as a young fellow, I would admire their cars. Mr Arnold Taylor had a white Buick, Mr Roy Taylor a green Mercury.

During the latter part of 1949 the No.1 and No.2 kilns were hauled up ramps with the assistance of the Lima and Bay City cranes.

The year 1950 was approaching, an eventful and challenging time with so much preparation required to complete work on the two kilns. A powerhouse had to be made operative and raw mills installed to produce slurry. Slurry silos and a mixing bowl were required. Beltways were needed to transport the clinker to the two Allis Chalmers cement grinding mills and a stock house to be built for despatching and close by, the finished cement silos required to hold the produce.

Suffice to say, at this point, this mammoth task was finally accomplished and operations at Maldon began during April, 1951.

## The Big Transfer—Detroit to Maldon

..... *the history of Maldon didn't begin at the site, the plant was dismantled at Detroit USA then....* it was transported by rail, ship and road to the site at Maldon.

Apparently, during the 1940s, a tremendous lag had occurred in the supply of cement and with major public works underway and the imminent construction of the mighty Warragamba Dam, the opportunity to secure a complete, two unit cement plant was seized upon. It had been estimated a period of up to four years could elapse should a new plant be contemplated and with the urgent need of cement production, the time saved by the acquisition of the Detroit plant was imperative.

*Continued.....*



*The main weighbridge 1995.*

### **Big Industry Comes to a Tiny Town continued ....**

Within three months after the completion of the deal, the first of the units was being removed from the plant. The Russell Engineering Co. was the consultant and the North Western Co. attended to the dismantling work. The total weight of the cement making machine was 1,140 tons and added to this was the weight of a complete power generating station, building frames, hopper and bin sections and conveyor gear brought the maximum weight to 4,000 tons.

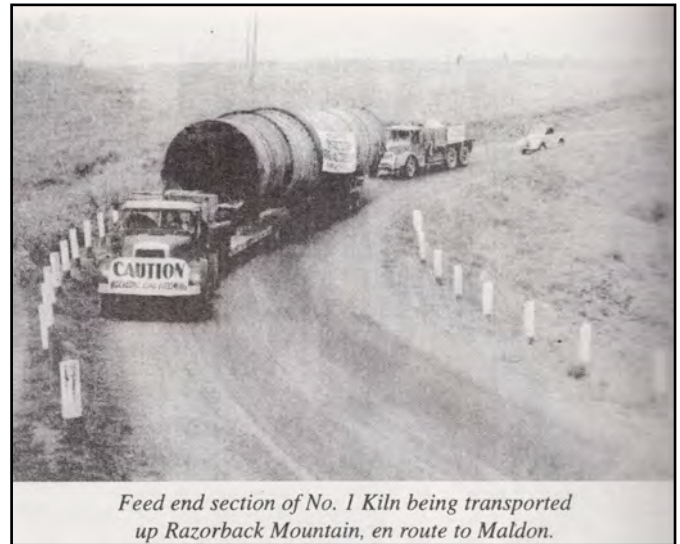
Three considerations were given towards the transportation of the plant to Australia. The use of 1500 ton ocean going vessels was vetoed because of their unsuitability to stow the heavier units which was unfortunate as they could have docked at the dismantling site. Because there was a seven month lag with shipping on the Lake's system, this idea was abandoned as too much time would be lost in reaching Montreal for loading on larger ships. The third alternative was finally adopted and the plant was moved on rail cars, a distance of 1,000 miles, to the port of St John. Over a five month period about 210 car loads were moved, the weight capacities ranging from 23 to 50 tons each. From these rail cars the machinery was loaded on to the MV La Estancia, the load in shipping tons on his vessel was 4,590 and a further 500 shipping tons was loaded on to the Pipirikti, that followed later. La Estancia was stowed to full capacity in the holds and carried the heavy bulky units on deck. These included six rotary kiln sections, each 50 feet long with diameters of 12 feet, weighing 43 tons, two rotary coolers each 63 feet long by 8 feet diameter and weighed in at 36 tons. Leaving St John on December 8th, and despite encountering heavy weather, the cargo held fast and arrived in Sydney on January 11th in excellent condition.

The following day, the Cockatoo Dock floating crane, Titan and Darling Island Stevedoring Co's floating crane Hawk, began the unloading.

Messrs Marshall and Kelly of Yass provided 62 vehicles ranging from 5 to 25 tons capacity and designed and built a special low loader float to transport the heavier sections. The unloading of the complete cargo was accomplished in 19 working days. Four-fifths of the machinery, consisting of power house, raw grinding and calcining units, were despatched to Maldon. The remainder, which included the finish grinding and bagging sections were taken to Granville. Loading operations began on January 14th and in a spate of two weeks all had been delivered to Maldon, except fourteen heavy lifts.

The vehicles used by the subcontractors were many and varied, in make and size, but the two main contractors used their own heavy vehicles for the big loads and these included three ten ton Mack N R Diesels and three fifteen ton, eight wheel Foden Diesels.

For a truck with a load ranging from thirty six to fifty tons trailing behind, the safe ascent and descent over Razorback Mountain was indeed a hurdle to be faced. Doubling up of trucks was employed and linked by a heavy cable, the second



*Feed end section of No. 1 Kiln being transported up Razorback Mountain, en route to Maldon.*

truck assisted in the ascent and linked behind in the same manner provided extra braking, for the descent. The trucks stopped every ten miles for tyre pressure checks. The Mack power unit had ten tyres, the float had eight tyres and the specially designed jinker had sixteen tyres.

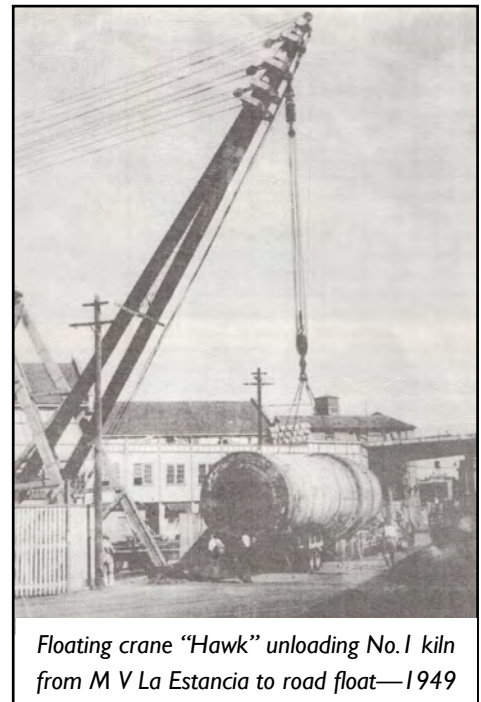
Finally the transportation and unloading was completed and the complete plant that had once manufactured cement in Detroit now lay in readiness for re-assembly at the Maldon site.

### **Powerhouse Problems**

One of the earliest and largest building constructions on site at Maldon was the housing for the power producing plant. This plant was purchased and shipped to Australia with the cement producing plant from Detroit.

It was intended the turbines would supply the electricity required to service the plant. Installed in 1950/51 it operated barely twelve months. Three boilers were used, two operating and one kept in reserve, but with frequent problems experienced with the boiler tubes the powerhouse finally closed down and power was obtained from the Nepean River County Council. It is reputed the resultant total loss was in the vicinity of 1.5 million pounds.

Undoubtedly this loss, coupled with others during the 1950's, led to the financial difficulties that caused Metropolitan Portland Cement being taken over by Commonwealth Portland Cement in May 1960 and so became a part of the Blue Circle group. ■



*Floating crane "Hawk" unloading No.1 kiln from M V La Estancia to road float—1949*

# Some familiar faces at our

# 2016



# Christmas Party



# Reminders, News & Info

## WEEKEND ROSTER

FEBRUARY	
Saturday, 4th	Phil & Laurette
Sunday, 5th	Sue & Jan
Saturday, 11th	<b>WORKING BEE</b>
Sunday, 12th	Louisa & Doreen
Saturday, 18th	Jim & Maureen
Sunday, 19th	Bob & Viv
Saturday, 25th	Colleen & June
Sunday, 26th	Allen & Debbie
<b>OPEN DAY</b>	Castrol Globe

## SUPPER ROSTER

February	Please bring a plate
March	Robyn & Ray
April	Jan & Sue
May AGM	Louisa & Marie
June	Doreen & Ben
July	Maureen & Jim
August	Aileen & Pam
September	Shirley & Trish
October	Vivian & Pam McV
November	Jenny & Pacita
December	Please bring a plate

## GUEST SPEAKERS

**FEBRUARY** Sue Davis—family history counter enquiries and our family history library books

The author makes wonderful use of photographic archival materials to explain the changing dairy industry. The photographs in the chapter 'The end of milk cans' help readers better understand the back-breaking work involved to send milk to market in cans loaded onto carts, wagons or trucks. Dr Brian Walsh's work is also a testament to the benefits of looking at history through different lenses. His research on the agricultural history of Camden Park provides important historical insights into interpreting the Belgenny Farm site to the many tour and school groups that visit.

Available from Belgenny Farm Trust. Phone (02) 4654 6800 or email

[belgenny.farm@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:belgenny.farm@dpi.nsw.gov.au) ■

### THIRLMERE STEAM FESTIVAL

Sunday, 5th March—help our stall volunteers

### SENIORS WEEK FESTIVAL

Monday, 6th March—Tea Dance at The Oaks (OUR EVENT)

### TRUCKIES REUNION

Sunday, 6 May 2017—Family Day BBQ

## METAL CONSERVATION WORKSHOP

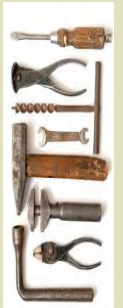
Tuesday, 7 March 2017

9.30am to 3.30pm

Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

Cost is only \$20 per person which includes a light lunch

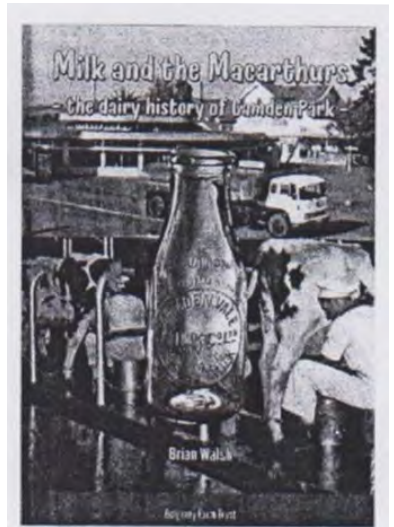
Spaces are limited so book early on 0432 689 034



## Milk & the Macarthurs: the Dairy History of Camden Park

Written by Brian Walsh, published by Camden, NSW Belgenny Farm Trust, 2016

Belgenny Farm is part of the original 2000 hectare Camden property granted to John Macarthur in 1805. In 2016 Belgenny Creamery was adapted for use as an interpretive centre for the history of dairying on Camden Park. It is therefore very timely that Dr Brian Walsh, an agriculturalist and historian, has written an agricultural history of this property with a particular focus on the dairy industry. In the opening pages he provides readers with a very useful timeline that traces the commercial sale of Camden butter in the 1830s to the sale Camden Park Real Estate in 1973. The timeline and the following chapters connect the history of Camden Park to evolutions in agricultural technology.



**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 Street, The Oaks starting at 7.00pm. Upcoming meetings are 6 March and 3 April 2017. Our patrons are Mr Luke Johnson and Mr 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 minutes are available.

If undelivered, please return to:-  
**The Oaks Historical Society Inc.**  
**P O Box 6016 The Oaks NSW 2570**

