

The Oaks Historical Society Inc

Est. May 1979

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Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2019

Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

2019 - A NEW BEGINNING



2019 is the beginning of a new era for The Oaks Historical Society Incorporated and The Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum. The Museum celebrated 30 years of operation in 2018 and this year TOHS celebrates 40 years since we began in 1979. In 2014 we developed a plan for building extensions and have worked tirelessly towards 'getting it off the ground'. Last year additional funds were secured making it a reality and now it's all happening. Building works include an extension to the main building that will give us improved administration and research area, a new toilet block and an extension to the existing kitchen area. Additionally the Blacksmith facility will be adjacent to the machinery area. Due to the progression of building work we anticipate there will be some disruption to our outside areas over the next few months. We will try to focus on the outcome and for our volunteers who have worked long and hard it is an exciting prospect to see our plans coming to fruition. ■

Happy New Year to all of our Volunteers

President: Trish Hill 0432 689034 ■ Editor: Trish Hill 0432 689034 ■ Museum Bookings: Trish or Sue 0414 703204



President's Report

Trish Hill

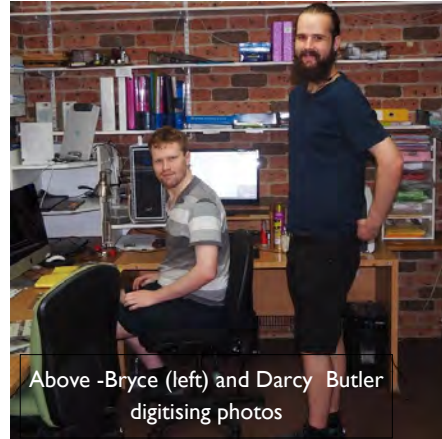
I trust you have enjoyed the festive season and all rested and reinvigorated and ready for a busy year.

Mid December the ground work commenced for our building extensions and so did excellent rainfall and with that the work halted as quickly as it had begun. It recommenced mid-January with excellent progress despite the extreme heat. Both slabs have been completed, the blacksmith facility and the admin extension and the buildings will now start to take shape. We plan to operate as usual, well almost, and hope any disruptions will be minimal. It was good to have the earthwork and concrete completed before we reopened and obviously there are construction areas that are no go zones and these are clearly defined. It is an exciting time for us here at the museum.



We managed to take delivery of the two large wagon wheels in December which have now completed the wagon. Once the blacksmith facility is completed with the attached skillion roof the wagon will be under cover with the shafts fitted.

Sue has added the school group promotion video to our Facebook page which has proved very popular and is likely to generate additional interest



Above -Bryce (left) and Darcy Butler digitising photos

in our program. There is a link on our website to view this and it is located under the 'School Programs' tab to 'Watch a clip of the School Activities'.

Darcy Butler has been a valuable addition to our volunteer base. Darcy has started scanning our photo collection so they are more accessible digitally and has recently seconded

brother Bryce to help.

We have had a small stream of visitors over the holiday period and a couple of brave family history researchers on one of the hottest of days, suddenly it is time to open again officially and the hot days continue on relentlessly■



Family History & Local Archive Research Corner

Sue Davis

I hope you enjoyed catching up with family over the holiday season.

On 28 January, Australia Day Holiday, we had a family come to our museum to learn more about their family who once lived in the Burraborang Valley. They were related to the **Riley** Family and we shared many stories and hopefully we will share more in the future. Early in January we opened up for a family passing through the area who were related to the **Kerswells**. In fact a distant relative also came and we were able to arrange for them to meet. The volunteers involved felt just as rewarded as the family historians. It is very satisfying helping others on their family history journey.

To help you on your journey, I would like to share some ideas from Cassie Mercer. Cassie Mercer is an editor based in Sydney. She founded the award-winning magazine *Inside History* in 2010. *Ancestry* recently published 10 genealogy goals for the year. Here are 5, summarised, and next month there will be another 5.

- 1. Book a trip** - There's nothing like standing in the spot where your ancestors once stood. Perhaps they ran a hotel in Hobart, or fought for their country in France. Wherever they were, make a goal to book that trip you've always wanted.
- 2. Organise a family reunion**- Get everyone together for a chance to swap photographs, memories and stories. It could be just

immediate family, or it could be with cousins you've never met. Book a place to meet that is easy to get to, and ask everyone to bring their memorabilia. Perhaps you could choose to celebrate an anniversary – of when your first ancestor arrived in Australia, or a marriage of your great, great, great grandparents.

3. Have your DNA tested- Millions of people across the globe have chosen to do a DNA test in recent years. It's a terrific way of discovering more about your heritage, and finding cousins you didn't know existed. It's easy with [AncestryDNA](#).

4. Focus on overcoming one brick wall- It can be daunting when there is lots of information missing on your family tree. Just like anything else, break it down into specific areas and set realistic goals. Then choose one thing that you want to discover this year and focus only on that.

6. Reorganise your files- Scan those old photographs and name them, back up your research, labels your files properly, update software and throw out or shred anything that you no longer need. It'll help you focus and you'll feel like spending more time researching when it's well organised.

Enjoy your family history journey ■



Display officers Report

Doreen Lyon



On 11th December we attended the unveiling of a public artwork at Picton Railway Station to commemorate the local railway men who served in the First World War. This photo shows some of the descendants of these men and you may recognise Shirley Curtis on the left, a long- time member of our society. The artwork was created by Tracey Luff who also created similar pieces in Moss Vale and Goulburn. Tracey researched the stories with the help of Mary Hutchinson from the National Archives and created stories in the artwork which are unique to each area while following a similar theme. In this artwork, the names are burnt into the timber slats and were taken from railway staff records. Judith Hannan, then Mayor, unveiled the artwork and Susan Conroy explained the research findings which can be found on THE GREAT SOUTHERN LINE ANZAC STORY website. A QR code is located with the artwork which allows people to learn more about the stories by using their smartphone or device. "This means that the wealth of material collected offers future opportunities for research and new projects" said Susan Conroy ■



Susan Conroy, Executive Director of Southern Tablelands Arts with artist Tracy Luff and (then) Mayor Judith Hannan



Acquisitions Report

Allen Seymour

The year has started with a few items in already and they include:

- A booklet explaining the significance and history of Australia's coat of arms.
- Posters of Aussie PM's, centenary of Federation and the Bridge's 60th anniversary.
- Macarthur Heritage Directory – a joint publication of Campbelltown and Camden Councils, listing heritage buildings in the areas.
- Picton Post newspapers from the 1970's.
- The last Picton News from 1998.
- Some suitcases used by the Carlon family.

Next week I'll be picking up a collection of Telstra phones and a small switchboard, typical of what would have been used in Wollondilly.

Over the holiday period I've compiled a spreadsheet listing all the newspapers we have in our collection (close to 400), which will make it a lot easier to find a certain paper or article. I've also been through our mining items and put together a spreadsheet listing the names of any miners which are mentioned in the records. This is not a comprehensive list of those who worked in the mines, only those who are mentioned in documents and archives in the collection. These are things such as compensation records, lodge memberships, even actual company records. There are over 500 names on the list ■



Jenny Wood, our Newsletter editor is stepping down from her role for family reasons. For too many newsletters last year, Jenny had to work from far away. The newsletter production was excellent as always but taxing on her and the team. We hope to still produce the best possible newsletter and will be striving for perfection.

Jenny was part of Wollondilly's Seniors Week planning team and produced our Seniors publications also minutes secretary. Your input will be missed.

Jenny, our very best wishes and thank you for all you've done!

30 YEARS OF THE WOLLONDILLY HERITAGE CENTRE & MUSEUM

PART 6 — THE CONCLUSION

Seniors day was on April 4th, and the theme this year was 'My Most Memorable Job and Mode of Transport'. Eighteen stories were told on the day, including one by the Mayor, Simon Landow. The book 'My First Home When I Got Married' with the 2015 stories in was released. Sadly 2016 was to be the last in this series of books, and we can't leave this without mentioning the great work done by Jenny Wood in transcribing these stories from the oral tapes and preparing the books. A job well done indeed.

We lost two the passing of Mel Catt and Doris Woods. Mel lives on in the oral recording that plays in the mine. Doris was the founder of The Oaks Historical Society, being the originator of the flyer that resulted in the first meeting.

A bus trip to the old steam operated pumping station at Goulburn occurred in April, and in July we went to St Marys Towers at Douglas Park. We also visited the Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens in October.

With the help of the Razorback Crankhandle Association, work was proceeding on the installation of the Castrol Globe, and this was completed in August. A Clutha Cup reunion was held on October 8th, and was well attended. Our building fund received a big boost with support from the Retired Miners Association and the Mineworkers Trust in the form of a donation.

The year finished with the Christmas party and a new set of chairs for the Drill Hall courtesy of a grant from Glencore.

We started 2017 off with the usual Australia Day and Steam-



fest stalls and on February 26th we had the unveiling of the Castrol Globe, along with the Razorback Crankhandle Assoc. March 7th saw us hosting a Metal Conservation Workshop, run by a representa-

tive of the Powerhouse Museum. He gave us some advice on the horseworks and this inspired Frank Mackie and Kevin Wintle to restore it to operating condition.

Senior's week this year had the theme 'Rock Up and Frock Up', with music and dancing, which was enjoyed by all those who attended. This was followed by another Truckies reunion in May, also well attended. May also saw our long serving Treasurer, Maureen Whyte, retire after over twenty years, a truly remarkable effort.

History Week in September saw a presentation at the Centre by cycling expert Marc Rerceretnam, and to go with this Doreen organized a cycling display. Also in September we had 'Pop Music & Milkshakes at the Magpie Café', followed in October by National Grandparents Day, where grandparents were encouraged to bring their grand children along and participate in the same type of activities that the schools do. Later in October we had a workshop on how to look after glass slides, orga-

nized through Museums and Galleries. There was also a new book 'Pioneers of the Wollondilly Shire' put together by Sue Davis from stories done by some of the local schools.

Work was also proceeding on a new mining display to go with the Nattai/Bulli mine banner, and we were also in discussion with Camden Historical Society regarding the Percival Wagon. This was on display in John Street for many years before being taken to the Macarthur Anglican School where it was partly restored. With the school's work done, the wagon needed a new home and was offered to us.

We lost more long-time members with the deaths of Pat Catt, who had been a volunteer for many years, and Muriel Allen, who was on the management committee for many years, and had served time as Secretary and Treasurer. The community bus was used on visits to Wollongong Museum and Elizabeth Farm/Brislington House at Parramatta. We used our own cars to visit Belgenny Farm, and later in the year went back again to visit the Camden Park gardens and stables, with Pauline Downing as a guide.

The holiday period saw the Centre a hive of activity, with the mining display completed, Burragorang Cottage got a spring cleaning, and we had new carpet and a dance floor installed in the Drill Hall.

This brings us up to 2018, which has been a very hectic year. We lost two more valuable members in Jim Whyte and Eileen O'Brien, both have done a lot for the Centre over many years, and their loss will be deeply felt. There was the "Reimagining Her War" textiles exhibition for International Women's Day, the launch of the Nattai/Bulli Union Banner display, the 'Valley of Dispossession' day, the 'Where They Travelled' Exhibition' by Paul Irish, the 'Peeps At Pioneers' cemetery tours for History week, and for Armistice Day we had 'The Music of War', 'The Fabric of War' and 'Echoes of the Great War', which saw some of members stepping out of their comfort zone with some dramatic performances.



There was also first-aid training, and the donation of a defibrillator by Wollondilly North and Picton Rotary Clubs. We organised community bus trips to the Nan Tien Temple and Hill 60 at Wollongong, and the cottage and St Thomas church at Mulgoa. On top of this we have a new kitchen in the main building, and a new kitchenette in the Drill Hall. All four wheels for the wagon have been replaced which has completed the wagon rebuild.

In March came the news we had been waiting for – a successful grant from NSW Liquor & Gaming. This allowed us to proceed with the building work, the blacksmith shed and display area, and work commenced on these before Christmas. This has been achieved after a lot of hard work by our Treasurer, Debbie Seymour.

We will not be able to rest on our laurels in 2019 though. The construction work will cause some disruption and will require a big effort from everyone, but the end result will be worth it. ■

George Eden 1919 to 2018

By David Eden



Born in Dulwich Hill when it was one of Sydney's western suburbs, George took a few years to build up his self confidence. His elder twin sisters were so smart, George says they got their Leaving Certificates before they were old enough to leave school, so they had to stay at

school for another year. That meant they topped the state two years in a row. George missed some schooling as his father, Charles was an electrical engineer who spent six months away from home on jobs such as installing electric lighting in country towns, so his mother thought it wasn't worth sending George to school for just six months at a time. Perhaps he was thought to be a year or two behind children his age. George said: "I couldn't leave school quickly enough. I left school the day I turned 14."

After trying out as a pattern maker, he got a job making wind mills at Sidney Williams. "After I had done my trade course at Tech, I decided to continue at Tech and get my diploma. Now, to get a diploma in engineering you had to have the leaving certificate in English and maths. After doing a day's work, then doing the trades course in the afternoon, you get tired. I used to have a headache at the end of the maths course in the evening. I'd look at the other younger kids who didn't seem to be trying or even care about what they were doing."

During the Second World War, George was a Despatch Rider, because he owned a motorbike, operating search lights as a reservist. He worked for the Lithgow Small Arms Factory in the Annex at Sidney Williams factory near Hurlstone Park and Dulwich Hill. His job was to make precise gauges for measuring tools.

George's family moved to the bush suburb of Oatley in 1960, next to a waterfront park. Marge and George raised four sons, sending them to university.

Phil and Lurette Hughes used to go to music performances in the 1970's at the Oakdale property of psychologists Haigh and Jo Masters. The Masters thought their days there were limited due to the cold weather, so asked Phil if he knew of anybody wanting to buy a bush block. A week later at an



Antique and Classic Motor Club rally, George asked Phil if he knew of any bush blocks for sale for Marje and George to get away from the increasingly crowded city. When my parents had a look at the house on top of a cliff overlooking rainforest, instead of hiding her enthusiasm, Marge asked: "When can we move in?" before they had discussed the price.

When Marje and George moved to what became their weekend at Oakdale, they joined The Oaks Historical Society. George and Marge really enjoyed helping to build the Settlers Cottage and working on other projects at the Museum. It was a team effort so they both got a lot out of it socially. The photo shows Marje and George admiring the finished chimney. According to Phil, there is still a trowel somewhere inside it, preserved as an archeological relic near the bottom. ■

BOOK REVIEW

A Glimpse of Cawdor by John W. Burge

As the title says, it is a glimpse of Cawdor. Author John Burge compiled the book in 2000, a history of Cawdor, the Cowpastures, development of settlement, the Church and the Wesleyan settlers and tenant farmers of Macarthur. There is a section of maps, some of those include Camden Farms, Cobbitty Paddocks, Mt Hunter and Camden and shows the tenant farmers. Numerous locals contributed memories, documents, photos and maps and there is a section on pioneering families.

We have referred to this book many times for local and family history enquiries and it is an excellent reference resource. The book is available in our shop and is \$18.00

A Glimpse of Cawdor



Compiled by
John W. Burge

For the Sesqui Centenary of Cawdor Uniting Church 2000

TOHS Christmas Party 2018

If you weren't there that afternoon, well did you miss a great time! In past years we always found we had a clash of dates, but this year we were locked in. All we had to do was **bring a salad or a sweet and BYO nibbles and/or drinks.**

Colin decided to make the salad, why would I argue? We had Haloumi in the fridge and with some other delicious ingredients we both looked forward to trying it when supper was served.

We must have arrived late-ish as many of the members were already seated at the long tables. Committee, what a powerhouse, even recruiting grand-daughters into the mix; using the beaut new kitchen to the max. They must have started at dawn. We found we were sitting next to members we had not met before. Great to meet new people and to chat about common interests. We also got full value from sitting close by a couple of Crankhandlers— members who are of enormous help to TOHS with their mechanical expertise (names withheld). They constantly chucked each other mercilessly. Frank was in great form that afternoon.

The buffet opened and the amazing variety of food that was on those groaning tables ... typically country, no one was going to starve on this committee's watch, I believe the leftovers could have fed Genghis Khan's army! That was before dessert. A few dregs of dressing were all that was left of Colin's salad, that was a hit.

And then we played party games. Its just years since I have laughed so much, particularly during **Pass the Parcel**. Its been a looong time since I played this game. Wikipedia says '**Pass the parcel is a classic British party game in which a parcel is passed from one person to another. In preparation for the game, a prize (or "gift") is wrapped in a large number of layers of wrapping paper. Usually, each layer is of a different design so they can be easily distinguished. Smaller prizes or mottos may be placed between some or all other layers of wrapping.**

Between the layers this parcel had labels that suited specific people attending that afternoon. And its climax was a hoot, a beer glass with a distinct droop in the stem making it

impossible to drink from. The Lucky Door Prize tickets we were given were drawn and hardly anyone missed out on a prize. Colin picked up a very heavy square parcel that felt like a concrete brick, he was not going to open it until Christmas Day – it was a set of coffee cups and saucers, not a brick at all! Very useful.

So, thank you to the incredibly hard-working committee and those who volunteer. What workers you are, all of you, dedicating your time and putting on a true country-style Christmas party. (PS: The best one we have attended) ■

Pauline Downing and Colin Howie

Christmas



2018



Gallery



Reminders, News & Info

WEEKEND ROSTER

FEBRUARY	
Sue & Helen	Saturday, 2
Louisa & Doreen	Sunday, 3
WORKING BEE	Saturday, 9
Ben & Doreen	Sunday, 10
Debbie & Allen	Saturday, 16
Phil & Laurette	Sunday, 17
Jenny & Pam	Saturday, 23
Trish & Kevin	Sunday, 24

MONTHLY SUPPER ROSTER

February	Please bring a plate
March	TBA
April	Jan & Sue
May AGM	Louisa & Marie
June	Doreen & Ben
July	Colleen & Bev
August	Debbie & Pam
September	Shirley & Trish
October	Vivian & Pam McV
November	Jenny & Pacita
December	Please bring a plate

Desperately seeking a duo to help out and join our meeting supper roster team. If you think you can help please let us know.



The lucky winner of our patchwork quilt raffle (drawn at our Christmas party) was member Jan Lyons.

FEBRUARY MEETING

Date: 4th | Time: 7.00pm

Guest speaker—Ian Willis

Topic—Talks and More from 2018



FREE-SURPLUS KITCHEN EQUIPMENT

TWO HOT WATER URNS IN GOOD CONDITION

Contact Trish 0432 689034

MEMORIES AND LANDSCAPE

HISTORY WEEK EVENT PLANNING DAY

You are all invited to a History Week planning day on the 1st March 2019 in the View Room of the Wollondilly library. History Week is the annual state wide celebration of history organised by the History Council of New South Wales, this year the event is 31st August-8th September. This is a great opportunity for all the historical and family history societies in this great Wollondilly Shire to get together and talk about a possible joint venture. The theme of the week is 'Memories and Landscape', so planning around this theme will be something everyone would be able to contribute to.

The morning will be spent brainstorming the theme and coming up with creative ways to showcase your photo, objects and recordings. The afternoon will be spent bringing it all together so there is a shared vision of the theme with actions leading up to the week.

'Memories and Landscape' History Week 2019 Planning Day

Calling all local historical and family history societies to the meeting of the Century!

1st March 2019, The View Room
Wollondilly Library, Picton NSW
10am to 4.30pm

Lunch & light refreshments provided



SYDNEY & SURROUNDS



SENIORS WEEKEND AT THE

WOLLONDILLY HERITAGE CENTRE

& MUSEUM

Free entry to the museum for Seniors to celebrate Seniors Festival.

February -Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th 10.00am–4.00pm, 43 Edward St, The Oaks

Tea and coffee available.

Contact Trish on 0432 689 034



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 and Monday 4th March 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.

If undelivered, please return to:-
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