

The Oaks Historical Society Inc

Est. May 1979

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Newsletter

JULY 2016

Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

A lonely grave by the Nattai River

By Jim Smith



Image 931

"Jim wrote: After more than 20 years as a member I am submitting my first article for the newsletter! ..."

Yerranderie, in Aug. 1912. It is on the left bank of the Nattai River and at that date was in dense scrub. A few posts and the remains of a couple of fireplaces marked the site of the habitation.

The solitude is rarely disturbed. The parents have left the district. Poor little chap, aged 8 years. Drowned in the Nattai River in 1870. No doubt, the beautiful Kurrajong tree behind the headstone was planted shortly after burial.¹"

The gravestone inscription is quite clear in the photo and reads:

The marble headstone was set into a block of local stone and surrounded by four posts which probably had wire strands between them. A latch and hinge can be seen on two of the posts, showing that there was once a gate into the enclosure.

The bushwalkers of 1912

believed that the Kurrajong tree behind the headstone was planted at the time of the burial, making it 42 years old when the photo was taken in 1922. It would now be 145 years old.

James Taylor was the third child of William and Elizabeth Taylor. His birth was registered at Chippendale in 1862. Also registered there were James's brother Alfred, born in 1859, and sister Mary born in 1860. The couple had nine more children between 1864 and 1874 whose births were registered at Picton. It is likely that the Taylors moved to the Nattai River between 1862 and 1864. In 1863 James Taylor registered a Conditional Purchase of the 40 acre Portion 46, about two kilometres upstream of the junction of the Nattai and Little Rivers. *Continued inside* ▶

In
affectionate
remembrance of
James S. Taylor
who was drowned
18 December 1870
Aged eight years
Thy will be done

One of the most isolated graves in New South Wales is beside the lower Nattai River. It is within the 'Schedule 1' zone around Lake Burragorang, an area which cannot be visited without the permission of Water New South Wales. I found a photo of it, and the description below, in the scrapbook of H. Tompkins who came across the grave during a walk with the Warragamba Walking Club.

"The old quartet-- Ernie Yates, Geo. Grant, Ward Jackson and the writer-- first chanced upon this lonely grave when returning from Wombeyan Caves via the gulf country and

A lonely grave by the Nattai River

By Jim Smith

Continued

By December 1874 he was the owner of six more freehold lots (Portions 16, 61, 62, 63, 77 and 79, totalling 210 acres) further downstream on the Nattai River². This land, which cost £1 per acre, was around the junctions of Sheehys and Gillans Creeks with the Nattai River. William Taylor sold his freehold land in January 1887 but retained the Conditional Purchase, where his family presumably continued to live. It was still in his name in 1899 but had been sold to Philip Reilly by 1910³.

William and Elizabeth lost two other children while at the Nattai River: baby Matthew in 1867 and son William, who died in 1895 aged 27. As noted by Tompkins, the property was abandoned by 1912. Myles Dunphy marked it on his 1931 map of the Burratorang Valley and Southern Highlands area.

James Taylor was buried near the boundary of portions 62 and 63, on a ridge well above the height of the Nattai River floods, and so his grave was not inundated by Lake Burratorang and can still be seen today with the lettering still legible.

There were 15 major floods in the Burratorang Valley in 1870, with the biggest one in late April⁴. The Camden rain gauge recorded 55.7 inches (142 cm) for the year, compared with the average of 31.5 inches (79 cm) per year between 1861 and 1869. The last two floods of 1870 were on 21 November and 26 December (these dates are for the South Creek and Windsor areas), so that James Taylor was not drowned during one of the major floods, but possibly while swimming in the river during a year when it was at much higher than normal levels.

The Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Warragamba Flood Mitigation Dam identified 57 European heritage items upstream of Warragamba Dam⁵. Seven of these, including James Taylor's grave, were assessed as having Regional Significance. It was the only grave identified in the study. The former cemeteries of the Burratorang Valley are all now under water. At the time of the study, heritage assessments allowed the classification of sites into local, regional or State significance. Since then, amendments to the Heritage Act have removed the regional significance category. It is possible that a reassessment of the grave site might see its heritage significance raised to State level, as it is the only remaining evidence of a burial in the Burratorang Valley. The 'Stone Track' shown at Cooba Bay, the remarkable road built by Peter Mulheran between the late 19th century and the early 1900s, has since been assessed as having State Heritage Significance.

Image 2160 ►

Captions.

Img931: Photo by Horrie T. Woods, 1922. In H. Tompkins, Warragamba Walking Club Scrapbook, held by Jim Smith. Note the piece of wood near the top of the post on the left, which was the latch, and the hinge on the right-hand post.

Img932: Extract from Myles Dunphy, Map of the Picton Lakes, Blue Gum and Little River Canyons, Lower Nattai Valley and Central Burratorang including the country between Buxton, Picton and The Oaks. Compiled for members of the Mountain Trails Club New South Wales and the Sydney Bush Walkers from all available sources and personal knowledge. Not sold for profit. August 1933 edition (first edition 1931).

Img933: Map showing location of James Taylor's grave and other regionally significant European heritage sites. From Environmental Impact Statement for Proposed Warragamba Flood Mitigation Dam, 1995, volume 1, page 9.57.

Img2160: Photo of the grave site taken in June 2016 by Tony Kondek. The headstone is now leaning up against the Kurrajong tree. One of the fence posts originally surrounding the grave can be seen in the foreground.

¹ H. Tompkins, Warragamba Walking Club scrapbook, held by Jim Smith.

² Information from Certificates of Title. J. Sheehy was the original owner of Portion 16, granted on 5 September 1855

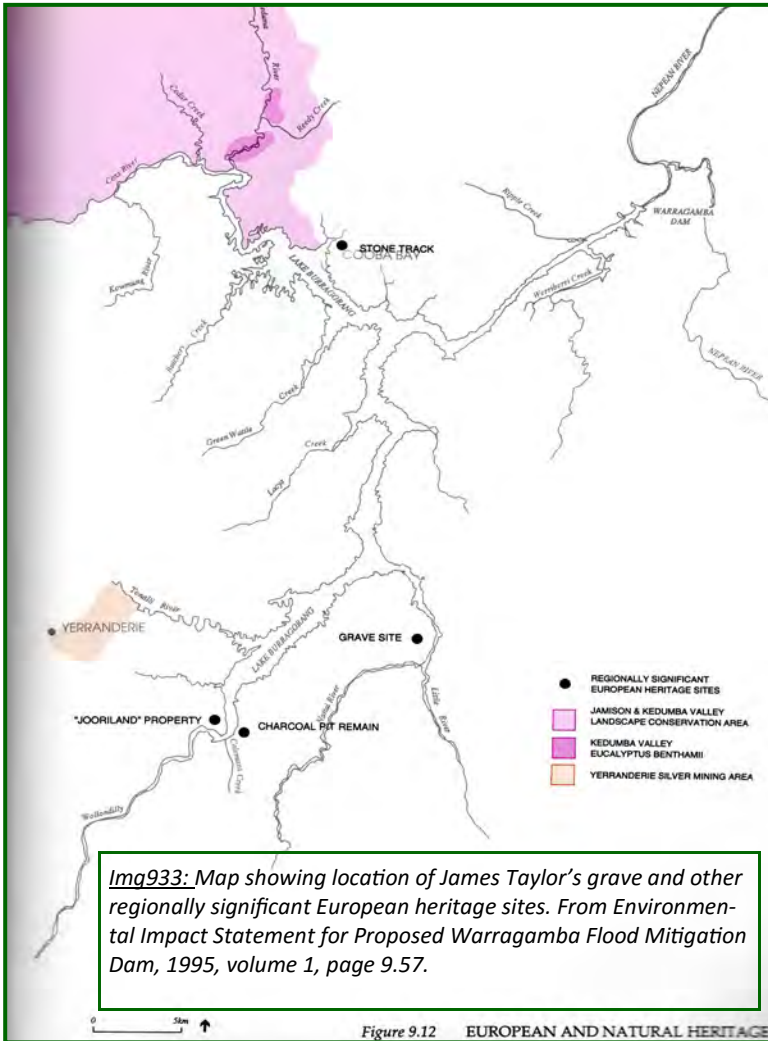
³ Parish of Nattai maps, third edition, 1899 and fourth edition early 1900s.

⁴ J. Josephson, 'History of Floods in the Hawkesbury River', *Journal of the Royal Society of New South Wales for 1885*, 1886, pp.97-107.

⁵ ERM Mitchell McCotter, Environmental Impact Statement for Sydney Water Corporation, 1995, Volume 1, pp.9.54-9.57. Volume 2, appendix M, pages M1 and M2.



A Lonely Grave by the Nattai River continued



Img933: Map showing location of James Taylor's grave and other regionally significant European heritage sites. From Environmental Impact Statement for Proposed Warragamba Flood Mitigation Dam, 1995, volume 1, page 9.57.

Figure 9.12 EUROPEAN AND NATURAL HERITAGE



Img932: Extract from Myles Dunphy, Map of the Picton Lakes, Blue Gum and Little River Canyons, Lower Nattai Valley and Central Burrigorang including the country between Buxton, Picton and The Oaks. Compiled for members of the Mountain Trails Club New South Wales and the Sydney Bush Walkers from all available sources and personal knowledge. Not sold for profit. August 1933 edition (first edition 1931).

President's Report



Trish Hill

I hope you have all been keeping warm and dry and may you continue to for the next couple of months. I would tolerate winter much better if I didn't have to leave the confines of a cosy fire.

Earlier in June Debbie Seymour, Sue Davis and I attended Museums & Galleries "Access to Funding" workshop at Windsor. The keynote speaker was Ray Christison from Lithgow Mining Museum who was very engaging and explained how they forward planned, preparing for funding opportunities and offered some handy tips. All of the speakers gave us excellent advice on the best practices for funding applications. Break-out sessions were held at the conclusion with opportunities for Q&A.

On Saturday last I attended Campbelltown & Airds Historical Society meeting as guest speaker talking about Present Day Yerranderie. Members and guests were very interested with lots of questions at the conclusion and we spent an enjoyable afternoon tea with Ben and Doreen's Campbelltown neighbours.

We have had some lovely groups in this month who have

been very interested in our local history and much appreciated their museum tour.

Our thoughts are with the people from Picton and the surrounding area who suffered devastating storm damage due to the heavy rains early June. Council are organising a fundraiser, **Wollondilly Big Day In** on Saturday, 23 July at the Picton Sportsground to aid those needing help. ■



A visitor from Loftus Probus Car Torque on 17 June

Family History & Local Archive Research



Sue Davis

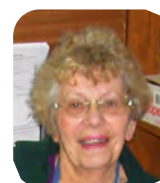
I recently gave a talk to the Stage 1 (Year 1 & 2) students at The Oaks Public School. They have been learning about their environment as part of the new National History Curriculum. My family had lived in the school residence for some time and my talk was centred in and around the residence. The original classroom and residence were built at the same time in 1902. The classroom and residence are easily recognisable from the outside but several changes have occurred on the inside. The classroom is modernised and equipped to teach children in the technological age. The residence is changed to support the school with an office, storerooms, tiered learning area and uniform shop. I was delighted to see that the front bedroom still features the original fireplace and mantel piece.

Here is a picture from our photograph collection of the Teacher-in-charge, Mr Weisel, with some of the school students in the back of a truck outside the residence in the 1930s.

Early in Term 3 we will be welcoming The Oaks Public School, Year 2 students, to learn more about the history of their area as part of our "Hands On History" school program.



Marketing Report



Louisa Singleman

June Bus Tours

What a topsy turvy month we have had with last minute bookings and cancellations and change of days! Thank you all, our co-operative volunteers who have been so versatile in stepping in to help at a moment's notice. During June we have had some large groups of over 40 as well as some small groups of 13. Each one is just as important as the other as they all help to spread the word of a wonderful experience. It was great to hear that Sue conducted a tour of the museum to a group of high school students. We hope this may be the first of many. Thanks Sue. Many of our visitors have wheel chairs or walking frames and are very pleased to hear that the

museum has disability access. Colleen has been very informative in this area and has passed on valuable advice to us to assist in making the bus tours more friendly for people with disabilities.

Marketing Report

Due to the storm damage in Picton the Wollondilly Visitors Information centre has been re-located to the foyer of the Wollondilly Council Chambers. Winter is a rather quiet time for outdoor activities but it will be all go, go, go in the spring with the Centenary of the Naming of Tahmoor on Saturday 3rd September at the Tahmoor Public School. We will be having a stall so I will be looking for helpers to assist on the day. ■

Acquisitions Corner



Allen Seymour

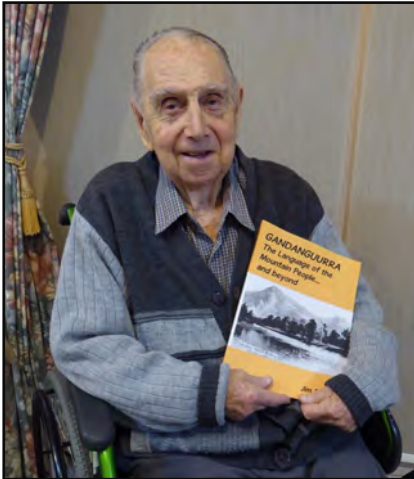
This month we've received a Longwall changeover manual and an outburst prevention manual, both for Oakdale Colliery. We've also had some more items from 'Ellensville'. Among these is a record of land sales in Wollondilly Shire for the 1914-15 years. This has been put into a spreadsheet to make the information easier to access and to stop the original document from being damaged. This document records the vendor and purchaser, date, price, locality and size. Some details are given for the portion, section and lot, but in most cases it's difficult to identify the exact piece of land, but hopefully this will provide some useful information for family historians.

I'm also working my way through the Dowle collection of glass negatives, recording what is there. This will take quite a while, as there are well over seven hundred, and although there is an index, every box will have to be gone through. There is a lot of great material, including photos of the unveiling of the Mt Hunter war memorial. Also lots of great shots of Camden, interesting cars and bikes which we may be able to digitise. Another addition to our collection is a replica of the Castrol globe that used to be on the top of Razorback. Some of you

may remember this. It was a large globe of the world with Castrol on it and a sign on the top with the height above sea level. Along with the Anthony Horden's tree, this globe was a well-known icon from the 1930's through until the 1970's when it was removed. Mick Fairfax, with help from the Razorback Crankhandlers Car Club has built a scaled down replica of it. The steelwork for the stand and globe structure was done by Larry Wood. The original plan was to install it on Razorback, but bureaucracy prevented that. It is going to be installed at the southern end of the machinery shed with help from the Crankhandlers and we hope that it will be a further attraction for the Centre.

We have also managed to identify the Billy Wintle stationary engine that was retrieved from Burraborang Valley. A photo of it in The Old Machinery Magazine has resulted in a number of replies, and we are especially indebted to Eddie of Back Creek. The engine was made by the Associated Manufacturing Company of Waterloo in Idaho, USA, and is a 6h.p. unit. At one time this company advertised itself as the largest manufacturer of gasoline engines in the world. ■

Gandanguurra Book Launch



Jim Barrett's Speech on 14 May 2016

How did I come to be interested in writing a book on an Aboriginal language? ... I am often asked.

It really started almost 70 years ago when I took up bushwalking in the Blue Mountains, and a very special area

there was the Burragorang Valley and its hinterland only about 15 km southwest of Katoomba.

The Burragorang was first settled by non-Aborigines in the 1820s, almost primarily by ex-convicts. In more recent times (the 1990s) I began writing books about the history of the Blue Mountains including the Burragorang Valley. Two very important books (in 1994 and 1995) were *'Life in the Burragorang'* and *'Place Names of the Blue Mountains and Burragorang Valley'*.

During the two years of writing these two books I began to realise that in the 1800s another significant group also had formed a strong presence in the Burragorang, namely: descendants of the Gandanguurra people. Following are a few cases of very, very close associations between the white newcomers and the resident Aborigines whose ancestors had been in the area for some thousands of years.

These examples illustrate a strong bond between the ex-convicts and other settlers, and the Aboriginal people, strikingly different to the story of how Aboriginal people were treated in other parts of NSW and in other states of Australia.

Thomas Seymour discovered Kanangra Walls in 1864: his route took him past the Jingery camp site on the Kowmung River. Thomas's grand-daughter told me that Thomas had a working knowledge of the Gandanguurra language, almost certainly learnt from the Jingery people. He had also prepared a summary of the language in an exercise book, which sadly has been mislaid.

Jimmy Pippin was a blood brother to his local tribe, and was protector of the "red hand rock" in Upper Burragorang, a great responsibility...

To become a 'blood brother' was a rarity indeed.

Peter Fitzpatrick was said to be as good as a native, for he also knew the Gandanguurra language and could use a spear and boomerang as well as any Aborigine. The local Aborigines called him Burrung gullut. (Quite an honour!)

In July 1875, John Jingery "an Aboriginal native" applied to buy a 40 acre block on Scotts Main Range through his 'agent' – Robert O'Reilly. Robert ran cattle on the Lower

Cox. The Burragorang Aborigines showed their gratitude by showing Mr O'Reilly a short cut for him in taking his cattle from the Lower Cox to the Upper Cox. About 80 kms.

In pre-dam days (the Burragorang was flooded in 1960 for the Warragamba Dam) there was a 'red hand rock' a couple of kilometres up the river from Bimlow. Mr Maurice Hayes knew the rock for 50 years. The Aborigines eventually gave him to understand that *"the hands were the imprints of those of their deity, when they were on earth"*.

Mrs Longbottom (pictured) was an Aboriginal woman, with some reputation as a midwife and who smoked a clay pipe, and accepted the remuneration for her services in the form of plug tobacco. She assisted birthing women, not only of her own race but also European women, using some of her tribal medicine and practices.



In 1929 Fathers Keith Bush and Steve Ford, as seminarians, walked from Wentworth Falls to Picton. On the way they came across a camp of Aborigines in the Burragorang Valley, on Cox's River, near the Wollondilly junction.... (This spot would have been very close to the farming settlements of the white newcomers).

These years - the 1800s - was a period in which terrible injustices were wrought on Aboriginal communities in other parts of NSW, but I have demonstrated that the Burragorang Valley was a shining example of an opposite situation.

Another reason for writing the book is set out in the dedication page of my book:

"With great humility and much affection I dedicate these pages to the original inhabitants of the Blue Mountains and to their descendants, but especially Margaret Jordan, a Billy Lynch (Cox's River) descendant, and Ivy Brookman – nee Riley, a George Riley (Burragorang) descendant, who many years ago encouraged me to put on paper the story of their beautiful language."

Following publication of this book it is my hope to complete a simple text book containing an elementary grammar suitable for those who would be interested in acquiring basic conversational skills in the language."

In closing..... I am fairly confident that my work is grammatically correct, but if anyone thinks otherwise, I would appreciate being advised. Also, difficult job for me was to work out the western boundary of the Gandanguurra territory, and in this regard, some readers might have other opinions. If so, I would be grateful to learn of same. ■

Jim Barrett, 14/5/16

From Montpelier to Mowbray Park

CONTINUED FROM LAST MONTH



A Story from our archives by John K Ruffels (a Barnardo's boy)

The sale of Mowbray Park by the Red Cross sadly disappointed its donor, Lady Waley. But it is an ill wind which blows nobody any good.

On 15 August 1928, it was announced in Picton that Mowbray Park had changed hands again. This time, the old property

was going to be transformed by the Doctor Barnardo's Home organisation into a farm school for the sons (and daughters) of deceased British servicemen.

One of the stout supporters of this scheme had been Sir Arthur Rickards, a successful Sydney real estate man, who thought that such a scheme would benefit both Britain and Australia.

The final purchase of Mowbray Park was the end of a long series of attempts to buy it previously.

Lady Waley's last comment was, *"The Governor-General begged me to lend it for twenty years. I did not take his advice, but I am not now sorry when it is so healthy and useful for the Barnardo Children."*

In May 1929, the renovations and additions had been completed and the first forty immigrant boys went to the new Farm School.

On 20 November, the Governor Sir Dudley de Chair attended the official opening. Sir Frederick Waley's ballroom had become a dining-room, and the billiard-room a massive clothing store.

The horses' stables were converted into a chapel which was later consecrated by the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney.

In 1939, a new cottage was erected on the south side of the main house; this was named 'Millions Cottage' after Sir Arthur Rickard's club, which had provided so much financial assistance for the farm school. The Millions Club.

During the next thirty years, the Barnardo Farm School became a part of the life of local Picton, with the boys exhibiting stock and produce successfully at the Picton Annual Show.

The keenness and result of these boys depended largely on the influence exerted by the various Headmasters; under one they became active participants in the social and agricultural life of the area; under another, they seemed to be less industrious and not so successful.

The farm had sixty head of Ayreshire cows, with the best cow averaging seventy-eight pounds of milk in twenty-four hours. In addition, there were sheep, horses, pigs, geese and seven hundred head of poultry.

Just as the Red Cross had done, they too, were the source of vegetables for all of their Sydney homes.

During World War Two, at the request of the CSIRO, the first opium poppies produced in any quantity in Australia were grown on five acres of land at Mowbray Park. This provided badly-needed morphia to supplement supplies for overseas troops.

By 1959, the Doctor Barnardo's Homes organisation realised that insufficient British children were available to justify continuing a large school like Mowbray Park; as a result, it was decided to sell the school and to open a smaller school in the Upper Hunter Valley, to which Australian children could be admitted.

In July 1960, Mowbray Park was sold again. The new owner was a pastoral company calling itself Mowbray Park Proprietary Ltd. Their stay was short-lived.... but they built several dams and re-fenced areas of the property.

By 1971, the property had been purchased by a Spanish real estate investor, named Mr E Margolin of Bellevue Hill, Sydney. He improved the pastures, re-fenced the entire property and planted clover and lucerne. He installed a farm manager and visited from Sydney from time to time.

Other than these improvements, the most dramatic contribution he made was to redecorate the main house in Louis XIV style! The woodwork throughout was painted white with gold trim, new floors were laid down and period furniture was placed on expensive Persian carpets. New silk pelmets and curtains were placed in every room, at the cost of \$10,000.

Where just over ten years before, young boys had jostled each other amongst solid cedar furniture, now stood a deserted room with a lone table in the centre. Placed on this table was a tree-stump on which stood a stuffed eagle clutching in its talons, an equally stuffed rabbit! ■

FINAL CHAPTER CONTINUED NEXT MONTH



The dining room at Mowbray Park during the days of Mandeville BARKER c1895 Photo provided by John K Ruffels

Volunteer Weekend Roster

News & Info

JULY 2016	
Sat, 2	Phil & Laurette
Sunday, 3	Louisa & Doreen
Saturday, 9	WORKING BEE
Sunday, 10	Sue & Paul
Saturday, 16	Jim & Maureen
Sunday, 17	Allen & Debbie
Saturday, 23	Colleen & June
Sunday, 24	Bob & Vivian
Saturday, 30	Pacita & Kathy
Sunday, 31	Trish & Kevin
Saturday, 6	Sue & Tina

Supper Roster



July	Maureen & Jim
August	Aileen & Pam S
September	Shirley & Trish
October	Vivian & Pam McV
November	Jenny & Pacita
December	Please bring a plate

UPCOMING GUEST SPEAKERS

JULY 4 — John Graveur poultry judge
AUGUST 1 — From our collection

VISITOR REQUEST

Mary McClure of Greenacre is looking for a container to cook her date and walnut roll like her mother used to. Remember the cylindrical tins with caps over both ends that we put the cake mixture in.

Mary phoned us on her 84th birthday on 25 June. Contact Jenny on 0431 241 518

St Marys Towers Bus Tour

Wednesday, 27 July

The bus will depart The Oaks at 9.30am



Broughton Pass is closed so unfortunately we won't be lunching at Campbelltown as planned.

Morning tea is provided.

The bus and tour of St Mary's Towers at Douglas Park is \$13 PLUS lunch (lunch venue has not been decided) and we will tour some of the district.

Any enquiries to Betty on 4677 2587 or Trish on 0432 689034

Photos: Some of us on the last bus tour at Goulburn Waterworks
Photo's by Robyn Gill

MAYOR'S RELIEF FUND

Helping Wollondilly Residents and Businesses affected by recent storm event

100% of funds going directly to assist residents and businesses of Wollondilly



Councils events officer on 46771100

Ways to donate:

At Council
62-64 Menangle St
Picton

Direct Deposit
BSB 082-883
Acc N° 359330786

PLEASE SUPPORT WOLLONDILLY'S BIG DAY IN on Saturday 23 July

Venue to be decided (contact Councils Event Officer, Kim)

A who's who of musicians and entertainers are expected to be part of the star-studded line-up at the fundraiser which will be held at (possibly) Picton Sportsground and feature a silent auction, markets, kids' rides and a custom car show. Help get Picton residents back on their feet and running again after the devastating storm.

TAHMOOR IS TURNING 100

Celebrations will be held at Tahmoor Primary School on

Saturday, 3 September 2016

Mark your calendar—residents and visitors all welcome

MONTHLY MEETINGS: The Oaks Historical Society Inc. holds its meetings on the first Monday of each month (except January) at the Wollondilly Heritage Centre, 43 Edward Street, The Oaks starting at 7.00pm. **Upcoming meetings are 4 July, 1 August & 5 September 2016.** Our patrons are Mr. Philip Costa 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 at the Centre.

REMINDER

MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR 2016 /17 ARE NOW DUE

Newsletter via
Email is
FREE

\$10 for single

\$18 for family

Plus \$10 postage for newsletter

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

