

The Oaks Historical Society Inc

Est. May 1979

The Oaks Historical Society Inc.
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Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

Newsletter

MARCH 2018

Nightmare trip for Barrallier

Sunday Telegraph, November 4, 1984 page 125

In 1802 the Colonial Office banned the use of army officers on exploring ventures in Australia. But famine threatened and Governor King was desperate. He decided to bend the rules.

In the NSW Corps was a French Ensign, Francis Barrallier, 29, active and enthusiastic. King made Barrallier his aide-de-camp and sent him as ambassador to an entirely mythical aboriginal, "the King of the Mountains".

To reach him, Barrallier would have to burst through the heart-breaking barrier of the Blue Mountains. And this might open the way for pioneers to settle the interior, King thought.

With four soldiers, five convicts, two native boys, Barrallier crossed the Nepean near what is now Camden on November 6, 1802. For seven weeks he travelled 240km through wild country at the south end of the mountains.

Natives Terrified

No white man had ever penetrated this region. Only the cries of birds broke the awe-inspiring silence of the ages. Barrallier looked, in vain, for native guides.

He carried his supplies on wagons and at the sight of the

bullocks, the terrified natives fled into the bush. When the wagons went back for fresh supplies Barrallier was dogged by hostile tribesmen to the Nattai River. Beyond, the hills were so steep they were like rows of pyramids. Barrallier's men dragged themselves up the rocks till their hands were bloodied and raw.

By November 26 they had toiled to a point near the 1000m peak of Coolong Mountain. Five kms away lay the terrible sandstone pinnacles of the Kanangra Walls. All around was a silent wilderness. His men mutinous, his supplies dwindling, on November 28 Barrallier cut a rough cross on a tree.

Then he struck camp and set out on the nightmare return journey. ■



Governor Philip Gidley King

BARRALLIER PARK

opposite the shops in the main street of The Oaks, has just had a plaque and pathway completed.



"Francis Louis Barrallier, Engineer and Explorer, arrived in Sydney with the newly appointed Governor, Philip Gidley King on 15 April 1800. In 1802 a supply depot was set up at Nattai on the eastern side of the Burratorang Valley. Barrallier set off with a small party on an embassy to the "King of the Mountains" (Aboriginal). The party penetrated about 161 kms into the mountains. They discovered Byrne's Gap, the Tonalli and Burratorang Valleys, but were stopped from reaching the Great Dividing Range by a waterfall which seemed impassable. Barrallier turned back as his provisions were running low, although he was then very close to the Kanangra Plateau, from which a day's march would have taken him across the main divide between Oberon and the Jenolan Caves. This failure did much to deter further attempts of the mountain barrier for some years and Barrallier's hearing on the trip, of the word "coo-ee", which the Aboriginals used as a bush call, was no great compensation. He died on 11 June 1853 at his home in London following a distinguished military career. "





President's Report

Trish Hill

This month we have been in negotiations with Council and builder that should see us commence the building of our long awaited extension. We are still awaiting the outcome of a funding round which if successful would certainly ease the financial burden. However with a little luck and further hard work this year we should have a positive outcome.

Plans are also underway for a blacksmith shed and covered area which will house the wagon and other large equipment currently in the agricultural shed.

The Bennett wagon is looking nearer to completion with sides fitted recently. Nobby Forge in Queensland has sent through some photographs of the two small wheels he was commissioned to build with one completed and the other almost. They have said the job should be complete by Easter and we then have to get them back here.

Please come along and join us in celebrating International Women's Day 2018 on **Friday 9th March, 6-8pm**. The event 'Macarthur Textile Network Reimagines Her War', a partnership with Macarthur Textile Network features textiles they have created from personal stories and war history. See *Betty Villy's story on Knitting Socks for Soldiers on page 5*.

A new weekend roster commences this month and I thank all volunteers for their commitment and trust you are not too inconvenienced by any of your allocated days. We always encourage and welcome new volunteers so if you think you would like to join us please come along.

Thanks to Pam McVey for her very interesting guest speaker

slot at our February meeting. We had a glimpse of the McVey personal collection, from theodolites to coffee grinder, the objects were rare, well cared for and supported by a wealth of information from Pam.

A reminder to please bring a supper plate to our meeting on 5 March as roster members are currently away. ■

Pam McVey



Family History & Local Archive Research Corner

Sue Davis

Recently I have enjoyed helping researchers find more information about their ancestors of the **Kable** family; **Wild** family; and **John Macquarie Antill** and family. It is always interesting doing this research because it is a pleasure to help others but I also learn more about identities who helped form our history in the Wollondilly.

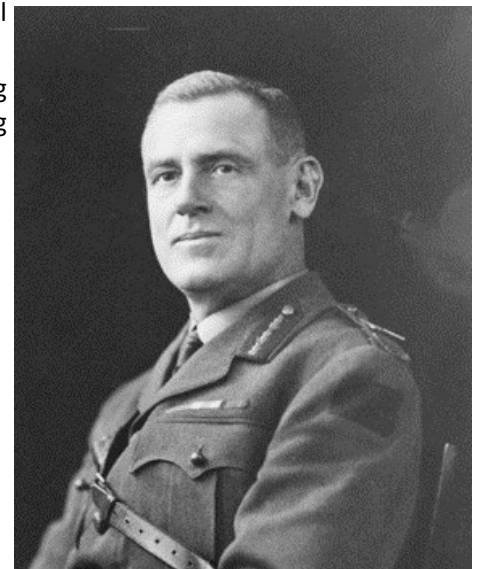
I am delighted to be finally making some more progress with cataloguing of local archives. Many thanks to new member, Peter Meyer, as well as members, Jim and Judy Murdoch, who have been assisting me on a Thursday morning. If anyone else would like to join us on most Thursday mornings then please contact me for more information on tohs1988@bigpond.net.au or phone me on 0414703204.

Monthly Hint for Family History Enthusiasts: Always cross check your information, including that of family members. Sometimes family names are repeated and you need to make sure you are researching the correct one! Accurate birth and

death dates will help.

Happy researching and start getting organised! ■

*John Macquarie
ANTILL:
Born 26 January
1866, Picton and
died 1 March
1937 at Little Bay,
Randwick*





Schoolies Report

Bev Batros

Our Schools' Program gets underway on March 15th with a visit from Mt Annan Christian College. Bookings for the year are quiet although there are a few enquiries.

Three bookings have been taken for Term 3, one from a school in Thirroul, possibly as a result of our Grandparents' Day.

Our School Group volunteers met with Sue Davis this week to update all our forms and Working With Children checks. We reviewed our risk management and evacuation procedures and of course revised what to do in the event of a snake bite! The relevant outcomes of the program were discussed and we revisited best practice in working with young children. And so we are all set to go!



Bus Visits to the Centre

Louisa Singleman

BUS TOURS

We have had three bus tours in this month with one being a last minute affair. It is nice to see a Legacy group come along again. The Country Women's Association from Ingleburn also paid us a visit. Due to Debbie's craft expertise I have sent out some beautiful invitations to fifteen retirement villages in the Hills District so hopefully we will get some bookings.

MARKETING

Thirlmere Steam Festival

To date I have not received any information from the organisers of the Steam Festival even though I have emailed them. Hopefully I shall receive some information as to the

location of our stall. As soon as I know I will let volunteers know too.

Wollondilly Tourist Association Inc. (WTAI)

The WTAI held a meeting at the Heritage Centre on 6th February. It was attended by Judith Hannan, the Wollondilly Mayor. Under the new leadership of Lyn Davey we can look forward to the association promoting the Wollondilly Shire as a top tourist attraction.

Razorback Ridge Winery—End of Harvest Paella Party

To celebrate a successful harvest the Razorback Ridge Winery is holding a party on 25th March Winery open from 11am -4pm. \$42 per head includes entry, lunch and entertainment. Bookings essential—Phone 0408 866 129 ■



Acquisitions Corner

Another busy month, with some interesting items.

From Steve Bracken comes a collection of port bottles in the shape of miners lamps. These commemorate the Colliery Officials Association, United Mine Workers CFMEU and 30 years of Brimstone. There is also an Oakdale mine T-Shirt.

From Pam McVey comes four metal milk jugs which were used at the dairy in Glendiver Road. There are ½ pint, pint, quart and ½ gallon jugs. One has Dairy Farmers Milk Co, while another has Fresh Food & Ice Co on it.

From John Hyland comes a blacksmith made gate hinge, a charcoal iron, methylated spirits iron and an electric iron.

From Julie Bacon comes a Wolfe's Schnapps bottle, a Parker Quink ink bottle and a glycerine bottle.

Our thanks to everybody for their donations.

We've also added copies of some of our early publications, such as the first edition of 'A Short History of The Oaks', 'Traditional Remedies and Advice by The Oaks Historical Society', Les Seibright's book, 'Werri Berri – King of the Burrangrang' and a first edition of 'Women's Voices'.

In the cottage we found that there was a Weston's biscuit tin and a Griffiths Bros. tin that were not included, so these have been added as well. ■



The Remarkable Rileys of Burraborang

The Gundungorra people of the Burraborang Valley were among many local Aboriginal people who were affected by the local frontier violence which culminated in the Appin Massacres of 1816. Although a number of the Burra Burra clan were killed in the conflicts, or transported to other colonies, many survived in their remote valley and re-appeared in historical documents in claims for land.

George Riley [1833-1906] was among these claimants. His Aboriginal name was Dundoar or Dundowra, he married Ellen Clayton [1835-1910] and his country was in Upper Burraborang adjacent to Murphy's Flat. He was among the first Aboriginal people in Australia to enrol to vote, along with his half-brother Solomon Toliman. The two brothers were also celebrated in the local newspapers in 1870 as rescuing young Michael Carlon from the flooded Wollondilly River.

The penetration of traditional Gundungorra lands in the Burraborang Valley began in the 1860s. Edward Lomas Moore obtained title to land which became the Oberon Stock Route and Moore's Colong Station became the largest in the Valley. Aboriginal stockmen involved in mustering Moore's cattle included Billy Russell, George Miranda and his wife Black Bet (Jenny Clay) and Michael Angelo. He was succeeded by his son J.E. Moore who owned Mountain Vale station and also employed Aboriginal stockmen including Peter Sherritt.

In 1843 Archbishop John Bede Polding visited Patrick Carlon in the Burraborang Valley to discuss building a church. In his travels he had observed the negative effects on the Aboriginal population of colonisation and exerted his considerable influence to remedy them by bringing the Aboriginal people into the Catholic Church. He recommended giving them tracts of land on which to support themselves by farming. He appointed Father George Dillon who established schools and supervised the construction of St Paulinus Church of the Guardian Angels in 1872. William Henry Shepard and Eva Cramlin were married there in 1872 and by 1874 all the Aboriginal people in the Valley had been baptised. When Archbishop Vaughan visited in 1874, George Riley's son John read a welcome speech written by Father Dillon and gave the Archbishop the gift of a possum skin cloak to be taken to Rome for the Pope. In this speech he asked for material assistance for Aboriginal farmers to support themselves on land he had selected on their behalf. A group of farmers from Camden gave a herd of Jersey cows. In 1872 Gundungorra men, Billy Russell, George Riley, Sam Hassall and Charles Sherritt made applications for land grants.



John Joseph Riley and family

On the advice of the Catholic Church they were rejected in favour of Aboriginal Reserves. Father Dillon's own plans for a farm for Aboriginal families at St Joseph's Farm went ahead. St Joseph's farm flourished while Dillon was there but gradually ran down after he left to go back to Ireland.

Between 1889 and 1906 several more attempts were made by Aboriginal people for Conditional Purchase leases. Most were converted by the Aboriginal protection Board into Reserves except for one by John Riley on Burnt Flat where he raised eight children with his wife Margaret O'Brien. John E Moore loaned him £30 at 8% interest. On Boxing Day 1900 John Riley held a party on his selection which was attended by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal families in their best party dresses to violin music and singing and good food including a Christmas cake. In 1904 John moved to AR 14937, Gungarlook Farm. His children attended the new Wollondilly Provisional School.



John's daughters, Mary, Bella, Emma, Ethel, Adella and Mabel worked on the Summer Hill property as maids. The loans from J.E Moore were eventually foreclosed by the bank and sold to J.E. Moore and his son Gidley in 1946. It was then resumed for the Warragamba Dam scheme.

"This small bit of Gundungorra country below Beunan Bunung was only ever a minor financial asset to be exploited and traded in the eyes of its white owner", Jim Smith p. 74 "Gungarlook"

Many of the Riley family spent time in Harmony House in Thirlmere. This had been built by Colonel John Hay Goodlet as his residence next to the Queen Victoria Home for Consumptives. Harmony House was used as an Infant's Home between 1907-1912. Sometime after this it was leased to the Rileys as a guest house and run by John Riley's daughters, Emma, Ethel, Della and Mabel. John Riley never gave up trying to get more secure tenure over his land and died in Harmony House in 1929 aged 70.

Most of the descendants of the Rileys did not go far when they had to leave Burraborang Valley and today there are many in the Southern Highlands and Sydney. Some including Dale Chalker and Jay Baumann still live close to the Valley which they loved.— **Doreen Lyon**

There will be a Reunion of the Riley families at the Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum at The Oaks on March 17th 2018. Please Contact Kazan Brown on Email: kazanbrown@gmail.com.

Sources:

Goodall, Heather *Invasion to Embassy* p28-29

Smith, Jim *Gungarlook: the Story of the Aboriginal Riley Family* Ibid p.49

Smith, Jim *The Aboriginal People of Burraborang Valley* p.290 Please note that *Gungarlook* is now out of print and has been re-published in *The Aboriginal People of the Burraborang Valley*

Knitting Socks for Soldiers

Extract taken from Betty Villy's book, Red Poppies and the White Waratah - Heroines of the Great War from Wollondilly p.83-86

There has been in recent years, criticism by some historians that the sock knitting of women at home was of little consequence. Their view has been that the knitters had an easy time while men suffered at the front. Apart from bringing the women closer to combatants, sock knitting was an essential industry, albeit home-based and unpaid. The AIF provided only three pairs to a soldier on enlistment with sporadic issues at later dates. A pair of socks lasted about two weeks in the trenches so the millions of pairs sent from Australia were invaluable.

Those who were critical of women's lack of active participation miss the essence of early 20th century life, where women were seen as home-makers and givers of life. It was an unthinkable concept that a woman be given a gun and sent to fight. Even nurses were kept safely behind the lines until the catastrophe of multiple battle casualties forced military authorities to allow them to work at the casualty clearing stations.

Not all women, especially elderly ones or those with young families, could devote hours each week to activities outside the home at the Red Cross centres.

What else could the widowed Mrs Susan Clarke, who had arrived in Picton some 50 years previously from Armagh, do? She died in 1918 aged 93 with the proud record of having knitted 82 pairs of socks for soldiers. Mrs Clarke had three daughters and no sons or grandsons, the closest male in the forces was her granddaughter's fiancé. However, Mrs Clarke was well-known as her daughter Elizabeth ran a school at Upper Picton from 1892 to 1905 in her home at Hillcrest. Over these years Mrs Clarke was involved in helping at the school and many of the former pupils who enlisted were known to her personally. There were women like Susan Clarke who had no menfolk at war but made contributions regardless. Children as young as five or six struggled with wool and needles along with great-grandmothers clicking away in kitchens or sunny verandahs.

Knitting socks was considered so important that a number of competitions were held with cash prizes donated by other citizens. On one occasion in 1916 Mrs Clarke was the recipient of a five shilling prize. The Red Cross provided wool for those unable to afford it as well as sewing materials. Patterns, not only for socks but for balaclavas or gloves, were

freely available from charities or printed in the women's section of newspapers. Apart from the standard funds, there were a number set up especially for socks. The pattern for Grey Socks was sold for sixpence by the Soldiers' Sock Fund and many Australians made socks for the local branches of Queen Mary's Sock Fund. Millions of pairs were knitted and sent to soldiers overseas. It was such an essential industry that the Defence Department arranged the shipping and allocated space in vessels taking troops and supplies to the front.



Mrs Sidman and her daughters spin raw wool for socks at Camden (courtesy of the Camden Historical Society)



Soldiers in a trench having their feet inspected for Trench Feet

From the early days of the war, demand far outpaced supply of factory produced socks, hence the call to women to hand-knit socks. Before the war all wool was sent to England for processing, then returned here as a finished product. This trade was disrupted by the conflict and the Commonwealth Government undertook all wool marketing. Now raw wool was sent to charity depots and to individuals. An old cottage industry, spinning, took root. Spinning wheels were recovered from hidden corners, dusted off and were soon whirring and clicking. Wood workers built new ones for women to resume this ancient skill. One such craftsman, Mr D. Brunero at Elderslie, built a number of spinning wheels and gave models to Red Cross branches at Camden, The Oaks and Campbelltown.

The main theatre of war for Australian troops was northern France with its brutal winters. The men lived like rats in freezing cold and water-logged trenches resulting in an ailment called trench feet. The man's foot went numb, began to rot and the soldier was disabled. Wearing hand-knitted socks, especially those made from natural wool rich in lanolin, helped prevent this condition. Many a man, after serving his term in the trenches and back at base, was pleased that after having his feet washed and dried, was presented with clean, dry and warm socks.

Socks were not always worn on the feet. In France, when a man needed to crawl in the dark over no-man's-land, he cut the toes off the socks and pulled them over his knees to give extra protection. They were even pulled over the working parts of a rifle to prevent oil freezing during winter. ■

WARM THANKS FOR A WONDERFUL WELCOME

The following message was sent to Noelene Mainwaring....

On behalf of my sisters and myself, I want to thank you and your mum and dad for the warmth of your welcome at The Oaks and for all the trouble you went to, to make the [Burraborang] reunion a success. Here is the best of my photos..... with everyone looking good.

However, as I said, I want to return on another occasion to spend a lot more time having another close look at the museum and to talk to people whose stories I would love to hear....

Could you also forward this message to Trish and thank her for her valuable information and enthusiasm too.

Till not too long! Keith



At last they've closed the Valley mate And now what shall we do?

The water's over Nattai Bridge
The last mail has been run,
And lonely Kiaramba Ridge
Glows in the setting sun.
The dusky old Australian folk
These many years ago
Lost their homes at Pocket Creek
But little did they know
The white folk that had ousted them
(And thereby stand convicted)
In AD 1959 would also be evicted!

So now the white folk too have gone
And kangaroos will romp
In freedom on the luscious grass
Around Gumbeding Swamp,
For game 'twill be a paradise,
But, ah! We can't recall
The native fold a-sleeping there
By old Myanga's wall:
A paradise once more for them,
If they could re-appear,
To hunt the bounding kangaroo
With boomerang and spear!

J W Brown 1973

Point of Interest H in *The Old Hume Highway—History Begins With a Road* book for sale in our shop (\$15) page 29

VICTORIA BRIDGE OVER STONEQUARRY CREEK, PICTON

Completed in 1897, the Victoria Bridge is an early example of an Allan type timber truss bridge. Percy Allan's truss design was third in the five-stage design evolution of NSW timber truss bridges, and was a major improvement over the McDonald trusses which preceded them. Allan trusses were 20% cheaper to build than McDonald trusses, could carry 50% more load and were easier to maintain. Having the tallest timber trestle supporting piers of any timber truss bridge in NSW, the Victoria Bridge has an imposing appearance, and is both technically and aesthetically significant as a result. It has been classified as being State Significant under the NSW Heritage Act. ■



Did you know?

1. The Oaks & Oakdale were named after the she-oak forests which once covered the area.
2. The first white colonists thought that koalas were monkeys—which is how Monkey Creek got its name.
3. Forty horse teams carted 26,018 tons of silver ore through The Oaks from Yerranderie to Camden in the boom years between 1900-1908.
4. Built in 1838, St Matthews church on Old Oaks Road is one of the oldest slab churches in Australia still in use.
5. The Oaks hotel was originally named, The Oaks Sanatorium Family Hotel and had flower gardens, tennis courts and a skating rink.
6. The first commercial apple orchard at Oakdale was owned by Augustus Heise. ■

Reminders, News & Info

WEEKEND ROSTER

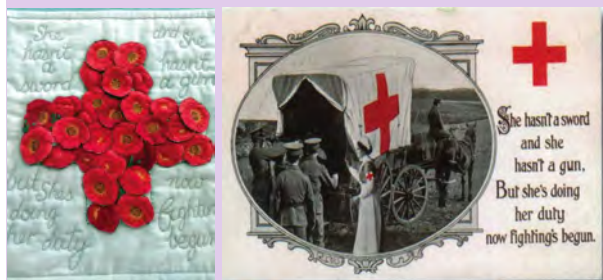
MARCH	
Bev & David	Saturday, 3
Kay & Jim Cuthel	Sunday, 4
WORKING BEE	Saturday, 10
Maria & Betty	Sunday, 11
Doreen & Ben	Saturday, 17
Trish & Kevin	Sunday, 18
Jenny & Pam	Saturday, 24
Sue & Paul	Sunday, 25
Colleen & John	Saturday, 31
Vivian & Bob	Sunday, 1 April

MONTHLY SUPPER ROSTER

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

GUEST SPEAKER

March—Stephen Gard
author of *Once Upon a Hume*



Macarthur Textile Network Re-imagines Her War
Light refreshments will follow the opening of the exhibition by Susan Conroy, Executive Director of the Southern Tablelands Arts. Macarthur Textile Network are creating an exhibition of textiles which re-imagine the exhibition, *Her War* of the women of Wollondilly in the First World War together with their own stories.

BURRAGORANG REUNION

Sunday, 8 April at the heritage centre from 10am



MEMBERS BUS TOUR TO WOLLONGONG

Wednesday, 11 April

Visit to Nan Tien Buddhist Temple near Wollongong, Hill 60 and later lunch near Lake Illawarra—bus leaves centre at 8.30am
Ring Trish or Betty to book OR add your name to sheet on counter

ADDITIONAL RECYCLING BIN



Please do not crush cans or bottles



Please put plastic drink bottles and drink cans in NEW black lidded bin

All proceeds from returning the cans and bottles go towards the running of Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum—Thank you

INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY AT THE HERITAGE CENTRE

Friday, 9 March 2018—From 6pm to 8pm

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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. Upcoming meetings are 2 April & 7 May 2018. 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.

International Womens Day
here at the Centre on
Friday 9 March

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

