

The Oaks Historical Society Inc

Est. May 1979

The Oaks Historical Society Inc.
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Newsletter

May 2019

Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

The Oaks Historical Society turns 40

In April of 1979, Doris Woods, a local identity at The Oaks circulated a flyer suggesting that a local historical society be formed, and asked interested parties to attend a meeting on May 1st at The Oaks Community Pre-school. The call was answered by some forty people, and by the end of the night The Oaks Historical Society was formed, with the following committee:

President—Mert Daley Treasurer – Mrs V Allen
Secretary – Mrs J Haynes Publicity Officer – Mrs D Lyon
Committee – Mrs B Wintle, Mrs E McDonald, Mrs D Woods
& Mr E Gall.

A collection of objects, books and photos started almost immediately, and by the end of 1980 some 120 objects had been donated. Storage was obviously a problem and it was soon realised that some sort of permanent home was needed. Visits to other museums took place along with fund raising activities, and a number of books covering local history were produced.

In 1983, TOHS members commenced the restoration of St Matthews Church with funding from the Heritage Council and the approval of Church of England authorities. The project took two years to complete resulting in the church being restored to its former glory.

Leading up to 1988, Wollondilly Shire Council offered a block of land in Edward Street for a museum site and an application was made for Bicentennial funding. Ultimately this was successful, and with Jim Whyte supervising, the Wollondilly Heritage Centre was built over the next 12 months. On May 28th 1988 our State Member John Fahey officiated at the



opening which included a street parade and packed audience.

Today the Wollondilly Heritage Centre and Museum is home to over 5000 objects, together with a similar number of photos, a large library and family history files. Members have produced publications covering many aspects of local history, places, industries and people. The centre also operates a very

successful hands-on history schools program. A blacksmith shop and undercover machinery storage area is nearing completion and expected to open this year. The centre is

also currently undergoing an extension to the main building courtesy of a grant from the Department of Liquor and Gaming.

It has been a very successful forty years for The Oaks Historical Society, and we are indebted to those who had the foresight to attend that first meeting: Gwyneth and Elwyn Noakes, Shirley and Joe Carlon, Jan and Eddie Gall, Les Murdoch, Doreen and Ben Lyon, Vivian and Bob Allen, Janelle Allen, Brenda Wintle, Elva McDonald, Clarice Barr, Jean Wheeler, Mary Clarke, the Montgomery family, Michael and Mary Caldwell, Zillah Brown, Mert and Coral Daley, R. Nixon, Mary Tunks, Freda Noakes, Rex and Jan Noakes, Colin and Clarice Noakes, Lindsay Brown, Noel and June Hewit, Denny and Jackie Haynes, B. Wilson, Mr McIntyre, Doris Woods and Mr and Mrs Val Moore.



Looking forward, we have a great team of volunteers which includes a few of those original members of 40 years ago to take us into the next phase of our journey. ■

By Allen Seymour

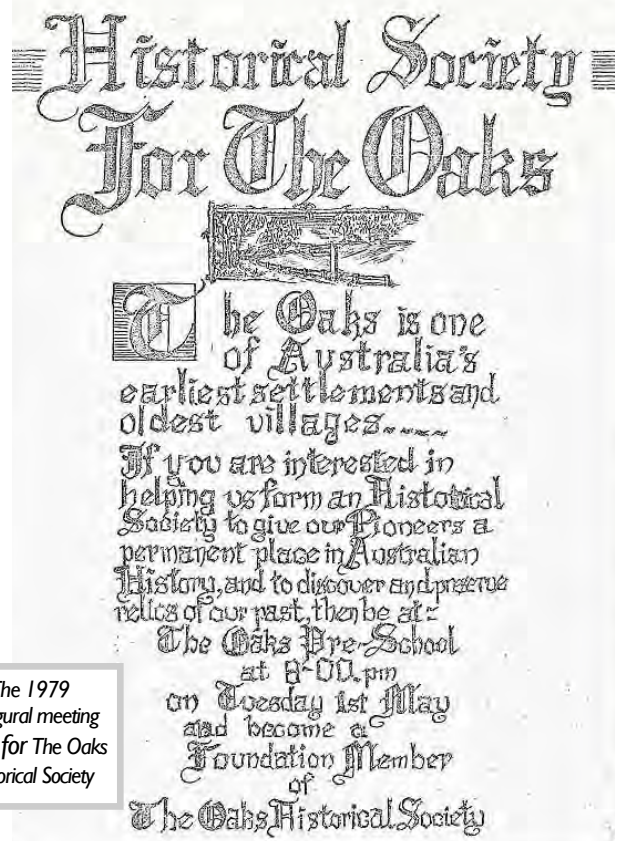


President's Report

Trish Hill

This past year has been busy and very productive. Milestones have included 40 years of The Oaks Historical Society Inc and 30 years of The Wollondilly Heritage Centre. Our dedicated volunteer base give freely of their time to ensure our success with several foundation members from the 1979 inaugural meeting an integral part of our organisation today. Extensions well underway will add another dimension to the museum. The completion of the blacksmith and shed area will focus on the importance of the Blacksmiths in Wollondilly and how they underpinned local horse and wagon transport, farms , agriculture and road building and a precursor to todays auto service centres.

The admin extension will enhance the working environment for our volunteers, visitors and researchers and return valuable space back to exhibitions. The building improvements have now progressed sufficiently for us to visualise the difference they will bring. After a full on weekend at the museum with several researchers and a variety of jobs underway and everyone vying for work space, completion will be welcome. Thanks to our student volunteers Amelia Mangan, Lachlan Brookes, Darcy & Bryce Butler who have been assisting us. This week will see changes to our shop area with the installation of a new counter and stock area. To our Treasurer Debbie Seymour for her vigilance in all money matters, a big thankyou. Thanks to all of our volunteers for your coordinated roles in achievements and it is because of the work you do that we are successful. Our next meeting on Monday, May 6th is our AGM and memberships are due to be renewed at this time. I would like to also express our thanks to Patrons, Luke Johnson and Richard Booth for their support ■



The 1979 Inaugural meeting notice for The Oaks Historical Society



Family History & Local Archive Research Corner

Sue Davis

ANNUAL REPORT: 2018-2019

This past year it has been very exciting to support some family reunions and connect distant relatives as part of our research support as well as providing a venue for the gatherings.

From May, 2018 to April 2019 we have supported 51 formal research enquiries. More of these came via the internet from people who are often living interstate. Researchers have not only been grateful for the information we provide but also the assistance provided by volunteers. We continue to expand our resources in Family History Research through contact with our various researchers with whom we are very happy to exchange information.

During Family History month of August I enjoyed using a variety of family history resources as a journey in finding out more information about one of my ancestors. These were presented at our August meeting to show our members the variety of sources that can be used when researching your family history.

Thank you to volunteers who have assisted over the last year, including Trish Hill and Betty Villy. We have also been fortunate to have Amelia Mangan working with us as part of her Community Service for her Bronze level Duke of Edinburgh award. Amelia has been invaluable in assisting in a variety of museum tasks.

LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION:

Our CD/DVD collection has been properly packaged and catalogued. Thank you Helen Perry for carrying out this task. The Wollondilly Local History Archives continue to be used regularly and have proved vital resources for many in finding out what life was like when their ancestors lived in the area. Thank you to Pam who has continued helping to locate topics of interest in local newspapers. The master file used to catalogue these archives has again been updated. I am very pleased to have extra assistance in cataloguing from Judy Murdoch and Di Smith ■



Acquisitions Report

Allen Seymour

2018 saw us add 214 items to the collection, and so far this year we have added another 45. While most were newly donated items, there were also a number of existing items that had never been processed. We now have a total of 4,803 items listed in Mosaic (not including de-accessioned items).

I am still auditing and checking the collection, and locating items that do not have a photo. I have also been looking closely at the photographs that are in Mosaic. Some are on the photo register, but are too large to be stored in the office. These I have been photographing so we now have a

digital copy. Others that don't have photo register numbers have been scanned so that they can eventually be added to the register. This includes the Littlewood and Briggs collections, and there are over 800 already scanned from the Briggs collection, with a number of albums to go.

Work is progressing on identifying and gathering together items for the new blacksmith shop, and a number of items have already been moved there. We also need a review of store 3 as a number of items there need to be de-accessed from the collection ■



Marketing & Bus Visits

Louisa Singleman

April Bus Tours

We had five bus tours visit our museum during the month of April. Legacy from Peshurst enjoyed a day out at our museum and we also had groups from Legacy Peshurst, Glenmore Park Anglican Church, Blacktown Workers Travel Group, Baptist Care and Botany Bay Computer Pals. I am sure they all enjoyed their day. Thank you once again to all our volunteers who host these tours.

Illuminate Picton—Saturday 18th May 12 noon—9pm

Again we are having a stall at this most successful event which attracts thousands of people to the Wollondilly Shire. If you can spare an hour or two please call me on 0408 669 287 or leave a message on 4680 8358

Bus Tours Annual Report May 2018 – April 2019

Over the past twelve months the Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum had 45 bus tours bringing a total of 914 visitors. During 2018 May bus tours numbered 4 with a total of 57 visitors, June 7 bus tours bringing 119 visitors, July 5 bus tours with 86 visitors, August 5 bus tours with 95 guests, September 4 bus tours with 137 visitors, October 5 bus tours with 88 visitors and November had 4 bus tours with 85 visitors.

2019 started off with February having 4 bus tours, March 3 bus tours with 70 visitors and finally April with 4 bus tours and 90 visitors.

As a comparison previous bus tours numbered, 2012-2013 1650 visitors, 2013 -2014 1554 visitors 2014 – 2015 1500 visitors and these past 12 months 914. May I suggest that a committee be formed to promote the museum, increase the number of bus tours and encourage more weekend visitors.

I wish to thank all our volunteers who offer their time so freely to host our visitors at the museum and Debbie Seymour for making some at-

tractive brochures to send out to potential visitors.

Marketing Annual Report May 2018 - April 2019

The Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum had two stalls during this year one being the IlluminARTE Festival in Picton and the Thirlmere Steam Festival. At both these festivals we were able to promote the museum and encourage visitors and locals to visit our interesting and informative museum and sell some of our informative publications.

It is amazing that many locals have not visited the museum and are unaware of its existence. I hope we can remedy this by further marketing and advertising during the next twelve months.

A big thank you to those helped man our stall at the IlluminARTE festival in 2018. It was a long day but worth the effort and especially to Betty Villy who helped all day at the Thirlmere Steam Festival and Allen Seymour for helping to erect the gazebo.

Over the past 12 months the WTAI (Wollondilly Tourist Association Inc) was resurrected by Lyn Davey and monthly meetings were held where interested tourist operators attended meetings at either Picton Bowling Club or Antill Golf Club. Doreen & Ben Lyon and I were regular attendees at these meetings. Tourism After 5 events were held at Antill Golf Club, Wollondilly Tourist Information Centre & Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum, two of which were catered for by the Oaks Historical Society.

In conjunction with the Picton Rotary Club and Wollondilly Arts Group a very successful Open Garden Day was held last October.

Unfortunately, due to various issues all three meetings this year have been cancelled. The next meeting of WTAI is scheduled for Wednesday 24th April so hopefully issues can be resolved ■

HAPPY MOTHERS DAY



From Camden News 15th May 1913

Last Sunday was observed as 'Mother's Day' in the churches, and white flowers were worn by church-goers. 'Your mother and mine' were the themes in the pulpit all the world over, and many touching references to mothers' love, care, influence and guidance were made. Someone truly said, 'The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.' A mother has the moulding of her children and to a large extent on her depends their future conduct in life. A nation of good mothers is bound to have a nation of good citizen's and much misery and suffering would thus be avoided. A Mother's Day, first celebrated 300 years ago, once a year is an excellent idea and tends to strengthen mothers to do their part to their children, and encourage the young people to love and honor their mothers who were their first friends on earth and comforters.



And does anyone remember when we sent telegrams.....

MOTHERS' DAY GREETING TELEGRAMS - Advice has been received from the Postmaster General's Department that the Mothers' Day telegram forms will be available again this year from 8th to 21st May, inclusive. An entirely new design has been introduced, the form and envelope being brightly coloured and in keeping with the spirit of the occasion. No extra charge is made for the use of the facility. Message's may be lodged at any Post Office. Write your message on the ordinary telegram form procurable on the writing slopes at the Post Office and place the word 'Greeting' immediately in front of the address. Telephone subscribers may call their local exchange and ask for 'Telegrams,' intimating that it is desired to forward their telegrams as Mothers' Day Greeting messages.

Camden News 4th May 1939

MOTHER'S DAY.

'DEDICATED TO OUR AUSTRALIAN MOTHERS'

Keep a bright heart Mother,
We honour your brave son,
He answered the Empire's call,
To claim a Victory won.

Keep the home fires burning,
This is what he would say,
Write me cheery letters Mum,
While I'm far away.

Keep the chin right up Mum,
A cheery word from you
Will brighten the road ahead
And help to see me through,

Don't mention anything of ships.
Be careful what you say,
Just give me news of friends and home,
To cheer me on my way.

The streak of honour I inherit,
May come from your generation,
Be proud its in my blood Mum,
This is what holds our Nation.

Then when the war is over,
And Victory is our gain,
I'd walk right home from here Mum,
To see you smile again.

M. M. English.
Camden News 11th May 1944



FROM A POISONER'S POINT OF VIEW

As found in the Elementary Text Book of Cooking & Laundry Etc

Alongside my Common Sense Cookery Book purchased just a few days after my marriage, there is a small booklet called **Elementary Text Book of Cookery, Laundry and Home Management (revised)** probably from a text book from pre WW2.

We had eaten hamburgers and meat pies the first couple of days and I thought I had best try to remember something from the cooking class I was obliged to do first year in High School. I doubt I ever read it, unless we were referred to it. I lived with my grandmother and what she didn't know about the subject within that text book, published by the NSW Cookery Teachers' Association (they knew where to put an apostrophe as well you may note) wasn't worth knowing.

It still resides amongst my recipe books and as it's a Sunday today when I was searching through the books, I meandered through it while eating my porridge. It's a bit of a shock actually, as I thought that 20th century women were dying of things like childbirth, but when I saw the list of dangerous substances that were blithely listed as everyday cleaning chemicals, I blanched.

Common domestic solvents were ammonia, petrol and washing-soda, used to dissolve grease and remove dirt. Ammonia and borax to wash your woollens in; (the European Chemicals Agency and the US Food and Drug Administration have banned borax as a food additive, putting the compound on the list of 'substances of very high concern.' In a single exception, caviar is still preserved by borax) I guess it was OK to breathe it in or ingest through your skin, there is no mention in this book of recommending wearing gloves while using any of these cleaning compounds.

Floor cream: make your own of course, ingredients - beeswax, turpentine and ammonia – a list of common domestic solvents were water, soap, ammonia, petrol, washing soda and patent cleansers, these were made of the same ingredients saving you the trouble of mixing them yourself.

Then I did some research and found that in the Victorian era, late 1800s I discovered the following ;(<https://www.health24>)

1. Bread

While there is still some debate about the health aspects of bread, the actual safety of bread was a genuine concern in the Victorian era. In those days they had "adulterated" bread– with added substances to bulk it up. As more and more people moved to the cities, the demand for fresh bread grew, as did the need for ingredients. Victorian manufacturers incorporated cheaper ingredients to add weight and bulk, including Plaster of Paris, chalk or alum, an aluminium-based compound which made bread denser.



2. Milk

Bread wasn't the only essential to be tweaked– a substance called boracic acid was added to milk for purification. It was believed that it took away the sour taste of spoiled milk (in those days pasteurisation and fridges had not yet been invented). Boracic acid is far from harmless, causing nausea, vomiting and stomach cramps. Because there



was no pasteurisation, bovine tuberculosis flourished in milk and affected humans. This would affect internal organs and the spine and was believed to have killed almost half a million Victorian children.

3. Household cleaning items

While many modern cleaning items contain chemicals that can aggravate sinusitis and allergies, we can be grateful that they don't contain phenol, (I'm sure my grandmother used phenyl as a disinfectant) better known as carbolic acid. The discovery of microbes made the Victorians obsessed with cleaning. Carbolic acid was most commonly used and was often confused with household products, since the packaging all looked the same. Imagine mistaking a box of caustic soda for salt! This led to the 1902 Pharmacy Act that made it illegal for bottles containing chemicals to look similar to those containing other liquids and the word "Poison" was included in labelling.

4. Children's toys and furniture

Brightly coloured children's toys and furniture were often painted with lead-based paint. This was poisonous when children put them in their mouths. What makes it even worse is that lead paint has a sweet taste. (Small children put EVERYTHING into their mouth to chew or suck...)

One of the main reasons why poisoning became such a common means of murder in the Victorian era was, quite simply, ease of access. Cyanide was everywhere, in everything from paints to daguerreotypes to wallpaper. As a poison, its effects were unmistakable, including unconsciousness, convulsions, nausea, cardiac arrest and death, often in a matter of seconds. Its speed, from a poisoner's point of view, was a plus, but its distinctive effects were easily recognisable and hard to pass off as anything but murder. (<https://en.wikipedia.org>)

Strychnine, meanwhile, was broadly used as a form of pest control in big cities. In humans, it caused frothing at the mouth and muscle spasms which increased in intensity until the victim died from asphyxiation due to paralysis of the neural pathways. Although a fairly unsubtle way to kill someone, strychnine was a popular poison for some years, favoured by murderers. Despite the popularity of Cyanide and Strychnine, Arsenic was nonetheless the chief poison of the Victorian era. Readily available in a staggering array of forms from flypaper to cosmetics, it was comparatively difficult to detect. A tasteless, odourless compound, its effects could often be written off as food poisoning, making foul play harder to trace. Its popularity led to the Arsenic Act of 1851, which enforced tighter restrictions on its sale and required most arsenic to be coloured indigo to make it harder to disguise. Measures like this, as well as development in the fields of toxicology and pathology, marked the beginning of a decline in the poisoner's free-for-all of the early 19th century. With poisons becoming more easily traceable and mass media broadcasting their effects more widely, old favourites such as cyanide, strychnine and arsenic gradually became less commonly used.



The AUSTRALIANA PIONEER VILLAGE

Wilberforce

The other week members of our society enjoyed a pleasant day at the village. It was built on the site of the town of Wilberforce, one of the five Macquarie towns. Prior to this it had been a thriving farming settlement vital in supplying food to the citizens of early Sydney. Its 28 acres is managed by the Friends of Australiana Village and is entirely run by volunteers.

Greentree Street was the main street and lined with all the types of buildings one would expect in a village or small town. All were original and were moved to this site from various places in the Hawkesbury district.. There was Riverstone General Store, now an antique and curios shop; nearby is the Oxboro Inn, now selling lunches and drinks of a more harmless nature. There was the Riverstone Police Station, a saddler's shop, wagon sheds, a blacksmith's shop, North Sackville Post Office, The Bee House, a tiny weatherboard cubby house that once sold honey on Windsor Road, a church and shearing sheds.

The blacksmith's shop was a hit especially for Allen and Kevin, who mulled over what we had in store and what was needed to fit out our own shop. The smith worked at the back near the furnace which was heated by pumping the leather bellows. It was deep and dark, equipment and bits and pieces hanging off the walls or on the floor. On our must-have list is a video of a smith working. The village had engaged local smith, Wayne Wagstaff, to make a medieval small garden fork on a video presentation.

A number of cottages stood between the commercial buildings All were small, most with only two rooms as against our slab cottage which has the one room. Case cottage, built late 19th century, was of sawn ironbark timber in the drop side style. Once a month the dividing wall was removed and the room was a dance hall for the locals. We did not see the earliest cottage as it was not open. It stands opposite the village and was built from ironbark timber in 1811 by Thomas Rose. The family arrived in 1793 and were the first free settlers. Not only was the village authentic but this was carried to the backyards. There were vegetable gardens, fowl runs, cow byres and even in several the old dunny nestling among weeds and overgrown shrubs.

We had a great day, relaxed and friendly. Our next visit will be to a state-of-the-art dairy and that should be a revelation to those who remembered the old hand-milking on freezing mornings.

Betty Villy



FROM A POISONERS POINT OF VIEW *continued*

The text covers all types of heating, lighting, cooking stoves, from open fires through oil stoves to electric. It has some incredible methods such as bran water for your laundry instead of starch. Not of much use today when I hear women boast of never touching an iron since the 1990s ... and finally, the most illuminating paragraph.

Daily Requirements: The following foods should be on the menu every day:

Milk and milk products; Meats one serve, eggs, fruits, two or more servings, vegetables two or more servings besides potato, wholemeal or brown bread, wholemeal cereals: oatmeal, rolled oats and wheatmeal porridge. And 6-8 glasses of water daily.

White bread is NOT mentioned, yet white bread is extremely popular and consumed by a huge part of the peoples of the

planet. I have been astonished to find in many countries, ie France, Turkey (200kgs per capita!), Serbia the Baltic countries, Vietnam, USA (maybe not astonished) UK – apparently white bread has always been a status symbol and the myth continues and white bread rules the world.

BUT! the page that stopped me completely was p29 **To clean and truss a fowl**—Oh! How I remember my grandmother leaning over the concrete tubs in the laundry with water boiled and dipped out of the copper... hot wet feathers, the squelch as she drew out the “lights” was that what she called the innards ... got to stop there.

Hope you enjoyed wandering back down the century to the way our grandmothers and mothers lived and suffered as housewives, and how very easy we have it today ■

Pauline Downing 2019



Reminders, News & Info

WEEKEND ROSTER

MAY

Pacita & John	Saturday, 4
Marlane & Cheryl	Sunday, 5
Pam & Louisa	Saturday, 11
Doreen & Ben	Sunday, 12
Laurette & Phil	Saturday, 18
Debbie & Allen	Sunday, 19
Sue & Helen (Working Bee)	Saturday, 25
Maria & Betty	Sunday, 26

MONTHLY SUPPER ROSTER

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

MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE DUE NOW

FOR 2019-20

\$10 - SINGLE

\$18—FAMILY

Membership includes newsletters emailed free.

FOR HARD COPY POSTAGE OF NEWSLETTER PLEASE INCLUDE AN ADDITIONAL \$10.

Bank details are available on request for direct credit of funds.

REDUNDANT SHOP ITEMS (FREE)

Shop Counter-Glass/Timber
Table —Timber & Steel
Contact: Trish 0432 689034

MAY MEETING

AGM

Date: 6th – Time: 7.00pm

Guest speaker—Fireside Chat with Kevin Wintle



Topic— early life in Burraborang

Truckies Re-Union

from 10am

Saturday 11th May 2019



The Oaks Historical Society Inc.
PO Box 6016
43 Edwards Street
The Oaks 2570 NSW

\$3 entry fee
Enquiries to Ian Welsh
0403 823934
OR, Trish 0432 689 034

FAMILY DAY FOR ALL
drinks and sausage
sandwiches, tea and
coffee available

Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

Funds raised will aid The Oaks Historical Society Inc. building fund

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 6th May 2019(our AGM) and Monday 3rd June 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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P O Box 6016 The Oaks NSW 2570

