

# The Oaks Historical Society Inc

Est. May 1979

The Oaks Historical Society Inc.  
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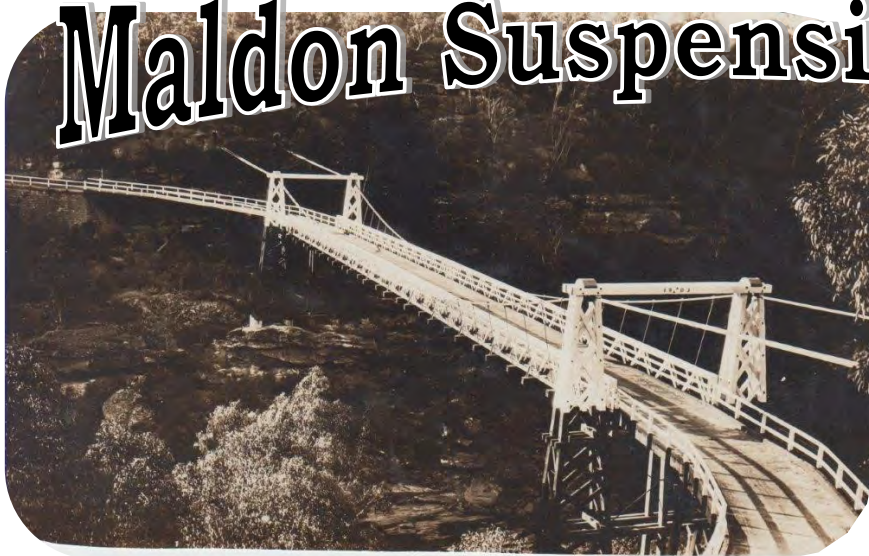


## Newsletter

OCTOBER 2016

### Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

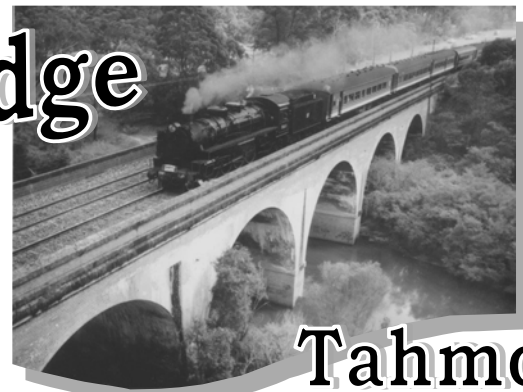
# Maldon Suspension Bridge



Recent arson damage to the bridge (2016)

**March 18, 1903:** the official opening of the Maldon Suspension Bridge by Hon E W O'Sullivan. The ceremony was attended by over 1,000 people, many from outlying centres. The weather was warm and the minister and party were late in arriving and free beer was available to all, so some *"disgraceful scenes were witnessed"*. —*Peeps at Picton's Past*. The bridge was designed by DeBurgh with unique engineering qualities and constructed by the Dept of Works.

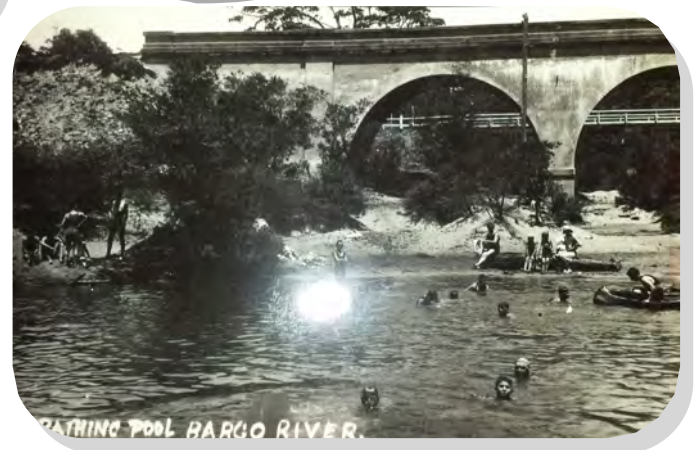
# Bargo River Bridge



## Tahmoor



Image (left) by the editor: Bargo River after the floods in June.



Photographs (from our collection) provided by Frank Baker of Tahmoor. Frank exhibited his vast collection at the 100th anniversary of the naming of Tahmoor recently.

# Family History & Local Archive Research



**Sue Davis**

The 2016 NSW & ACT Annual Family History Society Conference was held at Camden Civic Centre from the 9-11 September. Our centre had a stall along with many other exhibitors. Friday was a Fair Day and open to the public. We were kept busy all day with sales and interested folk wanting to chat about our area. Workshops were held to give ideas for where to find Family History information for those beginning their research journey.

Saturday and Sunday was the conference proper and only open to prepaid attendees. The John Vincent Crowe Memorial Address was given by Emeritus Professor Alan Atkinson. Many of us will remember Professor Atkinson for his book on the history of Camden.

Heather Garnsey, from the Society of Genealogists (SAG), gave an entertaining speech on "*Family Papers and Family Stories – the Hidden Gems of the SAG*". I am sure many people will be considering the SAG as another possible resource for research now!

Other speakers included Bruce Carter, State Library NSW; Nick Brodie, Author of KIN; Gail Davis, NSW State Records; Andrew Gildea, Finders Keepers; Gillian Kelly, Australian Society of Lacemakers of Calais; and Jody Taylor of Ancestry. All the speakers were very interesting but one of the great resources of any conference is the attendees and the networking that can take place. I met a lady from Dubbo who might be able to help me with information about my grandmother's family so we have exchanged contact details.

Over the three days attendees purchased over \$1,200 worth of items from our stall. Contacts were made and pledges to come and visit our museum were noted. A successful weekend for all! Congratulations to Camden & Area Family History Group and Picton Family History Group for their organisation. The 2017 conference will be held in Orange and looks like being another exciting event. ■

## Acquisitions Corner



**Allen Seymour**

The Clutha Cup reunion is generating new items for us, with the shield for the Best & Fairest Player in the cup, as well as a Clutha Golf Umbrella. Also in the mining field is a first aid box from Brimstone, which has been added to the Mines and Men display. In the furniture line we have a small writing slope form Pauline Downing and a primary school chair. Other items include a plastic shoulder apron used by hairdressers, a chamber pot, a KLG spark plug tin and a Bushell's coffee and chicory tin.

An interesting item which is in store 3 is a John Deere single row planter. Not sure how long this has been there but it's now in the system. Another unique item that has been around for a long time but hadn't made its way into the system is the sheep's foot roller. This has been made from a log, with the surface cut into pyramids and a steel spike driven into each pyramid. A truly remarkable piece of work as it's at least six foot long! Unfortunately we don't have any history recorded for either of these objects, so if anyone knows anything about them, please contact me. ... ■

The Camden News includes reports from many of the outlying areas, and we'll try and include some of them from time-to-time. Courtesy of Trove from the Camden News of Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> April, 1897. From their Burragorang correspondent—unnamed.

### **BURRAGORANG**

In Cox's River the drought has clutched the farmer's throat. His paddocks are pasture less, his stock famishing, his crops almost worthless. Of all the cultivated areas in this end of the valley, Messers Jas Smith and George Pearce alone have the promise of a decent yield of corn.

On the Wollondilly, the prospect is better. Heavy rains at the beginning of the month revived the corn and renewed the pastures, and the crops on the farms of Messrs Dunn, J. Fitzpatrick, Maxwell, R. Shoebridge and Pippen Bros, promise a fair average yield. Higher up on the river, in Upper Burragorang, the aspect is bad and the prospect awful. The corn crops are destroyed and farmers are feeding their cattle with the faded stalks. The grazing lands are destitute of grass, and

River Oaks are being felled and Kurrajongs topped for the starving stock, and water is almost as scarce as grass, the Wollondilly and Nattai Rivers are a chain of isolated water-holes, the very sources of supply seem to have surrendered to the demands of exhausted nature. The farmers and selectors are in hard case. Winter will complete the sum of their calamity. Probable not a dozen head of horned stock will survive the cold months. In exigencies such as this, where nature with-holds her bounty, where they who sow do not reap, and human effort is powerless to avert disaster, something should be done to mitigate the trouble. It is not suggested that the hat should be sent round, that is not the way to meet an emergency. The official mind should set itself to work to devise legitimate means for the assistance of any whose position may have been imperilled by the drought. In another colony where brainy men recognise the value of settlement, it is the custom, when roads are made, to let the work in small contracts to the resident settlers, who do it as well and as cheaply as a contractor, and with more profit to themselves, for they are on the spot, ..... *Continued*

# President's Report

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**Trish Hill**

This month we welcomed Luke Johnson in his role as our new patron when he made a visit to the museum. This took place last Thursday and coincided with a school group visit. Luke was able to see the school's 'hands on history' program in operation as well as taking a guided tour through the museum and a look behind the scenes.

In recent weeks we have seen the passing of Doris Woods and Mel Catt, both of whom have been a part of The Oaks Historical Society team from our beginning in 1979 contributing their knowledge in so many ways. Our sincere condolences go out to their families.

Through Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences we have secured a metal conservation workshop which is planned for March/April 2017. The workshop which will be conducted on a weekday can have up to 20 attendees.

On Friday we received and installed our new sound system.



With cordless microphones and dual extension speakers, it looks great and should serve us well into the future. (see photo)

Finally a reminder for the Clutha Cup Reunion on Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> October from 10.00am, a family day for anyone involved in the coal industry football

matches, golf and first aid competitions of the 1970s. Displays include memorabilia and team photographs. Drinks and sausage sandwiches—tea and coffee available. ■

# Schoolies Corner

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**Bev Batros**

It was a new experience for our volunteers this month when we were visited by a special education group from Picton High School. The students ranged from Year 7 to 12. Despite the fact that we normally work with much younger pupils our volunteers were delighted with the interest and enthusiasm of the older ones. One pupil even lay down on the floor in the cottage to see where the kerosene went in the old fridge! Some volunteers even decided older ones were much easier. A visit from another special education group from Kingswood High School later in the year will no doubt help us decide if this is a direction we would like to go in next year.

Here are some more of our interesting answers given in the program. In the school room a white ceramic ink well is

thought to be a bell, a knob, a sharpener, a whistle, a stamp, a paint pot or a pencil holder. In today's world many of these make a great deal of sense. One of our favourites is that an old wooden blackboard compass used to draw circles on the board is a chalk squirter or chalk cleaner or even tongs.

Our team continues to have a dedicated and reliable backbone of volunteers who are our regulars turning up almost every week. They are Julie Littler, Pam McVey, Shirley Carlon, Eileen O'Brien, John Hanger, Trevor Ditton, Glenis Pride, Pam Stephenson, John Mainwaring and Jacquie Finley. Their continued commitment and enthusiasm makes the Schools Program the success it is. ■

# Bus Visits & Marketing Report

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**Louisa Singleman**

## September Bus Tours

Spring is in the air and all our volunteers have a spring in their step hosting the September bus tours.

At the beginning of the month we had a men's group who were looked after by Vivian and Bob and Maureen and Jim. We had groups from Mortdale, Carrington Care and Warrigal Care from the Illawarra area.

The last week of September has also been quite busy with the Mayflower group visiting us again followed by Cabravale Seniors and Belrose Community Care. Thanks to all our volunteers who helped out during the month. Your assistance is invaluable.

If you would to be a volunteer to help in the kitchen and serve morning tea to our bus groups please contact Louisa on 4680 8358 or email me on [lsingleman@bigpond.net.au](mailto:lsingleman@bigpond.net.au). ■



# Vale Doris Woods

1917— September 2016

Doris was almost 100 years old when she passed away this month in her nursing home in Queensland. Her daughter Geraldine was with her and phoned to let me know of her funeral last Tuesday in Brisbane. Doris was a significant

part of the beginnings of The Oaks Historical Society which she initiated at a public meeting in The Oaks in 1979. She had a passion for history and working with communities with endless enthusiasm and energy.

Doris researched and wrote our first little book on The Oaks before persuading Sonja den Hertog that it would be a good idea to study Applied Local History by correspondence. Sonja went on to do that with her usual competence and wrote many of our first local history books, with encouragement from Doris.

Doris was married to Kynnersley F.C. Woods, Principal of Fairbridge Boys Home, Molong, from 1939-1967. She worked with him as a cottage mother. They married and came to The Oaks when he retired and lived in Rose Cottage on Montpelier Drive

which they restored into a delightful home full of books. Kynnersley died in April 1977 and was buried in St. Matthew's Church cemetery. Doris sold the property and left The Oaks to return to her native Queensland.

She was the daughter of William Villiers Brown (1843 – 29 April 1915), a member of the Queensland Legislative Assembly (1885-1893 ).

Doris served in the A.C.F. during the Second World War as a wireless operator and was also in the Land Army. She had two brothers, one of whom was killed in that war and the other, Vill, who became a doctor. After the war Doris became aware of the plight of injured soldiers who returned home but had no families to support them. She and her mother opened the first Care Home in their own house and set up a series of similar homes in Queensland.

Doris and Kynnersley became some of our first friends in The Oaks when we emigrated in 1973 and were helpful in our introduction to Australia. She was working as Occupational Therapist at Carrington Hospital. The above photo was taken at a Christmas dinner at our place in Belimbla Park about 1978.

- Doreen Lyon

## DIANA WARE

An Australian story ....



Photos by  
Robyn Gill

Recently we were given some interesting pottery by a member, Lyn Greenwood. It is interesting because it was made in Marrickville at 122-126 Marrickville Road. The Diana Pottery Pty Ltd company, from 1941 to 1966, was the most important Australian ceramics manufacturer during this period.

Established during World War II, the Diana Pottery produced wares to assist the war effort, including cups and mugs for Navy and munitions canteens, along with teapots and milk jugs. At the cessation of WWII, the pottery diversified and commercialised its output to include a large variety of slip cast vases in many colours, shapes and sizes, book ends, animal figures, table ware, utility and kitchen ware. During the life of the pottery, over 200 different shapes were produced. By the early 1950s the company had more than 70 employees and were producing a large range of hand painted articles which included *Waltzing Matilda* musical mugs and jugs and produced bright *gumnut* pots with pale green and brown glazes. In the 1960s Diana diversified their range further into decorated oven and kitchen ware, hand painted with maple, poinsettia, cornflower, blackberry, wattle and flannel flower designs.

During this period Diana Pottery made a variety of slip cast vases that were glazed in bright colours, or sprayed with a cream glaze creating a speckled texture. These were marketed under the name *Hollywood*. There was a burgeoning of Australian pottery in the 1960s and 70s. The most important manufacturer from this period was Diana. Diana Pottery marks include hand signed *Diana Australia*; an impressed *Diana* enclosed in a circle; *Diana Australia* with an imprint of the *Huntress* and stickers reading *Diana* label. Thank you Lyn. ...**Doreen Lyon**

Source: [www.carters.com.au/](http://www.carters.com.au/)

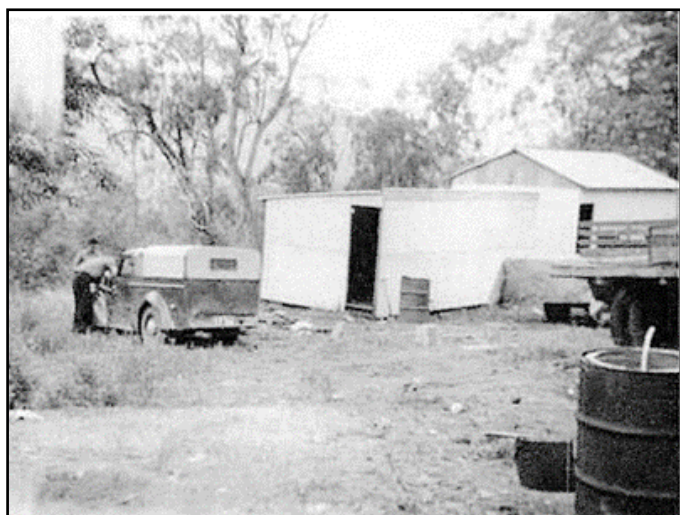
# Glen Davis to the Burraborang Valley 1952

By Roy Kearsley William Musgrave—Memories—September 2012

In November 1952 Glen Davis closed down and we and other families from the Glen had obtained work in the coal mines at Nattai in the Burraborang Valley, NSW. There was no accommodation; we had to provide our own. In those days you could get away with things that would be impossible today.

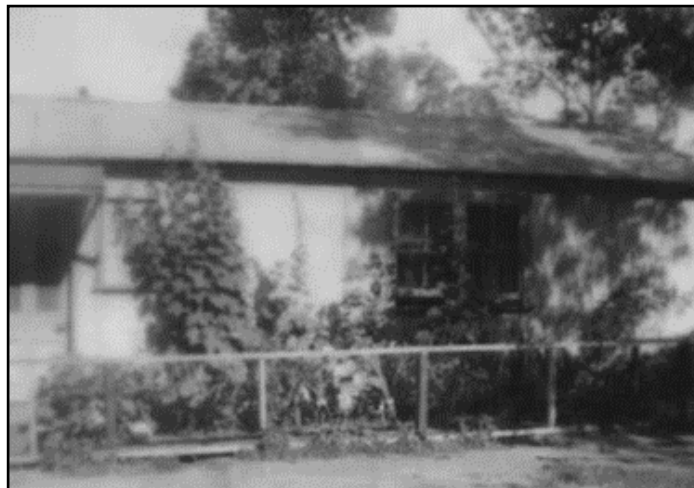
Some of us got together to sort out somewhere to live. Stan Grimshaw (my stepfather), Reg Kupke, Archie and Kevin Percival, Butt Barton and I, became the advance party. Harry Madeley and (his now, bride) Wilma Millar arrived before us and lived in a tent, before securing accommodation all-ready built.

Another was "Aub" Phillips and his son Bert (Bully), but they built away from us not for any particular reason, but as it was "Crown Land" (government owned) you could build where you liked. We secured our jobs at the mine and camped out, decided to build Percival's house first, "house" being a 24 x 12 foot shed, when that was waterproof, we all camped in that and built the next one and so on. It took some-time as we had to work as well.



Percy's house in front, mum and Stan's house behind. Kevin and I at the ute.

Mum and Stan had purchased the house at Newnes that we had previously lived in whilst he was a pipeline patrolman (1945-1952). They demolished it and used what we needed to build at Nattai, which meant several trips back to Newnes for materials, about 150 miles, in a 1948 model Bedford thirty hundred weight truck, (this took most of the day each way). As the accommodation became available the families moved in, it was



Mum's house at Nattai (Burraborang Valley) in later years. Stan built this with the materials taken from the Newnes house.

all a bit basic for a while, for instance, Mum had to cook outside on an open fire for some time.

Then we finally got her stove. We all ended up pretty comfortable after a while. Of course this sort of thing was not new to us, as we had done exactly the same thing in 1941 when we arrived at Glen Davis to start from scratch.

## **An after-thought....**

As I had lived in the Blue Mountains most of my life, moving from Glen Davis to Nattai, was certainly a revelation. When we got down to Penrith and further onto Camden, my eyes properly popped. I would not remember ever seeing *flat* ground before! I could see for miles! (I was nineteen).

**Story from Julie-Ann Warwick (daughter of author) ■**

## **BURRABORANG** *Camden News article continued*

..... and if such assistance is recognised as a public duty in a land where the seasons are regular, the soil good, water abundant and drought unknown, how much more necessary is it that there should be the same public recognition – here where a series of bad seasons may land the most industrious in financial ruin.

In Burraborang the present road accommodation is a disgrace to the colony. Last year much was expended in cutting a toy road from the Valley to Wentworth, which may or may not be of public service, but in the Valley itself, with the exception of the small portion from the foot of the mount to Lacey's

Crossing, the so-called roads are mere dray tracks, bad in Upper Burraborang, but worse in Cox's River, where the scarcely visible wheel-marks wind in and out of the rough river bed. A Government which kept a survey camp in the Valley for months for no apparent good, can surely afford to undertake the construction of permanent roads. Let the work which ought to have been done a generation back be taken in hand at once, and the contracts given to the man of the valley, for the river flats are deserving of public expenditure, and the Burraborangers have waited long years for their rights, with a patience unparalleled in any British community. Meanwhile Picton swallows huge slices of the public cake, and clamours for more. Greedy Picton! Needy Burraborang!

# Vale Mel Catt



Pat and Mel Catt met while working at one of the Burragorang Valley guesthouses. Mel entertained guests with his singing and playing guitar, concertina and mouth organ at the dances. They were married in the Methodist Church in Camden.

When it was time to leave the valley before the flooding of Burragorang, Mel transported their house in sections on the back of his truck and reassembled the building at the 'top of the mountain' now Nattai, where they have lived for 60 years.

Pat and Mel have three children and six grandchildren.



*We appreciate your expressions of sympathy and thank you for your support and presence here today.*

Following the service you are welcome to join us at Oakdale Workers Club Burragorang Road, Oakdale.

Celebrating the Life of  
*Melville Kenneth Catt*  
"Mel"



8th August 1923 - 13th September 2016  
Aged 93 years

19th September 2016  
Cawdor Uniting Church

## TRIBUTE (FROM MEL'S ORDER OF SERVICE)

*"There were hundreds of tough pioneering families like the Catts and the Shoebridges who took hardships in their stride and built this country into what it is today. Do not praise our politicians, rich industrialists or our sheep and cattle barons for what they have done until we firstly look back to the little people, the forgotten people, the poor unnoticed people who gave the best part of their lives under adverse conditions to establish the foundations of this country on which it now firmly stands.*

*Let us build skyscrapers of success on the solid foundations that they, through their sacrifice and toil, have laid for us. We must not throw away our opportunities that the sweat and blood of our ancestors have created for us, and those who are to come after us."*

This was a tribute taken from *Rabbit Hot, Rabbit Cold* by Owen W Pearce (Mel's cousin) written for the Catt and Shoebridge families.

## It's a small world...

While lunching at Raymond Terrace on the return journey from Grafton last month I ran in to TOHS member Ian Welsh and his daughter.

They were lunching after cruising in Ian's brand new Mustang that he acquired the week before. Ian visits Wollondilly regularly so we look forward to seeing him at one of our meetings, possibly in his mustang. Ed.



# Volunteer Weekend Roster

OCTOBER 2016	
Sat, 1st	Ben & Doreen
Sunday, 2nd	Ray & Robyn
Monday, 3rd	Bob & Vivian (Pub Hol.)
<b>Saturday, 8th</b>	<b>WORKING BEE</b>
Sunday, 9th	Trish & Kevin
<b>Saturday, 15th</b>	<b>Pacita &amp; Kathy</b>
Sunday, 16th	Sue & Paul
<b>Saturday, 22nd</b>	<b>Colleen &amp; June</b>
Sunday, 23rd	Maria & Betty
<b>Saturday, 29th</b>	<b>Phil &amp; Laurette</b>
Sunday, 30th	Allen & Debbie

## GUEST SPEAKERS

OCTOBER 3—Marlane Fairfax on Tahmoor's naming centenary

NOVEMBER—Ray Gill—disaster management preparedness in the museum

## Supper Roster



October	Vivian & Pam McV
November	Jenny & Pacita
December	Please bring a plate

## MT TOMAH BOTANIC GARDENS



**Wednesday, 26 October**

Cost is \$12 each and lunch will be at the café at the gardens.

We will leave the centre at 8.30am and as it is a long trip, will stop along the way to stretch our legs.

# News & Info

## Clutha Cup Re-Union

**Saturday  
8th October 2016—10am**

**Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum  
43 Edward Street, The Oaks**

Clutha Cup re-union for anyone involved in the coal industry football matches of the 1970s



Displays include memorabilia and team photographs  
Family day for all involved in the Clutha Cup days  
Drinks & sausage sandwiches—tea and coffee available  
\$3 entry fee—Enquiries to 0432 689 034

**Funds raised will aid our building fund**



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## MEMBERSHIP FEES REMINDER

Society fees are: \$10 single and \$18 family



**NEXT  
TRUCKIES REUNION  
SUNDAY, 6 MAY 2017**

**Family Day—BBQ**

## CHRISTMAS PARTY

**Saturday, 10th December at 6pm**

**MONTHLY MEETINGS:** The Oaks Historical Society Inc. holds its meetings on the first Monday of each month (except January) at the Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum, 43 Edward Street, The Oaks starting at 7.00pm. Upcoming meetings are 7 November and 5 December 2016. Our patrons are Mr Luke Johnson and Mr Richard Booth. The Oaks Historical Society Inc. takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the articles, papers or reviews that appear in this newsletter. The statements made or opinions expressed are not necessarily those of The Oaks Historical Society Inc. Copies of minutes are available.

## HISTORY WEEK

“Meet the Neighbours”.

Open Day afternoon tea on Sunday, 4th  
September 2016

For full story and photos go to:

[http://www.historycouncilnsw.org.au/  
history-week-oaks-historical-society-inc/](http://www.historycouncilnsw.org.au/history-week-oaks-historical-society-inc/)



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