The Oaks Historical Society Inc

Est. May 1979

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Newsletter

September 2019

Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

THE BURRAGORANG VALLE

BURRAGORANG VALLEY

BURRAGORANG HOUSE Junction Wolfondilly-Nattal Rivers JUST REOPENED—ACCOMMODATE 160

Excellent Cuisine, Modern Conveniences,

Ballroom, Billiards, Tennis, Swimming,

Riding Bookings available, Phone Natti 1

GUESTHOUSES

Burragorang Valley is remembered as a very attractive tourist resort with a multitude of guest houses offering their guests all kinds of outdoor activities and wholesome meals prepared from

home grown produce. Larger guest houses included 'Mountain View', 'Burragorang House' and 'The Knoll' with accommodation for 70 –100 guests. Some of the smaller ones with accommodation for 12-40 guests included 'Commodores', 'Hillside', 'Apple Grove', 'Bimlow', 'Curramutta', 'Strathmore', 'Nattai House' and Yarringtonville'. Then there were those who offered a room for accommodation to supplement their income. The NRMA had a

camping ground and there were also plenty of camping spots along the river and activities included fishing, shooting, swimming and riding schools. Burragorang was a popular place to holiday and many of the visitors returned year after

RIDING SCHOOL W. THORN Prop Phone NATTAI 12

year to the same accommodation. Dances were held regularly and

many a heart was won during a holiday to Burragorang. Guesthouses often advertised in the local and Sydney newspapers and offered a car service from Martin Place to Burragorang. Many



visitors to the **Heritage Centre** today remember fondly their holidays in Burragorang.

Motor Hikamp at Burragorang Valley

GROUND FEE for 3 days, 2'-

RESERVE your Camping Site
"Motor Hikamp," to be held
N.R.M.A. Grounds, Burragorang V
Eight-Hour Day Week-end, at NO
KIRBY'S CAMP EXHIBITION.

Marquee Auto Tents





Guests at Burragorang House going for a picnic

One of the Storyboards on display at the 'Memories & Landscape' Exhibition

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



President's Report

Trish Hill

Well, here it is almost Spring but I imagine we have a bit of cold blustery weather still to come. It is great to see clouds that look like rain and get a few millimetres in the gauge with the promise of more by the Bureau of Meteorology.

Congratulations (our) Matthew Larnach on your article published in the June edition of the RAHS Journal on the Bells Line of Road during the threat of invasion 1939-42. Well done!

Finally I have compiled a new volunteer roster taking us into 2020, thanks everyone for giving so freely of your time.

The building work is in the final stages with the second stage of the kitchen now the focus. The tiler should have the floor complete this week so the servery and roller shutter can be installed.

Our entry and shop area is looking great and thanks to Kersti at Wollondilly Council for thinking of us when recycling a

collection of framed photographs of Wollondilly scenes. They have really enhanced the wall behind the counter.

During the month one of our visitor groups was Galston & Dural Historical Society who picked one of the windiest days to visit Wollondilly. They braved the wind however and we accompanied them to St Matthews on the bus before they continued on to Nattai Lookout then heading across to Warragamba Dam.

I am looking forward to Friday evening's launch of History week in Wollondilly. The Oaks, Picton and Appin Historical Societies have worked together to reproduce early subdivision maps and some great storyboards of the history our village areas and the exhibition will continue for the following week . There is more information in the newsletter on dates and times.

I would like to thank Keith Polsen from CPE for his generous support of our organisation. Thanks Keith ■



Family History & Local Archive Research Corner

Sue Davis

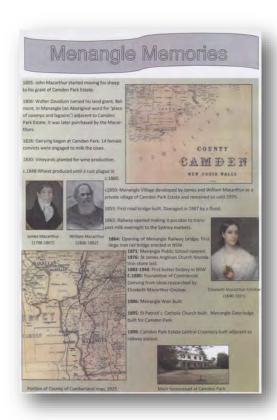
We had a few people who were able to take advantage of the free Family History research in August. One notable family historian was a researcher from Queensland who has been corresponding with us since 2009! Debbie Quig is researching the Quig, Wintle and Prendergast families. She and her husband were finally able attend the Heritage Centre in person and see the wonderful resources we have to support researchers. We were also able to introduce them to distant cousin, Kevin Wintle.

This month we have also been looking for information to help The Oaks Fire Brigade make an accurate list of their fire captains from 1942 when they began. Does anyone have any information that might help us?

We would like to thank Lachlan Brooks for his help with us while he was doing his community service for his Bronze Duke of Edinburgh award. Lachlan has now finished his required time but is happy to come back and help as a volunteer when he is needed. Amelia Mangan is now doing her Silver Duke of Edinburgh award and completing more community service with us. She has been kept busy with soccer over winter but we will see her again soon. Great work by two younger members of our community! Amelia was also recently chosen to attend a Rotary Youth Leadership camp. A busy girl!

We have been busy researching for History Week. We have been preparing storyboards for the exhibition and finding more history of our local streets for the *Naming Wollondilly* database. It will be great to see all our work come together during History Week, the first week in September ■

Happy researching!





Exhibitions Development

Doreen Lyon

The focus this month has been on History Week 'Memories & Landscape'. As you all know this will culminate on Friday night in Picton Library at 6pm when our District Surveyor will be able to view our work and launch the event. I urge you to come to this but if you can't, please come and talk to us during the following week in the Shire Hall gallery between 11am and 4pm and see the results. It should be a very colourful and interesting exhibition with a mix of old parish maps, colourful lithographs of ambitious subdivision

plans and vibrant story boards of photos and text. We have some very talented researchers and graphic designers among us!

It has been quite an ambitious project but we will have a lasting legacy of material with which to produce more displays of local history. The information is mainly relating to the early days but can be extended and more material added as time permits



Marketing & Bus Visits

Louisa Singleman

August Bus Tour Report

It seemed as though most people stayed indoors out of the wind as we only had three bus tours throughout August, two of those coming from Parramatta. With the warmer weather just around the corner and our anticipated marketing program getting underway hopefully there will be more groups out and about to enjoy our new facilities. Thanks again to our volunteers for all their help.

Marketing - Wollondilly Tourist Association Inc. (WTAI)

The August Meeting was held at the Antill Golf Club. Plans are already on the way in preparation for the 2020 Thirlmere Steam Festival with talks in progress with the Picton Rotary Club, Council and NSW Rail Museum in regards to the 2021 event. The WTAI are always in consultation with the Wollondilly Council in its endeavour to promote tourism throughout the shire ■

Memories of Childhood by Ida Whiteman

I remember, I remember, the home where I was born The little window where the sun came creeping in at dawn"

So wrote a great poet, and I remember, too, So fond memories of my childhood here I renew.

"Silverdale," a dairy farm, not far from here, Two and a half miles from Menangle, and it was there I lived all my childhood through good times and bad, And all together I'm thankful for all that I had.

Born in 1913, of six daughters, the youngest, Some say I was spoilt, I know I was blessed, With elders who loved me, and would always explain, Any problems I had, and from their advice I would gain.

I appreciate my parents more the older I grow, They set a fine example goodness to know, Through trials and hardships, drought and the lot, Love for god and humanity they never forgot. The five-bedroom house was large, built section by section, For the increase in family, I need not mention, With three or four white-washed chimneys tall, And large fireplaces with warmth for all.

The house may be old, but with paint shining bright, Clean polished floors, and decorated windows for light, It was very well kept, and a welcoming place, Hosted many a friend and relative with good grace.

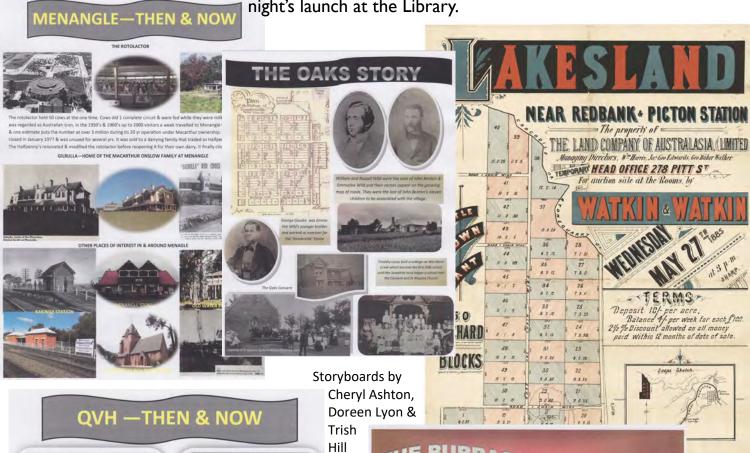


Photo- Ida Lillian Whiteman (nee Smart)

An extract of a story in verse in our library.



Preview of maps and storyboards that will be on 'Memory & Landscape Exhibition' from Friday night's launch at the Library.





A free private hospital for consumptive patients was founded by John H Goodlet in 1877

When the hospital was initially established patients were housed in a hotel leased by Goodlet in Picton

An Increase in patient numbers led Goodlet to construct a purpose built facility in Thirlmere, opening in 1886.

The ever increasing demand for the services of the hospital meant that Goodlet was no longer able to privately fund the institution.

As a result, the hospital became managed by a public board & largely funded by public subscription in 1893.

On 20th April 1898 a proposal was received from the Board of



the consumptive Hospital in Thirlmere proposing that the Queen Victoria Consumptive homes Fund Committee take over the Thirlmere Hospital.

This happened on3: 1898.

It was at this point the Thirlmere hospital came to be known as the Queen Victoria Sanatorium Thirlmere or Queen Victoria Home for Consumptives Thirlmere.

in 1904 the Queen Victoria Consumptive Homes Fund committee purchased the property from J Goodlet, it ran as a sanatorium for patients with TB until about 1959, when it became a hospital for the aged & chronicalby ill





THE BURRAGORANG VALLE

COMMUNITY

The Burragorang community consisted of a high proportion of Irish Catholics. Mostly, they were permanently settled families who owned the properties and the farms they worked along the fertile river flats, having remained in the hands of the same family since they were settled in the 1830's and 40's. Due to it's remoteness and the fact that travelling was difficult and time consuming, it was necessary to be self sufficient making their own bread, cheese, butter, bacon, jams and preserves of all kinds. Farms usually had an orchard with stone fruits and citrus, poultry to provide eggs and meat along with a few head of dairy cattle for the making of cream, butter and cheese. Those who had ample often shared or sold their produce amongst the community. On a larger scale in Burragorang, sheep were farmed and wool produced, sawmills operated producing timber, turkeys and pigs farmed and walked by road to Camden for sale. There were churches, cemeteries, post offices, schools, hotel and the Wollondilly River provided an idylike lifestyle and many recreation opportunities for

offices, schools, hotel and the Wollondilly River provided an idylike lifestyle and many recreation opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Recreational activities were important to the local community as it was an opportunity to interact with the adjoining villages and so cricket, football, tennis and horseracing were popular. As there were advances in both road conditions and vehicle transport it also improved living conditions for Burragorang Valley residents.





MENZIES





the Story of Eucalyptus Oil in Australia

In 1790 Surgeon-General White distilled a quart of oil from a eucalypt he called 'Sydney Peppermint' because its oil closely resembled that of peppermint, Mentha piperita, which grows in England. He sent the quart of oil to Thomas Wilson in England for further experimentation. When the oil was tested it was reported to be 'much more efficacious in removing all cholicky complaints than that of the oil obtained from the well known English peppermint, being less pungent and more aromatic'. The properties of eucalyptus oil were already well known in many of the local Aboriginal communities in Australia at the time. In one account, an early settler had this thumb nearly severed by an axe. His father had been taught by Aboriginal people to use eucalyptus leaves for the healing of almost every kind of wound and he applied a bandage of tightly-bound leaves around the cut after he had stitched it. A surgeon who later saw it was amazed at the rapidity of healing and the absence of any infection.

In 1841 Francis H. Faulding, an English pharmacist, and English physician Luther Scammell formed a partnership to explore and utilise the properties of Australian plants. They recognised the medicinal and antiseptic properties of eucalyptus oil and started distilleries on Kangaroo Island.

THE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF EUCALYPTUS OIL



In 1852 in Victoria a Yorkshire pharmacist, Joseph Bosisto, worked with botanist Baron Ferdinand von Meuller to examine the commercial production of eucalyptus oil. They began production in a small, crude distillery in the Dandenong Ranges using a local tree

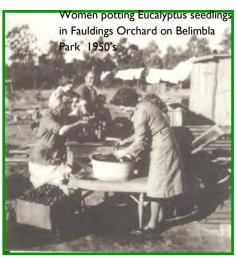
Eucalptus radiata which grew profusely in the area. In 1880 Bosisto established the Eucalptus Mallee Company with the backing of Melbourne business men Alfred Fenton and Frederick Grimwade on 600 acre Antwerp Sta-

tion near Dimboola.

In 1887 Faulding displayed his Eucalyptus Oil to the world at the South Australian Jubilee exhibition. By 1902- The main areas supplying the oil commercially were Spring Bay in Tasmania, Bosisto's in Victoria and Faulding's at Punyelroo in South Australia. There was increased interest in the business and in 1940 Martin Tenkel, a Czechoslovakian distiller in Rock Valley Tidbinbilla, employed two of his fellow countrymen, Mr Steve Lajcin and Mr Jan Jandura Pucek. Eucalyptus distilleries often attracted European immigrants as they brought years of expertise to what in Australia was a relatively new industry. By the 1950s, the business was under competition from Spain and Portugal and the Victorians began to lose market share. However in new South Wales the business

was just starting and used simple, inexpensive field techniques. Faulding purchased 288 acres near Oakdale in 1948.

A new still was usually financed by the oil purchasing companies and in 1951 generally cost about £150. The distiller was often charged





for the use of the still which depended on demand. The majority of those involved in the industry were seasonal workers or land owners from the local area. In Belimbla Park the field method was used by Mr. Swindale to produce Eucalyptus oil. The product was marketed as Solyptol in Redfern. Faulding imported seed from Belimbla Creek near Tumut which had proven excellence. The care of the Eucalyptus nursery was by local women from nearby farms and villages. It was seasonal work which

could be taken up in addition to their usual jobs in their own orchards and farms.

Australia lost its export industry to Spain and Portugal in the 1960s.



Mr. Swindale and his Eucalyptus Still in Belimbla Park 1950s

I would like to hear from anyone who has any information or worked in the eucalyptus nursery ■

Doreen Lyon

Haunting history was hidden inside old ute

It was sometime in July whilst at the Museum that my phone rang with an enquiry. It was Jeff Darmanin, a resident of Wollondilly looking for some information about an FJ ute he had purchased and had restored. His search for information had, as Jeff said 'unbelievably lead him to within about 5 minutes from home.' The story, though not originating in Wollondilly, is a poignant one and the threads to the story were here and we were able to pass on contact details for John Vincent that lead to the story unfolding. Putting people in touch is important in following a history thread. Editor

This is an extract of his story.....

A gunshot, the tragic death of an only child and the heartbreak that was hidden away in a Gundagai barn for almost 30 years. It sounds like the plot from a crime novel but this true story came into my life when I bought a rare 1955

Holden FJ ute. The FJ is part of Australian motoring history and something I'd always wanted to own. For me, it symbolised the Australian dream, freedom, the coming of age in this country's

manufacturing and of course a damn cool car. I bought it from Peter Prentice, who told me the vehicle was from a farm in the Gundagai area and had been kept in a shed for 30- odd years. He had bought the car with plans to restore but it remained in his shed for another 15 years. The day we brought the car home on a trailer was a special one for me and just days later had it running. I sent the next 3 years hand restoring this legendary Australian car and thought it would be great to track down some of its history. Reaching out to the community of Gundagai, I was surprised to receive a late night call from Larry Foster. He remembered the green Holden ute being owned by the Gundagai Shire President, Owen Edward Hume Vincent. He and his wife, Adeline, also ran the post office and telephone exchange from their 1850's family-built home called Stonelea in Wambidgee, 30 km from Gundagai.

The family would use the ute to collect mail from the train station and return home so locals could collect it. The trusty FJ served the family well while also working on the farm for 10 years. Mr Foster told me one day the ute was mysteriously parked in a farm shed and left for decades. He told me Mr Vincent's son Geoffrey, then 19, took the ute for a drive with a friend and the farm dogs. He often took the ute out to check the farm and always had a rifle ready for shooting foxes. At some stage the gun was knocked over in the rear of the car and Geoffrey was hit and died in the cabin. The family's overwhelming grief led them to park the car in the hayshed, totally surrounded by bales. Mr Foster suggested if my ute was owned previously by the Vincent family there would be a bullet hole in the rear of the cab on the driver's side. I raced out to the garage, flipped back the covers and looked behind the driver's seat and the bullet hole was there. My resolve to dig further into the history deepened and with the help of friends, I managed to track down

locals and family members who confirmed the story. I eventually connected with John Vincent, the first cousin of Geoffrey. Bizarrely, I had worked with his wife Liz, while I had been a cadet photographer at the local paper. John Vincent moved from Gundagai in 1959 and now lives only minutes from my home. He said, the boys, Geoffrey

and a friend did indeed take the ute out with the dogs on the 23rd of January 1965 and they were stopped when the incident happened. "Geoff's friend was standing on the passenger side as Geoffrey whistled the dogs back into the ute. Geoffrey was halfway into the driver's door as the dogs knocked over the gun and the rifle fired through the back of the seat." I think things happen for a reason. Why had I resisted doing a full restoration of the of the vehicle's exterior? Why had I not welded up the bullet hole in the driver's cabin? For me every bump, dent and rusty scratch on the exterior of the FJ will serve as a reminder of the tragedy and family's pain. I will endeavour to drive it with pride and respect it deserves, hopefully handing it on to my own son where it can begin to write another family story all over again ■

With permission by Jeff Darmanin.

Photos –top -John Vincent (aged 16), Geoffrey and Johns brother Robert (both 11) taken at the Gundagai Show photo booth in 1957. Bottom—Jeff Darmanin with John Vincent and the FJ ute 2019.

SEPTEMBER Vivian & Bob Sunday, I Colleen & Kathy Saturday, 7 Trish & Kevin Sunday, 8 Debbie & Allen Saturday, 14 Sue & Helen Sunday, 15 Pam & Louisa Saturday, 21 Bev & David Sunday, 22 Pacita & John Working Bee Maria & Betty Sunday, 29

MONTHLY SUPPER ROSTER	
September	Shirley & Trish
October	Vivian & Pam McV
November	Jenny & Pacita
December	Please bring a plate

Book LaunchCamden Through a Poet's Eyes



You are invited to a Book Launch on Wednesday 11th September at 7.30 p.m. at Camden Museum, at the general meeting of Camden Historical Society. The book is *Camden Through a Poet's*

Eyes 1847 to 1854. The text was written in the nineteenth century by an observer and journalist, Charles Tompson, and edited by the late Janice Johnson. It gives a first-hand account of what life in Camden was like in the mid 19th century. The book will be for sale for \$15.

Reminders, News & Info

SEPTEMBER MEETING



Viewing a
DVD of the
early days,
construction
and beginning of the
township of
Warragamba



Council joins local Historical Societies to celebrate History

Wollondilly Shire Council is partnering with The Oaks, Appin and Picton Historical Societies to mark NSW History Week with the introduction of a new street name database and an art exhibition. The Surveyor General, Narelle Underwood, will officially launch the online Wollondilly Street Name Database and the Memory & Landscape Art Exhibition at 6pm, Friday 30 August at the Picton Library View Room. Library Services Team Leader Gail Dunn said, "We are excited to be working together with these three local historical societies to celebrate History Week in Wollondilly." "For the Memory & Landscape Exhibition, the historical societies have mined their extensive records of maps, photos and local history to uncover early subdivisions in Wollondilly and have presented them, together with photos of people and places of the times, to illustrate the changes to our Shire over the decades," she said. The exhibition will include oral and video stories presented by John Churchill with village banners 'Then & Now' created by Bob Clayton. It will be on display from Saturday 31 August until Friday 6 September from I Iam-4pm in the Picton Shire Hall Art Gallery. For those who are interested in the history of the street where they live, 'Wollondilly Street Names' is a searchable online database of the streets in the Shire. 2 of 2 12 August 2019 Community members can go online to find out the history of their street, read the story behind the street name and see photographs from the past. There is even an opportunity for residents to add to the oral histories through video. If you'd like more information on these NSW History Week activities, you can contact Wollondilly Library at library@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au or 4677 8300.

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 2nd September 2019 followed by Monday 7th October 2019. Our patrons are Richard Booth and Judith Hannan. 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:The Oaks Historical Society Inc.
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