

# The Oaks Historical Society Inc

Est. May 1979

The Oaks Historical Society Inc.  
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## Newsletter

November 2024

## Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

### ANDREW ISAAC DEZIUS—A HEADMASTER AT MT HUNTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Andrew Isaac Dezius (pictured) became principal at Mount Hunter Public School in June 1946. In a hand written account he describes his life until he retired which was from Mount Hunter and the following is an extract of his story.

I was born in 1889 on the banks of the Gwydir River, Western slope of The Great Divide, New England Range. The original settlement was by Clerk's with a grant of land calling it 'Clerkness'. Tin was discovered at a place named Tingha and being alluvial people rushed there and a town soon sprang up. Teamsters transported the tin to Maitland which was the nearest railhead. The teamsters were often held up for weeks as in flood, the Gwydir River often rose to a height of 30 feet (9metres) and could take weeks to be low enough for the teamsters to cross. The teamsters leaving Tingha often had to camp on the north side of the river and those from Maitland on the south side where the settlement of Bundarra was formed. The house where I was born was originally a hotel. The remains of a blacksmith shop was still to be seen and it wasn't until about 1900 that houses began to appear on the north side of the river... George aka Baker Grey, Dave Solomon and Billy Baldwin. There was no doctor until about 1907. Parson Morrish (1870) acted as a Doctor until 1890 and G. Jones (1900), a school teacher gave advice as to whether a doctor should be brought from Inverell. The women acted as midwives, Granny Dyson, Granny Duncombe and Granny Baldwin all seemed competent enough. A chemist lived in Bundarra. When I can first remember the district, it was stations such as Clerkness, Laura, Abington. Slony Baller owned



most of the land. Georges Creek had a settlement of its own. The off-spring of both my maternal and paternal grandparents grew up and married forming a settlement. Most of the areas were 1280 acre blocks. There were 10 different families. It wasn't until 1900 that portions of the big stations were cut up in Homestead selections of 640 acres when quite a number of new settlers came to the district and what once was all bush, was being cleared.

Living conditions reflected very little variety in food, it was plain but nourishing and the only employment to be had was on the working stations. A 200lb bag flour and 7lbs of tea had to last 3 months. People baked their own bread and brown sugar was so hard in dry weather it had to be broken with a hammer. Salt was coarse and had to be crushed and got that hard it too had to be broken with a hammer. Honey was plentiful and came from wild bees nests in the bush and jam was made from fruit in season. Peaches could be had almost anywhere along the creek and every home had a plum tree or two, grapes and mulberries. No bottles were wasted or thrown away, always kept for the next crop. Grill's farm, an uncle of mine grew cherries, quinces and peaches. Sugar that first came to Bundarra was in casks and had to be otherwise it would have strained through a bag and there was a local flour mill which ground the local wheat for flour.

The only transport we had was what we made ourselves, usually carried everywhere we went and rest assured that was not far nor often. *Continued page 4...*



# President's Report

Trish Hill

October has been a busy month for our volunteers and this is reflected and detailed in the various reports. A few group bookings as well as the Cranfield Reunion Breakfast and the Devitt Reunion both last Sunday.

Our Garden has been judged in the Competition and the results will be announced at The Wollondilly Council Bloom Festival on Sunday 3rd November and further details can be found on the back page.

Sue and Doreen represented us last weekend at the Royal Australian Historical Society Conference at Campbelltown and by all accounts had a very successful weekend. Our Congratulations to Doreen on her well deserved Achievement Award from the RAHS!

Thanks to David Campbell for updating and refreshing our Museum sign at Edward Street and to Keith Polsen from CPE for the load of mulch to tidy up our machinery area ■



# Schoolies Report

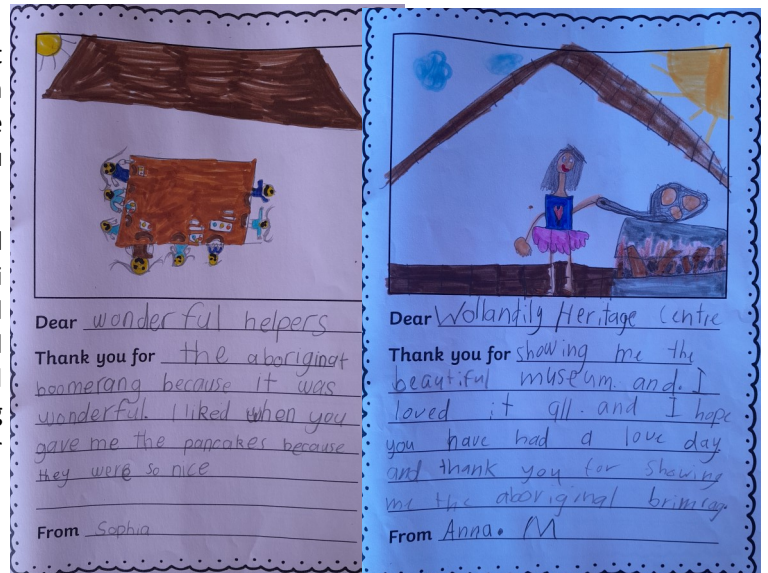
Bev Batros

We were delighted recently to receive thank you letters from the pupils of St Michael's Mittagong, telling us what they enjoyed about their visit. High on the list were painting boomerangs, the slinky apples, the pancakes and the dolly washer.

Maverick described it as the best day of his life, a sentiment echoed by Hollie and Matilda. The pancakes received quite a mention. Gabby added a PS to hers saying "You make the best pancakes". Esther added "They were so good you should be a chef".

The slinky apples were described by Hollie as 'satisfying and yummy' and she thanked us for inviting them over. Benji liked putting on the mining helmet while Eleanor liked patting our cow Daisy. Lachlan liked the beautiful coal and said he put it with the rest of his crystals. Tom encapsulated it all with his comment. "The apple tasted like apple, the egg farm looked sick and the apple farm is so cool, who ever made it must be a genius".

Luca said please tell Bruce, the mine guy, he was my favourite volunteer. Perhaps the nicest sentiment came from Macy who thanked us and added this. "It is so nice to volunteer and help people". Well said Macy ■



# Marketing Officer

Vicki Madeley

Another month has passed and marketing continues to grow.....this month distribution of pamphlets went to the Royal Australian Historical Society Conference held in Campbelltown. Sue and Doreen attended and set up a small sales shop of books and advertising for the centre which was a great success. They also had use of the small square Eftpos device purchased to complement the Terminal at the Centre and is used for off-site selling. It worked very well thanks to Sue's skills in operating it. Congratulations Doreen on your achievement award from the RAHS.



Our Facebook and Instagram continue to grow, we have lots to celebrate so it's not too hard finding things to post. We now have 1,914 followers on Face Book and 51 followers on Instagram at time of printing. Daisy our dairy cow still proves to be very popular on social media! I think she is becoming a celebrity! ■



# Family History & Local Archive Report

Sue Davis

On the 26 and 27 October Doreen Lyon and I had the pleasure of attending the Royal Australian Historical Society Conference held very conveniently at Campbelltown Catholic Club. It was a great time of networking and learning what is current in the Historical Society and Museum sector. We were also able to showcase what we do and the publications we sell. Many delegates looked and several purchased some of our publications. We will give a full summary of what we learned at a future meeting.

One highlight was the opening address delivered by Mark McKenna, Emeritus Professor at the University of Sydney and the Australian National University. He encouraged Local History to be renamed History of Place to shift the understanding of what is observed.

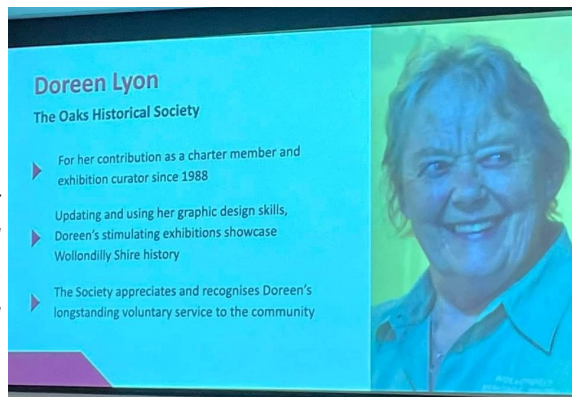
Another highlight was Doreen being awarded an Achievement Award! Very well deserved! Her citation read: ... *Doreen is a charter member of The Oaks Historical Society and has been exhibition curator of The Wollondilly Heritage Centre and museum since 1988. Doreen's background in graphics design have*



*ensured that exhibitions are relevant and stimulating. Over*

*the time of her volunteer service, she has continued to update her skills to ensure that the museum is always on track in preserving and showcasing the history of Wollondilly Shire and its environs. As she considers stepping down from her role she is mentoring others to guarantee that the quality of service to the community will continue to be of a high standard ■*

Happy researching!



# Acquisitions Report

Allen Seymour

I have finally finished sorting the maps and drawings so now catching up with processing the other items that have come in. Among these are three boxes that had contained explosives and have Clintons name on them . These came from Joy Riley whose husband Bruce worked in the mines. From Bruce Brown comes a three-legged milking stool made from a piece of tree trunk and a milk can with the name of 'Eric Moore – The Oaks' on it. Both these items have been used in the dairy display.

From Kim Vlotman comes 2 oil paintings by Norma Ross, one of Glenlee House and one of Tahmoor House. From David Laurance comes two cloth patches, one from Valley 2 mine and one for Mines rescue and also a photocopy of an article from the Miners Federation Common Cause paper for 1975 that has an article on Valley 2 mine.

From our patron, Judy Hannan comes a dress that was worn by her mother, Patricia Irvine in the 1960's. Christine Parkin has donated a number of items and one is a wooden clothes horse. This has gone straight up to the cottage and is already being used to hang the washing. Other items include a small school case that was used by her mother, a horse bridle, a

framed aerial photo of Tahmoor mine complex and a number of drawings of various mines. These latter items are interesting as they are official Dept. of Mineral Resources drawings.

From the Carlon family comes a framed copy of an invoice from their butchers shop. Colleen Haynes has donated a Hoover dustette vacuum still in its original box. Betty Peachey has given us two novels, one dated 1912 and presented to William Macey at Mowbray Park school by his teacher. The second dated 1923 when Mowbray Park was operated by the Red Cross then known as Waley Home before it became a Barnardo's Home. The book was donated by Sir William Vicars, a well-known Philanthropist.

A wood carving done by Tom Littlewood has been given to us by Scott Harvey and added to the display of Littlewood items. Lastly are two signs, one used to be on the gate of the lookout, giving access times etc, while the second is another Water Board one giving details of Catchment Area penalties etc. Thanks all who have donated items, they are much appreciated ■

I started my school career the day after I was 6. I had no trouble learning and was nearly always top of my class, 7 girls and 3 boys. At 13 I had gone as far in school work that we were doing work equal to intermediate, when I had to leave school and go to work farming. I tired of this after 12 months and was apprenticed to a blacksmith for 2 years. I passed as a journeyman and went relieving blacksmith for 2 months. I then went to Bora Creek and then to Boggabri. Drought reduced work and so I was paid up. My old teacher G.E. Jones advised me to take up teaching. I was given a subsidised school to teach after being away from school for 8 years. I studied hard and won a bursary to attend Hereford House so it was down to the city and college for six months. I did well there and got along with all the lecturers and supervisors. The supervisors attended all your teaching demonstrations usually 2 evenings a week 2.30 to 3.30 or 4pm. There were only 5 of us of 300 to get an 'A' mark for teaching. With 6 months up we all waited for our appointments and I was sent to Melon Ridge. I went from Moree to Boggabri via coach. It took 2 days to go 72 miles but this was round about. Landed at Boggabilla, I had to go 10 miles to Melon Ridge where I spent the next 3 years. After 3 years school attendance was 5 so I was transferred to Treloar Springs near Gunnedah. It was on my way to the school where I met Maud Connolly. We were married on the 9/12/1916 in Quirindi and spent about 4 days in Murrurundi. In 1919 we were transferred to Richlands near Goulburn. We remained there until 1938 when we were transferred to St Albans. The war broke out and the bridge was guarded day and night with pick and shovel handles, what for no-one could even guess. There was very little life here, a dance every Saturday night was the principal form of entertainment but everyone seemed to be happy. I was then transferred to Mt Hunter, Camden (June 1946) and it was from here that I retired in 1953. After retiring, I was very miserable and unhappy doing nothing so I went back as a casual to Guildford for 8 years.

When I was at Boggabilla I played cricket in the Border Team against Warwick and Toowoomba and we always held our own, however a draw after 10 minutes

each way overtime. At Toowoomba we won on the Saturday but were beaten on the Monday of the Prince of Wales Birthday. It was at Boggabilla where I first hit a ball over the net in tennis. I played cricket at Treloar where I used to bat and bowl and kept the team together. We won just as many matches as we lost. At Richlands I helped to build up a good cricket team as well as tennis. In the Taralga competition we won many more matches than we lost. Most of the teams were made up from school boys though we had some school girls who could play football as well as the boys. Whilst at Taralga we collected about 8 cups for tennis. At Mt Hunter I played cricket again and won a cup for best bowling average, 35 wickets at average 3.3 runs per wicket. I was 63 when I won that cup.

Editors note: Locals Fay Perkins, Olga Bailey and Nancy Robinson were the daughters of Andrew Dezius and John Robinson a grandson. Andrew Dezius appears in TROVE in many sporting events including cricket and football and The Gov Gazette 16 December 1921 notes the appointment of Andrew Dezius to Richlands School. The photo below is Headmaster Andrew Dezius and the children of Mt Hunter School in 1948 from our photo archives. The names written on the back are as follows:

Back Row Roy Green, Richie Ackerley, Don Mumberson, Russell Dawson, Don Butchers, Dawn Hanger, Doreen Biffin, Hazel Ackerley, Lance Channel, ?.

Middle Row Peter Bailey, Jim McFarlane, Ken McFarlane, Howard Biffin, Terry Rofe, Gordon Butchers, Tony Jenkins, Raymond Rofe, John Hanger.

Front Row Dennis Moore, Sandra Biddle, Deanne Robertson, Judy Moore, Margaret Moore, ?, Jeanette Jenkins, Mary Dawson, Lois Butchers, Alan Green, ? ■



# The Dilly Database by Janet Howe

Growing old sucks! The only redeeming aspect of being an elder, apart from grandchildren, is the time to enjoy hobbies. I have several, but the one that keeps me up into the late hours and away from household tasks is Genealogy and Family History and no, they are not the same thing. Genealogy is about constructing family trees, while Family History is about putting 'flesh on the bones' by gathering data and family stories that turn names into people.

There is no right way to do family history. Whether you manage your research on paper, or digitally or a combination of the two, whatever works for you is a right way. However, there are definitely wrong ways which generally come down to not realising when you start out, that your little tree and handful of documents will balloon into a leviathan thing that keeps on growing. It is then that you realise that poor record keeping, committing too much to an aging memory, and not being able to find things is spoiling your enjoyment of your hobby.

Family History is only a small portion of what we do at The Heritage Centre but it is nonetheless connected in that it covers the lives of the people involved in and highlighted by the vocations, industries and life experiences on display in the exhibitions. We hold large amounts of paper documents, contained in family folders which are indexed onto cards in a massive card index requiring a lot of man hours to keep updated.

Recently it was discovered that the latest release of one of the world's most popular family history software programmes, 'Legacy' has been made available for free which prompted the question, "Can we do what we do at Wollondilly differently, and if so, what would different look like?" The starting point,

given the extra workload of maintaining two processes i.e. paper and digital, is what are the benefits of a digital platform?

Research captures large quantities of both paper and digital records any one of which could contain from 1 to 30 or more pieces of data. For example a 20<sup>th</sup> century NSW marriage certificate could reveal, place and date of marriage, marital status (bachelor, spinster, widow(er), divorced), who performed the ceremony and who were the witnesses, as well as the names, ages, occupations, residences, parents (including mother's maiden name) and parents' occupations. In a paper file, the documents are not connected to each other and any overall sense of the family can be hard to grasp, even if the file contains a tree diagram. In Legacy, each person has a profile page and every data point can be recorded to create a complex timeline of the events in a person's life which apart from vital documents such as birth, marriage and death, could include education, trade certificates, sporting successes, military record, community involvement etc. Apart from recording the data from records, the documents themselves can be linked to a profile for easy access.

A further powerful aspect of a digital platform is the ability to interrogate the database and produce charts and reports on individuals or families. Given that the majority of our family history enquiries come via the internet, the ability to send a report from the database will be a boon.

It is early days, but the large Cranfield family file is the first to be input to help with the Cranfield Family Reunion. In coming months, more families will gradually be added ■

## WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

### PHILLIP JAMES SMITH # 3454: 1890-1918



Phillip Smith was born on the family farm and went to the local Cox's River school.

Phillip's enlisted at Wentworth Falls on 22 November 1916. His next of kin was given as his father James Smith of *St. Elmo*, Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls. He was 26 years and 8 months old. He sailed on the *Anchises* on January 24<sup>th</sup> 1917 and spent most of the time on the ship in hospital with measles. After training in England

Phillip joined the 35<sup>th</sup> Battalion and spent some time sick in the field hospital. He had three weeks leave in England and re-joined his unit in April 10<sup>th</sup> 1918 and spent a short time in hospital affected by gas. He was back at the front for the Allied attack on the German-held Hindenburg Line which claimed so many lives. Phillip was killed at Accroche Wood, Hamel, a strategic battle on the Somme on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1918.

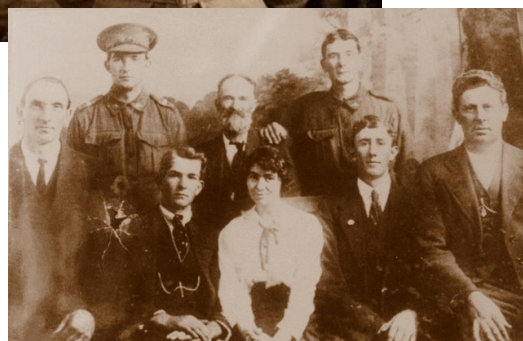


His father James was sent his effects consisting

of 1 disc, 1 wallet, 1 YMCA wallet, 1 notebook plus cards and photos.

One photo shows Phillip with his hand on his father's shoulder and family and friends. It also has evidence of a bullet hole on the left. This bullet also pierced other photos and birthday cards he had kept. Pictured

left is another of those photos and Phillip is on the right with the bullet hole in photo on left of unknown soldier ■



## A BRIDGE FOR MOYENGULLY

Wollondilly Council have recently erected a sign on the bridge at the intersection of Barkers Lodge Road and Mulholland's Road to the famed Gundungorra leader, Moyengully. Named after the place where he was born in the vicinity of Connors' Plains near Bathurst, he was first mentioned in Colonial records by Major Mitchell, the government surveyor-general.

1828,, Saturday, May 31<sup>st</sup>. After dinner I learned that the King of Nattai had 'sat down' near my encampment, and in the evening, I went to his fires; there were several young men at different fires-one black woman with her husband and child at another- and a widow with two children at another. Moyengully, the King, sat at another fire. He had a swelling on his right wrist and asked me for something to cure it. Several native spears stood against a tree beside him, and as many more were laid upon the ground but he got up and laid them also against the tree.....

Sunday, June 1<sup>st</sup>. The King of Nattai having come down to the tents, I could not resist the temptation of drawing his head, the profusion of woolly locks seemed so extraordinary. He sat for me very impatiently. I promised him a pair of trousers, and one of the men brought him a pair of Parramatta cloth but he refused them saying they were not fit for a gentleman. A good new pair of grey cloth were then offered him but he refused them also -saying he wanted a pair like mine, pointing to them. I gave him a pair of thin ones which he accepted and thanked me.

The Country of Moyengully was gradually taken over for farming by early settlers, many of whom were Irish convicts. Their memories often describe their interaction with Moyengully and his people.

Ben Carlon [1842-1925] told William Albert Cuneo [1860-1942], the station master in Thirlmere, some of his memories of Moyengully.....

"I think I was about four years old when Dad (Patrick Carlon 1807-1883) bought the farm at Burragorang, then the headquarters of the Kamilaroi tribe that claimed sovereignty over

that tract of country, much larger than the present County of Camden. We were ploughing, or rather Dad was. I only played



Moyengully, drawn by Major Mitchell

in the furrows he made, when the tall, powerful looking white haired black fellow wearing a kind of tiara about his head made in a curious fashion from possum wool, came accompanied by about 20 others and almost angrily enquired "What for you do this, ferra?" "This my land. I plough him now, by and by I sow him corn" answered Dad, somewhat amused.

"My land. My Corn. You sow him. I take him by and by" said the old man haughtily. Dad was taken aback but answered softly "Very well. By and by you come along. Plenty feller corn makes budgeriee damper. I give it to you. Plenty good feller you." It appeared to appease the old man, he spoke to his followers, grunted his approval, then walked away. Dad kept his word.

Before the corn was ripe they camped close by and commenced to help themselves. Dad was too wise to do more than remonstrate against their extravagance and by gently persuasion at last succeeded in getting on friendly terms with them.

Moyengully died in 1858 aged about 58 years and was buried on the banks of Crocodile Creek near Picton and three carved trees marked his passing ■

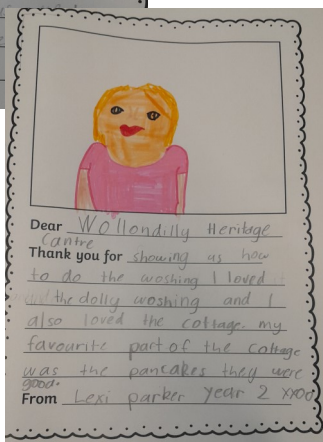
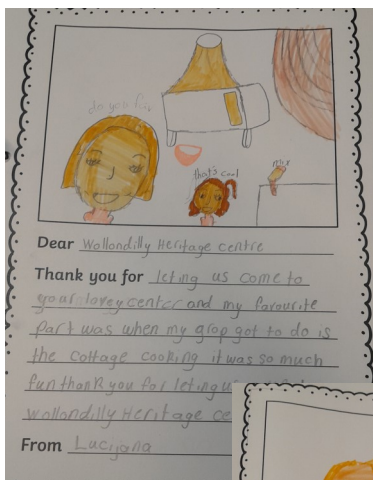


# Reminders, News & Info

WEEKEND ROSTER	
NOVEMBER	
Colleen & Kathy	Saturday, 2
Kaye & Jim	Sunday, 3
Viv & Bob	Saturday, 9
Trish & Linda	Sunday, 10
Debbie & Allen	Saturday, 16
Sue & Judy	Sunday, 17
Sue & Helen	Saturday, 23
Bev & David	Sunday, 24
Laurette & Phil (Working Bee)	Saturday, 30
<b><u>SUPPER ROSTER</u></b>	
November	Bring a plate
December	Bring a plate



A couple more 'Thankyou's' to our Schoolies



## General Meeting

Monday, November 4th 2024 at 7pm  
Meeting followed by supper/ All welcome

### GUEST SPEAKER

Sue Davis reporting on the RAHS Conference

# BLOOM

WOLLONDILLY GARDEN EXPO & PLANT FAIR

## BLOOM STAGE

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9.00AM - TALK  
Growing Seasonal Veg  
presented by Wollondilly Shire Council

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9.30AM - MUSIC  
James Lyon

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9.45AM - TALK  
10.30AM - Creating a Habitat Garden  
presented by Tom - Hooked On Nature

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10.45AM - SPRING GARDEN  
11.15AM - COMPETITION  
11.45AM - AWARDS CEREMONY  
presented by Wollondilly Shire Council  
Mayor - Matt Gould

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12.00PM - TALK  
12.30PM - Native Plant Propagation  
presented by Wollondilly Shire Council

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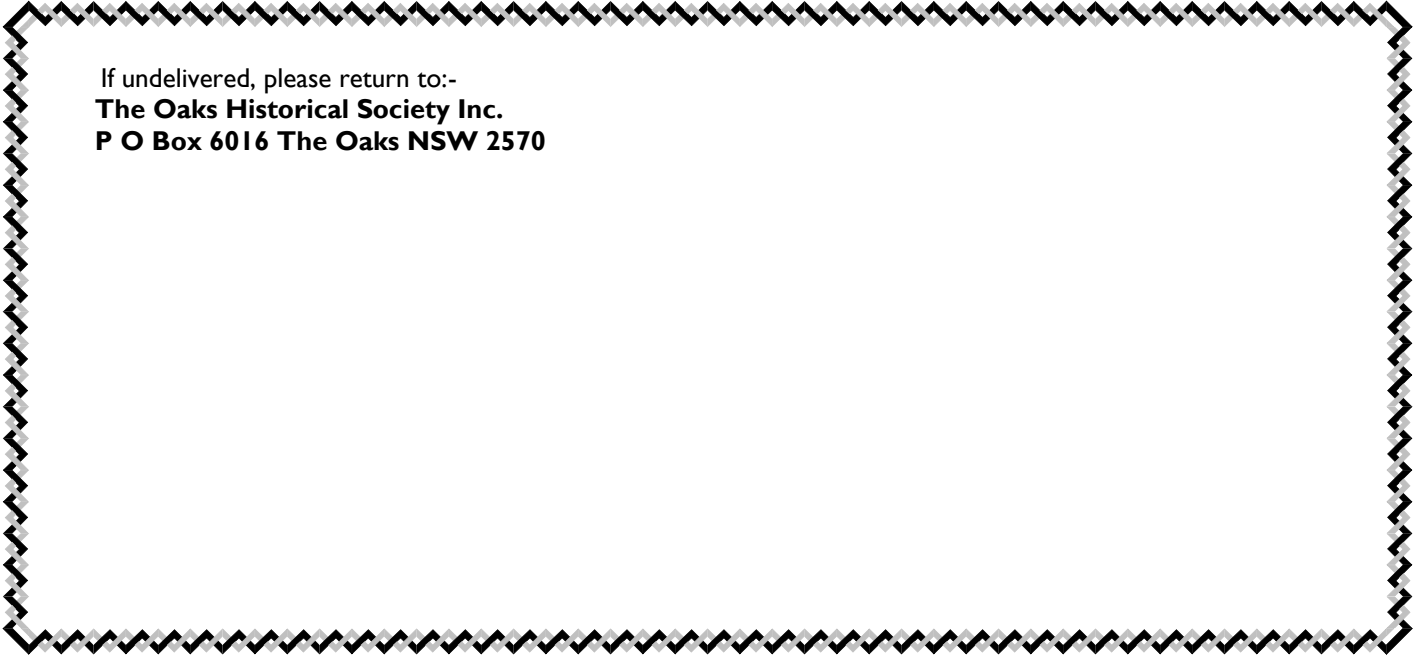
12.45PM - MUSIC  
1.30PM - Rachel Tidbury

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# STAGE SCHEDULE

**SPRING GARDEN COMPETITION AWARDS CEREMONY**  
Sunday 3rd Nov. 11.15am - 11.45am  
presented by Wollondilly Shire Council Mayor - Matt Gould

**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. The next meeting is our General Meeting on November 4th followed by our December 2nd meeting. Our patron is 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.



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