

The Oaks Historical Society Inc

Est. May 1979

The Oaks Historical Society Inc.
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Newsletter

JUNE 2025

Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

VALE –MAUREEN WHYTE

During May we lost another valued member of our team at the Centre, Maureen Whyte. Maureen and Jim Whyte moved from Northmead (near Parramatta) to The Oaks in 1974, purchasing 25 acres at 12 Dairy Road. They met their wonderful lifelong friends and neighbours, Joy Brislane, and across the road, Bob and Viv Allen. The family settled into shed and caravan life as Jim went about building the home the family were to eventually live in. Their children went to school, Jim Jnr at The Oaks Public School in Year 6 and Vicki into Year 7 at Camden High School.

Both Maureen and Jim were community minded people and wanted to embrace the country life, so they began getting involved in different activities and organisations. Maureen, who was a book-keeper and homemaker, became involved in many groups such as: The Oaks Tennis Club – organising tournaments and fundraising, as well as playing; Meals on Wheels, youth groups for the local young people and bus trips for them. She also engaged in many community events and hosted many Melbourne Cup Day lunches.

In the 1970s-1980s, Maureen and Jim became involved in the establishment of The Oaks Historical Society. Maureen recounts one of the first meetings was held in the rumpus room of 12 Dairy Road with a small number of people. In 1981-1983, when Jim commenced restoration work on St Mathews Church, Maureen also became part of the restoration team and supported the volunteers in all manner of ways.

The meetings for The Oaks Historical Society eventually started discussions on the concept of building a permanent site started to materialize with building commencing in 1987. There was a dedicated team of people who aided in construction, mostly voluntary with some paid labour for professional works using the Grant that funded the project and it was completed in 1988 ready for the Bi-Centenary Official Opening.

Maureen continued to support the building of The Centre, and in 1987, the first truck load of bricks were delivered to Edward Street and were manually unloaded by Maureen, her daughter

ter Vicki, Ben and Doreen and Mert Daley. Maureen became the treasurer of The Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum, taking over from Vivian Allen in 1991, and served continuously until 2017. Maureen worked on advertising in the community to attract bus groups as a means of tourism and a monetary source to support the ongoing development of the Heritage Centre. Maureen developed many rosters for volunteer shifts to host these bus trips and also gathered volunteers to help with cooking slices for morning teas for the bus trips. Scones came later as the volume of bus trips increased and volunteers couldn't keep up with the cooking, so eventually was

supplemented through the local Glen's Bakery. Maureen's grandchildren, Tess, Brittany and Eliza, recall many mornings before school started heading up to The Centre to whip the cream and set up for the bus trip of the day, before walking to school at The Oaks Public School.

Maureen was also initially involved in the school's program on Thursdays, and many community events and promotions.

Maureen was involved in many committees for fundraising efforts to build up funds so that displays and works could be completed at the Museum. These included many book launches, an annual "May Ball" - the first being a colonial dress up Ball in 1981 and displays in the community at events to promote The Centre. Maureen and Jim enjoyed the social life of the volunteer group and attended and helped organise many dinners out and Christmas parties. They believed that you had to give back to the volunteers, so each Christmas funds were set aside for the Christmas party to thank all the volunteers for their year of work. Maureen was the Booking Officer for the bus trips and school visits using their home phone number as the first point of contact and with her 'Diary of Heritage Centre Events', they would be pencilled in. Maureen, along with Jim were an integral part of our legacy of dedicated volunteers who set the standards and made our Centre the success it is today and Maureen we thank you for your friendship and service ■





President's Report

Trish Hill

The past month has been a rewarding and engaging month at the museum marked by community involvement, meaningful connections and a renewed sense of purpose following our AGM. With group visits, school group excursions, history enthusiasts with an interest in our exhibitions, it is always encouraging to see engagement and positive feedback. Congratulations to our committee members for the coming year and we look forward to the year as we continue to grow and improve our museum.

With the loss of Maureen Whyte, our heartfelt sympathy goes to Vicki and her extended family and we are thinking of you all at this time. The annual Riley reunion brought together family members to connect with their

local heritage, share stories and memories and enjoy another successful event.

Our working bee this month was a great success with lots of jobs completed. Thank you to our wonderful volunteers for your enthusiasm and support that keeps our museum thriving. To our members, volunteers and community who contribute to our recycling program, our thanks for your support. Our guest speaker on Monday night is Shane Smith, owner of The Estate, Camden(formerly Dr Crookston's)

Membership Fees 2025/2026 are due

Single- \$10.00 / Family -\$18.00

Newsletter postage is an additional \$16.50 / Emailed newsletters are free.

Our Bank details below are for direct credit & please use your surname for the transaction reference.

Account Name: The Oaks Historical Society Inc.

BSB: **062516** Account # **00904093**

Included are the details for membership renewal and thanks to those members who have already renewed their membership .

As we head into winter we remain committed to making our Centre a warm and welcoming place for all and hope to see you visit us ■



Family History & Local Archive Report

Sue Davis

We have managed to track down the last available copy of 'Farewell to the Green Fields' by Gerri

Nicholas. The book will soon be in our library and available for researchers when they come to visit. I have mentioned it in previous reports in connection to the history of the Byrne Family. The publication is extensively researched and is written as a timeline of history of Irish Political Protestors, Patrick Keighan and Hugh "Vesty" Byrne, who were ultimately sent to Old NSW as political prisoners. Following their time served as convicts their lives became embedded into the colonial history of Australia.

The author, Gerri Nicholas, spent time in Ireland, researching where the men lived, their lives and where they spent time for being political prisoners before coming across the seas as convicts and eventually coming to the Campbelltown area in NSW.

Hugh "Vesty" Byrne included "Vesty" in his name to distinguish his family from other Byrne families in County Wicklow, where he lived. The name honoured his father, Sylvester, and his family's direct descent from the legendary Celtic chieftain, Feagh McHugh O'Byrne. No sketch of Hugh "Vesty" Byrne has survived but a redescription of his physical appearance was included in a published list of Rebels where it proclaimed he was...about five feet eight inches high,

freckled, fair face, light or sandy hair, well-made, shot through the thigh...'

In 'Farewell to the Green Fields' you can read about Hugh Byrne beyond his convict days when he and wife Sarah Dwyer. They had married in Ireland and had 3 children there before adding to the family with another child on route to NSW and 10 more children in NSW. Their time in NSW sees them at Cabramatta, Airds, Burratorang Valley and back to Campbelltown where they are both buried at St John's Cemetery (see picture). Hugh Byrne had special affection for the Burratorang Valley and was the first land

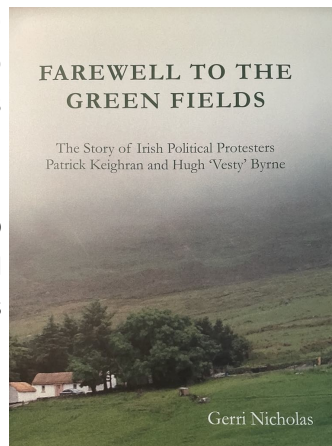
owner of "Apple Grove Farm" in the Upper Burratorang.

Hugh and Sarah's eldest child stayed in Dublin to be raised by his grandparents. Four of the 14 children stayed around Campbelltown but others married and moved to areas across NSW including Bargo, Albury, Monaro, Nymagee, Boorowa, Nerrigundah, Taralga and Yass.

Gerri Nicolas is to be congratulated for a detailed account of the lives of her ancestors.

A very interesting read!

Happy researching ■



ROADS, ROADS, ROADS

from Trove/Picton Post June 10th 1940

We recently came across this newspaper report which seemed to resonate as much today as it did in 1940. See what you think....

Much time was taken up at Wednesday's meeting of the Shire Council in dealing with matters relating to roads in different parts of the shire.

Submitting plans of a scheme for improving the church corner at The Oaks, Mr. Thorn said, *'it was a bit of a headache to do much with the job.'* He estimated the scheme would cost £480, of which the Council would have to provide a third. Left in abeyance, on the motion of Councillors Carroll and Cartwright.

The condition of Denmead Street, Thirlmere, was brought under Council's notice by Mr. Chas. Cook, and will be attended to when the plant is available.

Mr. Harold Shelley of Drummoyne, drew attention to *'the deplorable state'* of the road adjacent to his property on Rockbarton Road, near the junction of the Oakdale Road. *'I have been trying for years,'* he wrote, *'to get this much-needed road put in a reasonable state of repair, and I am not asking too much, seeing that you collect rates every year, and do nothing for them, so far as my property is concerned.'* The engineer reported that the road was in a reasonable condition, with the exception of a rough stony stretch which would cost about £40 to improve. Residents are to be asked if they are prepared to assist in carrying out the work.

Messrs. G. Barr and Son of Argyll Street requested that some binding be placed on the road, between the tarred surface and the gutter, in front of their business premises as it was feared that damage might be done to their windows by flying metals, which had been uncovered by the dry season and constant motor traffic. They pointed out that on a previous occasion metal thrown by a passing motor car had broken one of their windows, causing damage to the extent of £12. The engineer said the road could be surfaced at a cost of £5. Council agreed, on the motion of Councillors Carroll and Cartwright, to carry out the work provided the firm paid the cost.

Mr. R. McMahon, Hon Secretary of the Cox's River Progress Association, called attention to *'the dreadful state'* of the road from Nattai to Cox's River. Asking that *'something be done to save it from becoming impassable,'* he said that *'never in the history of the road has it been so neglected, and in many places there are absolutely dangerous spots.'* Surely, he added, *'with the traffic that uses it we are entitled to some consideration.'* The engineer, whilst admitting that sections of the road were rough, said the letter was considerably exaggerated.

Agreed on the motion of Councillors Cartwright and Moore that repairs be carried out as soon as the grader can be made available.

Complaining of the conditions of the Broughton Pass-Maldon road, Mr. D. Dickson said a section of it was difficult to negotiate in wet weather. He also suggested that the Appin-Brookes' Point road be graded where corrugated. Motion by Councillors Carroll and Wonson that the slippery section be shaled was carried. The engineer informed Council that the grader would be over the other section mentioned next week.

Scroggies road will be attended to in the near future, Mr. R. Skellet is to be informed.

The cost of improving the visibility on the Douglas Park-Mt. Keira road at an adjacent corner towards Douglas Park, was estimated by the engineer at £3. The work is to be carried out.

Messrs. E. W. Garside and Co on behalf of the Wollondilly Extended Colliery, drew attention to the condition of the road which is was necessary to travel in order to give delivery of coal. The road leads from the main road north of Nattai and passes the colliery. The engineer said the road served the mines only and was in a very bad state. Mining interests to be asked if they are prepared to assist in repairing it.

Mr. L. J. Hill, of Parramatta, who complained of the condition of the road to Shea's Creek is to be informed that funds are not available at present to improve the road.

The engineer is to report on the condition of the Cemetery Road, Thirlmere, to which attention was drawn by Mrs. E. Mercer.

Messrs. Ferguson and Son are to be approached regarding a proposal to dedicate a road passing through their property so as to provide access to Mr. G. Montefiore's holding.

The cost of completing the track over Blackall Rocks was estimated by the engineer at £250. Considering the amount prohibitive, Mr. N. L. Lang is to be informed that council is not prepared to undertake the work.

The Railway Commissioner advised Council that he repudiated liability for the maintenance of the eastern approach to the railway gates at Couridjah. The letter was formally received without comment ■

Picture sourced from Facebook- original supplied by Helen Grant from her collection—Road sign directions to Burraborang Valley.





Marketing Officers

Vicki Madeley & Team

It's been a wonderfully busy month at The Oaks Heritage Centre Museum, filled with vibrant activity and community connection. We were proud to host the Burragorang Reunion, bringing together former residents to share memories and stories, as well as the Riley Family Reunion (pictured)➔, which celebrated the legacy of one of the region's historic families. We also welcomed several school groups for educational visits, celebrated our amazing volunteers during National Volunteers Week, and featured a fascinating guest talk by Andrew Conacher on the history and significance of the Davy Lamp. Behind the scenes, our digital presence has been



buzzing bringing as many peoples attention to our museum as we can—our website saw over 800 visitors this month, one of our highest monthly totals, and we continue to grow online with over 1.9k followers on Facebook and 75 on Instagram, with numbers steadily climbing each day. If you'd like to support the museum's growth, a simple "like," comment, or share on social media goes a long way in boosting our visibility. You can also tag friends in our posts, check in when you visit, leave a review, or share a photo of your experience at the museum. Every small action helps spread the word and keeps local history alive for future generations ■



Schoolies Report

Bev Batros

This term has been a very pleasant one and promises to continue on that path with many of our regular schools attending. First, we had William Carey Christian School who always look amazing in their period costumes. Every year they make a special effort to add to the atmosphere. Next was The Oaks, another school who visits yearly, whose children are always enthusiastic and respectful. Their Facebook page had the following comment.

"A huge shout out to the amazing team there. You do such a fantastic job helping our students immerse themselves in the rich history of The Oaks. From old tools to jaw dropping stories, our students were fascinated by every moment. They had the best time." Quite an endorsement.



In this last week a very knowledgeable and interested group from Cawdor came, encompassing Kindergarten to Year 2. The rain was relentless but everybody made the best of it. Our activities are under shelter but transferring between activities required lots of umbrellas. Pictured is Judy Murdoch, our timekeeper for the day, stopwatch in hand, sheltering from the rain before she starts her trek to advise our volunteers how much time they have left.

Still to come are Mawarra, Narellan Vale and Macquarie Fields, all of whom are regular attendees. Macquarie Fields will take up 5 weeks with their 250 pupils. We are very fortunate in our program with the schools that attend ■



Acquisitions Report

Allen Seymour

Still very quiet on the acquisitions front with very little to report. One item which came from my own collection is a 2008 invitation to attend the official opening of Gundungarra Park at Belimbla Park. The park was just a paddock for many years until Wollondilly North Rotary Club put a lot of work in landscaping it and adding a shelter. Local residents also assisted with the work. The opening was performed by our patron, Judy Hannan when she was the mayor.

I've finished scanning the Littlewood negatives and have now moved onto the Alp collection. There are around 6000 of these and the majority of them are local subjects. Some of the first ones I've done are interesting and are of posters featuring the Masons, so if there are any Masons out there perhaps they can take a look at them and shed some light on them. I did scan some a while back and these included the Picton Sports Carnival back in 1957, a Wattle Blossom Festival at Bar-go, and an Estonian Theatre group performance ■

From file NRS/905 [5/5944] No. 89/9707, at State Records of New South Wales.

Background to the correspondence.

Billy Russell (c.1835-1914), at the time he dictated this letter, was living at St Joseph's Farm, 30 acres of private freehold land, and an adjacent 40-acre leasehold lot¹, purchased in 1876 by the Catholic Church on the initiative of the local priest Father George Dillon (1837-1893). Dillon was recalled to Sydney in 1878 and, without his enthusiasm and his urging of the local Catholic settlers to support the Aboriginal people on the farm, its produce began to decline. For example, in 1877 Dillon reported that the farm had produced "300 bushels of corn and 150 bushels of wheat, besides a large quantity of potatoes and other vegetables..." Sgt Crowley wrote that, in 1888, ten years after Dillon had left, the Aborigines harvested 200 bushels of corn. Thereafter, partly due to pressure from the Aborigines Protection Board, the number of residents on the farm declined. There were six Aboriginal people living there in 1924 and none in the following year.

20 August.

John Kidd MP

Forwarding newspaper cutting re the Cox's River Blacks.

The Cox's River Blacks

At the last sitting of the Bench of Magistrates at Picton Mr C. Dunn, JP brought under the notice of his brother justices the following letter which was courteously handed to our representative for publication²: -

July 19, 1889³.

Mr C. Dunn- We are about to write you these few lines to let you know how we are situated, for we are very badly off for want of shelter, the barks that is on our houses is all rolled off, and we don't know where to get any bark now to cover our houses, and I don't see why we shouldn't get any assistance as well as other aboriginals. For when the bush was open we used to live happy, for we could get bark, and make a camp where we like, and now when the ground is all taken up, we can't get bark as free as we used too. And since all the wallibys and kangaroos in tacts⁴, for all the white people is killing all our wild beef, only beef that we

used to fall back upon, so its very hard for us to live now, and when they are all shot down, what will the poor blacks do then for the white people as done us out of all the ground. So we want you to do a little for us for once; to see if we can get some tin for our houses and rations as well, for we are very poor, we sometimes without tucker for days, and what we do get will last perhaps for 2 or 3 days and we are without again, so that's all the help we want is some tins⁵ and rations. Thats all I've got to say.

I remain, yours truly,

William Russell,

Coxes River

Foot notes

¹A total area of about 28 ha.

²The reporter for the *Picton Argus* was present in the court. The original copies of this newspaper have not survived, but a shorter version of the article was printed in the *Daily Telegraph* ('Destitute Aborigines', *Daily Telegraph*, 10 August 1889, p.5). The full article, including Billy Russell's own words, with its valuable insights into the life of the Burragorang Aboriginal people,

would not have been known unless it was clipped for forwarding to the Aborigines Protection Board. In the *Telegraph* article the wording is: "...he and his tribe have no opossum meat, as the Stock and Pastures Board kill all the animals, leaving the blacks nothing to eat." Another article in the same newspaper (13 August 1889, p.4) stated that the Aborigines Protection Board "...thought that the state of the aborigines in the locality has been exaggerated. There are four reserves there of 100a. each, so that they should be able to procure bark and some food." This is a reference to Aboriginal Reserves 26 and 27, which had been gazetted in 1878. However, these were on much poorer agricultural land. Eventually, due to pressure from the Board, most of the St Joseph's Farm community moved there.

³Spelling, grammar and punctuation are reproduced as in the original letter. Russell was not able to write, but his scribe has attempted to reproduce his way of

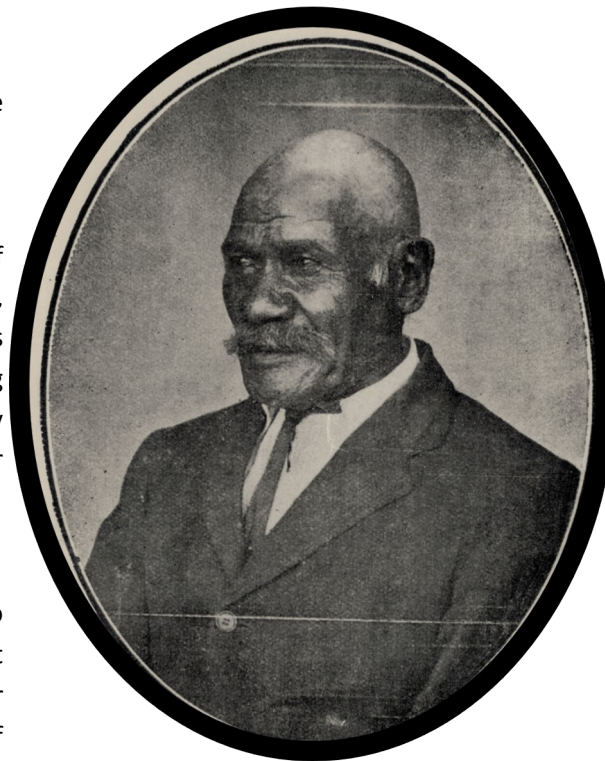
speaking, or perhaps put it in his own words.

⁴There must be some words, missing here. For example, the original could have read: And since the white people came all the wallibys and kangaroos, in fact they have become very scarce,...

⁵i.e. sheets of 'tin', i.e. galvanised corrugated iron.

Pictured centre - William Russell -Werriberri from the cover of the publication 'My Recollections' originally published in 1914

Continued overpage...



A GLIMPSE OF LIFE AT ST JOSEPH'S FARM IN THE BURRAGORANG VALLEY IN 1889 *Continued...*

Below the letter is the following article by the *Picton Argus* reporter.

Subsequently in conversation with their worships we were able to gain additional particulars relating to the subject the above letter deals with. The aborigines at present located at Cox's River Burragorang are some 40 to 60 in number⁶. Of these 19 only get rations; seven, on full rations, and the remaining twelve on half.⁷ The scale of rations is as follows: – 8lbs flour, 4oz tea; and 2lbs sugar per week.⁸ No meat or tobacco is mentioned.⁹ No clothing is supplied to them except on some special occasion and then only by special permission, as for instance at the centenary.¹⁰ From Sergeant Crawley we learn that the land tenanted by the blacks was formerly some years ago purchased by a Catholic Priest and the blacks permitted to reside upon and farm it. At the present time, he stated, they do a little farming, have a cow or two, some horses and pigs; but for all that they are apparently, as the letter indicates, in a state of destitution. One of their number fell ill some little time ago and it became necessary to obtain medical aid. This was done, the medical fee amounting to £6 was paid the doctor by the blacks.¹¹ That money has not been refunded to the blacks although the attention of the Government was directed to the matter. We trust that the Picton Bench of Magistrates will take steps to cause enquiry to be made into the condition of the aborigines at Cox's River. The race is dying out fast and in a few years time the obligation of the state to them will cease altogether.¹²

Footnotes

⁶The APB annual reports and other sources indicate that there were 50 residents in 1882 and about 27 in 1891-92.

⁷Children received the half ration. The total cost of the rations supplied in 1889 was £90.12.06.

⁸8 pounds of flour is 3.6 kg, 4 ounces of tea is 113 grams and 2 pounds of sugar is 900 g.

⁹At Christmas time, between 1890 and 1900, the Aborigines Protection Board provided beef, tobacco and ingredients to make puddings. On other rare occasions, on special application, meat could be issued to sick or struggling Aboriginal people, such as widows.

¹⁰The hundredth anniversary of the convict settlement in Sydney in 1788. No information has been located about the role of Burragorang Valley Aboriginal people in these events.

¹¹There was no resident doctor in the Burragorang Valley and there was always a difficulty in getting doctors, for example from Camden or Picton, to travel to the Valley. A similar situation occurred in 1890 when Eliza Saunders fell ill and died at St Joseph's Farm. The government was accused of not providing medical care for her, however William Antill claimed that she had refused medical treatment.

¹²The Aborigines Protection Board continued to supply rations to the Burragorang Aboriginal people until at least 1915. The minimal supply of rations provided does not seem to indicate that these representatives of the State felt any very strong "obligation" to the Aboriginal people.

Below is a transcript of the handwritten report by Constable Crawley. (Copy) CS89-9707 Police Station,

Picton, 19th August 1889. Re Alleged destitute Aborigines.

Senior Constable Crawley respectfully begs to report for the information of Mr Superintendent Ryeland that on the 17th instant he

proceeded to Cox's River for the purpose of ascertaining the true state of affairs existing among the Aborigines at that place. He inspected the huts (seven in number¹³) occupied by the Aborigines and found them all very clean and in good repair with the exception of the roofs which are very old and falling off. The bark which is now on the roofs was given to the Aborigines by Mr Kerswell, farmer, of Cox's River, sixteen years ago, on condition that they would strip more and return the same number of sheets to Mr Kerswell, but they have not done so¹⁴. The whole of the roofs want recovering which would take about 170 sheets, more or less, according to the size of the sheets. From inquiries made of Mr John Maxwell¹⁵, a farmer, who has been all his life in Burragorang, and the Aborigines themselves, the bark cannot be obtained nearer than seven miles from where the Aborigines are living, and could be delivered at the camp at a cost of about ninepence per sheet provided the Aborigines stripped it¹⁶. There are any quantity of opossums at Cox's River, but the Aborigines have got so used to eating beef and fish that they do not care to eat opossums¹⁷. Some of the Aborigines make a very fair living by shooting opossums and selling the skins, and state themselves they get on an average 4/6 per dozen for them.¹⁸ When in the hut of Billy Russell, the Aboriginal who states he wrote the letter to Mr C. Dunn J.P., the Senior Constable saw a roast of beef, about 10lbs¹⁹, on the table and Mrs Russell²⁰ chopping suet²¹ and beating eggs apparently with the intention of making a pudding; also a plate of fresh fish. Russel has two horses, two pigs, 20 fowls, has a share in the crop raised on the farm and is at present engaged in stripping 300 sheets of bark at 5d per sheet for Mr Charles Dunn J.P..²² Russel has no family.²³ Elizabeth Clarkson, who is supplied with Government rations, has 20 pigs, 3 horses, and 12 fowls, and has a share of the proceeds of the farm, her son being one of the men who work it.²⁴

Footnotes

¹³This is the same number of huts present when the farm was opened in 1876.

¹⁴George Kerswell (1852-1928) acquired, in the 1860s, a 40-acre farm at the junction of Green Wattle Creek and the Cox River. Sixteen years before 1889 would have been 1873, but there is no evidence that the huts were built before 1876.

¹⁵John Joseph Maxwell (1830-1912) lived at Bimlow, near the junction of Lacy's Creek and the Wollondilly River.

¹⁶There were 12 pence in one shilling. Two shillings in that year could purchase 25 pounds (11 kilograms) of flour, about 5 pounds (2.3 kilograms) of meat, a cotton shirt or two pairs of woollen socks.

¹⁷The child of one settler family remembered that his Aboriginal classmates "smelled pretty strongly of 'possum". Either they were eating possums, or sleeping on possum skin rugs.

¹⁸Four shillings and sixpence for a dozen skins is about four pence each. These hunters and their families surely ate the skinned possums.

¹⁹4.5 kilograms. If the roast was actually "beef", one of the local settlers may have killed a cow and shared some or all of it with the St Joseph's Farm residents.

²⁰Billy Russell married (registration not located) Selina Ross (c.1855-1895) in about 1882

²¹Suet is rendered kidney fat. Kidney fat from a range of animals was a highly prized food in traditional Aboriginal life.

²²The total value of this contract was about £6. There were 20 shillings in £1.

²³The death certificate of Billy Russell does not list any children. The death certificate of Selina lists a female deceased and a Bella Russell, but stated that Selina was not the mother of Bella.

²⁴Elizabeth Clarkson senior (c.1839-1899), had two sons, Joseph (c.1862-1926) and Edward (c.1868-1893). Her daughter, Elizabeth junior (c.1870-1925) was known as Bessie Sims after her 1894 marriage to Henry Sims. She provided the most detailed account of Gundungurra grammar to Mary Everitt at La Pouse in 1900. *Continued next month.....* ■

WEEKEND ROSTER

June

Vicki & Linda	Sunday, 1
Debbie & Allen	Saturday, 7
Kaye & Jim	Sunday, 8
Pam & Margaret	Monday, 9
Sue, Helen & Tony	Saturday, 14
Bev & David	Sunday, 15
Colleen & Kathy	Saturday, 21
Marlane Cheryl & Kate	June 22
Laurette & Phil (Working Bee)	June 28
Debbie & Allen	June 29

SUPPER	ROSTER
June	Aileen & Bev
July	Margaret & TBA

REMINDER

Membership Fees 2025/2026 are due

Single- \$10.00 / Family -\$18.00

Newsletter postage is an additional \$16.50 /

Emailed newsletters are free.

Our Bank details below are for direct credit & please use your surname for the transaction reference so we know who the payment is from.

Account Name: The Oaks Historical Society Inc.

BSB: **062516** Account # **00904093**

From Page 23 of our Voices

From The Kitchen Cookbook

APPLE FRUIT SLICE

Ingredients:

3 apples
1 cup sugar
1 cup sultanas
1 tsp. cinnamon
1-1/2 cups s.r. flour
2 eggs
2 tblsp. butter melted

Method:

Peel and slice apples into bowl. Mix in all other ingredients. Spread on greased slice tin and bake in mod. oven about 30 minutes. Ice when cold with lemon icing. Cut into fingers.

CRUNCHY HEALTH SLICE

Ingredients:

1 cup raw peanuts
2 cups mixed fruit
2 cups coconut
1-1/2 cups raw sugar
2 cups s.r. flour
4 dtps. honey
8 oz margarine or butter

Method:

Put all dry ingredients into bowl. Melt honey and margarine and add to bowl. Spread into a greased slice tin and bake at 350° [180°] for 30 minutes. Cut into squares when cold.

Reminders, News & Info



General Meeting


Monday, 2nd June 2025 at 7pm

Guest Speaker

Shane Smith owner of The Estate Camden

(originally Dr Crookston's residence)

Meeting followed by supper/ All welcome




Community Recognition Statement

Children from the Shadows - Book Launch

8th May 2025
PARLIAMENT OF NSW

It was a pleasure to attend the official book launch of "Children from the Shadows...with Hope for the Future", honouring the legacy of Elizabeth 'Betty' Villy. This event took place on Sunday at the Wollondilly Heritage Centre in The Oaks. Gathering with family members of the late Elizabeth Villy, we celebrated the launch of her completed published book. It was Elizabeth's wish to complete this book, and the collaboration between The Oaks Historical Society and the Picton and District Historical and Family History Society succeeded in fulfilling this wish after Elizabeth's passing in 2023. This publication provides a poignant account of children in the boarding-out system from 1881 until 1923 in Wollondilly and the surrounding district, detailing the unofficial fostering of these children. Attendees included Martin Killion, Director of Collections and Director of State Records NSW, who officially launched the book, along with Wollondilly Shire Councillors in attendance.

Judy H.



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 June 2nd followed by the meeting on July 7th 2025. Our patrons are Judith Hannan MP and Ben Taylor CEO, WSC. 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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