

# The Oaks Historical Society Inc

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Newsletter

AUGUST 2025

## Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

### MY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES IN BURRAGORANG VALLEY

By Marie Quigg Carter (2016)

My name is Marie Quigg Carter, born in 1935, my father Edward James Quigg and my grandparents were Rocky Jack Quigg & Eliza May Quigg. I am writing this short note as I thought it might be interesting to read of my life as a child and the time that I spent in Burratorang Valley.

We lived in Camden till I was five years old then the family moved to Granville. We would catch the train from Granville to Liverpool, Campbelltown then the steam train to Camden, we were always told not to put our heads out the window but guess what, always ended up with coal dust in the eye.

From Camden we would catch the mail car to the Valley, always enjoying the smell of the fresh bread to be delivered to The Oaks and the Valley. The Oaks in those days comprised just several shops and a garage on the corner. As a treat we usually were given a small chocolate. We would leave the mail car at my Pop's stop which was near the Carlon and Wintle homes, walk about a quarter of a kilometre then my Pop would take us across the river on the back of his horse.

We were sent down the Valley when the Japanese submarines entered Sydney Harbour and the threat of a Japanese invasion was feared. We started school, Pop would put us across the river and we walked to school with the Carlon and Wintle Children. I remember our teachers name was Mr Daley, he also taught my father, Mrs Daley taught sewing. I recall the mail car driver was Richie Jeffree and he also worked at a funeral home because we were given ribbons for our hair which came from the flowers. We went to a doctor in Cam-



den, he lived in a large house up near the church and his name was Dr Crookston. I will return to my Valley story:- I loved how we could play so freely, we would line up in the corn paddock and run to the other end and first there would win, never worried if snakes were in there. We loved getting

Pop's horse when he wanted it, it was feeding and roaming and we could catch it and ride it back to him. When we went to Mass, Pop would ride his horse but I would walk with Granny, cross the river then Granny would put her stockings and shoes on to walk to Church. Easter was an exciting time, going to the races in the sulky and at night dad and mum getting all dressed up for the dance. It was there that dad taught me ballroom dancing which I continued to do all through my teens.

I loved to get up early and go to Uncle Syl's at the old homestead, pictured . I would get a stick, tie a piece of string on it and pretend it was a horse. I loved to see him milking the cows. There were many other things we did to amuse ourselves, such a fun time. The mail car was eventually replaced by a bus, I recall the drivers were Bede and Kevin Daley. I am now in my 81<sup>st</sup> year but my memories of the time spent in The Valley and the people I knew and played with fill a special time in my life

and will forever be very dear to me ■

Editors note: For many of us in this era our lifestyle was very basic and very much about making do as is echoed throughout Marie's story. Her father Edward (Ted) Quigg was a successful operator of music and variety shows → with some well known performers such as Jimmy Little, Buster Noble, Frank Ifield and many more. The article is from

Trove/Cumberland Argus March 1955. Pictured -Marie, Rocky Jack on his horse and Syl Quigg,s homestead.

### VARIETY SHOW

Ted Quigg's hill-billy and variety show will be staged in Auburn Town Hall on Friday night, March 25.

Included in the programme will be Buster Noble, Lily Connors, Frank Ifield and Jimmy Haines, along with a talented cast of entertainers.

Compere will be Walter Elliot.

Bookings may be made at Alert Radio, Parramatta.



# President's Report

Trish Hill

July flew past very quickly which means its a little closer to spring and some milder weather. The month was a busy one at the museum with a few bus group visits, school groups resuming for term 3 as well as some busy weekends.

Students from Campbelltown-Koshigaya Sister Cities Association along with their team leaders were one of the visiting-groups. They are always a great group to host and we manage to accommodate any language difficulties through their interpreter and Donna, their group organiser always does a fantastic job. We have a few more group bookings coming up and Sonya is doing a wonderful job with co-ordinating the bookings and taking enquiries. There is a spread-sheet on the front counter with the booking details and a space for volunteer names if you are able to help out.

Our working bee Saturday happened to be very damp and cold however there were many inside jobs completed. A last minute



reconfiguration our shop front was completed to allow better use of space which has already proved a great success for volunteers who hosted the visiting groups in the past week ■

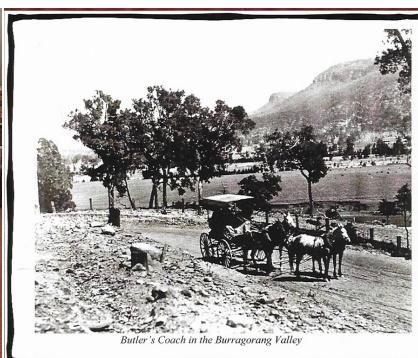


# Family History & Local Archive Report

Sue Davis

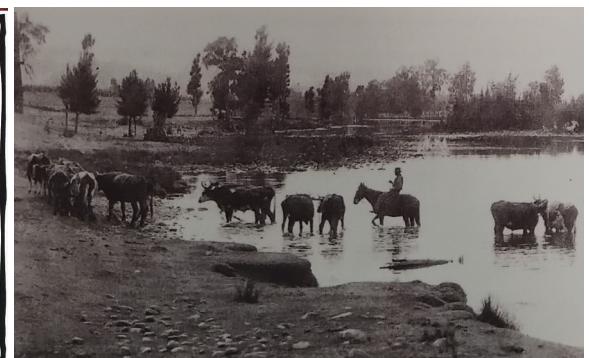
Family History Month is now here! We couple Family History with Local History because their link cannot be broken. This month I would like to highlight the value of Family and Local History in memory recall for those who are experiencing memory problems in their lives. Recalling Family and Local History significantly assist collective and individual memory by providing a sense of place, continuity and identity which encourages community engagement and attachment through individual and shared stories.

This year we have had several groups visit that have included an adult child who has travelled to The Oaks with their



elderly parent to the Wollondilly Heritage Centre and Museum to help prompt their memory of where they grew up. They have filmed or taken photographs of the experience to remind the parent when they travel back home, as well as taken copies of research papers or publications from our shop. It has been a rewarding experience for all. As a research volunteer it has been simply beautiful to be part of this experience and see for example a lady, who visited with her son and husband,

suddenly become immersed in our exhibition of the Burragorang Valley. She sat and told her son that, "this is where we used to live in the Burragorang Valley...this is where I went to the post office... these people delivered milk...and so on." How comforting for the adult child and the parents to experience these memories of the past. Footage taken will be later shared with us to remind others about life in the Burragorang Valley.



Some Burragorang memories for us all:

As a special treat, in August, we will maintain our free fee for family history research in August when you attend in person. Charges still apply for printing. If you can't come to the centre make sure you talk to the older members of the family and record their memories of their past ■

Happy researching



# Marketing Officers

## Vicki Madeley & Team

The Heritage Trades Fair is fast approaching and it's looking like a great day out for the community. We have approximately 20 stall holders and activities, lots of kids fun things to do to keep them entertained and lots of wonderful exhibits, demonstrations and stalls to purchase traditional crafts from. There will be something for everyone on the day. Bring cash and card will be accepted but limited to the front gate and shop and individual store holders.

Devonshire teas and Sausage sandwiches will be on sale. We need everyone to keep spreading the word and we also need volunteers to help on the day. It will be busy! So if you can help out let me know on 0407933460, I'm getting a running sheet of jobs to do so you can commit for a few hours or the whole day.

September 14<sup>th</sup> Mark the date!

We continue to grow as a business and we are getting more bus trips and visitors each week. I'd like to thank the volunteers for stepping up at times when we are



busy and for manning the shop and continuing to learn new forms of tech like the Eftpos machine.

We have a new Collector Exhibition in the front entrance. This exhibitor has a long association with the Centre and is also my dear father. It was suggested his tools would make a great collection that would align with the Heritage Trades Fair, so enjoy Dads Carpentry tools display, he was the ultimate traditional tradesman whose work can be seen throughout the Centre.

We also have had some wonderful news that we were successful in gaining funding for a grant for touch screens from the Angus Taylor Stronger Community Grants that we applied for 6 months ago. This will mean we can display digital media to enhance some of our exhibits with media that we have been unable to use for such a long time. It will be very exciting seeing this media displayed and enable our visitors another form of accessible history to

enjoy our Museum ■

<https://www.visitwollondilly.com.au/events/heritage-trades->

## OUR NEW COLLECTOR SERIES IS THE CARPENTRY TOOL COLLECTION OF JIM WHYTE

Jim Whyte and his wife Maureen were community minded people and wanted to embrace the country life when they moved here to The Oaks so they began getting involved in different activities and organisations.

Jim's profession was a carpenter and builder. Jim became known in the area for building "The Dome" at Belimbla Park, various houses, the canteen for the football club, repairing the tennis shed and upgrading the Pony Club's Club House. He built a house for a family at Oakdale which was based on the historic Elizabeth Farm House, all the windows and doors were hand-made, he also restored the windows, doors and gates at the Historic house at Glenmore and he did restoration work at Gledswood Historic Home.

April 19, 1983, Jim started restoration of St Mathew's Anglican Slab Church. Jim took this voluntary job on and with a dedicated team of volunteers, went about restoring the Church. It was a huge job which lasted from early 1983 until December 1984 and involved many community members and community donations. Jim also made the stained-glass window that is installed today. Work



continued in the interior of the church and the grand opening was in April 1985 with a church service and picnic.

In 1986 Jim began as the Building Supervisor for The Oaks Historical Society and the building commenced in 1987 under the guidance and Builder's licence of Jim Whyte. There was a dedicated team of volunteers who helped to construct these buildings with some paid labour for professional works using the Bi-Centennial Grant that Jim and Mert Daley had applied for and put plans into council. The Oaks Historical Society were successful in gaining this large grant that funded the project. It was completed in 1988 and opened for the Bi Centennial.

In 1993 Jim was involved in the moving of our Pioneer Slab Cottage and rebuilding it at the Heritage Centre and it is now used extensively on Thursdays for the school's program. It is named the Burragorang Cottage. The interior is set up like an early settler's cottage with kitchen and bedroom.

Jim was involved in many other aspects of our organisation and community and this small exhibition represents some of his rare and vast tool collection ■



# Acquisitions Report

## Allen Seymour

A bit more action on the acquisition front this month. We've received a donation of items from The Oaks Rural Fire Service which includes coat, boots, first aid box, a total fire ban sign and a set of training modules. Our thanks to them for these. There has also been a bit of work processing the items that have been removed from the decommissioned Barnardos display and ensuring these go back to their proper storage locations.

We have also received information on the Alp photos I've been scanning. Thanks to some research done by Graham Campbell, we now know that the Back to Picton Ball took place on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1954 at the Agricultural Hall at Picton, and that there were a number of debutantes presented

as well. The Ball was reported in the Picton News on October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1954. The dignitary at the tree planting may have been the NSW Governor, who visited the area in 1957. Thanks for that Graham. Other scans show the inside of a packing shed with an apple grader similar to ours only bigger and double-sided. There are also photos of the presentations at a boxing tournament. This seems like it may have an inter-service contest with both Army and Air Force personnel present and took place in what appears to be a large Nissan hut. There are also a lot of photos from the Liverpool Police Ball (yes they really did have them apparently) as well as some images of Picton railway station and the main street as well as Maldon Cement works ■

### AN EXTRACT FROM OUR PUBLICATION 'MY MOST MEMORABLE JOB & MODE OF TRANSPORT' AS TOLD BY MARIE EWING-TERRY

This publication was produced from interviews/stories told for our Seniors Week event in 2016 and one of those was Marie who told of her 'Most Memorable Job'. As it is Family History month stories such as these are important to record and share with family members.

I started my first working position after having my hair styled one Friday night at a salon in Camden when the proprietor asked me if I'd like to come back on the Saturday morning to be their receptionist.

The salon was called Alywn's Hair Artiste run by husband and wife team Alywn and Shirley Juilfs. When I finished on the Saturday they asked if I would like to come back on the Monday to start an apprenticeship in hairdressing. I was fifteen at the time. I loved the work and competed in competitions against some of the top hairdressers in Sydney and I have trophies from these successes. My employers were part of the first world cup team from Australia to compete in Busle in Switzerland successfully. They trained me well and after six



months I was cutting and styling hair without supervision. It suited me as when the bosses had a tiff Shirley would retreat home leaving her clients for me to style, as Alywn only liked to cut hair. He was popular and women would be queued out the door waiting for him to cut-style their hair. I felt privileged to be trained by them and went on to manage my own salons from then on. The photo of me with the plane went into an aeronautical magazine. It was taken by the Camden Commercial Bank Manager for his son who was involved in model airplanes. The other photo is of my sister Christine modelling

for me in a hairstyling competition held in Sydney, which I won. We were kept very busy at the salon as it was the first modern salon in Camden at the time. Being members of the International Hair Society, each month we would go to Sydney for a meeting to learn about the current trends that were happening. I did my training along with Colleen McGurren who later became the wife of John Fahey, Premier. Hairdressing was the only work I ever wanted to do. I enjoyed my training years in hairdressing even though the hours were long, it was an exciting time of my life ■

## Boots into Paradise by Geoff Howe

“The Burragorang Valley is a paradise.” That was the verdict of Myles Dunphy, known as the Father of Conservation in NSW, after his first major trek across the Blue Mountains. He and a mate travelled 230 km in 21 days in 1912, carrying 27 kg apiece. Finally reaching Picton, they caught a train back to Sydney.

A four-day hike was undertaken the following year. His passion for the Valley was as strong as ever but he was worried about the Nattai River, fearing the encroachment of “civilisation”. Later that year, the two friends trekked from Picton Lakes to Mittagong via Burragorang, Yerranderie, Colong Caves, Mt Werong and Wombeyan Caves. They explored the Colong Caves; again Dunphy was fearful the formations in the caves would suffer at the hands of tourists. After 257 km, they made Mittagong.

Born in Melbourne in 1891, the peripatetic family moved from place to place; his Irish father, a draper, frequently changing jobs. At Kiama, Dunphy came into his own, enthusiastic about writing, geography and art. He drew maps and sketches to accompany essays on various countries. By the age of 12, he had decided to become an architect. Dunphy was fascinated by the natural world, his first long excursion was a 7 km hike to the mouth of the Minnamurra River.

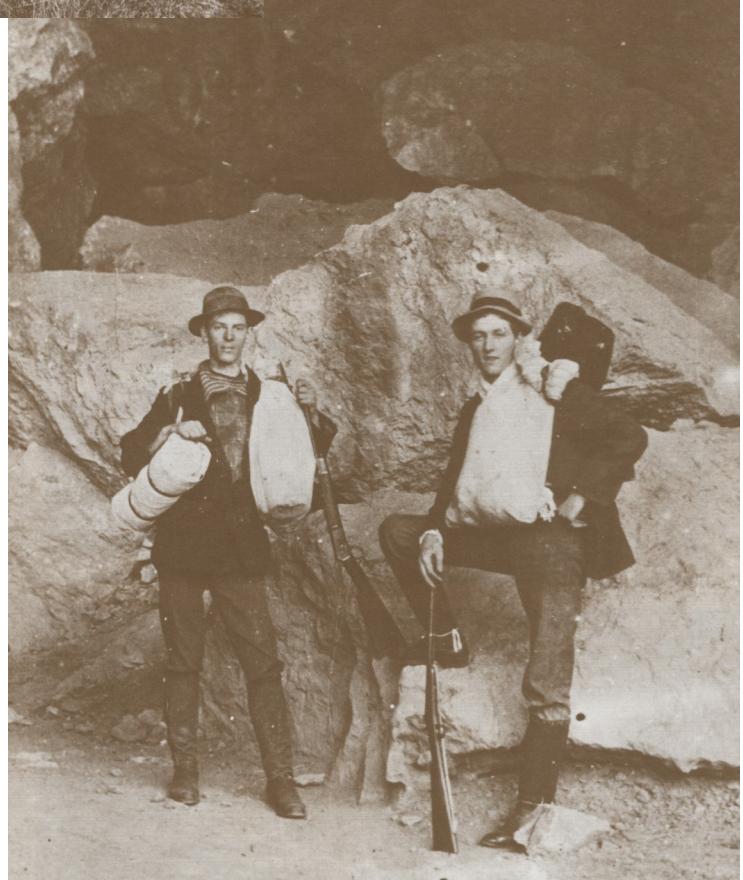
Moving back to Sydney, various walks around the metropolis were followed by his first visit to the Blue Mountains in 1910. He and two friends founded the Mountain Trails Club in 1914; he also managed a three-week trek to the Kowmung River that year. Enjoying canoeing, he explored the Myall Lakes, the logging and land-clearing sparked the idea of a national park; the Blue Mountains being a prime candidate for protection. He had kept up with overseas developments, particularly the US parks and wilderness areas. He took a teaching post at the Technical College in Ultimo in 1922, qualifying as an architect the following year. Mapping, sketching and taking photographs on his hikes, he built up a detailed picture of the State’s remote areas. Altogether, he published 23 maps, naming various features and working with the Department of Lands on a Greater Blue Mountains map.

A threat to log the Blue Gum Forest at the confluence of Grose River and Govetts Creek galvanised hiking enthusiasts with £130 raised to buy the lease. It was declared a recreation reserve in 1932. With four bushwalking clubs, he helped form

the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council, becoming secretary. Its first major campaign was the Greater Blue Mountains National Park, the details published in the *Katoomba Daily* in 1934 (a copy is held in the Heritage Centre library). The first reservation for the park was made 27 years later and

the largest park in the mountains, Wollemi, was established in 1979, 47 years on. Kosciusko, Morton, Warrumbungle, Brisbane Water and 10 other parks had been created with a further nine in the pipeline before the National Parks and Wildlife Service was established in 1979. The Colong Foundation said: “From 1932 Myles promoted a system of national parks from the Snowy Mountains in southern NSW to the Hastings River in the north, including the 465,000 ha Greater Blue Mountains National Park. These reserve proposals laid the foundations of the current national park system in NSW.”

Awarded the OBE in 1976, the conservationist died in 1985 ■



Pictured Top -Myles Dunphy c1915 with his ‘Dungal’ swag

Above—Myles Dunphy & Bert Gallop at Jenolan Caves 1912

# THE STORY OF MOUNT WERONG VILLAGE

by Dennis Ashton & Trish Hill

The history of Mount Werong 'Village' began in the late 1800's. Extensive mining leases and mining activity towards the late 1800's and early 1900's in the Mount Werong area led to the Village of Mount Werong being proclaimed on 11 May 1910. In the 1880's there were reports of between 70 to 80 miners at Mount Werong. Gold, silver, copper and other minerals as well as diamonds and rubies were mined in the area. The last mining lease in the area was worked until the 1990's (after the National Park was gazetted). Mount Werong is located in the Oberon LGA, is accessed by the Colong Stock Route which is the route to Yerranderie, the western most village in Wollondilly Shire.

A public school site was dedicated on 3rd April 1912, however there are no indications a school was built

The Mount Werong Cemetery was Notified on 4th October 1911 and is located to the west of the Village. It is unknown how many people are buried at this site, but it is known that it was not until 1923 when 72 year old miner Jacob Emmelheinz was the first buried in this cemetery.

A public auction was held on 6th December 1912 in Oberon and although there were many miners and people in the area it seems there was not much interest in the purchase of the many lots within the newly proclaimed town, possibly living on site of the various mines in the area.

However, Albert John Oram of Porters Retreat (Portions 30, 31 & 6 purchased 1898 on Little River) did purchase Lot 10 of Section 9 within the Village of Mount Werong on 22 October 2 1926. He built and ran a small store and had the local Post Office on the site. He also had nearby Portion 22 (20 acres) and mining interests in the area.

After Albert passed away, his wife, Ethel Mary Margurite Oram, became the owner of the property in 1941.

It was then sold to Gordon Robert Cullen in 1967 and later he sold it to Michael John White and Gillian Ann White in 1978. The old store building was still in situ up to the 1960's. There was a Mount Werong Common of

5000 acres for use of the people of the area that was in use up to the 1960's.

In 1983 George and his wife Edna Freeman purchased the property and not long after started to build a new house constructed of local stone. George Freeman had spent time in the area previously cutting timber. Whilst living at Mount Werong George Freeman, by arrangement carried out monitoring and feral pig trapping for the Water Board, who supplied him with

traps, bait and fuel to carry out these activities in the area on their behalf. The Water Board had a caravan located on the laneway next to his property for accommodation when working this area, mid to late 1980s.

After the National Parks took over the area, they rejected the role George Freeman had carried out in the area and directed him and the Water Board to cease this activity and they took control of such works.

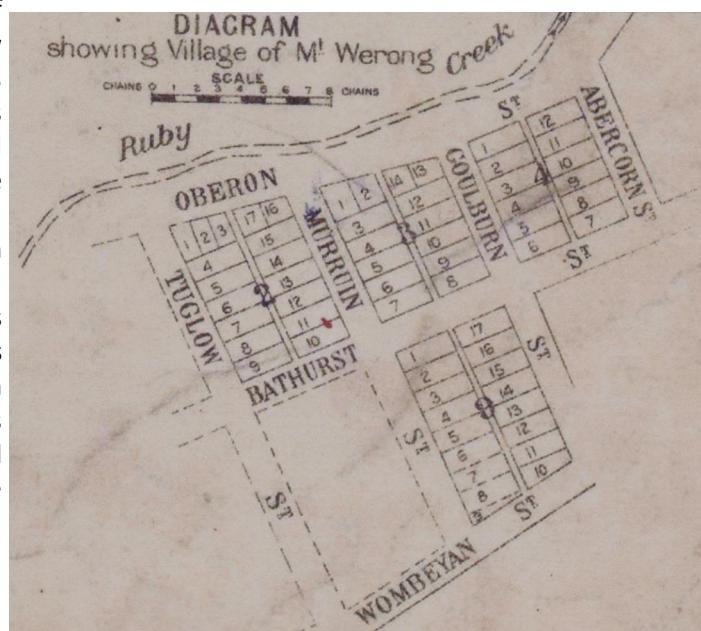
Albert Oram / George Freeman's land was located at the junction of Wombeyan and Goulburn Streets in the old Village of Mount Werong. Around 1995 Freemans sold the house to a private buyer who owned it for a couple of years before it then became a part of the NPWS and became known locally as The Stone House.

Wombeyan Street is now part of the Colong Stock Route that traverses to the east towards Yerranderie, another mining town of the same era. Apart from the many mines in the area, and any remaining infrastructure, George Freeman's stone house is probably one of only two remaining visual items of people living in the area and it is the last legacy of the Village of Mount Werong and its history.

Other nearby Forestry buildings / huts were removed by the National Parks soon after the gazettal and these had also provided shelter for people in the area during inclement weather conditions and had some historical significance.

Recently, serious concern has been expressed regarding the proposed demolition of The Stone House at Mount Werong by the NPWS as noted in their Plan of Management. Constructed from local stone, this structure is a significant feature of the area's natural and cultural heritage. For many years it has served as essential shelter for stricken travelers in extreme weather conditions as well as campers, bushwalkers and riders on the National Trail. Its location and sturdy construction have made it a vital resource in this remote environment.

Whilst not dating back to the inception of the Mount Village and its era of mining in a style similar to Yerranderie, it still very much reflects the foundations of Mount Werong. Beyond its practical function, the Stone House embodies the character and history of the Mount Werong region. Its presence enhances the visitor experience and provides a tangible link to past use and stewardship of the landscape ■



## MINING NEWS.

### GOOD SPECIMEN FROM MT. WERONG.

(From our Oberon Correspondent.)

Messrs. Cunynghame, Collie, and party, who have taken up a claim on Mount Werong, brought a splendid specimen of lead and silver in during last week. The specimen weighed 240lb. It was exhibited for a few days, and then sent on to Sydney, where it will be on view in Anthony Hordern and Sons' window. It is believed that these gentlemen have struck something good. They have six or eight tons of stone, which they are sending away to be treated, and it is hoped that it will turn out well.

A fresh start has been made at the Golden Horseshoe mine.

## WEEKEND ROSTER

### AUGUST

Colleen & Kathy	Saturday, 2
Vicki & Noelene/Trish	Sunday, 3
Margaret & Pam	Saturday, 9
Trish & Kevin	Sunday, 10
Sue & Helen	Saturday, 16
Bev & David	Sunday 17
Sonya & Trish	Saturday 23
Marlane/Cheryl/Kate/ Pam	Sunday 24
Colleen & Kathy (Working Bee)	Saturday 30
Vivian & Bob	Sunday 31

### SUPPER



### ROSTER

August	Pam S & Vicki
September	Noelene & Trish



### WOLLONDILLY LIBRARY HISTORY

#### WEEK EVENTS

Join us to celebrate History Week! Hear from Kate Holmes, Vice President of the Picton & District Historical Society, as she explores the evolution of the Picton Town centre through photographs and historical documents.

You can also join Sue Davis, Secretary of The Oaks Historical Society as she discusses how water has played a central role in shaping the story of Wollondilly. Bookings are encouraged.

**Tuesday 9th 1.30-2.30pm & Monday 15th September 2-3pm**

**The View Room, Wollondilly Library**  
<https://www.library.wollondilly.nsw.gov.au/>

# Reminders, News & Info

### General Meeting

**Monday, 4th August 2025 at 7pm**

#### Our Guest Speaker

Paul Parsonage speaking on RFS aerial fire-fighting

Meeting followed by supper/ All welcome



## THE WOLLONDILLY HERITAGE CENTRE Presents



## TRADITIONAL TRADES & CRAFTS SEPTEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup> FAIR

Scones, tea/coffee,  
Sausage sandwiches

**GOLD COIN DONATION FOR KIDS ACTIVITIES**

Tradition trade demonstrations

Crafts items for sale  
Music by The Honey Sippers

**43 Edward St, The Oaks.  
\$5 Adults, \$3 Child  
\$15 family 10-3pm**

**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 August 4th 2025 followed by the September 1st meeting. 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.

If undelivered, please return to:-  
**The Oaks Historical Society Inc.**  
**P O Box 6016 The Oaks NSW 2570**

