

The Oaks Historical Society Inc

Est. May 1979

The Oaks Historical Society Inc.
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Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2025

Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

SUSANNAH KABLE MILEHAM by Sonya Male

Susannah Kable was born on 23rd October 1795 in Sydney Cove - the second daughter (and fifth child) of First Fleet convicts, Henry Kable and Susannah Holmes.

From an early age Susannah and her older sister Diana helped to run the household and to care for their siblings who by all accounts were quite mischievous (which they carried into adulthood!).

Susannah's father Henry was an active member of the new colony – becoming a police constable and later a ship owner and merchant (after illegally buying pigs from a visiting ship caused him to be removed from his post). The Kable family prospered and had been granted land in Petersham as well as having purchased farms in Cowpastures and the Hawkesbury.

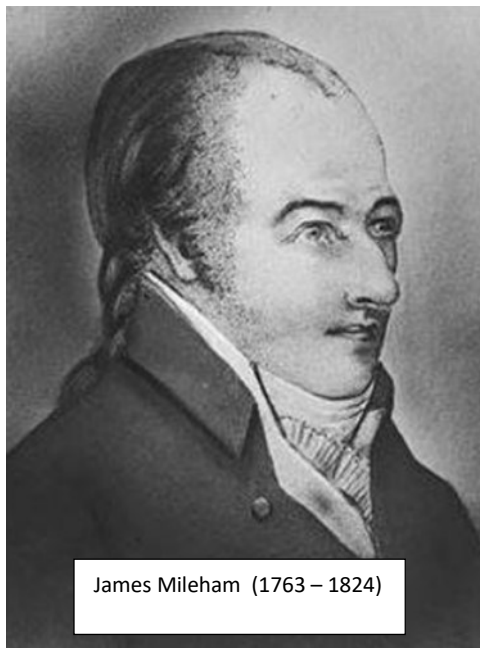
In 1809 when Susannah was 14, her older sister Diana married William Gaudry, leaving Susannah in charge of her unruly younger brothers and later she was also often called upon to help with her sister's children.

Unfortunately for the Kable family, Henry fell out of favour with the Governors of the colony and in 1810 a hostile relationship with Governor Bligh led to him transfer all of his business interests in Sydney to his eldest son

(also named Henry but known to the family as Harry). Sadly by this time, two of Susannah's three elder brothers had died. Harry remained based in Sydney, a bachelor spending a significant amount of his life at sea.

By 1811 Susannah and the entire extended Kable family (including Diana, William and their children) moved to Wind-

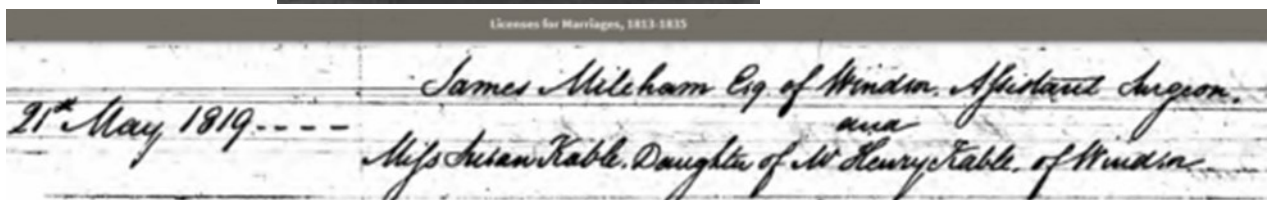
sor where Henry was involved with a brewery, flour mill and bakehouse. Windsor was a small settlement chosen by Governor Macquarie to be one of five townships in the colony to be built up to provide safe homes and produce stores for farmers in the region. It was here that Susannah came to know the Mileham family. James Mileham was the Government Surgeon in the Hawkesbury region and was appointed as the Magistrate for surrounding districts. He was also 'anti-Bligh' so had similar views to Henry Kable.



James Mileham (1763 – 1824)

Mileham and his first wife Elizabeth had three children – two who died in infancy and daughter Lucy, who was only 4 years younger than Susannah. Elizabeth Mileham suffered ill health for many years and Susannah was a frequent visitor to the Mileham household – looking after young Lucy. Susannah and Lucy became as close as sisters and their strong friendship was to last for the remainder of their lives.

Elizabeth Mileham died in 1818 and on the 2nd of June 1819 Susannah married James Mileham in St. Matthew's church in Windsor. James was 54 and Susannah 24. A special licence was secured to allow the marriage to proceed (pictured below).



Up to the 1820's marriages were conducted by the Church of England (regardless of the faith of the individuals marrying) and either involved a special licence or the proclamation of banns on three successive Sundays before the ceremony. The fee for a licence was £4/4/0 – which showed that Mileham was prosperous as only the wealthy could afford to marry via this process. *Continued page 5.....*



President's Report

Trish Hill

I'm sure we are looking forward to the arrival of Spring and some nicer warmer weather. Our Traditional Trades and Crafts day on Sunday 14th September is fast approaching and further information can be found in the Marketing Officers report and on our website and Facebook site. We look forward to seeing you all here on the day.

Thanks to Jeff Brown for his great job on painting the exhibition space in the Federation Building. It looks great and is ready to transform into our new fabric exhibition.→

Our condensed Barnados Exhibition has now been completed in the Drill Hall.



excellent lunch to warm us all.■

The entry and re-vamped shop space has been a work in progress and now almost complete thanks to Sonya, Vicki and Kevin. Thanks to our Working Bee team for braving the elements on Saturday and Colleen for the



Family History & Local Archive Report

Sue Davis

History Week is fast approaching. This year the theme is Water Stories and there are many registered events happening all over NSW to highlight the wide-ranging impact of water. You can find out more on the attached website at <https://historycouncilnsw.org.au/whats-on-2/>



Our link is called, *Looking Back. Looking Forward*, and we are highlighting water stories from our Burratorang Valley exhibition that people can visit when they come to our Traditional Trades and Crafts Fair on 14th September. I have been asked by the Picton Library to give a talk about Wollondilly Water Stories on the 15th September. While I have been researching I came across a Wollondilly Shire publication of 1981 that included some Aboriginal place name meanings that I thought to include here as we often forget their origin... Benkennie – Dry land; Burratorang – Valley abundant with food; Couridjah – Home of the ants; Menangle – swamp; Tahmoor – Bronzewing pigeon; Yanderra – Turpentine tree; Wollondilly – Water trickling over rocks.

The before mentioned publication also gave interesting background information into dams in the Wollondilly Shire. This included that, Wollondilly Shire gives access to five of the

dams that provide the water supply for Sydney, the Wollongong -Shellharbour - Kiama and Campbelltown regions and part of the Lower Blue Mountains as well as many parts of the

Shire itself. Sydney's Tank Stream and Busby's Bore were followed in 1858 by the Botany Swamps supply scheme, which served until 1866.

The Upper Nepean River and its tributaries were selected as the inland source of supply. Planning began in the mid-1870s with construction work proceeding from 1878 to 1888. At first a flow-of-the-river scheme began by diversions of waters from the rivers to Broughton Pass. From there by tunnel and canal the water was sent by gravitation to Prospect Reservoir for distribution in the Sydney metropolitan area.

The Sydney Water Board was constituted in 1888 and water storage dams were planned. As the need for increased water in Sydney became apparent, the Board began the progressive construction of dams. *Looking Back. Looking Forward!* (below are the first 4 dams completed)■

Happy researching !



Cataract Dam, the first of the 4 dams of the upper Nepean, completed 1907.



Cordeaux Dam, the second constructed, completed 1926



Avon Dam completed 1927



Nepean Dam, completed 1935.



Marketing Officers

Vicki Madeley & Team

We have all been busy planning and organising The Heritage Trades Fair Day which is fast approaching! September 14th will be here before we know it. I'd like to thank everyone who has offered help and given support thus far. The big workload will be in the coming weeks as we prepare the grounds of the Centre for the event. It will be busy on the day before and on the day of the event, so thanks to all for hanging in there and supporting a day that we hope will be very successful and that we will all enjoy as well.

Step Back in Time at our **Heritage Trades & Traditional Crafts Fair** Sunday 14th September-10am – 3pmWollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum @ 43 Edward Street, The Oaks 2570.

Spread the Word Its fast approaching!

Visit us for a day of music, heritage, and hands-on fun as the Wollondilly Heritage Centre comes alive with the sights, sounds, and smells of yesteryear.

→**Entertainment**.....The sweet sounds of The Honey Sippers and the Picton Singers in the air.

→**Delicious treats** **Devonshire teas**, hot coffees, cold drinks.

→**Sausage sandwiches** hot off the BBQ

→**Explore & shop**, Eftpos available but bring cash as well for stalls etc and our museum book & gift shop will be open all day alongside a fascinating variety of stalls and displays

→**Macarthur Wood Turners**

→**Penrith Printing Museum** – kids can print their own names

→**Beekeeping & Jams** from Werombbee Man

→**Patchwork quilting**, Macramé & crochet toys, hand-carved spoons & wooden treasures

→**Pottery, watercolour painting & printing**, calligraphy

→**Classic cars** (Crankhandlers), and farm produce

→**Wool spinning & weaving**, poker work, lapidary, Charcoal sketching

→**The Collectors Display** – traditional carpentry tools

→**Talks Throughout the Day**.....Predators on Country – Discover the animals that roam the Burratorang Valley and 'Progress Spells Doom'...the Story of Burratorang Valley and how the building of Warragamba Dam changed the Burratorang community and the landscape.

→**Family Research** – Tips on tracing your ancestry.

→**Apple Sorting** in the Ag Hall – with old-fashioned

apple peeling demonstrations.

→**Fun for the Kids**...Traditional games – skipping, hoops, quoits

→**Photo selfies** in old-fashioned dress-ups

→**Pikelet or butter** making in the Colonial Cottage

Whether you're fascinated by old trades, keen to try your hand at traditional crafts, or simply love a great family day out, this fair is the perfect way to step back in time and celebrate our heritage.

Bring along your gold coins to join in some activities.

Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum, 43 Edward Street, The Oaks, 2570

10.00am - 3.00pm

Entry fee: \$5 per person, \$3.00 per child, \$15.00 family

www.Wollondillymuseum.org.au



Devonshire teas/coffee \$5.00

Sausage sandwiches \$5 each.

Drinks \$2.00



THE WOLLONDILLY
HERITAGE CENTRE
Presents



TRADITIONAL
TRADES & CRAFTS
SEPTEMBER 14TH 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





Acquisitions Report

Allen Seymour

A quiet month on the acquisitions front. Sorting out the items from the Barnardos display. We've received another bunch of photos from Betty Yewen. Betty and the late Jennifer Eggins ran the Macarthur Country Tourist Association and Betty also ran tourist Trips around the area. As part of this she spent a lot of time visiting various tourist spots such as Bullens Animal World, The Dingo Sanctuary, a doll collection at Tahmoor and

many other locations including restaurants and retirement villages, taking photos along the way recording many places that are no longer around. These will go into the photo register when I've done a bit of sorting out, many thanks Betty.

Scanning of the Alp Collection continues and I've just completed a number from the 1955 Picton Show. Lots more to come yet■



Schoolies Report

Bev Batros

We were delighted recently to have a visit from Buzy Bee Kindy, a local preschool. There were twelve 3-4-year-olds who seemed to enjoy everything. The theme of the day was what life was like for our volunteers when they were children. We explained that some of us did not have electricity and of course they were surprised at all the things we didn't have and couldn't do. We also explained that children had to help a lot around the house or farm.

In the cottage they were shown the hip bath that everyone used and the fuel stove. The mosquito netting over the bed intrigued them and one child thought it looked like a ghost, which would have been a daunting thought in a dimly lit house. The sticky fly paper created a lot of interest too.



In the school room, they thought the Globite school case would have been used to go on holidays. Washing with a wash board and dolly washer had to be repeated in the laundry as it was so popular.

We also showed some toys from the olden days and the children had a game of quoits and marbles. A spinning top from our collection proved tricky for most, although one child had it spinning perfectly first go.



In the shed the focus was on how the children had to help their parents. They were introduced to Daisy our cow and pretended to milk her, as well as picking apples and eating them.

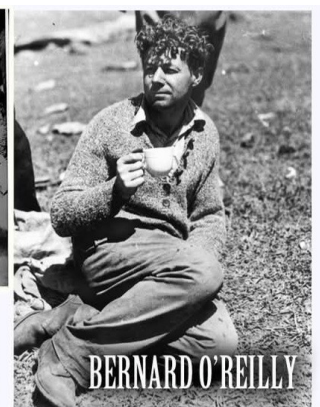
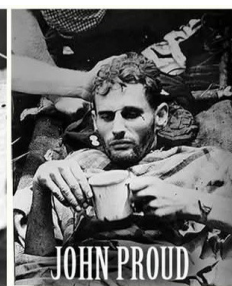
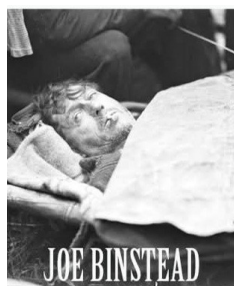
I think our volunteers were all very pleased at how successful the morning was and how much the children enjoyed it ■

FROM FACEBOOK—GRAVE TALES

On the 29th August 1969, Joe Binstead died aged 87, having survived the crash of the Stinson Plane in the McPherson Ranges 32 years earlier in 1937. Five men died in the crash including the 2 pilots, but Joe and fellow survivor John Proud (pictured with rescuers) were found by Bernard O'Reilly (originally from Burrigorang), a renowned figure who doggedly searched for the fallen plane, finding it where others failed-an incredible story in itself. Both Joe and John went on to lead long lives. Joe is buried in Macquarie Park Cemetery, Sydney and John died in 1997 aged 90 and is buried in St Aloysius Cemetery, ↓The Oaks. Their rescuer, Bernard died in 1975 and is buried in Kerry Catholic Cemetery, Kerry QLD ■



Thanks to member Val Malcolm for sharing this with me.



**NO TRACE BY AIR
OR LAND**

**Stinson Searchers
Abandon Hope**

SYDNEY, February 24.
SEARCHERS by air and land have
now abandoned hope of finding
the missing Stinson.

Susannah Kable Mileham *continued.....*

Through her marriage, Susannah became a "currency lass" (as did both of her sisters). In the early colonial period, a 'currency lass' was a first-generation young white woman born in Australia to convict or emancipated parents. In contrast, young ladies born in Britain were known as 'sterlings'. Initially a derogatory term, the designation of 'currency lass' was later a proud way of acknowledging a uniquely Australian identity. Susannah's sister Diana was Australia's first 'currency lass'.

Susannah remained an active carer for her family and in his role as a local magistrate, James Mileham did his utmost to keep Susannah's younger brothers out of gaol (not always successfully). There were many occasions when Mileham had broken up brawls involving his brothers-in-law – and then ministered to the cuts and injuries they received from the fights. (All of the fighting proved to be good training as Susannah's younger brother Jack became Australia's first bare-knuckled fighting champion.)

James Mileham was not in the best of health when he and Susannah married and despite her great care, after only 5 years of marriage, James died in September 1824. The pair did not have any children. After James's death, Susannah was allocated a government annuity of £100 (roughly \$17,000 today) for the remainder of her life.

Susannah remained in Windsor, caring for her declining mother who died in 1825. After the marriage of her younger sister Eunice, Susannah continued to support and protect her broader family – as evidenced by a letter sent to the Colonial Secretary Alexander McLeay Esq. on behalf of her younger brother Charles.



Lucy Mileham Hassall Howell
(1799 – 1882)

Letter 16 March 1827 from Susannah Mileham (pictured below)

Transcript: Sir I beg leave to request permission to send to Charles Kable a prisoner at Moreton Bay, by the vessel about to sail to that place, the following articles viz. 4 shirts, 3 pair of trousers, 2 neckerchiefs 1 pair shoes, 1 jacket, 1 waistcoat, 3 lbs tea 12 lbs sugar 2 lbs tobacco - Your allowing the above things to be sent will greatly oblige. Sir Your most obedient and much obliged Servt. Susanna Mileham.

Susannah remained in close contact with her great friend (and step-daughter) Lucy Mileham who had famously married Samuel Otoo Hassall in a triple ceremony where three of the Hassall siblings married their spouses (5 months after Susannah's own marriage in 1819). Seeing that her father and brothers were well situated, Susannah eventually

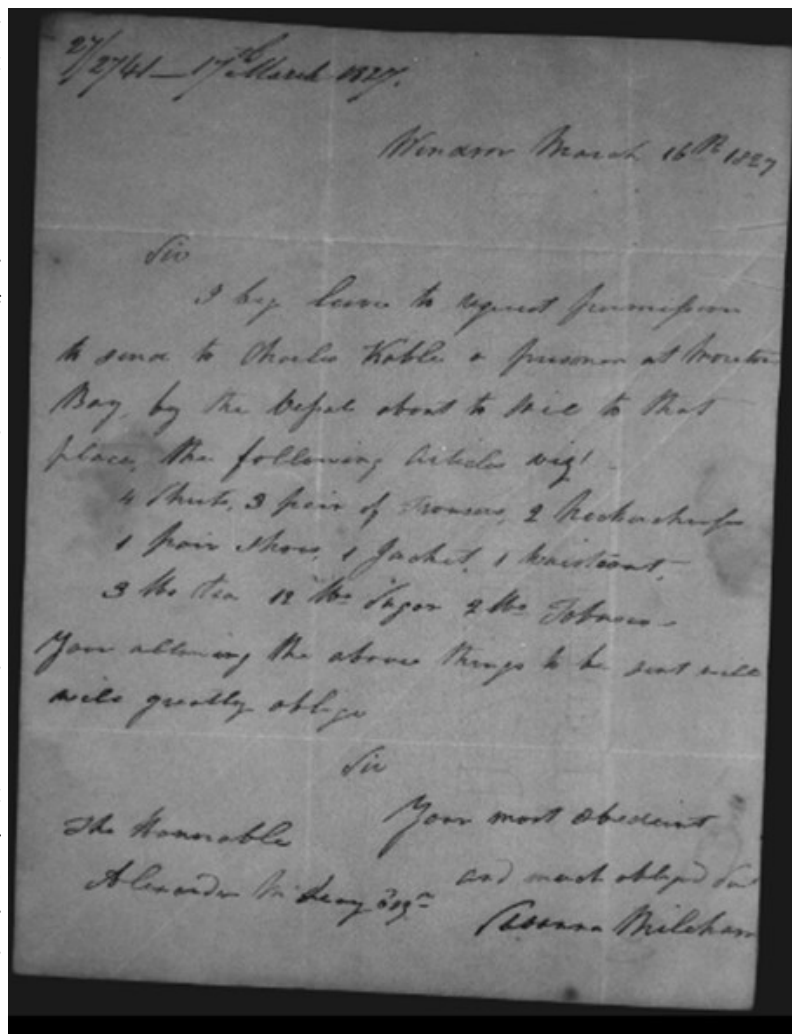
accepted Lucy's offer to share her home with the Hassall's at 'Macquarie Grove' now Hassall Cottage near Camden Airport ■

This article will be continued in the October Newsletter.

Sources:

Whittaker, J. (2002) Kable: Convict Extraordinaire. Tumbarumba, NSW, Australia: June Whittaker.

HenryKable-
SusannahHolmes.com;
convictrecords.com.au;
The Canberra Times;
Trove; Australian Dictionary of Biography and the Fellowship of First Fleeters.



James Thompson

a find from a family history enquiry

Following up a family history enquiry for information on James Thompson Snr and Jnr from Burragorang we found there was indeed quite a story to tell. Initially it wasn't a name we recognized from Burragorang. From research it appears James Thompson (1801-1855) was 33 years old on arrival in Australia as a convict on the vessel 'Royal Sovereign' on 19th January 1834. His Native place was listed as County Armagh Northern Ireland.

In 1838 he got a Ticket of Leave at Windsor and on 13/6/1839 his Certificate of Freedom and that may have been the reason he did not marry until 1838. James married Margaret Teresa Malloy on the 15th October 1838 at Cobbitty in the Parish of Narellan. The minister was Thomas Hassall and the witnesses were Thomas & Margaret Wheatley of The Oaks. The birth of their son James P. Thompson was registered as 20th Dec 1835 and the early church code in the registry indicates C of E St Johns/The Oaks/Picton Stonequarry. Next was the birth of daughter Caroline Catherine Thompson, 20th July 1837 at Maitland NSW and finally twins, Mary Ann & Susannah on 3rd September 1839, at The Oaks.

The 4 children of James and Teresa were baptised 6th October 1839 in the parish of The Oaks and Stonequarry, details give their address as The Oaks and the occupation of James was a sawyer.

Ancestry records James death at Burragorang January 1855 and his burial at St John's Catholic cemetery Campbelltown, NSW. Margaret Teresa Thompson (nee Malloy) died on 10th August 1861 at Burragorang and was buried in St Paulinus Cemetery.

In 1867 son James P Thompson married Ellen Millar and the marriage certificate states the marriage took place at 'the home of Mr Patrick Carlon, Carlonstown Burragorang according to the Roman Catholic Rites.'→

The witnesses to the marriage were Peter Fitzpatrick and Mary Dennis, who was the aunt of Ellen Miller. Mary (Murphy) Dennis had arrived in 1839 with her mother Ellen Murphy and 2 sisters Honora and Catherine, all as convicts. Honora Murphy Millar was Ellen's mother.

Ellen Murphy (mother) aged 64 had married Burragorang Pioneer Bryan Carlon at Narellan in 1845 after the death of his first wife Ann.

The Empire Newspaper of 28th February 1861 notes- 'The bench was occupied by the Messrs J.H. & W.R Antill. James Thompson of Burragorang was charged with stealing a mare, the property of Timothy Lacey; the evidence not being sufficiently conclusive the case was adjourned till next Court day.'

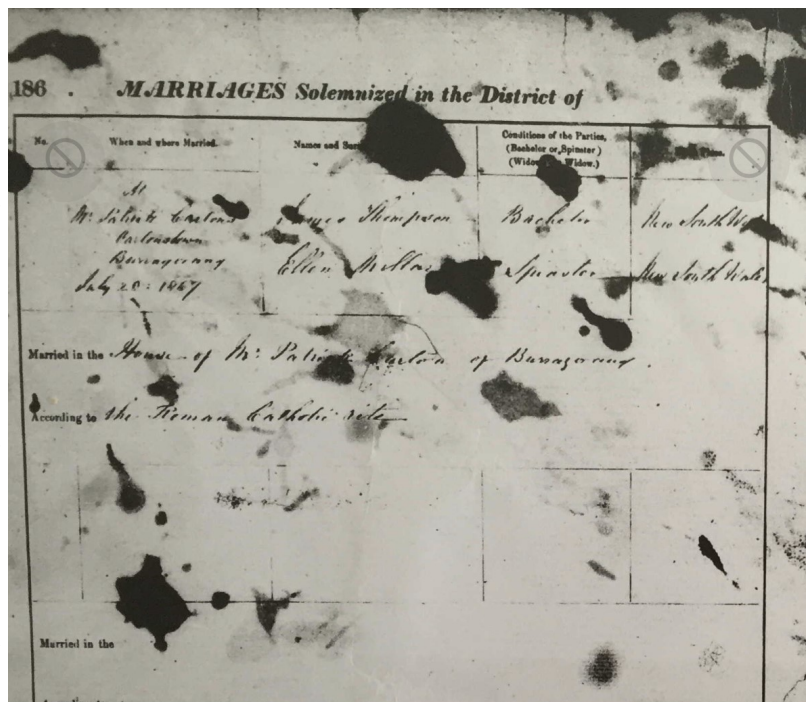
James and Ellen and their family moved to the Oberon area where they took up large tracts of land at Shooters Hill. The Bathurst Free Press & Mining Journal of 10th Feb 1890 reported 'Accident- On Saturday afternoon a boy of 14 years of age named Charles Thompson, a son of Mr James Thompson of Shooters Hill, while driving a horse and cart about half a mile from Oberon met with an accident. The vehicle capsized and the boy was thrown out, alighting on his head and fracturing his skull. He was taken to Mr Moores Hotel and Dr

McCormack instantly attended to him. Consciousness returned but the lad is not yet out of danger.'

There were 9 children born to James and Ellen with the first few births registered at Picton and the later ones registered over the mountains.

James P. Thompson died on 19th October 1898 at The Oaks aged 62 and is buried at Saint Aloysius Cemetery The Oaks.

Mary Ann Thompson b1839 (to James & Teresa a twin) went on to marry William James Maxwell, twin to John Joseph Maxwell and they had 10 children and lived at Kedumba Valley in the Blue Mountains. This Maxwell family is closely related to the Maxwell family of Bimlow, Burragorang Valley. ■



James P Thompson 1835-1898

Pictured:

Top- Marriage Certificate of James & Ellen.

Right-Grave of James P Thompson at St Aloysius

Sources: Trove/Ancestry/Carlons Town by Damain Gleeson.



WEEKEND ROSTER

SEPTEMBER

Doreen & Ben	Saturday, 6
Vicki & Linda	Sunday, 7
Tony & Kevin	Saturday, 13
Bev & David	Sunday, 14
Sonya & Trish	Saturday, 20
Kaye & Jim	Sunday, 21
Working Bee	Saturday, 27
Marlane/Cheryl/Kate/ Pam	Sunday, 28

SUPPER

ROSTER

September



Noelene & Trish

BUNBURY TREFOIL GUILD presents "WILD ABOUT WARATAHS" FUNDRAISER MORNING TEA

**Date: Tuesday 16th September 2025
10am – 1pm**

Location:

Brimstone Waratahs 25 Wild Oaks Rd, The Oaks NSW 2570

Cost & Inclusions:

\$15- Morning Tea, Farm walk, Guest Speaker.



We are holding a Guessing Competition: \$1per Ticket (Cash please)

Book through: <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1407649> (Use Ctrl key & Left Click your Mouse to activate the link)

If you have any questions please contact Jenny Rombi Bunbury T/G Secretary: Mob: 0425249301 Email: lori-keet1858@gmail.com

[keet1858@gmail.com](mailto:lori-keet1858@gmail.com)

Reminders, News & Info



General Meeting

Monday, 1st September 2025 at 7pm

Our Guest Speaker

Jim Ollis talking about growing up in The Oaks in the 1950's

Meeting followed by supper/ All welcome

**FREE
ENTRY**

**GET
READY
WEEKEND**

PREPARE FOR BUSH FIRE.

DATE: SATURDAY 20TH SEPT TIME: 9:00AM-1:00PM

THE OAKS RURAL FIRE BRIGADE



- The Oaks RFS BRAND NEW STATION
- Bush Fire Preparation Stand
- Warragamba Fire Rescue
- Wollondilly SES
- Historic Gallery Wall Display
- Police Mounted Unit
- Police Detective & Highway
- Jumping Castle

- Face Painters
- Ice Cream Van
- Sausage Sizzle
- C91.3FM



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 September 1st 2025 followed by the 6th October 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.

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