

The Oaks Historical Society Inc

Est. May 1979

The Oaks Historical Society Inc.
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Newsletter

MAY 2026

Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

THE STATE HERITAGE REGISTER

by Sonya Male

Wollondilly has over 700 items listed on the NSW State Heritage Register – ranging from buildings and landscapes to movable equipment such as steam locomotives and train carriages.

So what exactly is the State Heritage Register and what protection does it afford for our historically significant items?

The New South Wales State Heritage Register is an official list of objects of significant importance to the people of New South Wales. Established under the *Heritage Act 1977*, the Register provides a formal framework for identifying, protecting, and managing items that contribute to the state's cultural, historical, architectural, archaeological and social history. It means that listed items are highly protected - requiring Heritage Council approval for most alterations, demolition, or development – with the objective of ensuring their conservation. For buildings, the surrounding land is also assessed to ensure that any adjacent development does not negatively affect the heritage item. Owners of items on the Register are eligible to receive specialist advice from the Heritage Council and may also apply for financial assistance (such as heritage grants).

Items that can be placed on the Register include buildings, precincts, landscapes, archaeological sites and movable objects – but their value to the community must extend beyond

a local area and they need to contribute to the broader story of New South Wales.



Warragamba Dam

The key protection afforded by heritage listing is statutory control over change. Any major works, alterations, or development affecting a listed item needs approval from the NSW Government (usually via a heritage permit issued by the Heritage Council). This ensures that changes are carefully assessed and that the significance of the item is conserved. Demolition is strongly discouraged and, in most cases, would not be approved unless exceptional circumstances exist.



Appin Massacre Cultural Landscape

Importantly, listing does not prevent all change or adaptive reuse. Rather, it encourages sympathetic management, allowing heritage places to remain relevant and usable while retaining their defining characteristics. Owners are responsible for the ongoing care of listed items (including weatherproofing, security and fire protection) and minimum maintenance standards apply to prevent neglect or deterioration. There are certain exemptions so that owners are not burdened with unnecessary hardship.

Through nomination and community engagement, local groups can help ensure that places of importance are recognised and protected for future generations.

Continued page 5.....



President's Annual Report

Trish Hill

It is my pleasure to present this year's President's Report on behalf of The Oaks Historical Society Inc., proud custodians of the Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum, now 38 years on. Over the past year, our Society has continued to thrive thanks to the dedication, enthusiasm and generosity of our volunteers. We are fortunate to have a fantastic team who give their time across many areas of our operations, ensuring the continued success and growth of our organisation.

I would also like to sincerely acknowledge and thank our Executive team for their ongoing support throughout the year. The role of President is made significantly easier through their support, commitment, and willingness to share the workload—it is truly a team effort, and I am very grateful for their contribution.

Our weekend roster remains strong, with volunteers consistently providing a welcoming and informative experience for visitors to the Museum. Their knowledge and passion for local history are at the heart of what we offer to the community.

Our schools education program and visiting group tours have also been a highlight. These programs play an important role in connecting people—especially younger generations—with the rich history of our region. The positive feedback we receive is a testament to the effort and preparation that goes into delivering these experiences.

Behind the scenes, a committed group has been working diligently on archiving, cataloguing, and digitising our extensive collection of photographs and historical records. This work is vital in preserving our history and making it more accessible for future generations. Their consistency and attention to detail deserve special recognition.

We were also very pleased to receive funding through the Community Building Partnership Program. This support has enabled the installation of four tablets, including sound capa-

bility, which will allow visitors—particularly children—to engage with short stories connected to our exhibitions and the history of Wollondilly. This initiative enhances the visitor experience and provides an accessible, interactive way to share our stories.

Our monthly working bees, held on the last Saturday of each month, continue to be well attended and highly productive. These gatherings not only help maintain and improve our facilities but also foster a strong sense of community and shared purpose among members.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to our friends, Ben and Doreen Lyon, who have been part of this organisation from its very beginning and are now retiring. Their dedication, knowledge, and commitment have helped shape the Society into what it is today. They have set the standard for excellence across all aspects of our museum operations, and their contribution will leave a lasting legacy. They will be greatly missed, and we wish them all the very best for the future.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank our Society Patrons, Judith Hannan MP and Ben Taylor, CEO of Wollondilly Shire Council, for their ongoing support and interest in the work of our Society. Their encouragement is greatly valued.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on preserving our local heritage, expanding our collection, and enhancing the visitor experience. With such a dedicated and capable team, I am confident that the Society is well positioned for the future.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to sincerely thank all our volunteers, members, supporters, and benefactors within our broader museum community, whose generosity and ongoing support are so greatly appreciated. Your contributions—whether through time, expertise, or resources—are the foundation of everything we achieve ■



Schoolies Annual Report

Bev Batros

Our School Program continued in 2025/26 due to the valuable work of our volunteers. Eleven people regularly attend each Thursday and are extremely experienced with their service ranging from 3 years to 20 years. Of the regular eleven, seven will be 80 or over in 2026, quite a remarkable statistic. We also have 7 enthusiastic reserves and the school program could not function without them. In a time where many organisations are struggling to get volunteers, having 18 people regularly available is very impressive.

In 2025 we filled 28 weeks, which was the same as 2024. Our new schools were Hilltop, Leppington and Kearns, plus we had 3 home school groups and a small group from Buzy Bee Preschool at The Oaks. There was a welcome return from Picton High's special needs group. The average number of pupils attending each week was approximately 41 which

meant a profit of about \$180 each week. Obviously, this is only a side benefit of what we consider to be an important educational experience.

In 2026 we have 18 weeks booked so far and Term 2 which has just begun involves 11 weeks straight. At this stage we only have 3 weeks booked for the new Kindergarten Program and we are delighted to say schools are still coming despite the Syllabus changes. At the end of 2025 we modified our program for Kindergarten, ready for the syllabus that will become mandatory in 2027 ■



Treasurer & Marketing Annual Report

Vicki Madeley & Team

It has been a busy year and my first in the Treasurer's role combined with the Marketing role. We continue to grow as a small business run by volunteers and we must acknowledge the team effort in making our Museum work. Without the volunteers we couldn't maintain the income to keep us operational. The varied and continued marketing has proved successful in attracting bus groups and visitors through the doors on the weekends. The schools' groups also add to the program of things to do at the centre and has been able to modify and adapt the program to gain continued bookings this year thanks to the dedicated team in the Schoolies department. The shop continues to grow and is providing a good source of income. The changes made in the set out and the benefit of the EFTPOs and the Register which now compliments the shop and makes the accounting and service to the public a lot easier. I congratulate all the volunteers for learning and adapting to this new technology which enables people to spend more money. A definite increase in book and shop sales has been seen this year. A shout out to Sonya who has helped in the shop front and advice on accounting as I learned the Treasurer's role.

Other changes we have made to streamline the income and expenditure costs were the cancellation of the skip bin Remondis Service and the addition of extra free council bins. Our Telstra bill increased in line with everyone's monthly bill. We changed Energy provider and got an improved deal for our electricity.

The Heritage Trades Day was added to the calendar for the first time and was a great success with positive feedback from community and stall holders. Financially it was a real boost to our income stream.

Entry was increased to \$5.00 per adult with no fee for children and has increased our entry income already.

A detailed treasurers report will be delivered at the AGM, the following are the top take aways....

Bus groups and the School program are our main sources of income followed by the sales in the shop which has increased dramatically. Donations have been very generous this year. The Events that we run such as the Heritage Trades Day, book launches and other special days are also a good source of income. Memberships, Research and weekend visitors provide a steady source of income over the year.

We obtained a grant this year of \$17,070.00 for the touch screens and we are installing them on the 5th May 2026. Jeff has been a great help getting the content sorted and has spent many hours formatting the tech to suit the touch screens. They have been fully paid for now with the grant money. A great collaboration with the Camden Men's Shed has seen the boxes to house the touch screen made by them and the materials were sponsored by [Caldwell Martin Cox Solicitors](#), thus a zero cost for us. We are very grateful to the Camden's men Shed and Caldwell Martin Cox Solicitors.

Our website is also well used by the public to gain information about the Museum so the public can plan their visits and make bookings. Thanks to Vanessa for maintaining the site. Go to www.wollondillymuseum.org.au

Face Book Followers 2212 people.

Instagram Followers 107 people

We get over 20,000 viewers on our posts and 56,000 views on some posts.

We can be assured we are in a good financial position at present and we get lots of publicity through our social media platforms ■

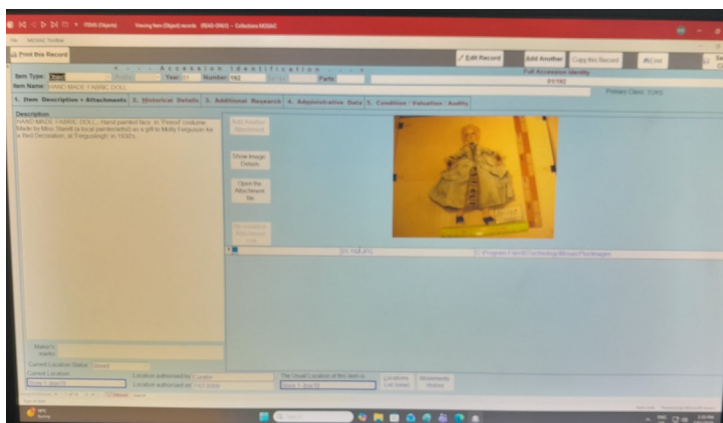
Vicki, Vanessa, Sonya & Jeff



Acquisitions Annual Report

Allen Seymour

The past twelve months has seen new 48 Mosaic entries. In total there are now 5542 Mosaic entries. The actual number of items in the collection will be higher as some entries have more than one item. Not all items offered to us are accepted as some have no local relevance or are duplicates of items already in the collection. A number of



items have been removed from the collection over the years, some because they were damaged, others because they were not relevant, while others that were on loan and have been returned.

Work is continuing on the scanning of the Alp negatives and currently about 4000 have now been done ■



Family History & Local Archives Annual Report

Sue Davis

Our Thursday morning team of Helen Perry, Judy Murdoch, Steve Devitt, Janet Howe, Geoff Howe, Tony Jackson, Laura Windred and myself have been continuing to navigate our way through cataloguing and organising of Liz Vincent Collection, newspapers, Sonja Den Hertog research papers, Family History and Local History files as well as researching enquiries. Tony's mammoth task continues with the organising of the Liz Vincent Collection. Geoff's indexing of the newspapers will be invaluable. Steve has been helping with the research for history of the naming of roads in Wollondilly. The team is often joined by librarian, Vivian Allen, who continues to add her history wisdom as always. Vivian has been training Helen to assist in the library. Laura has joined the team to help digitise some of our oral history tapes. Digitising our records is becoming a focus for us. We are often assisted by President Trish and her expertise is much appreciated.

In August, 2025 we joined in with National Family History Month and gave researchers free of fee research time.

In September, 2025, we participated in the History Council, History Week of "Water". Our event highlighted our Burragorang Valley Exhibition. Sue conducted a Family History workshop at the Heritage Trades Fair. Sue also represented The Oaks Historical Society as guest speaker at the Wollondilly Library with a presentation on "Wonderful Wollondilly Water".

In October, 2025, Sue and Joceline were to attend Regional

forum for Museums and Galleries but both were unwell and not able to attend.

In March, 2026, Volunteer, Doreen Lyon, joined with representatives of Picton and Appin Societies in a presentation of *Wollondilly Women in History*. The presentation was part of an International Women's Day afternoon tea organised by the Wollondilly library.

In April/May, 2026, our event connected with the National Trust Australian History Festival of "Changes". We are very pleased to have launched our first book in the series of *Naming Your Street*. The first was *Naming Oakdale Streets* and was capably researched by The Oaks Historical Society volunteer, Steve Devitt. The launch was supported by Oakdale Public School with students illustrating a picture of their house for display during the launch. Many changes were noted from interviews on the day with local long-term residents.

During the past 12 months we continued to receive a mixture of requests for research from online enquiries and face to face enquiries. The types of enquiries are a mix of local family history to that related to property and events. Some requests have needed in-depth research and broadened our research base to include online sources as well as museum resources ■

Sue Davis

Family History and Local Archives

OUR MUSEUM DIGITAL TABLET INSTALLATION SO FAR

In 2025 we secured funding through the Angus Taylor Community Partnership Program to install a series of four small screens along with sound capability in selected exhibition spaces throughout the museum. Vicki and Jeff have been coordinating the process. Jeff has been developing the content behind the scenes. We required timber boxes to house the electronic components and sound bars and so made a call to David Funnell at Camden Men's Shed and they were pleased to be able to help and the project was soon underway. Camden Men's Shed also found a sponsor in Caldwell, Martin & Cox for the materials and were pleased to advise us they could complete the project free of charge. We were able to pick up the boxes



from them this week and next week they will be installed. Thankyou Camden Men's Shed & Caldwell, Martin & Cox.

Pictured left: Men's Shed members Warren, President Michael, Daryl and Ray with Caldwell Martin & Cox Team Jillaine Duve & Bill McGookin.

Left: Carpenters Daryl & Ray with Trish and below the Mens Shed Team at work ■



THE STATE HERITAGE REGISTER continued.....

To list an item on the NSW State Heritage Register, a nomination form must be submitted demonstrating that the item meets at least two of the seven State heritage significance criteria.

The process requires the provision of detailed evidence, including historical research, images and physical descriptions. The Heritage Council of NSW assesses the submission (which includes public consultation and consultation with the Aboriginal Heritage Advisory Panel). The Minister for Heritage makes the final decision on listing based on the Council's recommendation.

The Register represents a balance between preservation and practical use, ensuring that the heritage of New South Wales is both protected and meaningfully sustained.

Pictured opposite top Steam Locomotive 3801 and below Aboriginal Art Shelter at Wilton.

The NSW State Heritage Register can be searched via www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au ■



Vale - Miss Annette Macarthur-Onslow

Miss Annette Macarthur-Onslow (1933 - 2026) died peacefully in her sleep on 25th April 2026. There will be no public funeral but a Memorial is planned sometime in the future.

Annette was a significant Australian writer and illustrator who provided advice, photos and documents, and generous donations to the Camden Historical Society for over fifty years.

Annette studied art at the East Sydney Technical College, worked as a freelance commercial artist in Sydney, and has had a career as a children's writer and book illustrator. In England she was employed in the production department of a publishing firm. In Europe she studied at Salzburg, visited Italy and lived in Paris before returning to England and later to Australia.

Her many books, including *Trim*, *Uhu*, *Round House*, *Minnie* and the *Giant Bamboo Happening* were all well received and she won the Victorian Premier's Children's Book of the Year Award for *Uhu* in 1970. She illustrated twelve books by other writers.

As a descendant of the wool pioneers John and Elizabeth Macarthur, Miss Macarthur-Onslow found herself in the role of family historian. In the 1970s and 80s she painstakingly transcribed various family diaries and archived many albums and sketchbooks held at Camden Park House. She accumulated an important collection of family papers and

photographs at her home at Camden Airport, the very historic 'Hassall Cottage'. She lived close to her two sisters, horticultural writer Pamela (d.2012) and former model Phoebe Atkinson (d.2018).

Annette wrote two special editions of the Camden Historical Society Journal. The first was in 2014 about the history of the Camden airport. The second one in March 2015 was about the life of Lieut. Colonel Astley John Onslow Thompson, the outstanding manager of Camden Park Estate, who died leading an attack on the second day of the Gallipoli campaign.

As a source of advice and historical facts Annette was sought out by many writers, librarians, consultants and family historians. She was always generous with her time and assistance. The Camden Historical Society and Museum benefitted greatly from her advice and support.

Annette was a guest speaker at an early meeting of The Oaks Historical Society whilst we were at The Oaks Pre School.

Annette Macarthur-Onslow was made an Honorary Life Member of Camden Historical Society in 2013 and her name is on the Camden Museum Honour Roll at the museum ■

Information courtesy of John Wrigley

OAKDALE STREET NAMES by Steve Devitt

Our latest publication 'Oakdale Street Names - The stories behind the names' will be launched Sunday 3rd May at The Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum and will be available from our shop. The book aims to reveal the family histories behind some of the street names in Oakdale. The amount of information available from the records varies, as some of the families have a long history going back to the early settlement of Burratorang Valley, while other families have a shorter, more recent history in the region.

Street names provide an everlasting reminder of the hard work and resilience of the pioneers in the district who carved a living from the land and laid the foundations for future settlement.

As the population of the region increases, the new residents can explore the local history and make their own contribution to the story. Hopefully this booklet will provide a good reference for those interested in the stories behind the names.

The Camden News of August 1943, now over eighty years ago reported on many road issues in and around Oakdale and it highlights many of the problems faced by residents.

New Jerusalem Road—Mr M Dietz requested repairs to road of access to his property and on the motion of Crs. R.V. Moore and J.B. Cartwright the request is to be granted.

Bush Fire Brigade—The following appointments were made for the Oakdale area—Mr Jack Cranfield—Captain, Mr. George Dowling—Deputy Captain, Mr Clement W. Sharp—Secretary.

Mr C.C. Pearce Cox's River wrote stating that owing to illness he was unable to resume duties and on the motion of the President and Cr R.V. Moore he is to be informed of the Council's sympathy and that he will be re-engaged when recovered.

That the subsidence on the big culvert at Back Creek on the Camden—Yerranderie Road be attended to. Moved Crs. E. Moore and W.E. Middleton, motion Carried.

In The Camden News of June 1947 many of the Oakdale roads had been a hot topic and the following are those relevant.

The May meeting of the Shire council was attended by Councillors Eric Moore— President, J.T. Carroll, E.H.K. Downes, W.E. Middleton, A. Millard, R.V. Moore and L. Nicolson.

Oakdale Barkers Lodge Road, the road leading through to Mr Russell's property is not dedicated. On the motion of the President and Cr. Downes, Mr Russell be informed accordingly and advised that Council's funds cannot be expended thereon.

Picton-The Oaks Road in the Oaks was failing for need of a re-seal, estimated to cost £160— Recommendation adopted, work to be done conjointly with work on the Main Road.

Sheeys Creek Road—On the motion of the President and Cr Middleton, Mr Franklin is to be advised that Council is prepared to employ local road users to the extent of £20 worth of work provided a similar amount at least of voluntary work is contributed.

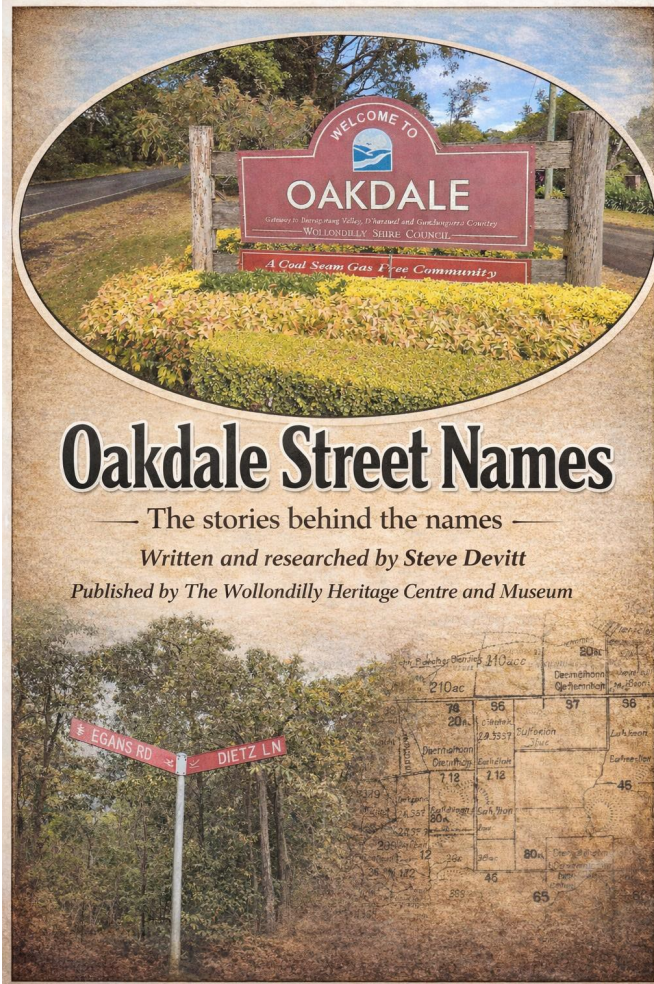
Proposal for a track from Monkey Creek to join Werriberri Road. Mr Stevens and other interested persons to be informed Council's funds cannot be expended on

undedicated roads but Council would be glad to provide engineering advice.

Mr E. Heise wrote advising that he had delivered stores on to Steveys Forest Road, Oakdale near various potholes requiring repair and requesting that a man be made available to fill the holes prior to the road being graded—On the motion of Crs .R.V. Moore and L. Nicolson an employee is to be made available to do this work.

Following a letter from the Burratorang United Progress Association conveying thanks for the promise of a grader. The President moved and Cr Middleton seconded that a lorry and gang be employed on the Nattai-Wentworth Falls Road for two weeks.

At Mr R.J. Ditton's request re New Jerusalem Road the grader is to be put on that road as soon as convenient, moved by Crs. E.H.K. Downes and L. Nicolson ■



Reminders, News & Info

WEEKEND ROSTER

MAY

Trish & Kevin	Saturday, 2
Bev & David	Sunday, 3
Sue & Helen	Saturday, 9
Marlane/Cheryl/Pam B	Saturday, 10
Tony & Kevin	Saturday, 16
Sonya & Vicki	Sunday, 17
Sue & Judy	Saturday, 23
Trish & Kevin	Sunday, 24
Working Bee(Laurette & Phil)	Saturday, 30
Sonya & Trish	Sunday, 31



Annual General Meeting

Monday, 4th May 2026 at 7pm

Membership Renewals are due Now

Meeting followed by supper/ All welcome

EXPLORE THE FESTIVAL



NSW PREMIER STEAM EVENT

Experience the power and spectacle of steam at the Thirlmere Festival of Steam on 16-17 May.

Thirlmere village will once again awaken to the enchanting sound of the steam whistle for the annual Thirlmere Festival of Steam. Enjoy an incredible weekend out and experience the magic of steam with heritage train rides, vintage steam machinery, live entertainment, carnival rides, a street parade and more. Entry to the festival is FREE! Come and enjoy live entertainment, see steam machines in action, and watch steam trains depart right from Thirlmere Station.

Want to really experience the magic of steam? There's even more to see and do with a ticket to enter the NSW Rail Museum, where you can jump on a steam train ride. Or enjoy carnival rides for the whole family at the Festival of Steam Family Carnival! Don't miss this unique and exciting weekend event for the whole family; proudly brought to you by Wollondilly Shire Council and Transport Heritage NSW, operators of the NSW Rail Museum. For further information go to

<https://www.visitwollondilly.com.au/events/thirlmere-festival-of-steam-2026/>

SUPPER



ROSTER

May AGM

Bring a plate



Membership Fees 2026/2027 are now due

Single- \$10.00 / Family -\$18.00

And Newsletter postage is an additional \$20.

However Emailed newsletters are free.

Our Bank details below are for direct credit & please use your surname for the transaction reference to enable us to receipt payment.

Account Name: The Oaks Historical Society Inc.

BSB: 062516 Account # 00904093

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 Annual General Meeting on May 4th 2026 followed by the June 1st General meeting. Our patrons are Judith Hannan MP and Ben Taylor CEO, Wollondilly Shire Council. 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:-
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