

The Oaks Historical Society Inc

Est. May 1979

The Oaks Historical Society Inc.
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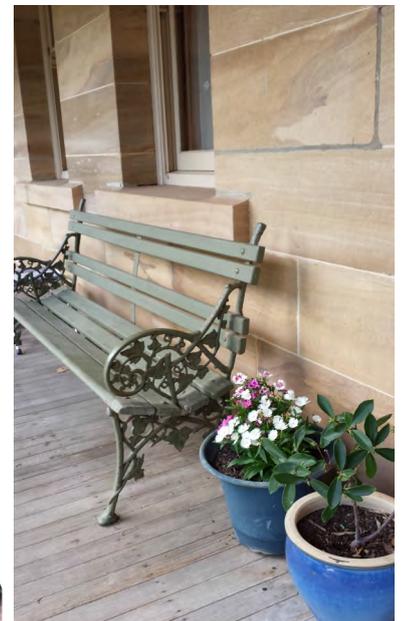


Newsletter

DECEMBER 2015

Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

Pacita's beautiful ELLENSVILLE



◀ Ellensville, Pacita's delightful home. A wedding had taken place in the barn only days before a visit in April this year (see centre photo) Ed.

Historical Society Christmas Party

Saturday 12th December at 6pm

Bring cutlery, nibbles & drinks

Early days outdoor sports /games theme

RSVP to Trish Hill on 0432 689 034



President: Trish Hill (02) 4657 1129 ■ Editor: Jenny Wood ■ Museum Bookings: Maureen Whyte (02) 46571224

President's Report

by Trish Hill



What a great day we had for the opening of our 'Boys from Burratorang & Beyond' exhibition on 8th November. With perfect weather conditions the car park filled early as did the Drill Hall. I would like to thank all of our volunteers for their support from the outset, the 'boys' who worked behind the scenes building the cabinet, everyone who assisted in the development of the exhibition, those who came forward and generously loaned items, organisations and individuals who supported on the day, the kitchen and BBQ team, each and every one of you made an important contribution to the success of the event and for that we thank you.

Moving forward now the focus is on the final stage of our exhibition titled, 'Her War', the stories of our local women during WW1 with the official opening and book launch on Sunday, March 13th 2016. 'Red Poppies and the White Waratah'.



Last month we made an appeal for a bar fridge for the drill hall and within the week Keith Polsen from CPE had delivered one to us. Keith we always appreciate your support and generosity, thanks mate.

Thanks also Marlene Ford and Eileen O'Brien who have provided another fridge additional to the kitchen to



facilitate proper storage when functions are held. Betty Villy organised our very enjoyable tour (on what turned out to be a very hot day) to the Female Factory and Old Government House last Wednesday 18th and generated funds for the building extension. Well done Betty, we're looking forward to the next one. Our

guide talked about the deteriorating condition of the facility and the possibility of building high rise apartments to pay for improvements. News reports since have disclosed that construction has been approved and the income will fund much needed restoration work to the factory and extensive grounds. Our Christmas Party is Saturday 12th December 6.00pm, a reminder to add your name to the list on the front counter or call to confirm.

On that note I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New year and thank you for all you do at The Heritage Centre.

A reminder that the Centre closes after the 20th December through till 26th January though we do have a couple of bookings and may be here working during that time. ■



[Christmas] Protest



From the book
My Scribblings by Gladys Will

It was Christmas Eve in the fowl house
With many a vacant perch.
Moaned George, the big white leghorn rooster,
'I think I've been left in the lurch.
I lost nineteen wives this time, last year.
I'm betting a couple of jacks
That the bloke that clobbered me last night
Was the one that carried the axe.'

Old Betty, the Rhode island spinster
Choked down a big worm with a gulp.
'It's time to do something about it,
Not sit in a corner, and sulk'.

'I told Penny, the pullet from Persia,
The way she goes on makes me ill,
Why can't we act just like humans
And put all the girls on the pill?'

'Without hen fruit there'd be no more
chicks,
No chickens, spell, no bloody eggs.
We wouldn't get chased by the roosters
And run everyday off our legs.'

'My boyfriend, a Plymouth rock cockerel,
Has taken some legal advice
Not to grow any bigger than bantams,
But I don't think that's very nice.'

'Why can't we cross breed with the emus
And start a big hullabaloo
With day old chicks bigger than footballs,
And too tough to bake, boil, or stew.'

'We could shove out our necks at those humans
And with poultry no longer the rage,
We could hatch out our chicks in comfort,
And die in the end of old age!'



Family History & Local Archive Research

by Sue Davis Family Historian/Archivist

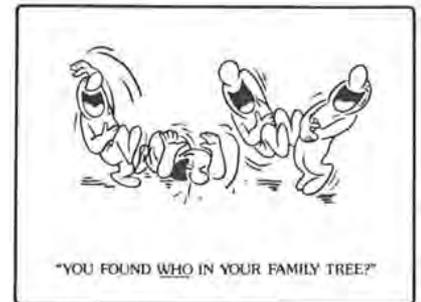


I hope as you catch up with family over the Christmas season that you will ensure you talk about your family history. You never know what new snippets have been discovered. I always enjoy this cartoon that my mother shared with me. She was an amazing family historian who never owned a computer.

A recent research request for support from our museum came from James Gray who is researching **George Nelson**, born 1840. ■

*Happy researching!
Happy Christmas and
best wishes for the new
year!*

Sue Davis,
Family History and Local Archives
davii@bigpond.net.au



Marketing Report

by Louisa Singleman



Bus Tours

This year is almost to an end and most people are thinking about the festive season. Have you thought about having a celebration in our wonderful undercover area. A great way to avoid the mess at home! Its not too late to contact our booking officer on 4657 1224.

November has been a very quiet month in relation to bus tours but last weekend saw the Illawarra Classic Car Club visit us bringing with them their prized collection of cars. They showed a great interest in our new exhibition *The Boys From Burraborang & Beyond in WWI*. If you haven't seen it yet come along at the weekend before our Christmas break.

Once again thanks to our volunteers who work so hard to make our visitors so welcome and thanks to Maureen for helping out with my tasks while I was on holiday.

Tourism

The Wollondilly Shire Council is preparing a new tourist guide for the shire in which we have a small advertisement. The Council has kindly given us some space free of charge so many thanks to them.

The Wollondilly Tourist Association Inc (WTAI) is still awaiting a report from the Australian Tourism Association regarding ways and means the Wollondilly Shire can be better advertised as a tourist destination.

Thirlmere Steam Festival Sunday, 6 March 2016

Bookings for this event are already in the pipeline. The event is being organised by Emma Sputnik the CEO of the Picton Creative Markets so no doubt there will be a few changes.

Keep this date in mind if you are able to give a hand on the day. ■

Christmas Bush for His Adorning

*School Magazine
November 1973—3 P.291*

All the bells are gaily ringing,
Birds in every tree are singing;
Let us in the golden weather,
Gather Christmas bush together.

Christ is born! The angels thunder
Thro' the heavens their tale of wonder,
While we pluck for His adorning
Christmas bush this hallowed morning.

Christ has conquered Evil's power,
Hear the bells rock every tower;
Birds and beasts lift up their voices,
Freed at last the world rejoices.

Onward with triumphant chorus,
Following the road before us,
Singing through the golden weather,
Gathering Christmas bush together.

*John Wheeler
Taken from
'Five Australian
Christmas Carols'*



Exhibition opening by Angus Taylor MP

Sunday, 8th November Boys From Burraborang & Beyond in WWI



Photographer Robyn Gill



Report on 2015 RAHS Conference Saturday, 24th October by Doreen Lyon

The venue was Bankstown Sports Club (an amazing palace of sport and leisure) and the theme was 'Migration matters'. The keynote speaker was David Hill who spoke of the British Child Migrant Experience. He came to Australia under the Fairbridge Farm School Child Migrant scheme in 1959 and has described his experience and those of others in his book, 'The Forgotten Children'. This was a significant study into child migration which has contributed to many subsequent books and exhibitions, including our own 'With the Best of Intentions' and the Migration Museums', 'Alone'.

The Fairbridge scheme was initiated by Kingsley Fairbridge. He was a Rhodes scholar born in South Africa who saw children abandoned in British institutions and the potential for improved lives in the Colonies. He set up a series of farm schools in Pinjarra, Western Australia and Molong, NSW.

The first children under this scheme were brought out in 1938 by Frederick Kynnersley Smythies Woods (1907-1977) who is buried at St. Matthews, Old Oaks. He came to live in The Oaks just about the same time as we did and we became good friends with him and his wife Doris. In fact Doris was the person who initiated The Oaks Historical Society! He shared with us many memories of his period as 'the Boss' at Fairbridge which was a new story for us as we had never heard of the child migrant schemes at this stage. We were to learn much more of these stories in the next 30 years!

Other speakers took different approaches to the stories of migrants and the choice of Bankstown was appropriate as **Sue Rosen** explained in her study of the area in 1990s 'A Sense of Identity'. She gave some interesting statistics of the development of the area and the changes to migration.

Tim Carroll, Bankstown Youth Development Service, described his work using oral history/theatre/music/film. He creates opportunities for cross cultural exchange as well as cross generational projects and had some interesting examples to share.

Anne Parry, an educational consultant, explained her current project for the Federation of Australian Historical Societies to write a set of online guidelines to assist historical societies develop their own educational programs. Some of her ideas included

- Linking your collection to the curriculum. (eg if your museum has a strong migration story this could be promoted to schools who are studying migration)
- Use your website to link themes to the curriculum
- For schools who cannot afford to visit consider going to them with museums in a box. Encourage children to think outside the square by using objects to examine issues such as: Who do you think used this? How did they use it? Were they poor or rich? And so on.

Liz Rushen shared some of her findings into government schemes to encourage migration to Australia which she has written about in her PhD 'Single & Female; female migration to Australia 1833-1837' and other books. Understanding the colonial processes of selection of migrants is essential to understanding how Australia developed. We are all migrants!

Bruce Pennay is a historian working on the Bonegilla migrant camp. He is fascinated by the photographs taken by migrants when they first came and how they relate to the official photos used in government migration schemes. The hundreds of photos in family albums show how migration mattered to those undertaking the experience and those are the ones which are often available to historical societies and local history museums. They are a valuable source of stories and experiences.

We are on the right track but need to keep collecting stories. ■

Conference Reports



Report on Regional Stakeholders Forum on 13 November by Sue Davis

Doreen Lyon and I attended the Regional Stakeholders Forum at the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (Powerhouse Museum) on Friday, 13 November.

The forum is held in partnership with M&G of NSW and Regional Arts NSW. This forum is an annual event and opportunity for the NSW regional sector to meet and discuss issues relating to their sector. The one-day forum is aimed at supporting smaller volunteer-run regional museums and galleries by programming relevant speakers. Representatives from NSW cultural institutions working in the regional sector attend, as do regional advisors, thus providing networking opportunities. The event is free to stakeholders.

Some points of interest were:

- Andrew Gray, General Manager, South East Arts explained how museums could enliven displays by engaging local artists. An example given was the Waterways Museum which took place at the Moruya Showground Pavilion in May. This can now be accessed online.
- Caroline Downer, Regional Development Officer, Arts North West spoke on practical ideas to developing the visitor experience. Some of the ideas included being involved in 'Museum Selfie Day' on 20 January and posting the photographs on social media; combine with local community organisations to promote museum events; using local collections as models for art clubs to sketch; conduct a music-athon in the museum; allow local theatre groups to use props from the collection.
- Elliott Bledsoe, Communications Manager, Queensland Writers Centre explained the benefits of 'crowd funding' through social media. This might be useful for our building fund!
- Harlan Hall, Berrima District Museum outlined the funding process for their extension for their WWI exhibition.
- Brett Dunlop, Director Museums, The Sovereign Hill Museums Association - each year museums need to promote themselves differently to change how people perceive the museum.
- Kevin Williams, Arts Development Officer, Arts Mid North Coast - become involved in cultural tourism in your area. Join local tourism groups. Ensure brochures have good photography and are included in booklets in motels on what to do in the area. Go on Trip Advisor and respond to any comment visitors make about your museum. Provide a special experience for each guest. Conduct a cost analysis of other tourism activities. Conduct a postcode survey for market research.

The forum provided some valuable ideas and I would recommend others to attend next year. The location was ideal and we had a short time to appreciate some of the displays. ■

Parramatta Female Factory & Old Government House

Our history tour and lunch took place on a very hot Wednesday, 18th November. Another great day out for our members.



Old Government House ↑



Top right: Old Government House & remainder of photos: Parramatta's workhouse (Female Factory) buildings - now the Mental Health Sciences Centre



Preston McIntosh Piano Accordionist

Locals identities
Preston McIntosh and Sheila Strahan rehearse in the Drill Hall most Saturdays and we approached Preston, a long time resident of The Oaks, for his story. He quickly responded with a short account of his musical life.

Our thanks to Preston's wife Val for writing his story for us. The top photo shows him playing at the Wollondilly Country Music Club at Picton Bowling Club. Preston always has a kind word for everyone.

"I was born in The Oaks on the family dairy farm 'Glendiver' 86 years ago.

My mother, aunt, two sisters, brother, my wife, son,

daughter, two granddaughters (ballroom dancers), all musical. I learnt music at an early age from my mother and aunt (classical piano) and was always interested in the piano accordion.

Back then we had friends from Sydney come for the weekend and Saturday nights were sing-a-longs around the piano. There were slide nights at the local hall with words and a neighbour on the piano, some dancing as well, (no TV and only battery wireless on the farm), everyone would come along, great suppers!

An older school friend was a piano accordionist, he entertained on the harbour cruises, and he taught me the basics of the instrument, then I had a few lessons in Sydney.

I joined the Gwen Jenkins Old Time Dance Band for about 4 years playing 3 times a week. That taught me good timing. When Gwen passed away, my brother Owen (guitar) and a friend Colin (singer), introduced me to country music.

Since retiring from my business I play at nursing homes and retirement villages, or restaurants in Narellan Sunday lunchtime. I have been playing there 4 years, plus the music clubs."

Jenny Wood ■

Sheila and Preston at the Centre ↓



Volunteer Weekend Roster

News & Info

DECEMBER	
Saturday, 5th	WORKING BEE
Sunday, 6th	Ray & Robyn
Saturday, 12th	Jim & Maureen
Sunday, 13th	Ben & Doreen
Saturday, 19th	Bob & Vivian
Sunday, 20th	Trish & Kevin

CENTRE CLOSED

Tuesday, 26th January 2016	Ben & Doreen
Saturday, 30th	Jim & Maureen
Sunday, 31st	Louisa & Doreen

BRING AN INTERESTING OR MYSTERY OBJECT

Everyone please also bring a small plate of food



IMPORTANT EVENTS 2016

FIRST MEETING—Monday, 1 February

THIRLMERE STEAM FESTIVAL Sunday, 6 March

EXHIBITION OPENING *'Her War'* Sunday, 13 March

EASTER Good Friday, 25 March

OUR 'SENIORS WEEK' EVENT Monday, 4 April

The story theme is

"Your most memorable job or mode of transport"



Our Christmas party

Saturday, 12 December 2015

Its time to sit back and enjoy yourself after a busy year

The party commences at 6pm & nibbles and drinks will be served in the Burraborang Cottage

Bring along your own cutlery, nibbles and drinks

Expect some interesting outdoor games from the early 20th century just like last year

ANTHONY HORDERNS, SYDNEY

"From every part of the globe to every part of Australia Anthony Horderns' distribute merchandise of every kind." Anthony Hordern & Sons, Manufacturers and universal providers, New Palace Emporium, Brickfield Hill, Sydney. Free carriage of goods to the value of 2 pound and 10 shillings and upwards. Parcels by passenger trains. Here are some indoor and outdoor games from the June 1931 Anthony Horderns' mail order catalogue that might have been Christmas gifts: Lawn tennis sets, wood skittles, draughts, chess, dominoes, darts, Ludo, snakes and ladders, tiddlewinks, table tennis and ping pong midget bagatelle and bobs sets.

"Our own make" clothing - Cricketing and tennis suits consisting of coat and trousers only from 25/- to 35/-." Note the cigarette!!!



MONTHLY MEETINGS: The Oaks Historical Society Inc. holds its meetings on the first Monday of each month (except January) at the Wollondilly Heritage Centre, 43 Edward Street, The Oaks starting at 7.00pm. **The next meeting will be 1st February 2016.** Our patrons are Mr. Philip Costa and Mr. Richard Booth. 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 at the Heritage Centre.



Merry Christmas members—thanks for another wonderful year

Special mention was made at our business meeting of the dedication of our volunteer teams throughout the year and especially at our recent exhibition.... from the impressive work in building the display cases through to opening day. Many positive comments have been passed along.

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

