

The Oaks Historical Society Inc

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Newsletter

August 2023

Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

JUST AN OLD TRUNK OR IS IT?

By Noelene Mainwaring

Recently while cleaning out an old trunk, my mum Shirley Carlon has had for years, I wondered what stories it could tell. It was given to Shirley's mother, Vera Tickner from her Uncle Harry Hanger. Vera's father Jack and Harry were brothers. Uncle Harry said this trunk came out from England when the family came to Australia. Harry lived at 'Tennyson' a big old house (now demolished) on Montpelier Drive near the junction of Evelyn's Range Road. The trunk was here at this house when Harry's parents George & Matilda lived there in the 1800's.

When researching trunks I discovered there were quite a few different types. They can be known as steamer trunks because they were used on steam powered ships or travelling and cabin trunks. They were designed to withstand the rigours of travel by steamship, train & stagecoach in the 19th & early 20th century.

This trunk pictured, is made of timber slats with steel straps,

leather side handle, front lock and two locking latches, is paper lined and has an arched lid. The trunks with these lids are referred to as a dome lid, camel back, hump back or barrel trunk. The arch lid meant the trunk had to be stacked on top or stand alone. The dome top also prevented water pooling on top, which

was a concern when travelling at sea. This trunk has small inbuilt wheels which would be handy for transporting.

Inside the lid of this trunk there is an image (pictured) of a young lady. I discovered these trunks have different images of girls inside the lids and are called chromolithograms. Chromolithography is a method for making multi-coloured prints & lithograms are black & white. The trunks often had

different compartments, sections and lift out trays for packing clothes & hat boxes.

Now.... to find out who the trunk came to Australia with? Did it belong to Matilda Hanger's mother, Celia Willis née Mitchell or maybe her mother-in-law, Mary Hanger née Dooling? Both of these ladies had married convicts so the trunk did not come with those men. This research lead me to discover that Mary Hanger (Dooling) was sent to Australia with the



Earl Grey Orphan scheme from Ireland in 1849. She worked for Henry Colden Antill at Jarvisfield for 12 months before marrying Henry Hanger in 1850 at St John's Church Camden and that Mary is listed with the Earl Grey Scheme girls at Hyde Park Barracks.

The details included in Mary's record at the Barracks read: Native of Baltinglass, Wicklow. Age on arrival-19, parents John & Catherine both deceased, Ship-Lady Peel Sydney 3 Jul 1849, housemaid, reads & writes, no relatives in colony. Empl. Major HC Antill, Jarvisfield, £10, 1 year; married in Camden

1850, husband Henry Hanger, an ex-convict, shoemaker & farmer; 9 children; lived Minto & Camden districts; Mary died 1912; buried Narellan. Her obituary in the Camden News 30 Nov 1912 described her as having a 'heart of gold and a strong constitution'. So, just an old trunk, is it really?

■

Details of The Earl Grey scheme over on page 5....



President's Report

Trish Hill

It amazes just how fast the weeks between newsletters fly by and we just breathe a sigh of relief that we've completed one, emailed and posted and suddenly its time to go again. I took a look back to the newsletter of August 22 and noted that we needed some respite from the rain and now it is so dry we really need rain.

Our car park has been resealed and I'd like to thank the great team at Council who liaised with us to get the work done in such a seamless manner. Thankyou, it is very much appreciated.

Last Saturday we had lots of our volunteers for the working bee and got through a tremendous amount of work, they just never know when to stop. Fantastic job everyone, our museum is looking great .

This month is National Family History Month and Sue has some excellent tips below. Last month as we were finalising the newsletter, member and author of 'Carlons Town', Damian Gleeson contacted me and sent through this months page 4 story for which I am most grateful. Being Family History Month this was perfect timing so thankyou Damian and Noelene Mainwaring has had some success as you will read in her 'Just an Old Trunk' story. Both great family history stories.

School groups commence again this week after term 2 holidays and extended by a cancellation of one school.

The first since Covid, this week we had a visiting student group from the Koshigaya Host program who were just a delight.

Our condolences to Kaye and Jim Cuthel ■



Family History & Local Archive Report

Sue Davis

Last month we looked at finding family history records on your own bookshelves. Did you find any special books with inscriptions? I am still finding things that continue to amaze me!

August is National Family History Month.

What will you do to find out more about your family? If you have ancestors from the Wollondilly Area then we could help you using our various retrieval systems. Here are some other ideas from Ancestry.com...

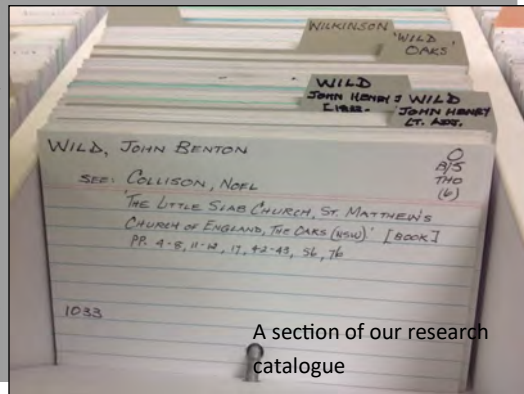
1. Have your DNA tested

Millions of people across the globe have chosen to do a DNA test in recent years. It's a terrific way of discovering more about your heritage, and finding cousins you didn't know existed. It's easy with [AncestryDNA](#) – you just need a sample of saliva – and your results will be available in 6-8 weeks. (I have used this and originally as a bit of fun but have found it useful in finding some missing folk on my family tree. I always double check authenticity by using the NSW Births, Deaths and Marriages website)

2. Focus on overcoming one brick wall

It can be daunting when there is lots of information missing on your family tree. Just like anything else, break it down into specific areas and set realistic goals. Then choose one thing that you want to discover this year and focus only on that. Perhaps it's to find a grave of an ancestor, or to un-

cover the ship on which your ancestor arrived. Targeting one thing will help you feel like you've accomplished your goals, which will incentivise you to keep going!



A section of our research catalogue

3. Reorganise your files

Scan those old photographs and name them, back up your research, labels your files properly, update software and throw out or shred anything that you no longer need. It'll help you focus and you'll feel like spending more time researching when it's well organised.

4. Interview a family member

We all make promises to ourselves that, one day, we'll interview family members and record their trip down memory lane. Make 2023 the year you do that. And you don't need a lot of technology – taking a video on your smartphone will do the trick. There're loads of free editing software out there if you want to get a bit more creative. Just make sure you save everything and create a backup file as well.

We have recently been helping the Small Family with research resources. Currently we are looking for a picture of Orangeville Public School before it was burnt down in 1963. Can anyone help with a copy?

Start searching for ancestral recipe books for our special event in History Week, 3-10 September. More information next newsletter ■

Happy researching!



Acquisitions Report

Allen Seymour

Still pretty quiet, but there has been a fair bit to process. We have a box of paperwork from the Orangeville Agricultural Bureau operating from the 1950's through to the 1970's including minutes, correspondence, president's reports etc. Lots of well-known local families in this. I've tried to detail what's there, but it's very difficult to cover everything.

On the mining side we've received a number of items from Bill Twedde. Bill was head of marketing at Clutha from 1978 until its closure, and was dealing with overseas clients, and these are souvenir items that were given to clients such as a clock, drink coasters, timber box, all en-

graved with Australiana such as Koala, kangaroo, cockatoo etc. There is a helmet from the official opening of the Tahmoor complex in 1981.

Other items include a three-foot folding rule used by Bill Tickner, a folding steel shearers bed which has been installed in the cottage. The glass cabinet from the cottage has been relocated to the school room. From the Butler family comes a number of boiler certificates for the boiler that was at the Dairy Farmers Milk Depot in Camden and covering the years 1965 to 1970.

Another item is a flyer for Loxton Park Estate at Chatswood created by A. R. Lhuede, Val's father, and one of the streets is named Valerie Street ■



Display Officer

Doreen Lyon

During the last term of Council through the Heritage Advisory Group we discussed the 'Kungla' Building / Store at Thirlmere and how it might be improved visually and have its history projected to the community. We are pleased the project is almost completed. The Kungla sign on top has been cleaned and a storyboard will soon be mounted on the wall at the entry with an unveiling ceremony planned for the 30th September. Following the unveiling there will be an afternoon tea in the park. This project was completed with funding through the Estonian Cultural Foundation.

The History Council History Week 2023 event 2nd-10th September theme is *Voices from the Past*. Come and join us on Sunday 10th September with 'Stories From the Kitchen'. Bring along an old Recipe book (maybe grandparents) that provide recipes or stories and if you like bring a dish cooked from the book to share. From 11am at The Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum. Entry FREE if you bring along a recipe book.



KUNGLA PÖLLUMEESTE ÜHING

(This storyboard commemorates the)

KUNGLA FARMERS' ASSOCIATION



Established in 1938 and later constituted as THIRLMERE FARMERS' CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED

This building with its iconic sign KUNGLA, represents the endeavors of many hardy people who came to Australia after the First and Second World Wars. Amongst those people who found sanctuary in Thirlmere, were Estonians who arrived with very little and soon established the beginnings of a local poultry industry.



Members of the Estonian Farmers community loading the Alp Brothers' truck with wheat stored at Thirlmere Rail before the Co-operative was built.

To overcome logistical issues, the Kungla Farmers' Association was established in 1938. In 1952 this organization was reconstituted as the Thirlmere Farmers' Co-Operative Society Limited.

Following the creation of the Co-operative, the original store was constructed on this site. The building was crowned with the KUNGLA sign which, legend has it, was adopted from the epic Estonian poem Kalevipoeg - meaning a land of opportunity.

During the 1960's and 1970's the store, under the leadership of the Co-Operative, had a very successful commercial life as the poultry industry in the Thirlmere district prospered. At the time, it was described as The Largest Egg Producing District in NSW. However, due to the imposition of a range of negative economic and regulatory conditions during the late 1970's and early 1980's, the local poultry industry declined and as a result, the Co-Operative was officially wound up on 9th June, 1982.

Whilst the ownership of the building and land has changed several times since then, the Kungla sign has been retained and its historical significance has been recognized by Wollondilly Shire Council as a heritage item.

It is acknowledged that the maintenance of the Kungla sign has been made possible by the Estonian Cultural Foundation of Australia and the Wollondilly Shire Council



"Welcome to Thirlmere postcard featuring (from top left-hand side and clockwise) the following Estonian land marks – the Estonian Church, "Welcome to Thirlmere, Australia", Estonian Hall, typical farm, Estonian Retirement Village and the Kungla Co-operative."

John McMahon's 1827 letter from 'Borrogarang' by Damian Gleeson

One aspect of early colonial New South Wales that has not received much historical coverage is the intractable dilemma faced by convicts who had left behind families in Ireland and England. This situation applied to a greater number of Irish convicts, because of three factors: Irish convicts were generally two to three years older than English counterparts; Ireland had the highest marriage rate in western Europe and very low rates of unofficial cohabitation outside of cities, such as Dublin and Cork; and the Irish married at exceptionally low ages before the 1840s Famine, the average age for females was fifteen years.

Families of convicts in Ireland experienced considerable despair, hardship, and loneliness.

They had lost their sole breadwinner and often too, there was little community support, regardless of whether their convict spouse had been unjustly transported or was a political prisoner. Following the introduction of an NSW government assisted migration scheme in 1817, which historian Perry McIntyre has detailed in her excellent book, *Free Passage* (Irish Academic Press, 2011) many well behaved convicts were eligible to apply for a free passage after serving a minimum number of years or gaining a ticket-of-leave (partial emancipation).

Yet, a popular belief prevailed amongst convicts that criminal transportation marked the end of their marriages, and thus they were free to unofficially cohabit or to enter bigamous marriages in the penal colony. Prior to 1825 convict indents did not list a person's marital status, so convicts who had arrived in the colony married, were able to marry again, without colonial or church officials being able to stop them.

Early Irish families of the Burrarorang – Carolan (Carlton), Coleman, Hayes, McMahon and Reilly, to name just a few – faced the dilemma of whether to apply for a free passage for their families and await the outcome or to move on.

Forty-year-old ploughman from County Kerry, John McMahon, was tried at Tralee in early 1822 and transported per *Brampton* (1823). He was fortunate to be first assigned to colonial born farmer, John Vardy, at Cow Pastures, near Minto. Vardy held land in the Burrarorang Valley, and it was

from there that John McMahon wrote the following letter to the colony's then only Catholic priest Fr. John Joseph Therry, on 13 June 1827.

'Reverend Sir, I beg leave to remind you that about two years and a half ago you were pleased to promise me with my master's consent that you would write home for my family to be sent out at the expense of the crown consisting of my wife and four children two boys and two girls. I have never

heard anything of them since which makes me think it slipped your memory or that your letter miscarried.

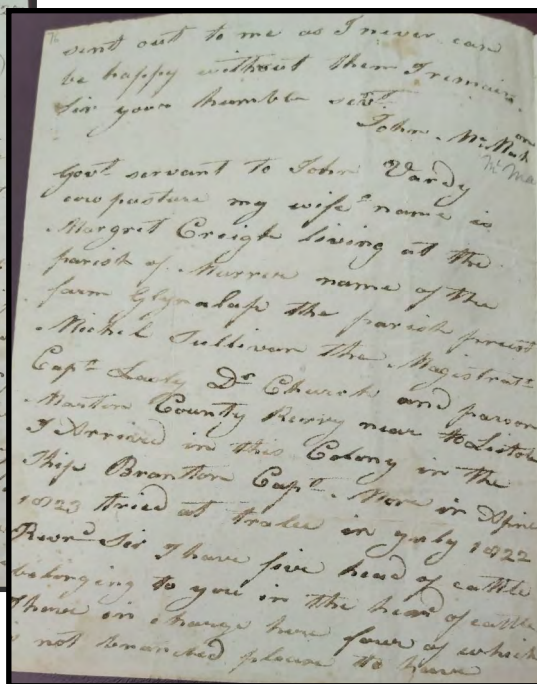
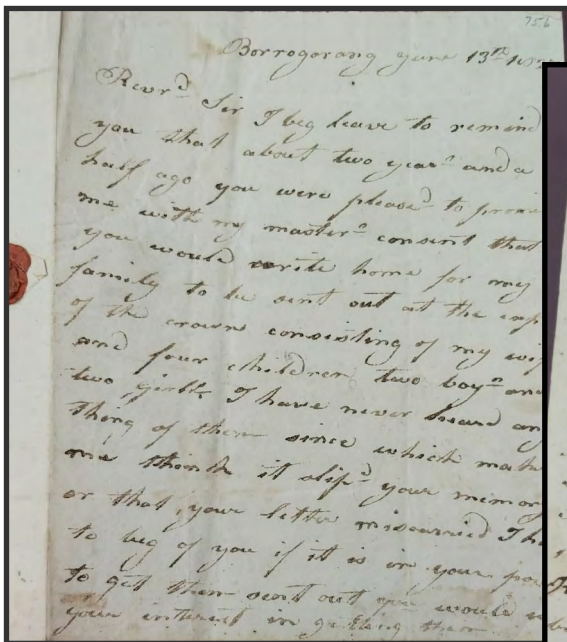
'I have to beg of you if it is in your power to get them sent out you would use your influence in getting

them sent out to me as I never can be happy without them.

'I remain Sir your humble servant, John McMahon, government servant to John Vardy, Cow Pastures. My wife's name is Margaret Creigh living at the [civil] parish of Murher ... the name of the parish priest is Michael Sullivan'.

It is unknown if Fr. Therry wrote home to Ireland on John's behalf. There is no evidence of a formal petition being sent for Margaret Creigh and children, nor is there indication that they migrated. John McMahon received a ticket of leave in 1831 and an absolute pardon in 1838. He may have re-partnered in the colony. The exact relationship between John McMahon and later McMahon families of Lower Burrarorang is still being researched. Readers with any information on the early McMahons are encouraged to contact the editor.

This original letter is held in the Fr. Therry collection in the State Library of New South Wales and is reproduced with the Library's permission ■



THE EARL GREY SCHEME

Since 1845 the successive failure of potato crops across Ireland had brought devastating famine, economic ruin and widespread evictions. Oppressive new Poor Laws had sent those hardest hit to the dreaded workhouse, breaking up families, village life and long-term connections to the land. Bitter winters, meagre relief efforts and deepening famine

By 1848, the famine's death toll had reached one million, with around one in five deaths occurring in a workhouse. As diseases like dysentery, typhus, cholera and scurvy swept through the overcrowded and unwelcoming institutions, inmates were forced work for their keep breaking rocks, building roads and carrying out other heavy, often pointless, physical tasks.

Behind the scheme to relieve Ireland of its crowded workhouses and ship needy orphans to the colonies was the politically progressive Earl, Henry George Grey, Secretary of State for the Colonies (1846–1852). His vision was two-fold: youthful lives spared of misery and the ex-convict colonies enriched with hardy, humble, fertile females. The selection process was simple. The girls had to be young, single, obedient, healthy and free of smallpox.

Earl Grey had originally hoped that orphans would be drawn from pauper institutions operating throughout Britain, although for unknown reasons only adolescent, unmarried girls from Ireland were despatched. Transport and processing costs were shared between the English government and Irish Poor Law Unions. Just as important was support from the colonies to ensure secure and comfortable housing and efficient hiring facilities, once the girls were brought ashore.

In Australia, decades of convict transportation had left the colonies with a serious shortage of women. Teenage girls were vital for raising families while female servants and workers were needed in aspiring colonial households. However, without supportive networks or family, the girls remained vulnerable and powerless to control their fate. Mostly uneducated, unworldly and unused to domestic service, the orphans relied on protective officials to negotiate their place in the labour market. And costing less to hire than more experienced servants they generally found work quickly. Despite low wages, some sent savings home and funded family reunions. Before they left Ireland each orphan girl was given a regulation kit of clothing, linen and

utensils stored in a lockable box. These included six shifts, two flannel petticoats, six pairs of stockings, two pair of shoes, two gowns one of which must be made from warm material and bonnets were included as were sewing materials. If Catholic a bible if Protestant a prayer book. The girls shared bunks in third-class quarters and mustered in small mess groups. Each shipment was overseen by a surgeon-superintendent and a matron, who guarded against contact with sailors and fellow passengers.

After several months at sea, the immigrant ships were towed into Sydney Cove. The orphan girls, strangers in a strange place, along with the motley assortment of unaccompanied women and mothers with children, were carted on drays or walked up Macquarie Street to the Immigration Depot at Hyde Park Barracks.

In the following three years a total of 2253 orphan girls were lodged at the Barracks. Scrutinised by immigration clerks, health officers and clergy, they shared sleeping quarters in the newly-appointed wards upstairs, before signing indentures for work in the ground floor hiring room. Elsewhere in the building, separate areas were appointed for regular shiploads of immigrant women. Immigration officials saw the Barracks as shelter for 'unaccompanied' females, along with the wives and children of convicts, 'sent out to their husbands or parents'.

Pictured below is a collection of cotton bonnets worn by the female occupants of Hyde Park Barracks and discovered under floorboards by archaeologists in the early 1980's ■ Information sourced from Museums of History NSW website

<https://mhnsw.au/stories/general/irish-orphan-girls-hyde-park-barracks/>

To view details of the Orphan Data Base

<https://irishfaminememorial.org/orphans/>



NATIONAL PARKS & WILDLIFE SERVICE ENDANGERED BRUSH TAIL ROCK WALLABY PROGRAM

At our July meeting Mick Webber and Glenn Meade from National Parks and Wildlife Service treated us to an insight into their program to preserve and grow the numbers of the critically endangered Rock Wallaby. This NPWS program is underway within the Wollondilly LGA. The tailored program Mick showed as a slide presentation, detailed a large enclosure to provide protection from predators including feral cats, foxes and goannas with some of these depicted at the enclosure. Mick noted the prevalence of feral cats in the surrounding area and the serious impact they have on the wildlife population. The enclosure is monitored by surveillance and provides feed and water stations which are regularly replenished. The site chosen replicates the known aspect of habitats and possibly been the site of a colony. NPWS program includes a team of other wildlife specialists in this field to ensure the best outcome for the conservation of this tiny wallaby.

The photographs are of the Brush-Tails on site.

The Brush-tailed Rock-Wallaby has a characteristic, long and bushy, dark rufous-brown tail that is bushier towards its tip. It has long, thick, brown body-fur that tends to be rufous on the rump and greyer on the shoulders. The fur on its chest and belly are paler, and some individuals have a white blaze on their chest. It also has a characteristic white cheek-stripe and a black stripe from its forehead to the back of its head. The Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby is highly agile and can move swiftly and confidently through rugged and precipitous areas. This agility is attributed to their compact, muscular build, their long and flexible tail that is used for balance and their well-padded and rough textured feet that provide excellent traction. The average weight of this species is about 5 to 8 kg. Species numbers have declined significantly and have become more fragmented.

Habitat and ecology

Occupy rocky escarpments, outcrops and cliffs with a preference for complex structures with fissures, caves and ledges, often facing north.

Shelter or bask during the day in rock crevices, caves and overhangs and are most active at night when foraging.

Browse on vegetation in and adjacent to

rocky areas eating grasses and forbs as well as the foliage and fruits of shrubs and trees.

Highly territorial and have strong site fidelity with an average home range size of about 15 hectares. Males tend to have larger home ranges than females.

The home range consists of a refuge area and a foraging range linked by habitually used commuting routes.

Females settle in or near their mother's range, while males mainly disperse between female groups within colonies, and less commonly between colonies.

Dominant males associate and breed with multiple females.

Breeding occurs throughout the year with a peak in births between February and May, especially in the southern parts of the range and at higher altitudes ■

Photos courtesy of Mick Webber.



Reminders, News & Info

WEEKEND ROSTER	
AUGUST	
Pam & Margaret	Saturday, 5
Bev & David	Sunday, 6
Sue & Helen	Saturday, 12
Trish & Kevin	Sunday, 13
Colleen & Kathy	Saturday, 19
Marlane/Cheryl/Kate	Sunday, 20
Working Bee- Vivian & Bob	Saturday, 26
Maria & Vicki	Sunday, 27



General Meeting

Monday, August 7th 2023 at 7pm

A fireside chat for Family History Month talking to 3 locals who came to call Wollondilly their home at different stages of their lives.

Meeting followed by supper/All welcome



Entries opened on Monday 17 July and will close on Friday 22 September. The entry form is available on Council's website www.wollondilly.nsw.gov.au/events-and-community/annual-events/garden-competition/



Join us at the museum on Sunday 10th September with 'Stories From the Kitchen'. Bring along an old Recipe book (maybe grandparents) that provide recipes or stories and bring a dish cooked from the book to share.

Membership Fees 2023/2024

Single- \$10.00

Family -\$18.00

Newsletter postage is an additional \$12.

Emailed newsletters are free.

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

Account Name: The Oaks Historical Society Inc.

BSB:062516 Account # 00904093



APPLE CUSTARD SLICE

This delicious apple custard slice was made by Bev Batros for supper at our July meeting and by request is sharing the recipe. Bev remembers her Mum saying some of the local good cooks left out something if asked for a recipe, so it didn't taste as good but rest assured everyone there is nothing left out, enjoy!



BASE

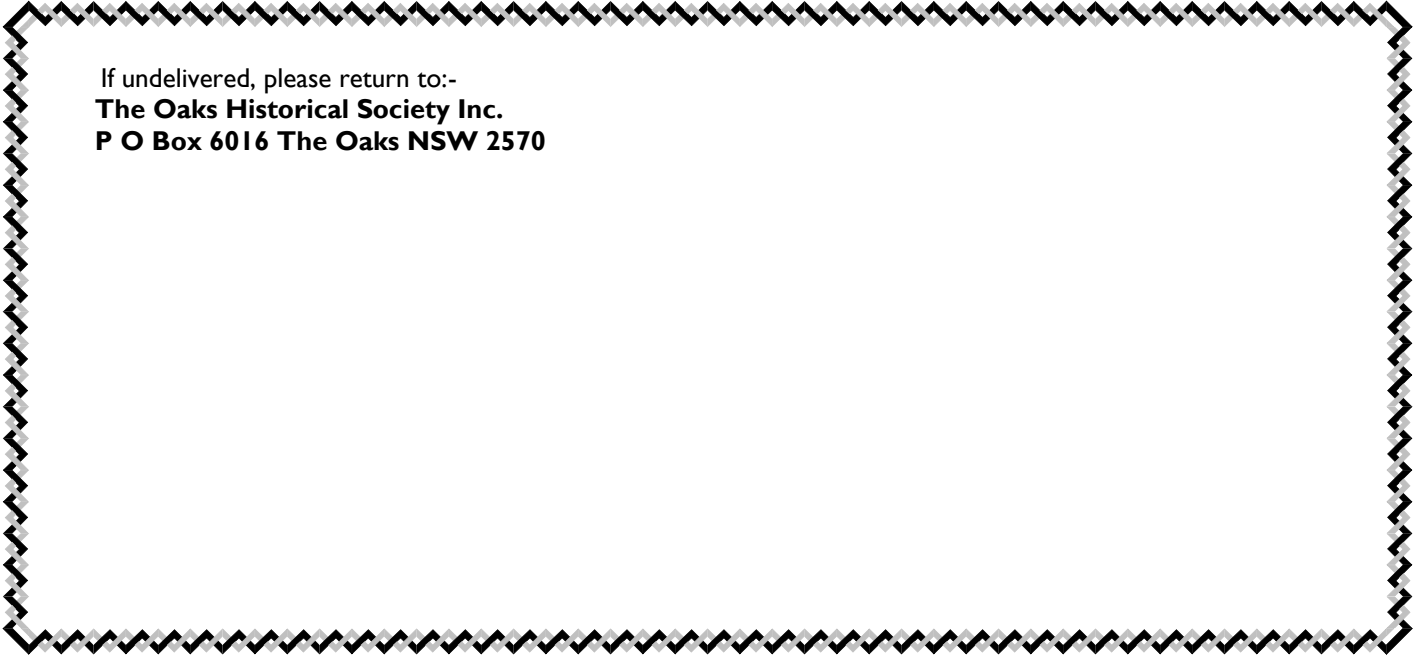
- 1 packet vanilla cake mix
- 1 cup coconut
- 125g margarine

Melt margarine and combine all ingredients. Press into slice tin covered in baking paper (or sprayed). Cook in moderate oven (170 to 180 degrees) for 12 minutes and remove. It looks totally uncooked and has just started to rise. Add the topping.

TOPPING

- 1 carton sour cream (250g)
 - 1 egg beaten
 - 1 can pie apples (410g) I add 2 teaspoons of sugar to the apple for taste.
- Combine ingredients. Spread over the base. Sprinkle with cinnamon and return to the oven for 30 to 35 minutes. It should be lightly 'touch set' as it becomes firmer when cool. Place in the fridge when cooler.

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 Monday August 7th followed by the general meeting on September 4th 2023. Our patron is Judith Hannan. 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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