

<i>Month & Year of Topic</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Written & Spoken Presenters</i>
February 2003	Ern Lawson	Compiled: Alec Leach Material: George Kendall Additional Comments Daisy Ardley Joyce Bray Owen O'Brien

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OATLEY HERITAGE GROUP

MEETING DATE: 27 Feb. 2003

TOPIC: Annual Elections
and Discussing Ernie Lawson

PAPERS BY:

George Kendall

Daisy Ardley (née Drever)

Joyce Marks (née Bray)

Lex Roberts

Owen O'Brien

Noela Bentley

OATLEY HERITAGE GROUP

MEETING DATE: 30 May, 2003

TOPIC: EDUCATION IN OATLEY

PAPERS BY:

Alec Leach

Daisy Ardley

Jack Elliott

Norm Elliott

Shirley & Bill Davidson

Glenn Stevens - Georges River College

June Bennett - Oatley School 1927-1980

Charles Small - 1926-31

Kath Graham (nee Starr) - 1936-41

Gordon Anderson - 1933-38

Muriel Lind (nee Gold) - 1936-41

Daphne Pennington (nee Dodd) - 1936-44

Margaret Forbes (nee Morrison) - 1936-44

ERNEST LAWRENCE LAWSON
(ERNIE LAWSON)

28.9.1894 TO 18-3-1979

Recollections by George Kendall.

Presented to the OATLEY HERITAGE GROUP'S Annual Meeting Thursday 27th February 2003

Ernie was the eldest child with three brothers and two sisters. He was born on the 28th September 1894 at Newtown and the family home was at Watsons Bay.

During his lifetime he was awarded two Civil Awards, the MBE (Member of the British Empire) and the Imperial Service Medal. These awards have been replaced by the Order of Australia awards

He was a member of the Auctioneer family Lawsons whose business premises were at Newtown. A firm that is still trading today.

Ernie was a private with the 7 Field Ambulance and later with the 3rd Australian General Hospital. He served during the First World War in France, Belgium and other major campaigns. His service number was 4417.



February 1916



March 1917



Date unknown



15th March 1917

Ernie came to Oatley on 1st April 1929 accompanied by his wife, Lillian and two daughters, Gwenneth and Lynette.

Ernie was one of the first non-official Post Office representative Postmaster, a job for which it was necessary to be a returned ex-serviceman.

His first Post Office was at Number 5 Frederick Street, he later moved across the street and lived all his working life above the Post Office which is now the Gourmet Shop No 20 Frederick.

My earliest recollection of Ernie was of him delivering the mail on horseback. In my time he had two horses, both named Bess. A good friend of mine Alan Cuthbertson, was once knocked over by one of the Bess's. Fortunately he was not hurt, only his pride suffered.

During the 30's the movies showed many Western films particularly Cowboys and Indians. A favourite of the younger set was a film that featured a horse called "Silver".

Many of the boys called out "Hi Ho Silver" and "Hi Cowboy Lawson". Both these remarks made Ernie very angry but that didn't stop us from doing it.

I also recall him a longtime President of the Oatley Parents and Citizens group and at one time he presented me with a prize (Book) for attaining first place in fourth class.

Ernie employed me during school holidays as a postman. The wage was thirty shillings (30/-) or in today's language (\$3.00). For this huge sum of money I delivered mail twice a day to both sides of Oatley. I also placed the mail on the 8.15pm train for extra money.

Ernie was always in the public eye and worked tirelessly for returned ex Service people. He was a very special person who when bad news occurred, he personally delivered the news, especially parents / families of Servicemen killed in action.

He was a member of the Masonic fraternity and held many of the high offices of the lodge.

During World War 2 and immediately afterwards Ernie was asked (by the Government) to observe known members of the Communist Party in Oatley. This was the then state of Federal Government thinking to so called subservient organisations.



Taken approximately mid 1960's

He was a well-respected friend of my family and would have most likely married my mother, however she died of cancer, which cancelled out that option.

***Daisy Ardley, formally Drever, then from Russell Street, recalls her memories of Ernie.
Daisy lived opposite the Tee intersection of Neville and Russell Street.***

“He would ride his horse right down to the front veranda of our house sometimes, to hand our mail to my mother, sitting in her rocking chair. That enchanted me. One of my tasks was to go to the Post Office and get books for my mother to read from the lending library he had on the shelves near the door. It was tuppence per book and I was allowed to choose one for myself. Mine were always westerns/adventure.

Joyce Marks nee Bray.

“A line about Ernie Lawson’s horse Bess. A couple of Bess’s shoes are hanging on the outside wall of the backyard toilet in the late Mabel Roberts home in Oatley Ave., together with shoes from my Dad’s draught horse Mick. Rex Roberts being Mabel’s son.”

I remember Ernie riding down the dirt road of Rosa Street hurling letters over fences (not sure if we could afford letter boxes in those days) Bess’s home was in a paddock next to Mabels home where pear, plum and apple trees grew. A field day for us kids when the fruit was ripe.

Confirmation by Rex Roberts.

Rex has exquisitely refurbished his mother’s house at number 32 Oatley Avenue. It is soon to be a café and venue place for small gatherings such as conferences, committee meetings etc.

Rex still has the horseshoes proudly mounted on the shed walls. Bess’s horseshoe looks as though they have trodden some miles around Oatley. The other shoe Rex thinks could have belonged to Mr. Bray’s second horse Toby, Mick being his first horse.

Owen O’Brien reiterates.

He thought there was information in the library about Ernie. He continues “ I do know he came to Oatley in 1929, to the Post Office / Lending Library some confectionery He lived in the residence above. The Dry Cleaner is now there. Ernie relocated across Frederick Street early 1922/3. I think the Gourmet Deli is now there.”

Noela Bentley.

Remembers Ernie whenever he was called upon to deliver the ODE. He would recite it in its entirety in a faultless, sincere manner people expected from him. He was equally respected for his charges he delivered in the Masonic Movement.

The memory of Ernie Lawson should not be forgotten in Oatley. By George, Daisy, Joyce, Noela and Owen’s efforts, future generations will have a grasp of what a Gentleman he was.

Compiled by: Alec Leach.

MRS D. ARDLEY, 44 WRIGHTS ROAD, KELLYVILLE, 2155

9629-1284

To Glenn Stevens
Oatley Heritage Group.

Dear Glenn:

Thank you for the newsletter. Your info is always very interesting to me. I have only lived in two places in my 78 years — Oatley and Kellyville, hence I am very interested in both.

With regard to the talk you are to have regarding artists of Oatley, I would like to mention Hugh Thorburn. I don't know that he ever had public recognition but his work used to sell. The Thorburns lives in Russell Street, where the road curved toward Annette Street. Their house was on the right hand side going from Neville Street. I received a painting for my 21st birthday, and a beautiful scene of Oatley Bay as a wedding present. It is hanging on my wall right now. Hugh was a soldier in WWI, and met and married his wife in England. She was a delightful person, had been a school teacher, and who cheerfully loaned me books from her fascinating store. They had three children, Earnest, Alan and Heather. During the Depression, Hugh used to make brooches from plaster of paris set in spoons for a mould and paint little scenes and sell them, probably from door-to-door. He made me one with a pony on it as a gift. I have always been a lover of animals. Earnest and Alan died rather early, but Heather is still alive. Hugh's real trade was as a hairdresser, which he did not like. He was a member of the hairdressing family of Hurstville, who had a business in Forest Road, I think near the Railway steps.

Ernie Lawson,
Postmaster.

I may have told you about my vivid memories of Mr Lawson before. He would ride his horse right down to the front veranda of our house, sometimes, to hand our mail to my mother, sitting in her rocking chair. I was enchanted by that. One of my tasks, was to go to the Post Office and get books for my mother to read from the lending library he had on the shelves near the door. It was tuppence per book, and I was allowed to choose one for myself. Mine were always westerns/adventure.

Your group may be interested to hear of an honour which was bestowed upon me this year by the Baulkham Hills Shire Council. They/it commissioned an artist to paint my portrait, which was duly done over about three months of sittings, and which now hangs in the Council Chambers. Council commissions a portrait each year, and this year to my astonishment it was me! The person selected is always someone who is assumed to merit the honour for sort of services to the community. I have always been involved with this and that, but in 1993 I published a history of Kellyville, which has now been reprinted three times. It has been very well received and is a very well travelled book now, both within Australia and overseas. It is called "*Kellyville - The Pleasant Village*". The content only goes to about 1950. I am almost ready to publish a second book which will be called "*Kellyville And the Village Grew*". This book will go back but will also move up to the present time — Kellyville is changing so dramatically! I don't like it.

Thanks for the newsletters. One day I will get around to digging out more photos possibly.

Regards.

Apologies for blowing my own trumpet, but it may be of interest.

Daisy

14.11.02

(mirrored text from reverse side of paper)

Ernie Lawson, past Postmaster of Oatley, 27 Feb 2003

by Joyce Marks.

A line about Ernie Lawson's horse Bess. A couple of Bess's shoes are hanging on the outside wall of the backyard toilet in the late Mabel Roberts home in Oatley Ave, together with shoes from my Dad's daughter's horse "Mick". Rex Roberts being

Mabel's son.

I remember Ernie riding down the dirt road of Rosa or hurling letters over the fences. (Not sure if we could afford letter boxes in those days) Bess's home was in the paddock next to Mabel's home where Pear, Plum & apple trees grew - a field day for us kids when the fruit was ripe.

Enough —

(Extract from letter to secretary, Glenn Stevens.)
O.H.G.