

<i>Month &amp; Year of Topic</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Written &amp; Spoken Presenters</i>
August 2006	<b>Butcher &amp; Bakers of Oatley</b>  MacDonald's Butchery	Cliff Crane, Material Rafe Kowron, Presenter Alec Leach Jane Robinson

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**OATLEY HERITAGE GROUP**

**MEETING DATE: 25<sup>th</sup> August 2006**

**TOPIC: Butchers & Bakers of Oatley**

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**PAPER BY:**

Cliff Crane

Alec Leach

Jan Robinson

**T. H. MacDonald's Butchers**  
**Mortdale & Oatley**

**Presented to the OATLEY HERITAGE GROUPS Quarterly meeting Friday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2006.**  
Compiled by Alec Leach from information supplied by Helen Le Bate, nee Hunter & Tom MacDonald.

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In those early days it was common for the Australia League Band to play out the front of the MacDonald's shop of a Friday night. Graham was a musician in the band.

Thomas senior and David operated the Mortdale shop.

Thomas and his wife Helen's family consisted of David, Tom, Nell, Betty & Graham who survived. Sadly, a son Robert died as a youngster in Scotland and as was the custom of the day when another son arrived, he too was called Robert. He met an accidental death which devastated the family and they migrated to Australia.

Nell married Bill Hunter who later worked in the Oatley shop.

With the death of Graham in 1953, Bill Hunter became a member of the Oatley structure.

In the mid forties the younger Thomas who had been working in the Mortdale shop transferred back to Oatley and took up residence above the shop. His marriage to Hilda in 1937 resulted in having three children. Jeannette, Heather and the last of the line, Thomas Handyside.

Late in January 1950, Thomas senior passed away.

In 1959 young Tom became ill and the business was sold in 1960 to Arthur Shepherd.

## *T. H. MacDonald's Butchers*



*Graham MacDonald outside Oatley shop.*



*MacDonald's first horseless carriage - Rear Mortdale shop.*

*Early mode of deliveries*

*Thomas Handyside  
Senior  
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*Graham & Bill Hunter, Oatley Shop.*



*Thomas senior, Bill Hunter, Morrie, employee & Graham.*



## BUTCHES & BAKERS OF OATLEY

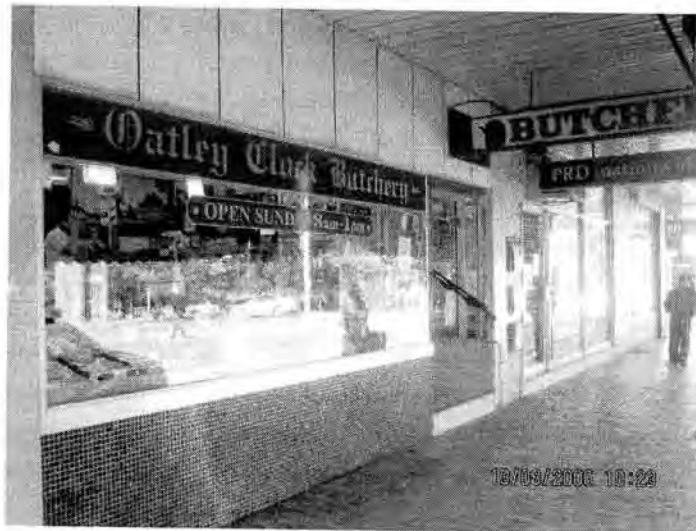
It seems there has only ever been one real 'Bakery' in terms of baking and delivering of bread in Oatley, that being Edward's Bakery in Letitia Street. The actual bakery seems to have been well to the rear of the present parking area in Letitia Street adjacent to the Masonic Lodge building with some form of shop at the Letitia Street frontage..

Relatively little information has come directly to me for recording about 'Bakers' of Oatley and I hope more information will be forthcoming from the next meeting.

As to 'Butchers of Oatley' -

### BUTCHERY, 22 Oatley Avenue Oatley

The following photograph is of the window and entrance of this butchery in 2006. It has been operated since December 1993 by Mark and Daphne Parsonage. Their children have 'helped in the shop' over the years, while their only son Justin commenced as apprentice with the business four years ago.



The Parsonages took the butchery over from Anthony Larkis, on 4 December 1993, Mark applied to register the name *Oatley Clock Butchery* the next day. Mark had pretty much decided to re-name the business *Oatley Chimes Butchery* - but he took up the suggestion of *Oatley Clock Butchery* made by the then well-known Oatley identity Lindsay Bird, and Mark registered that name the next day, on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1993. Johnny Samuels, who had been manager of the shop for some 6 years for Anthony Larkis, prior to ownership of the parsonages, says he believes the butchery had always before that, or at least for very many years, been known as '*Oatley Quality Meats*'

When Mark and Daphne's son, Justin Parsonage, commenced in the business as an apprentice butcher in July 2002 he became the fourth consecutive direct generation Parsonage butcher in the family.

An account of the Parsonage '*butchering dynasty*' and their involvement with this Oatley butchery is dealt with more fully in a document to be attached to this document for archival storage.

From various sources the order of ownership of the butchery, from commencement, seems to be as follows:

1. From around 1920s-1930s it was Draper's Butchery – it is possible that during Draper's ownership it's name was changed to '*Oatley Quality Meats*' (Glenn Stevens, the Oatley Heritage Group's secretary, recalls that when she came to Oatley in 19??, the proprietor of this butchery was Draper);
2. Russell Napp or Knapp (it is understood this owner had – or still had – a butchery in Hurstville);
3. Payne Brothers (owners of a number of butcher shops in Sydney's southern suburbs – one version has it they also at one time owned the butchery in Mulga Road just west of the Waratah Street intersection (most recently, before closure a few years ago, known as '*Les's Quality Meats*'
4. Ron Clogg and Joe Larkis (Joe was a heavily built, loquacious man of Lebanese ancestry, with black wavy hair, sometimes happy to talk on Saturday mornings about his love for playing cards (gambling) on Friday evenings, and motor cars – for some time he drove a reddish jaguar car);
5. Anthony 'Tony' Larkis (a pathologist who worked for years with Dr. Sugerman's practice in Hurstville, then had his own pathology practice for a couple of years). Rumour has it that Dr Tony Larkis was losing, and lost, a significant sum from his investment in this butchery until replacement of his initial manager. Johnny Samuels, an '*old-style butcher*', had been working there for Joe Larkis before he sold it to his cousin Tony Larkis. Under the initial management (for Tony Larkis) the business lost a lot of money – Tony Larkis fired that original manager on a Saturday morning and Johnnie Samuels was appointed manager straight away – Johnny did all the buying, all the books, and started making money for the investor/owner Tony Larkis. During this period the shop was attended by Johnny and another butcher, a tall bloke named David Bartch, and a casual. When the shop was sold to the Parsonages, David Bartch stayed in the butchery for about three months, then left – David Bartch now has a butcher shop in the Ingleburn / Holsworthy area.
6. Mark and Daphne Parsonage took over effective ownership on 4 December 1993

**BUTCHERY, 16 Frederick Street, Oatley**



Ray Wood has been the owner of this business for the last couple of years, having purchased it from Peter Eggleton. The butchery was commenced by Thomas H ("Tom") McDonald in the 1920s.

Phillip ("Phill") Smith – former employee at this butchery and also at 30 Frederick Street, provided information that the butchery business started by McDonalds had subsequent ownerships, in this order -

- Jimmy Condon
- Len Wright
- Arthur Shepherd
- Paul Carson, in 2006 of Neville Street, Oatley, and partner with surname Higgins – they were/are both Accountants, and had the business run under a manager
- Garry and Peter Eggleton
- Peter Eggleton

Phill also says business proprietors McDonald, Condon and Wright all had lived, or parts of their family had lived, over the shop. After Len Wright moved out, the property freehold was sold and two sisters bought the premises - they then let out the residence above the butchery, as a separate tenancy.

Our President Alec has provided the following information about the inception of this butchery business by Thomas H McDonald –

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**Mortdale & Oatley**

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*Graham MacDonald outside Oatley shop.  
horseless age – rear Mortdale shop.*



*MacDonald's first*

*Early mode of deliveries*

*Thomas*

*Handyside*



*Senior*



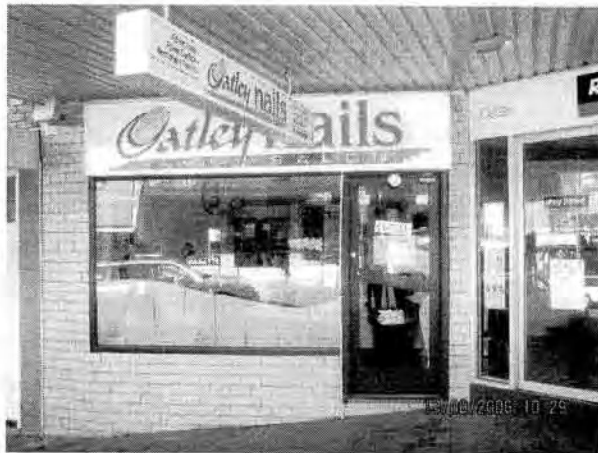
*Graham & Bill Hunter, Oatley Shop.  
employee & Graham.*



*Thomas senior, Bill Hunter, Morrie,*

### **BUTCHERY, 30 Frederick Street, Oatley**

The business which in 2006 operates where the former butchery was located, is 'Oatley Nails' as shown in the following picture



Just when a butchery commenced at 30 Frederick Street is yet to be established.

The last butcher at this address was Brian Black, who about 1991 - having until then been employed some years as a butcher at *Eggleton's Butchery* at 16 Frederick Street, - bought the business and branched out on his own, trading as '*Brian's Quality Meats*'. Another former Eggleton's butcher, Phillip Smith, joined Brian at the butchery only four weeks after Brian had started up.

Brian Black took over from Ronnie Legge, who was there for a fair while. It is said that prior to Legge's ownership - since a previous owner Frank Bresnehan - there were several owners whose butcheries weren't very successful.

Frank Bresnehan ran this butchery for about 7-8 years from 1968 to about 1976-7. Frank has lived with his wife Marie at 123 Myall Street, Oatley since they bought that home in 1969, the year after they purchased their Oatley butchery. Frank and Marie's five sons and four daughters all attended St. Joseph's school in Oatley, and some of those offspring still reside in the area today. Peter, their first born, has in recent years managed the remaining Bresnehan butcher - '*Bresnehan's Butchery*' in Morts Road, Mortdale.

Frank Bresnehan couldn't remember the name of the butcher from whom he had bought the butchery in Frederick Street.

**BUTCHERY, (24?) Letitia Street, Oatley (now Hot Chili Man restaurant).**

'Fon' Wilding (nee Hatchman) has allowed reproduction of the following copy of a photograph in her possession, taken about 1922. The photograph shows the premises occupied in 2006 by Australia Post / David Birch Lawyers/ and Hot Chili Man Thai restaurant –



Fon says the three individual business frontages were – from north to south – her parents' store, a newsagency conducted by people whose name she does not know or recall, and a butchery bearing the name, above the double doors, 'A.E. Johnson'.

Above the awnings of these shops is shown their construction date – "A.D.1918". The southern most business, now (2006) is the 'Hot Chili Man Thai' restaurant – but not discernible these days is what appeared in the stucco façade of those early 1920 days, proclaiming the butchery below (at least when built in about 1918) as 'Q.C.C. Butchery' or 'O.C.C. Butchery'. Any knowledge – or theories – as to what the acronyms 'Q.C.C. Butchery' or 'O.C.C. Butchery' represented, would be appreciated.

Most popular theory/recollection of the butchery among these shops is that *Johnson* was the original butcher there, followed by *Stones butchers*, then *Buttle's Butchery* of Mark and (Scots born) Jean Buttle, and then, following death of Mark Buttle, a period in which the widowed Jean Buttle and daughter Lettie continued running the shop with staff. It was then taken over and run by Bill ('Curly') Jeffs who had been apprenticed to Mark Buttle. The Jeffs were an old-established family in the Oatley-Mortdale area, the father of 'Curly' having been the *Rawleighs* or similar door-to-door representative in the district.

Of the many people to whom I spoke, some said that one or the other of the Jeffs' brothers from the butchery in Letitia Street was an ex-professional boxer – a 'pug' .. was it Curly or Stan?

Whatever – it seems a "consortium" or partnership of 4 or 5 people involved with management of the Oatley R.S.L. Club, bought the business, in expectation the club membership would follow as customers – apparently that did not ensue, and, some nine weeks after appointment of a new 'butcher/manager' who said it wasn't a likely income producer, they closed down the butchery business for good.

**BUTCHERY, Cnr Renown & Judd Streets, Oatley**

Colin Campbell ran this Butchery for a number of years.

I have been unable to learn about Col's background in butchery. It seems he started up the butchery there on this corner, where a small mixed business / 'corner store' had operated for many years previously.

Col and his wife Margaret lived in Ada Street, Oatley, and had a son Brett, and possibly another son.

Eventually Col found the butchery not sufficiently profitable, and closed it up and took on lawn mowing, and found the lawn mowing run was more profitable than the butchery had been.

Alec Leach thinks Col closed the shop sometime in the 1980's and moved to northern NSW to a place called Cabarita south of Tweed Heads.

Alec says Col Campbell, from whom Alec used to get meat for fishing bait, interested Col in fishing, and he became and Col became 'a fishing nut'.

The former Campbell's butchery shop, after Col closed it down, never operated as a chop again and today is part of a complex of 2 or 3 tenanted flats.



## WEST OATLEY BUTCHERIES

Rafe Kowron thinks one of the early butchers in Mulga Road was a George Payne; this ties in with Phill Smith's recollection that when he moved to live at West Oatley in 1960 the 'bottom butchery' was a 'Paynes' butchery.

Moyia Kowron reports she understands the original butcher in Mulga Road was Dave Miller, in the shop still sign-posted as *Les's Quality Meats* next to (west of) the corner block of Mulga Road and Waratah Street. Dave Miller, if not the first Oatley West butcher, was certainly there very early, as remembered by Frank Keating, now of Oatley Parade (whose parents got their meat from Dave Miller), and Billie Brooks, now of Maclean.

It seems there were two butcheries in Mulga Road, and another in Lansdowne Parade.

That earliest butchery in Mulga Road was in the shop near the intersection with Waratah Street – the building is now used as the site office for the new 'Coles Store' building, and is shown in the following photograph –



Les Thomas, an employed butcher at the butchery at 103 Mulga Road, left that shop and re-opened this former butchery near the corner of Waratah Street, which had been closed for some time after having been operated some years as *Val's Chicken* shop. Les was quite successful, and the other butcher shop at 103 Mulga Road closed down soon after.

Les opened his shop on Sundays, and it was then that the Oatley Avenue butchery also started opening on Sundays (8am – 3 pm).

After trading for some years, Les quite suddenly closed his butchery, and it has not operate for a number of years since then.

Interestingly, George Patterson, the last man to run the Lansdowne Street butchery went to work for Les Thomas in Mulga Road for a few years after he closed the Lansdowne Street butchery.

### Butchery at 103 Mulga Road, Oatley

Another butchery was started up at 103 Mulga Road, and ran for a number of years in a shop which now (2006) operates as *Evolution Hairdressing*.



George Patterson, one time proprietor of the Lansdowne Street butchery, said a Mick Taylor had the 103 Mulga Road butcher shop – George thinks the Oatley West bottle shop owner owned the freehold of that butcher shop.

### Lansdowne Street Butchery

George Patterson, originally from New Zealand, ran this butchery for 4 or 5 years before closing up in 1996; he sold all the butchery equipment, and didn't renew his lease. He said he decided to close up because he lost, pretty much at the same time, two of his large established *non-residential* customers - a restaurant which was part of a golf club in Moorefields Road (the club house burnt down) and *Victoria House* reception centre in Bexley (which was taken over by two Greek brothers who had their own butchery arrangements).

George said he had bought the butchery from a quite tall man, who George thinks was named Moroney, but couldn't recall knowing much about previous owners of the butchery except that he understood previous owners had included a man named Aitken, and two brothers called Pearse/Peirs/Pearce.

After closing his own shop George worked as butcher for Les and Marion Thomas in *Les's Quality Meats*, in Mulga Road, for about 3 years until finally retiring from butchering about 1999.

## OATLEY WEST.

In the 1880's Peasley, the bushranger (no relation to the Rosa Street Peasley's, the breadcarter) stole cattle and horses from local farms and concealed them in the gully down behind where the Oatley Bowling Club is today. These were then sold to butchers in the district. He lived in a cave at the top of Llewellyn Street. Police, following the cattle tracks to his hideout, arrested him in the early 1900's.

In 1894, Mrs Saunders and family of "Demerara", 78 Woronora Parade, the only house in Oatley West at the time, held Sunday School and Church services. Ministers who visited and held the services there were Rev. M. Walker (Wesleyan), Rev. R. McKay (Presbyterian) and Rev. A. Killworth Church of England.

A settlement was established in Gungah Bay by the Wrights at the lower end of Waratah Street in 1910.

Oatley West Public School was opened in 1947. The original site gazetted in 1883 for a school in Oatley was a one acre block of land bounded by Acacia, Mi Mi and Woronora Parade. However, this did not eventuate and the land was later divided into building blocks and sold.

In 1888 Myles McRae owned 81 acres adjacent to Oatley Park (then named Peakhurst Park) and ran steers. His land was subdivided following World War I for War Service Homes.

Due to the efforts of the Oatley West Progress Association the road alongside Oatley Park was named Dame Mary Gilmore in a ceremony in 1954. Dame Mary attended and donated a seat bearing an inscription "Given by Dame Mary Gilmore - for tired people". This was placed in the shade of the Lone Pine.

20 Walker Street  
Canada Bay 2046

12 May, 2006

Dear Alec,

Many thanks for the Heritage Group newsletters you send us regularly. I love them and they bring back so many memories of my childhood. You remember me - Alan Dunsmore's daughter Janet (now Jan) - we met at Kings Canyon a few years ago. Sadly we still haven't made it to one of the Group's meetings - shame on us. However, we would have tried hard to attend the August one when the subject is to be Butchers and Bakers of Oatley except that we will be two days short of completing a five week driving holiday to Darwin and the Kimberley.

However, I could not resist putting down some of my vivid memories about the butchers and bakers. As far as I am concerned there was only one butcher and that was Buttles shop where I think a credit union is now, next to the School of Arts. The three shops in that row were Marsh's the greengrocer, nearest the Methodist Church, then the milkbar then the butcher's. The Buttles lived in Rosa Street a few doors from Chiswells, I think. We're talking late 1940s here and early 50s. Most afternoons after school I was sent on messages (which I hated because it interrupted Biggles and Superman on the radio) and I invariably had a message for vegetables and meat. I will never forget the inside of the butcher's shop with all the carcasses hung up and the huge chopping blocks in the middle and the sawdust on the floor. Curley and Stan were the butchers (I always thought they were brothers but I'm not sure) and they knew me well - Curley was rather refined but Stan seemed more rough and ready and was scary because of his lack of teeth.

The baker's name was Edwards, I think. Their carts and horses were kept on a large site behind where the petrol station is now in Letitia street next to the Masonic Hall. I presume the bakery was there as well because they had a little shop in the middle of the yard. The baker and horse and cart always delivered the bread but at Easter time I would be sent to the baker's shop in the yard to get yeast for mum to use for hot cross buns. I would go home with this mysterious substance wrapped in paper for mum.

We lived at 37 Rosa Street, next door but one to the old Peasley house (No 41). Old Mr Peasley lived there with his daughter Jean and her family. Mr Peasley's son and his wife and children, Jacqueline and Colin, also lived there for some time before they moved to their own home. I was great friends with Jackie and spent a great deal of time with her either at my house or the Peasley's. Colin Peasley (ex Ballet Master of the Australian Ballet) was a tall, pale young man who spent a lot of time playing the piano.



There was a fair bit of hullabaloo going on at times with so many people under one roof but Colin appeared to be able to detach himself from it all and immerse himself in his music.

The Peasleys delivered the bread by horse and cart. Every day at lunchtime the horse and cart would be outside their house, two doors from our place. The horse was always half asleep with its nose bag on and Mr Peasley would be inside having lunch. As I always came home from school for lunch (mum's orders) it meant I had to pass the horse to get there. I was very scared of the horse and was sure it was going to take off and bolt at the very minute I was passing. I would slink along the fence line across the road and at the last minute dash into our place once I was safely past.

We always had unsliced brown bread and mum had a theory that fresh bread, especially white, was bad for you and hard to digest. Consequently, even when I was at high school at St George, Kogarah, I still suffered with doorstep sized, stale, wholemeal homecut sandwiches. Most people by then had sliced white bread, promax I think it was and it was wrapped up! Not us - mum said there was no goodness in it. As it turns out she was correct and these days I always buy wholemeal grain bread.

Today is our 40th wedding anniversary which must be making me more nostalgic than usual. I always consider myself an Oatley girl and always will. The roads and houses are as clear to me today as they were sixty years ago and the memories are greatly treasured. Mum's sister, Phil Davidson, turns 95 this month and when I see her I will ask her if she has any interesting anecdotes about the butcher and baker.

Best wishes to you and to all in the Oatley Heritage Group.

Yours sincerely,



Jan Robinson.

P.S. One day during my four years of nursing training at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, probably about 1960, I came home for some days off and was really distraught to see that the huge horse trough on the Methodist Church corner of Frederick and Letitia Sts had been ripped out and taken away (by Council I presume). I was very shocked and am to this day - what a wonderful landmark that would be if it was still there today!