

<i>Month &amp; Year of Topic</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Written &amp; Spoken Presenters</i>
May 2007	<b>Chemists of Oatley</b>	Jan (Dunsmore) Robinson.. Cliff Crane. Rafe Kowron Moyra Kowron Brian Smith

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**OATLEY HERITAGE GROUP**

**MEETING DATE: 24<sup>th</sup> May 2007**

**TOPIC: Chemists of Oatley**

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**PAPERS BY:** Cliff Crane (Terry O'Connor)  
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**Oatley Heritage Group Meeting**  
Thursday 24 May 2007

**PHARMACISTS OF OATLEY - O'CONNOR'S PHARMACY**

This paper has been prepared by Cliff Crane, Archivist, Oatley Heritage Group mainly based on information sourced from Lorraine O'Connor, of 32 Annette Street, Oatley, widow of Terry O'Connor, founder of the pharmacy business, and Terry's son Anthony ('Tony') the pharmacist who, with his pharmacist wife Gillian, has operated the business "*O'Connor's Pharmacy*" since his father's death in 1997.



**Terry O'Connor**  
**9<sup>th</sup> July 1934 – 10<sup>th</sup> May 1997**  
**Founded O'Connor's Pharmacy, Oatley, on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1959**



**O'Connor's Pharmacy soon after opening in 1959 - note demountable Commonwealth Bank structure to the west (left), undeveloped block to the east (right), And Weighing Scales outside entry door.**

With later completion of the present brick building for the Commonwealth Bank, the demountable building in the above photo was bought by St. Joseph's School and used as part of its kindergarten accommodation. The building later constructed on the other side of O'Connor's would initially house the *Dress Circle* Boutique.



**With later buildings either side**

Terence Francis O'Connor - Terry -, was Proprietor/Pharmacist in Charge of O'Connor's Pharmacy, Frederick Street, Oatley, from its foundation opening on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1959 until his sudden death at his Oatley home in the early hours of 10<sup>th</sup> May 1997 just two months short of his 63<sup>rd</sup> birthday

A pall of disbelief and gloom descended over Oatley and nearby suburbs when the news spread of Terry's unexpected passing which ended his 37 years of continuous customer service, certainly the longest presence of any business proprietor in either Oatley shopping centre at that time. St. Joseph's Church Oatley was overflowing with mourners at his service, and his funeral cortege was among the longest, if not the longest, seen in Oatley. Shopkeepers and shoppers stood lining the kerbsides of Oatley's Frederick Street shopping strip as the cortege went through, passing the pharmacy which had been his second home for nearly 40 years.

On 1<sup>st</sup> March 1997, just 2 months before his death, Terry had conferred on him an honorary Degree in Pharmacy from Sydney University – 40 years after completing his original Pharmacy Board studies and registration (Ph.C.) to practice as a pharmacist.



Terry with his honorary degree

O'Connor's Pharmacy lives on in the hands of Terry's eldest son, pharmacist Anthony – 'Tony' - and Tony's wife Gillian, also a pharmacist, and come 9<sup>th</sup> December 2009 the business will have served Oatley and nearby areas for 50 years.

### **Terry O'Connor – before coming to Oatley.**

Terry O'Connor was the second of four surviving children of Hilda and Timothy O'Connor, a PMG employee, of Maroubra Junction. He commenced schooling at St Aidan's Primary School, Maroubra, before attending 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class schooling at Marcellin College at Randwick. His secondary schooling and Leaving Certificate he undertook as a boarder at the then St. Columbia's College boarding school for boys at Springwood in the lower Blue Mountains.

When Terry embarked on a career in Pharmacy he took the then only course of qualification into the profession – a form of apprenticeship working in pharmacies while sitting for Pharmacy Registration Board examinations.

After completing his "apprenticeship" period and his examinations (passing his 'Qualifying Examination' in February 1957) Terry was registered in March 1957 to practice as a Pharmaceutical Chemist - as T. O'Connor *Ph.C.*

Terry brought with him to Oatley his great love for Rugby League and remained a one-eyed "Rabbitoh" supporter. He had played Third Grade for Souths in a Terry Fearnley trained team.

### **How Terry O'Connor "chose" Oatley.**

It was Des Magee, a pharmacy proprietor then living in Douglas Haig Street, Oatley, who suggested that Terry open a pharmacy at Oatley. The young Terry, soon after his March 1957 registration as a Pharmacist, was managing a Paddington pharmacy for Des Magee when Des made the suggestion. The young Maroubra Junction man, Terry, is reputed to have responded with "*Do they have electricity at Oatley*"! clearly thinking Oatley to be somewhere really out in the sticks!

Des Magee and builder Les Smith then developed No. 12 Frederick Street as a purpose built pharmacy of which Terry became first tenant. (The O'Connors would later buy freehold of the property). Terry's elder brother Tim having done the fit-out of the premises the new enterprise, *O'Connor's Pharmacy*, opened its doors for business on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1959.

On the day Terry opened his pharmacy in Oatley he was visited by Pat Mullane who by then had been operating his *Mullane's Pharmacy* at West Oatley for only 1 or 2 years – Pat came to wish his new "competitor" well – the two quickly became firm, lifelong friends, sharing many interests, and always co-operating and helping each other in business, helping each other out, e.g. when one might be out of supply of a product.

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### **O'Connor family in Oatley.**

1959 was a busy year for the young pharmacist Terry O'Connor who on Easter Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March, in his 25<sup>th</sup> year, married Lorraine Graham in their Holy Family Church, Maroubra. After marriage, until moving to live in Oatley in 1963, Lorraine & Terry lived in Forest Road, Arncliffe in a flat owned by an aunt of Lorraine's. Therese, their first child, then Tony, were born before Lorraine and Terry moved to live in Oatley.

Total and continuous involvement with the Oatley community came in 1963 when (just before birth of their third child Matthew – *Matt*) they moved into their first Oatley home built for them by Terry's brother Tim on a corner block, 57 Annette Street, Oatley at the intersection with Herbert Street.

Sometime prior to 1975 the O'Connors bought a house at 107 Rosa Street, Oatley, which was tenanted by family members for some time.

In 1975 Terry and Lorraine sold 57 Annette Street and moved some 300 metres north to No. 32 in the same street, into the weatherboard home they bought from the Madardy family. They would move twice more within Oatley – in 1976 they moved out of 32 Annette Street while a new two-storey brick home was built for them in place of the then existing weatherboard building which was demolished. During the period that project took, the family moved into their 'other house' at 107 Rosa Street.

Terry and Lorraine, with their five children, then moved back to 32 Annette Street into their new home, where Lorraine still lives.

Lorraine and Terry were members of the St. Joseph's Catholic Church congregation, Terry being an acolyte of the church and a member of the church choir. He gave service to St. Vincent de Paul Society over many years, and Tony also recalls his father over a long period of time having responsibility for collecting supplies of the *Catholic Weekly* from Oatley Railway Station. The O'Connor boys all were altar boys at St. Joseph's.

All the O'Connor children did their early schooling at St. Josephs Convent School in Oatley; for their secondary schooling the girls attended Santa Sabina, Strathfield, the boys went to the Marist Brothers School at Penshurst.

Terry's great love of sport and athletics led to his considerable involvement with the Oatley RSL Youth Club as his children grew beyond early childhood – he helped the somewhat legendary Jack Retallack with boxing training, helped with Physical Training, and with Ray Lillas coached rugby leagues for the club.

Therese, married to Beverley Hills Chemist James Boian, undertook nursing, and for a number of years was Director of Nursing at Hillcrest Nursing Home in Oatley. Tony and his wife Gillian now are proprietors of *O'Connor's Pharmacy*, Matt has made his career in Customs, Louise after working for years with her father studied Law through Wollongong University and now works in law, while Phil works in computer technology

The O'Connor offspring didn't move far – In 2007 - Therese lives at Blakehurst, *Tony* lives in Oatley as does the youngest, Phillip (*Phil*); third and fourth children *Matt* and Anne-Louise (*Lou* or *Louise*) live at Penshurst and Kingsgrove, respectively.

### **O'Connors Pharmacy – employees, helpers out and delivery boys**

And what about some of the “other faces” seen at O'Connor's Pharmacy over the years?

Can you remember Bert Cutler an Oatley resident, one time President of the Pharmacy Guild, who would 'take over the shop' on odd occasions if Terry needed a day off? – a service Daphne Newberry performed for years every Tuesday before moving away from Oatley.

Barbara (started 1972), and Judy (1976) who have both come back after having family; others many will recall included Jenny Best, Jenny Thompson, Pam Murphy, Kerry Harry, and Kim Matthews (who having completed her Pharmacy studies went on to study medicine, then became a Gynaecologist! -- delivery boys included the Bleakley boys and underlining the pharmacy's speedy delivery service - Daniel Batman, high profile sprinter who contested the 400 m at the Olympics, and won, among other titles – the 2004 British indoor 400m title. (Daniel married Nova Peris Kneebone, the Atlanta Olympic champion hockey player and Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games 200 metres champion). Tony O'Connor worked as shop boy during school and university breaks. Louise O'Connor, who ended up working as Pharmacy Assistant in the business for a number of years, started on shelving work at quite a young age (As does, these days, Tony and Gillian's eldest child Megan).





### **Terry and his involvement with sports, including Marathon running.**

Terry continued an interest in physical fitness all his life. Each morning he was one of a group who would meet at Oatley park at 6 am and go through a period of running, then on the oval there would kick and pass a football; his great friend Pat Mullane, Oatley West pharmacist was one of that group, which also included Naill McHugh, Mick Curlisa a Senior Police Force man & one-time Mayor of Hurstville, Patt Gibb (a policeman), and Bob Nash, a dentist.

Terry also liked playing tennis, which he could usually only find time for in the evenings, and I (Cliff Crane) enjoyed playing night tennis with a group including Terry during a few years just after he opened his Oatley pharmacy.

Terry was a keen athlete, and competitive running. For and cross country races, for Cronulla and back, usually n work. The St. George long distance running events business provides the prize.



maintained a regular regime of training for his many years, too, Terry competed in marathon which he would once a week or so run to the early morning before starting his day's Amateur Athletic Group calendar includes two named to commemorate Terry, for which the

The O'Connor children were encouraged too in some of the sporting and athletics interests Terry followed. The family had a long association with the Oatley RSL Sports Club. Terry helped Ray Lillas with coaching of the Club's Rugby league teams, in which his sons played, and they were taught boxing there by Jack Retallack. All the children were involved with Physical Training, too.

Sons Matthew and Phillip were encouraged in their sailing, becoming Australian class sailing champions in both VJs and 14 ft Skates.

**Evolution of Pharmacy Practices since Terry O'Connor entered the profession.**



The herb Valerian Officinalis – ‘Valerian’ –until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century was still prescribed as a sedative for insomnia, restlessness, and anxiety.

**Pharmaceutical dispensing into the 1950s was still based largely on processing and mixing derivatives of mainly naturally occurring plants etc. and the study requirements involved emphasis on botany and related fields.**



Gentiana Lutea – ‘Gentian’ –root of a flower prescribed primarily for digestive disorders such as loss of appetite, fullness, and flatulence.



A young Terry O'Connor as dispensing chemist “in the early days”

## **General evolution of Pharmacy practices since Terry O'Connor entered the profession.** (continued)

The role of pharmacists as dispensers changed a lot from Terry's early days.

It was during Terry's early involvement with pharmacy that "the old ways" of pharmacy passed into history. Gone were the days of rows of brightly coloured liquids and powders on shelves in the pharmacists *dispensary*, of the intricate weighing scales and measuring devices, the range of grinding, heating, burning and distilling etc. equipment, pill rollers' of the wonderful big old registers in which the pharmacist (or *chemist* as usually referred to then by laymen) had to record details of the individual prescriptions; gone too were the days of washing and re-use of bottles and jars, of hand-writing or typing up the labels of instruction for amount and frequency of taking or using the dispensed products, warnings about possible poisoning or harmful effects, and their storage requirements where necessary. Computers linked to customer details and product information now spit out labels in seconds!



(Pill Roller)

A trend developed for use of synthetic, and in most cases much more potent, substances, usually pre-packaged - progressively reducing call on pharmacists to *dispense* or *fill* individual preparation at the retail pharmacy level.

The move to university degree requirement for entry into the pharmacy profession came in the early 1960s and coincided with the beginning of the move away from pharmacists grinding/mixing preparation of plant-based ingredients into prescribed medicines, creams, and potions, etc

The modern day mass production of the often potent substances has had its down side too, for the pharmacy profession.. Many mass-produced synthetic based products were initially available exclusively from pharmacies, but following their acceptance and widespread usage, which chemists had helped manufacturers to achieve (*Myadec* in its various forms, *Mylanta* and *AktaVite*, for instance) would then be put out for retailing through general retail and supermarket outlets at such competitive cut prices that they would be virtually lost as sales items for pharmacies.

The community suffers too by monetary and societal costs of addiction by some people to these potent drugs. Some products, too, contain constituents widely used in manufacture of illegal addictive substances which has led to theft, often involving break-ins, and rorting of the PBS to obtain them for that purpose.

The move to synthetic based medications has not only led to break-ins and hold-ups, much more costly building and patrolling security costs, but change too in training of pharmacists. They now must oversight possible incompatibilities of different medications; extreme care in labelling is ever more important, orally reinforcing the warnings with various emphasis depending on the customer's ability to understand the written instructions. Only very rarely these days do we see on Pharmacists Labels such simple instructions as "Use as Directed" or "Use as Instructed". Modern day pharmacists are also trained and counselled in the need to be alert for the "doctor shoppers" and those showing signs of addiction. And of course there has been the ever-increasing growth of, and reliance on, in-house computer systems, and more recently the internet based ordering systems, customer records, and interface with the Federal bodies, "big brother", oversighting limitations of supply, pharmaceutical benefit entitlements etc. etc.

## **O'Connors Pharmacy –features and developments**

Lorraine says getting the prized Revlon products franchise when the pharmacy was quite new, was something of a coup, and an attraction to many – although she said it came with very strict requirements as to display positioning and product preference.

In the early days *O'Connor's Pharmacy* was somewhat of an unofficial Baby Health Centre – Terry had a set of baby weighing scales and many mothers and grandmothers would come in to have 'baby weighed and keep a record of baby's weight progress. This aspect of service gradually reduced with proliferation in the suburbs of Baby Health Centres.

Terry's period as pharmacist in Oatley coincided with an upsurge in development of nursing homes for the aged and frail. Pharmacies began "looking after" these homes by delivering prescriptions and filling of "Webster Packs" in a "by day and time order" to overcome forgetfulness and confusion.

Local and nearby nursing homes Terry 'serviced' included Hillcrest Nursing Homes in Mimosa Street, Oatley, and Leisure World and Banks Lodge Nursing Homes at Peakhurst. In due course servicing of Nursing homes had grown to a total of 9 in locations from Liverpool to Bankstown, and at South Hurstville, Peakhurst, Kogarah, Ashfield and Roselands.

The explosion in numbers of nursing homes led to pharmacies which specialised in providing service to the nursing homes and *O'Connor's Pharmacy* in due course was happy to relinquish that commitment so it could get back to concentrating exclusively on local customers at the pharmacy in Oatley.

### **How does Oatley remember Terry O'Connor.**

In many ways! Certainly as an ever genial man of ready smile and wit, a person with the charm of humility and for whom consideration for the feelings and welfare of others was a natural trait. As a pharmacist who strove always to give utmost satisfaction to people during normal hours, but ever-prepared also to give out of hours service whenever the need arose – often switching off the lawnmower, or dropping whatever job he was doing at home, to do so!

### **And – today - Tony O'Connor.**

Tony, who has carried on 'the practice' for the last ten years was born on 10 November 1961 at St. Margaret's Hospital, Darlinghurst

He undertook Pharmacy studies at Sydney University from where he graduated B. Phar. 1984 After completing his registration year at Bateman's Bay, Tony spent two years as a pharmacist in Darwin before moving back to the Oatley pharmacy.

Gillian and Tony managed the Pharmacy practice for a year after father Terry's death until Tony became partner with his mother Lorraine in 1998. From 1 October 2002, Gillian and Tony took the business over in their own right.

**AND – LIKE FATHER TERRY - TONY IS A KEEN ATHLETE; HE TOO RUNS IN HALF MARATHONS!!!**

## **Alan Dunsmore - Oatley's Chemist 1927 - 1956**

A young man in his early twenties from Bexley - Alan Keith Dunsmore - took over what was Oatley's only chemist shop in 1927. The previous chemist was Mr Flynn and the shop was situated on the corner of Frederick Street and Oatley Avenue in the corner premises now occupied by Nationwide Realty. Above the shop was a very pleasant two-bedroom residence and there was a small garden at the rear. Alan would mention more than once that his first day as a chemist was spent washing bottles!

Alan's family home was a beautiful residence set on a large block in Monomeeth Street, Bexley. Alan was the eldest of four children. His sister Margaret became one of the first women in Sydney to be admitted as a solicitor. His parents, Walter and Harriet were very reserved, quiet and conservative. This sheltered upbringing did not exactly prepare Alan for the whirl of Oatley's social life. However, that was soon taken care of once he settled in and became known, especially to the younger set.

Marjorie Phillips, a school teacher and her sister Phyllis were among Alan's customers at the shop. They lived with their brother, Bill and parents Gert and Arthur Phillips in a large brick house at 47 Letitia Street. Arthur Phillips was a plumber. It was the 1920s, before the Depression and the young people of Oatley's close-knit community were having a pretty good time. Marjorie, Bill and Phil were right in the thick of it and their memories and photos depict what seems to have been a never ending round of tennis parties, cricket matches, swimming in the river, picnics, boating and of course weekly dances at the School of Arts. The new chemist could not dance and needed to be taught pretty quickly. Phil taught him and can remember them doing the Maxina up and down the hall of her home. She says he became quite good.

Phil says she wasn't aware of the romance developing between her sister Marjorie and Alan but develop it did and Alan and Marjorie were married in St Paul's Church in 1931. The reception was held in Oatley Masonic Hall and the honeymoon in Bundanoon.

Their first home was the residence upstairs, above the chemist shop. The following year their first child, John, was born. Marjorie was 29 and Alan 25 at the time of their marriage

In 1935 Alan built his own shop at 22 Frederick Street, a single storey building with a small garden behind, the current site of the St George Bank. Their own home was completed at the same time at 37 Rosa Street and the young family moved in before the birth of their second baby, a daughter named Doreen. Janet was born six years later in 1941.

Alan's working hours were horrendous as he was the only chemist in Oatley for more than 20 years. The shop was open from 9am until well into the evening on weekdays as well as Saturday morning, Saturday evening, Sunday morning and Sunday evening. John well remembers walking down to the shop carrying his father's hot evening meal. Later a young boy on his bike would call at the house to collect the hot dinner each evening and deliver it to the shop. Eventually, about 1947, Alan started closing the shop at 6.30pm on weekdays and he was able to be at home for dinner. However, the Saturday and Sunday morning and evening opening hours remained unchanged. It was virtually impossible for him to have any sort of time away from Oatley and many family holidays were spent without him. He was great friends with Ced Havilah and once was about to leave for a short break in Lismore, Ced's home town, only to find that at the last minute the locum who was to manage the shop in his absence couldn't come. So holiday cancelled though the Lismore trip did eventuate later. The shortage of available locum chemists made things very difficult.

Alan enjoyed contact with the chemist at Mortdale and they were good friends. Much later Pat Mullane opened his Chemist shop in Mulga Road and became Oatley's second chemist. He and Alan formed a firm friendship.

Alan was such a well respected figure in Oatley. He was very well liked and seemed to know everyone. People would call in for a quick hullo or chat, there always seemed to be someone draped over the high counter of the dispensary - often a doctor. His advice was sought by many. His special friendship with Mr Ernie Lawson, Oatley's Postmaster, lasted a lifetime. Alan became the Foundation Master of Ashlar Freemason Lodge in 1948.

Alan's shop was fitted out with dark timber shelving and sliding glass and timber doors with dark linoleum on the floor. Most of the stock was behind the glass doors as was the custom of the time - no self service. Many common items such as soap, powder, toothpaste and brushes, combs, in fact toiletries of all description were purchased from the chemist as well as all items required for babies - bottles, dummies, baby milk formula etc - no supermarket in those days. A huge roll of brown paper was positioned in a steel frame to one side of the counter along with a very large spool of string. Everything was wrapped in the paper (no bags). Alan was very adept at arranging articles in the best way possible for wrapping. He wrapped quickly, made beautiful corners, tied the parcel up with the string and made a handle of string for ease of carrying. Everything was done in double quick time, with quite a flourish and without scissors.

In the early 50's Alan decided that the shop should be modernised. Out went the old beautiful original cabinets and in came light coloured blonde timber fittings along with a complete range of the latest Helena Rubenstein cosmetics! The shop became slightly more open plan though space was always at a premium. Looking back the shop seems to have been quite small and rather cramped, certainly compared with today's modern pharmacies.

Alan's dispensary was simply amazing by today's standards. Much of the medicine, mixtures, creams and ointments prescribed by doctors were made up by chemists in those days. Books and manuals needed to be on hand and were consulted to ensure

that ingredients and quantities were exact - just like a cooking recipe. All prescriptions dispensed were recorded in huge ledgers by hand. There were several sets of weighing scales in the dispensary to be used according to the volume of substance required. The finely balanced chemical scales made of brass were the most fragile and were used to weigh tiny amounts of various powders. Out in the shop there were other scales too, one for the babies and one for adults which required a penny in the slot and a pull of the handle.

Along two walls of the dispensary were many shelves holding dozens of glass bottles, many coloured blue, green and brown, containing all manner of solutions many with the labels written in Latin. Once the recipe was made up it was transferred to a bottle or jar. Bottles were stoppered with a cork. There were great quantities of empty bottles and jars of varying sizes in drawers waiting to be used. The bottles, of course, needed the right size cork and there were dozens of corks kept in drawers all sorted into their varying sizes. Above the sink were many glass pipettes used for the accurate measuring of liquid ingredients. There were mortars and pestles for grinding and heavy glass slabs on which ointments were made from ingredients mixed together with thin, flexible steel spatulas. Making ointments and creams by hand required quite a lot of energy and then getting the whole lot into a jar wasn't easy either. Alan would type the label on an ancient Underwood typewriter - only two fingers but very fast. The label would be moistened and stuck on and the bottle or jar given a final polish before being put on the shelf to await collection. Alan had two patented mixtures of his own - Dunsmore's Bronchitis Mixture and Dunsmore's Influenza Mixture. Each was as terrible to taste as the other. Not many residents of Oatley would have missed being on the receiving end of these diabolical remedies but the general consensus was that they worked wonders.

The shop didn't have its own refrigerator until the early 50s and new drugs such as penicillin and some of the earlier antibiotics were kept in the fridge at the Rosa Street house. Janet would dread the phone ringing (usually between 5 and 6pm in the middle



of the radio serials Superman and Biggles) with a request for her to run down to the shop with such and such which was required. Marjorie would say go barefoot and you will be quicker.

John, Doreen and Jan all have clear memories of helping in the shop - Jan's favourite job was weighing out the Gilseal jelly beans which came in huge cannisters and were the best ever. Doreen has memories of helping wrap baby teething powders. John was called upon to run errands, often on foot.

Alan worked alone until about 1945 when he began to employ an apprentice pharmacist who was studying pharmacy at Sydney University. Two or three young women were trained in this way over several years.

Mr and Mrs Dunsmore were both keen gardeners and belonged to the Oatley Garden Club. Somehow Alan found time to grow lots of vegetables as well as very nice roses. And of course, like everyone else, there were lots of chooks kept up the back. Around 1950 Alan took up lawn bowls and thoroughly enjoyed playing with Mortdale Bowling Club on Saturday afternoons and then on Wednesday afternoon when he could get away.

In 1954 Alan and Marjorie surprised everyone by embarking on the trip of a life time - eight months abroad in the UK and Europe travelling by P & O luxury liners the Himalaya and the Arcadia. Alan arranged for a locum chemist to take over the shop whilst he and Marjorie were away and this lady and her husband lived in the Rosa Street house with John who was at university. Doreen and Janet stayed with relatives and friends. Wonderful souvenirs, coloured slides, movie projector, movies and every other memento one can think of returned with them and they shared their experiences with many friends and relatives over the ensuing months.

Whilst in England Alan and Marjorie were able to at long last meet the chemist and his family with whom they had corresponded throughout the war and to whom they had

sent regular food parcels. The boys (now in their 60's) say they received their first lollies from Oatley, Australia.

The overseas trip seemed to give Alan itchy feet. In 1955 the family moved to a house in Letitia Street and he and Marjorie made many plans to redesign and improve the large new garden. However, Alan was not to live to enjoy the coming years. The following year the family visited New Zealand where John was working as a veterinary surgeon. It was on this visit that Alan, at the age of 50, was fatally injured in a car accident on 2nd December, 1956. His death shocked not only his family but much of Oatley and many many people attended his Memorial Service in St Paul's Anglican Church. The family's loss was devastating and very hard to get over - even now after 50 years it still seems hard to bear. Alan had been Oatley's chemist for 29 years and he was greatly missed.

Mr Thomas, the locum, stayed on as manager for several years before the business was sold to Mr and Mrs Harrold. The chemist shop at 22 Frederick Street no longer exists and is now the St George Bank.

Alan's parents never really recovered from the loss of their son. Marjorie lost her husband and mother in the same year but bravely continued on without her devoted husband. She died in 1991 in her ninetieth year. Her sister, Phil Davidson, is in her 96th year. She is well and living in Carlingford. Their brother Bill Phillips and his wife Jean passed away in recent years, well in their nineties.

John Dunsmore and his family live in Perth, Western Australia. John became an Associate Professor and Dean of Veterinary Studies at Murdoch University before his retirement.

Doreen Earl lives in Oatley as she has done all her life. She is well known to many. I live in Canada Bay near Concord. I was fifteen when Dad died and still, after all these

years, cannot speak of him without getting choked up so I would prefer not to attend the Meeting about Chemists of Oatley. I hope you will enjoy the memories we have of our father who served the community of Oatley so unselfishly and so willingly for so long all those years ago.

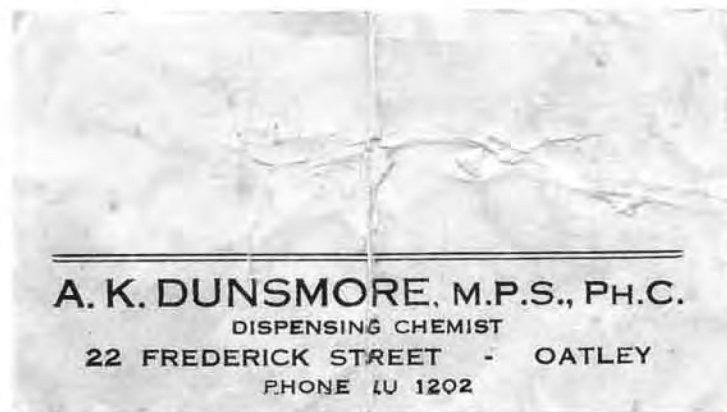
Best wishes,

*Jan Robinson*

Jan Robinson.



An apprentice pharmacist in the shop and Alan Dunsmore in the Dispensary probably at the typewriter. Alan's face is obscured by a newly dispensed bottle of mixture which has been placed on the high dispensary shelf awaiting collection. Photo taken about 1948.





## CHEMISTS OF OATLEY

Patrick Mullane

When we first moved to Oatley, Pat Mullane had his chemist shop opened 1951 on the corner of Mulga Road and Myall Street. We first met Pat at the local Progress Association meeting when he was endeavouring to have kerb and guttering laid in front of his shop. In the early days Pat resided with his wife and family in a home behind this shop, then moved to River Road, and then to Algernon Street.

Unfortunately, Pat passed away in 1988 during a social function on the North Shore which was a great shock to his wife Shirley. From 1959, until his death, Pat's assistant was Julie Doran and, after this loss, Julie retained the shop on the understanding that the name Mullane's remain the same.

Pat was an extremely likeable man, a popular man in the area doing great work on behalf of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and spending weekends at the Matthew Talbot Hostel helping disadvantaged human beings.

He was also very active, running around the Oatley Park Oval early morning with Terry O'Conner the other chemist in Frederick Street, Oatley.

Pat was also President of the Illawarra Catholic Club, contributing greatly to its advancement.

The main window of Pat's shop was always given over to the display of notices concerning anything and everything connected with the area, such as the announcement of poster competitions linked to the Oatley Flora & Fauna Association, to Lost and Found, Items for Sale, in fact at times it was difficult to know just what kind of a shop existed behind so many advertisements on behalf of all the lovely people in the area who appreciated his kindness. Nothing was too much trouble for him.

Pat is still thought of and remembered as a kind and generous man.

Since 2003 the shop has been taken over and the resident chemist is Pelagia Billiris, still retaining the name of Mullane's but Pelagia is proving herself to be a worthy successor.

RK 25.5.07

## BRIAN SMITH

After several different career choices I was offered an apprenticeship by Mr A J Cawood, a Pharmacist with a business in Kingsgrove. He had as previous apprentices both my brother and my future brother-in-law. I began my 3 year time with him in February 1953. I was then 19 years old and living with my family at Canterbury.

I attended Sydney University part time and the shop the rest of the time. I remember my starting wage was 3-5-9 per week. I passed my final exam at Uni in January 1956 and my qualifying exam by the Pharmacy Board in August 1956.

I spent several months as a relieving Pharmacist at places such as Belfield, Coniston, Belmont, Narromine, Gulgong, Ashfield and Earlwood.

I married Marcia in January 1957, and sought a position with a residence, and eventually took a position as Assistant Pharmacist with Mr R T Crago at Bowral with a wage of 25 plus bonus on turnover. It was 6 months before turnover reached the target figure to give me a bonus. We lived there for six years and eventually decided that for putting roots down, Sydney was best. We moved back in March 1963 with 2 children.

My intention was to begin my own business. I took a position with Mr Vince Bryant at Padstow to live in the residence above his shop and answer the night bell in return for free rent, phone and electricity. Also I opened his shop on Saturday night and Sunday morning for a payment of 5 per week. During the day I worked for Mr Bill Gilchrist at Bexley as assistant. I still sought my own business.

After looking at Pharmacies for sale and new empty shops to rent, I then looked at other business for sale, with the idea of conversion. I bought a grocery at Bankstown, telling the seller I didn't want the stock, employed a carpenter and worked with him to do the shop fittings. The business opened on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1963.

In March 1964 we moved into the residence above the shop. While living there our 3<sup>rd</sup> child was born. The stairs were a problem as this child neared walking so we began a search for a house, and eventually moved to our present home at 118 Woronora Pde Oatley in August 1965. Our next 2 children were born in 1966 and 1968..

I was one of the first Pharmacists to take a redundancy payment from the government and closed my Pharmacy on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1991. There was a changing population pattern. The old residents of Bankstown were ageing, and being replaced-mainly by Vietnamese and Lebanese. I had 3 new pharmacies open close by, 2 Vietnamese and 1 Lebanese.

My Idea then was to work casually 3 days a week. In 1997 I was working for Mr Brian Manning, a Pharmacist at Berala, who said he envied my lifestyle, and offered me a partnership, with the idea that we both worked 3 days a week. I accepted this and the partnership began on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1997. The system worked well. We eventually sold the business on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2002, and I retired.

**MARGARET FOGDEN;**

In 1963 Margaret and Roy Fogden opened their chemist shop in Lansdowne Parade, Jewfish Point. For three years Margaret and her husband lived over the premises while Margaret held the position of resident chemist until 1970.

In 1970 the business moved to Penshurst Street, Penshurst, (next to the jeweller, Mr. Hardiman - opposite the current Washington & Soul). This business was now called the Family Pharmacy and, after two years, was sold to a Mr. David Abeshouse, for whom Margaret did relief work. However, Mr. Abeshouse did not stay long and so Margaret did relief work from 1972 until 1994, moving between different areas, but mainly in the South Hurstville precincts.

Margaret retired in 1994 and, last November, moved from Marine Drive to a retirement villa at Woollooware.

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*Angie Rowan*  
25.5.07