

<i>Month &amp; Year of Topic</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Written &amp; Spoken Presenters</i>
November 1995	<b>Aspects of Oatley Bay</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Oatley Bay Sea Scouts Annette Street Oatley Point	Joyce Cowell George Kendall Alec Leach

## OATLEY HERITAGE

SUBJECT: OATLEY POINT RESERVE

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Oatley Point Reserve is fringed by the George's River and Oatley Bay roughly to the south west and north. Access by road is at the ends of Algernon and Herbert Streets. It covers approximately seven and a half acres.

The shoreline is of a rocky nature, from the Herbert Street entrance the reserve follows Oatley Bay to the left until Oatley Bay meets the George's River at Oatley Point. The actual Point is defined by an island type rock approximately five metres from the mainland. This was once a true island at high tide before Kogarah Council constructed a steel bridge, making it accessible to everybody. The rock measures approximately fifteen metres in diameter and stands about four metres above water level. It is known as Barber's Rock. The tale is told of a barber who was drowned off the rock, hence his memory lives on. It is a favourite place from which to fish.

Hawkesbury River sandstone sheer cliffs of approximately five metres high dominate the foreshore between Barbers Rock and the end of the reserve traversing upstream. There are a few side tracks leading from these cliffs to a main track which climbs rather steeply to the Algernon Street entrance.

A point of interest when approaching from the Herbert Street entrance is a cave, the turn off to it is located approximately sixty metres along the track on the right hand side and then a reasonably steep climb for about thirty metres. The caves entrance into the Hawkesbury river sandstone cliff which fashions the line on that side of the track is just over half a metre wide by a little over one metre high. Inside, it opens out to about a five by three metre elliptical shape having an average height of about three quarters of a metre. This main area has a solid rock floor, the roof tapers down to meet it at the rear and ends immediately inside the entrance. For about half a metre there is head room of nearly one and a half metres with a sandy loam base.

The bushland is made up of a variety of trees and ferns, the main ones being blackbutt and grey gums towering over the reserve with various wattles and other native trees dotted throughout. A list prepared by The Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society details approximately eighty five different species in the reserve. One tree that stands out is a Port Jackson Fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*). It is readily visible from the water, approximately forty metres from the Point in Oatley Bay, growing out between the rocks.

Years ago this bushland used to regularly go up in smoke. Whenever one saw smoke coming from the Point the finger of blame was always pointed to one Joe Ford. No one minded and it kept the undergrowth down

The first recognised white men to take in it's beauty would have been Bass and Flinders in 1795 when they explored the George's River to an extent of twenty miles upstream.

The reserve was part of the original James Oatley 1833 Grant. In the 1881 purchase by Griffiths and Co., an agreement was reached between them and Council on Oatley Point Reserve before Oatley was sold for development.

When the 150th Anniversary of Oatley was being celebrated a book was produced called "Oatley Writes". David our number one son, age eleven gave his thoughts on Oatley Point in this publication. In seven short lines he summed up my feelings of Oatley Point.

### OATLEY POINT

Oatley Point is a great place.

The trees are green and everything is beautiful.

People go fishing at Oatley point

And have barbecues and picnics.

Children go climbing on the rocks, exploring

And sometimes the scouts have "going up" ceremonies there.

But I like Oatley Point because it is quiet.

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Poem - Oatley Point.