

<i>Month & Year of Topic</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Written & Spoken Presenters</i>
February 2000	Heritage Homes in Oatley. Past & Present	Speakers Lyn Vincent Neville Gardner Ron Woodward Brian Stevens Merle Stone D. Ardley

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OATLEY HERITAGE GROUP

MEETING DATE: *24 Feb, 2000*

TOPIC: *Heritage Houses,
Oatley West.*

PAPERS BY:

*Lyn Vincent -
component of Assoc. Dip.
of Local and applied
History.
Uni. New England, Armidale*

*(Slides shown to accompany
this talk are retained by
Lyn Vincent)*

Meeting: 24th Feb 2000
 add to Heritage Homes in Watley

Topic: Brian Stevens slides of
 Watley houses taken abt 1820 yrs
 ago. - 22 slides.

Also: Alec Leach followed with
 computer copies of notable houses.

1. 11 Gurnea Rd - Buriel Lind's
 Parents Home.
2. 111 Rosa St. - Lil Leach's house.
3. 25 Annette St - Mrs. Cliff Crane
 (previously Chiswell)
4. 9 Russell St - Graham & Ethel Bell
 (originally Ely, Peg Leach's
 house)
5. 65 Llewellyn St. - John & his Wether
6. 24 Ada St - Alec & June Leach's house
 (originally J. & G. Dovers)
7. 10 Russell St - R. & J. Woodward's house
 (originally Edgar Williams')

Ron Woodward talked on acquiring his house,
 on renovating it and ~~gathering~~ ^{heard} anecdotes
 regarding people who lived in the vicinity.
 Neville Gardner spoke about ~~the~~ his former old
 timber house at 30 Rosa St its demolition &
 then construction of a new house built ~~on~~
 in its place

'THE TOWERS'

16 Russell Street Oatley

We have been asked to write of our experience of our short residence in 'The Towers' in Russell Street, Oatley. In 1965 we looked at this house with a hope of purchasing. The house was very old, needing a lot of work done on it, so we bought the land next door, which was part of the estate and built our home next door. At the time we were told the house was over 100 years old and originally owned by the Bushells Tea Family.

While our house was under construction, we lived in 'The Towers' with our two children for about 4 months. It was a house with character. One of our vivid memories was during the winter with a strong southerly blowing, the four of us sitting on the lounge, wrapped in blankets, with a small radiator turned on. The house was very drafty and we sat and watched the curtains blowing out and the carpet lifting. Bed was really the only place.

The house was built of fibro with a quaint attic perched on the top in the centre of the building, reached by a very narrow staircase. The house rested on piers, some made of bush rock which had badly eroded and over the years had sunk or had quite a lean, which meant the beams in some places missed the piers altogether.

On the bay down front of the house was a lovely little sandy beach. We were told that on 7th January, 1946 a schoolgirl of 14 was taken by a shark in about 1 metre of water from this beach. Her name was Valma Tegal and the story came from a relative, Owen Tegal. This story was also confirmed in a book written by Alan Sharpe, Shark down under, published 1993. A member of OFF, Margaret Forbes has also talked to me confirming this story, although her story differs with the book. She used to go to school with Valma and after school a group used to swim in the bathes at the end of the Bay. This particular day, Valma had to go on a message for her Mother and was too late to meet her friends. She just went down the front for a quick dip, this cost her life.

A couple of years ago, the house was pulled down and a 2 storey one built. The present owners, Jim and Irene Tibbetts designed the house in a very similar style, even with the attic.

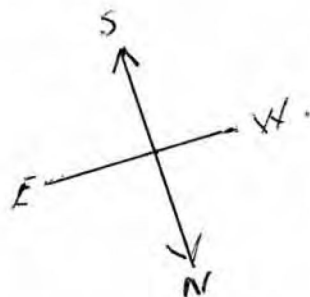
While in residence the southerlies seemed to blow continuously. The floor section was fully exposed to the winds.

The Tower section was an ideal airing and ironing room and a quite spot to relax and read with beautiful views of Oatley Bay and Georges River to the south and to the north on to a beautiful eroded rockface which the wind

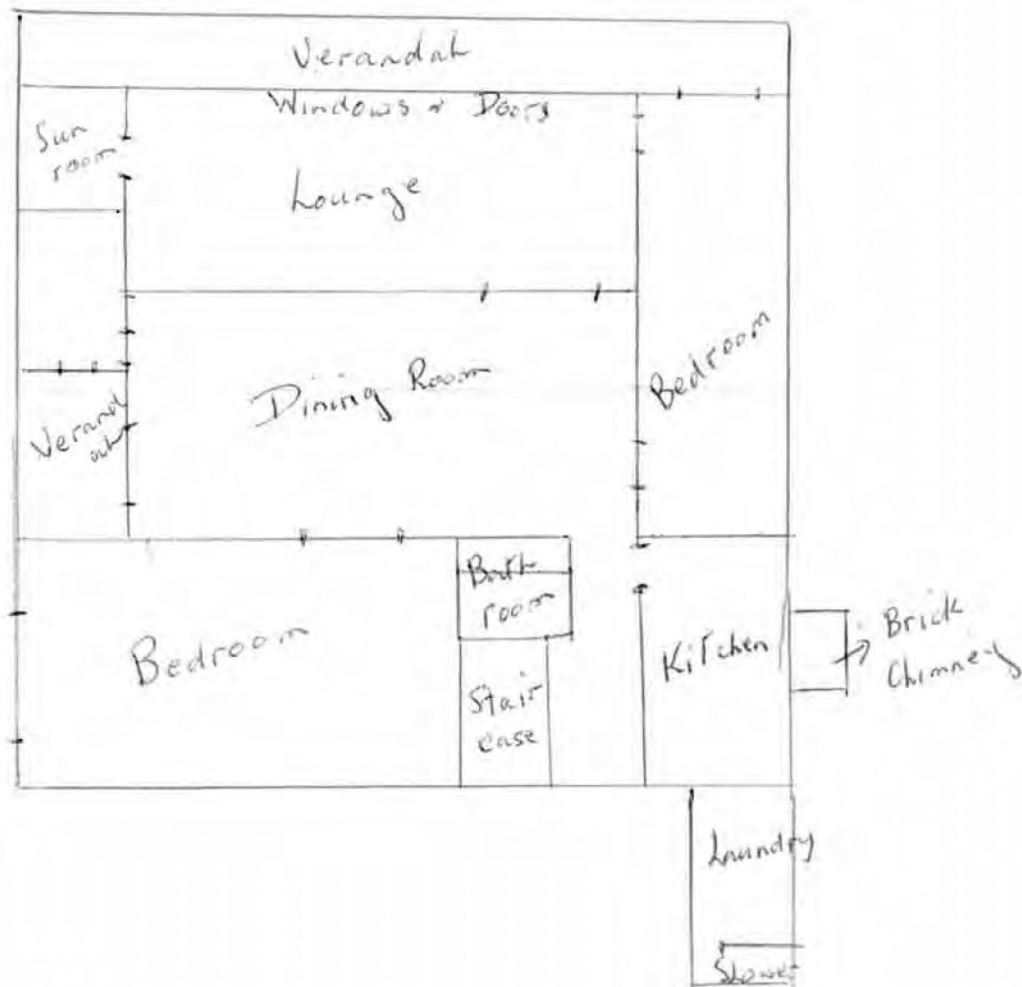
had eroded over the centuries. Down near the water was a huge rock with a cave that you could stand up in.

This was a beautiful part of Oatley that not many people knew about, so quiet and peaceful that you were in another world. Unfortunately health reasons forced us to move as access was down a very steep drive. Our four grandchildren spent many happy hours exploring the caves and rock pools in the area and fishing off the jetty.

We have drawn a rough sketch of the layout of the house.



Betty & Doug Wickens
Betty Wickens



HOW I RESEARCHED A CENSUS OF 17 HOUSES IN OATLEY WEST, NSW

I have been asked to talk briefly to you tonight about the research skills I used to accomplish a census of 17 houses in the Oatley West area. This census was a component of the Associate Diploma of Local and Applied History (ADLAH) I was enrolled in at The University of New England, Armidale.

I will begin with telling you how I originally researched the houses and then I will touch on some research skills that I did not use but in hindsight should have.

Firstly I drove around the neighbourhood of Oatley West and picked out a number of houses which I considered to be worthy candidates and began to take photographs of them. When I had these photographs developed I chose 17 which I considered worthy of some further research being done and I began to study the particular architectural features and put a possible date and time on each building.

The aims of the assignment at hand led me to devise 9 parameters to achieve these aims. These aims were:

BUILDING IDENTIFICATION
GENERAL PURPOSE
CURRENT FUNCTION
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION
SOURCE FOR DATING
PERIOD
STYLE
DESCRIPTION
HISTORICAL REMARKS

Another of the aims of the assignment was to define the particular area chosen for the census. I chose firstly to define Oatley in its relationship to the Sydney metropolitan area, secondly the area chosen in relationship to Oatley itself and thirdly I drew a plan of the chosen area showing where the houses were situated.

Another aim also, was to create a short contextual history of the general area where this house census was being done. This contextual history was mostly my observations of the area, my general knowledge of the area and of course my readings on the history of the area. I used books available on the history of Oatley to do this.

I will now attempt to explain to you what sources I used to fulfil the parameters I had devised for myself.

BUILDING IDENTIFICATION:

This included House Name (if any), House No., Street name and suburb. If possible I included the Lot and Section Nos. These details were attained by using Hurstville Council Rate and Valuation Records, NSW Land Title Records and of course my own observations.

GENERAL PURPOSE: What was the building used for? In this case the purpose was reasonably obvious, these buildings were being used for accommodation, but Hurstville Council Rate and Valuation Records confirmed this for me. In the case of buildings that are not residencies, observations may not always be obvious so it would be even more necessary to see what NSW Land Title Records and Council Records have to say.

CURRENT FUNCTION: Again in the case of this census, function was obvious, but this should never be taken at face value as even though it looks like a residency to the eye, it may in fact be a doctor's surgery, a solicitor's practice or it maybe even be both. Again, I used Hurstville Council Rate and Valuation Records to validate my observations. For example a building you are researching may look like a factory or maybe a hall, but you need to know exactly what the actual function is. Signs outside the building may indicate the purpose and function but these signs could be outdated so it is best to check it out in the appropriate records.

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: & SOURCE OF DATING:

Both of these paramaters were ascertained by my searching the Rate and Valuation records of Hurstville Council and the NSW Land Title Records. In one case of a dwelling in Mi Mi Street, Oatley I was unable to define the date with written evidence. If you can't find a fact, always be honest about this and state the records that you have searched. I could of course have gone to the Electoral Rolls and searched for the street name and number but this would have been too time consuming, but of course is an alternative when time permits. I should have also considered talking to the present owners, but again I did not have the luxury of time.

PERIOD: & STYLE:

Both these parameters were arrived at by the reading of a very good book on Architectural Design and Style. The book I used was called "A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture" written by R. Apperley et al in 1989. I also used another book called "A Manual of Architectural History Sources in Australia" by David Saunders and published in 1981. With these books and your own observation skills the period and style can be arrived at. It should be pointed out that I had previously completed an assignment on defining particular architectural details of a few buildings in the Sydney area. Armed with this knowledge I was able to define the architectural details of the houses in this census. My belief though is that if these books were used as an aid you would still be able to arrive at the same conclusions.

DESCRIPTION:

This is, in essence a description of all the features of the building, whether it has a tile, slate or iron roof, are there any gables, what kind of windows are they, is the building constructed of brick, stone, timber or some other material. Unusual features such as finials, quoining on the corners etc. should be mentioned. To achieve this parameter I again used the books on Architectural Design to guide me.

HISTORICAL REMARKS:

This parameter included: known owners, when they owned the building or land, is the owner living in the building or is it being leased, is this land part of a historical grant. For instance the house could be built on land that had once been granted to Mr. Oatley all those years ago. Another feature could be that a famous or infamous person had once resided in the house. This parameter could be achieved by readings on the history of the area and talking the present owners.

In conclusion the sources that would be used for researching a building or indeed a monument are:

- Books on architectural design, form and style
- Books on the history of the area
- Lands Title Records
- Municipality Rate and Valuation Books
- Sands and other directories
- Telephone directories
- Electoral Rolls
- Oral history

Regrettably I did not use Electoral Rolls or Oral History to complete this assignment, but in hindsight they would have been very valuable tools and would have been an enhancement to my assignment.

Since preparing this talk, it has come to my notice that the Department of Lands Titles have decided to shred old titles and issue new computerised versions. Some of you may be familiar with the old titles which had mortgagee stamps of all the previous owners. This document was sometimes quite a few pages long and very informative and not to mention historic. In their wisdom, and I say this with tongue in cheek, The Lands Titles people believe that these old documents take up too much shelf space and that everything should be computerised. It would seem it is a foregone conclusion that this will happen and all that can really be done is that we inform and advise our relatives and friends to request their bank to keep the old historic Deed Title when they are purchasing or selling a house or property. The banks are supposed to offer this service automatically but it would appear that this is not always the case.

Thank you for inviting me to talk about how I researched this building census in 1993 and in preparing this talk my interest in buildings and monuments has been renewed. In fact I am most keen to continue some earlier research into the monuments in and around Oatley and the people and events behind them.

Talk given by Lynette Vincent for the topic
"Heritage Homes in Oatley, Past & Present"
24th Feb. 2000

PARAMETERS

- 1. BUILDING IDENTIFICATION**
- 2. GENERAL PURPOSE**
- 3. CURRENT FUNCTION**
- 4. DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**
- 5. SOURCE FOR DATING**
- 6. PERIOD**
- 7. STYLE**
- 8. DESCRIPTION**
- 9. HISTORICAL REMARKS**

RESOURCES

- 1. BOOKS ON ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN,
FORM AND STYLE**
- 2. BOOKS ON THE HISTORY OF THE
AREA**
- 3. LANDS TITLE RECORDS**
- 4. MUNICIPALITY RATE AND VALUATION
BOOKS**
- 5. SANDS AND OTHER DIRECTORIES**
- 6. TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES**
- 7. ELECTORAL ROLLS**
- 8. ORAL HISTORY**

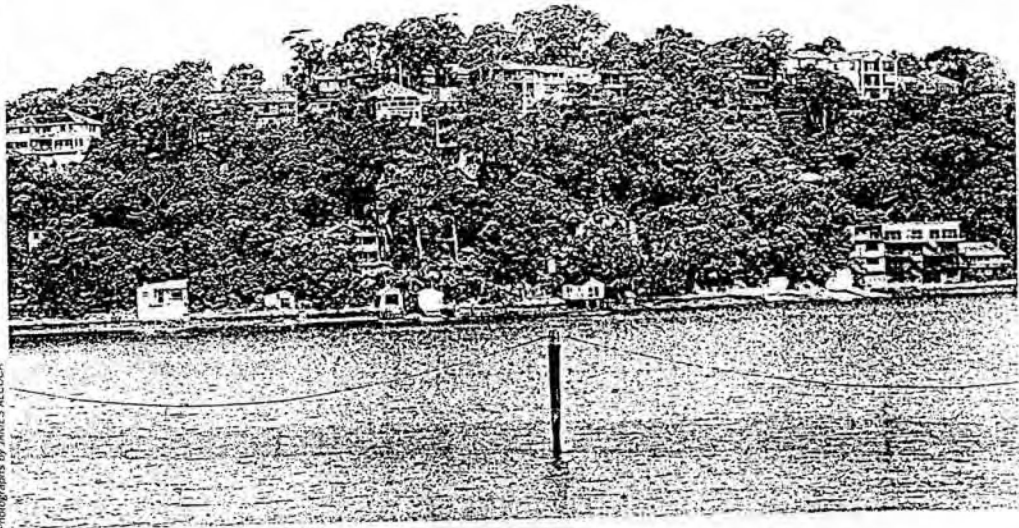
UP YOUR STREET Margie Blok



OATLEY

Style: Early colonial homes, Federation and Californian bungalows, '50s and '60s red-brickers, modern two-storey houses.
Price range: From \$300,000 to about \$1 million.
Transport: Buses and trains.
Facilities: Georges River, Oatley Park, Oatley Amateur Swimming Club.
Amusements: Boating, swimming.

1. Jew Fish Point. 2. Beverley Ferguson's house. 3. A typical Oatley Californian bungalow. 4. An older-style bungalow on the corner of Victory Road and Llewellyn Street. 5. No 48 Llewellyn Street. 6. The clock tower in Oatley shopping village.



Photographs by JAMES ALCOCK



DO THE TIMEWARP

Named after a watchmaker, Oatley is the perfect place to invest some valuable time.

THE quiet, leafy, family-oriented suburb of Oatley is worlds away from the hustle and bustle of the inner city. Located about 22 kilometres southwest of the CBD, on the Illawarra railway line between Mordiallo and Como, Oatley is bounded to the south by the Georges River (in particular, Lime Kiln Bay, Jew Fish Bay, Gungah Bay and Oatley Bay), with vast areas of natural bushland reserves dotted along its idyllic foreshores. The largest of these reserves, Oatley Park, is a paradise for lovers of nature and home to many species of native birds.

The area is named after James Oatley, an emancipist watch and clock-

maker who arrived in NSW from Stafford, England, in 1815. One of James Oatley's clocks can still be seen in the turret of Hyde Park Barracks, built under the supervision of the convict architect Francis Greenway in Macquarie Street.

As a result of a promise made by Governor Brisbane, James Oatley received a land grant of about 70 hectares in the Hurstville district, which he developed and farmed successfully.

In 1833, Governor Bourke granted Oatley a further 122 hectares in the Parish of St George. The clockmaker named his second land grant Needwood Forest. Today, it occupies almost the entire suburb of Oatley, and

is bounded by Gungah Bay, Boundary and Hurstville roads, Oatley Bay and Georges River.

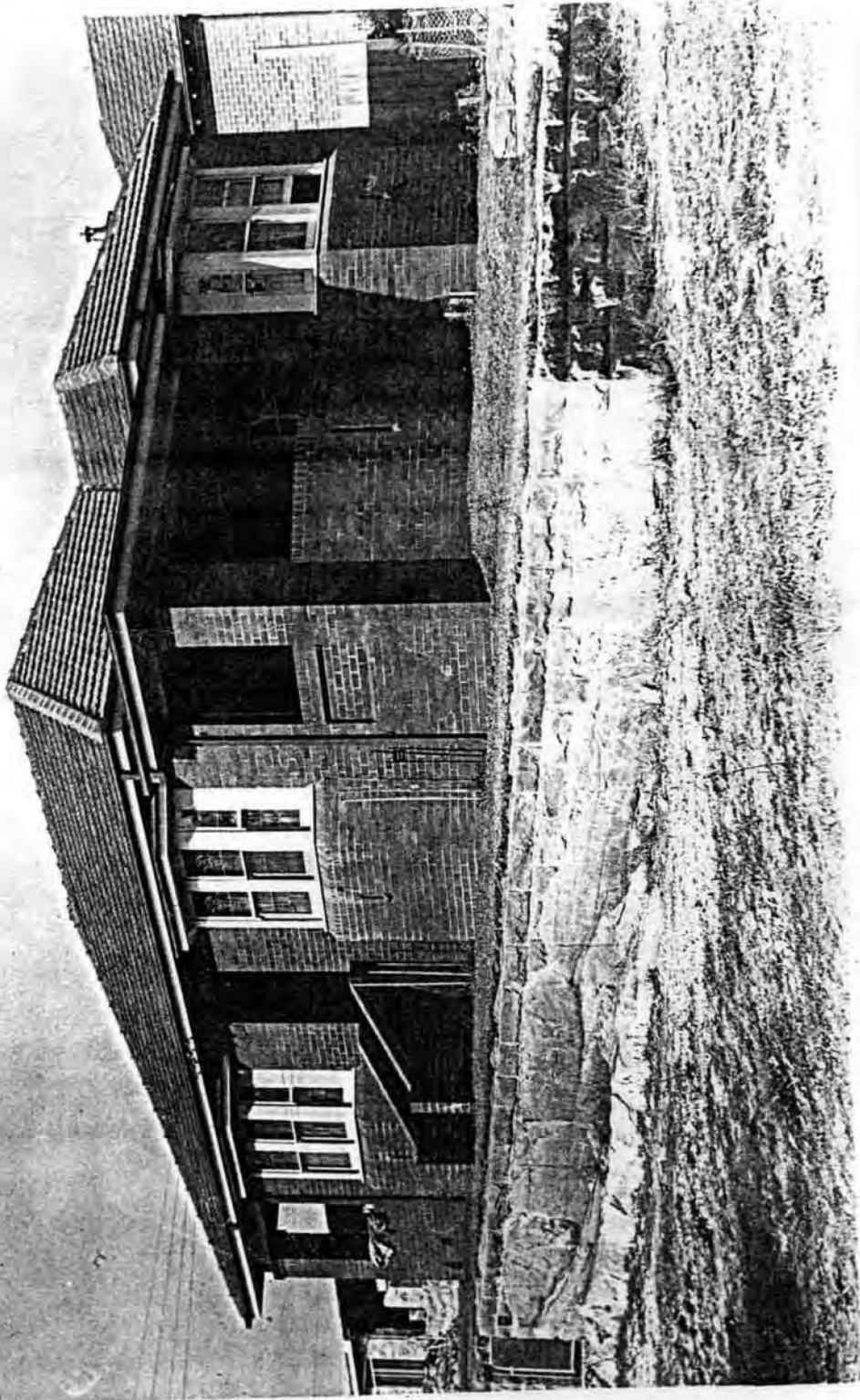
When the railway was extended to the Georges River area in 1886, a platform was erected on this land, then known as Oatley's Grant. Five years later, a stationmaster's residence was built, but land sales and residential development in the area were slow, and did not take off until after the World War I.

Today, Oatley has a broad range of housing styles, including some early colonial homes, Federation and Californian bungalows, '50s and '60s red-brickers and modern two-storey houses. Prices start at about \$300,000 for the smaller unrenovated homes, ris-

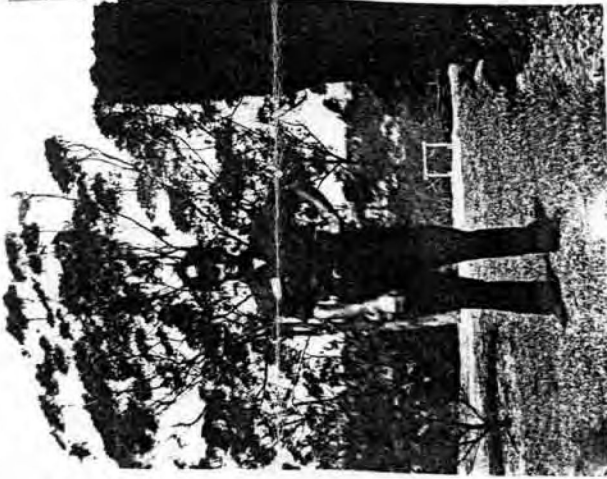
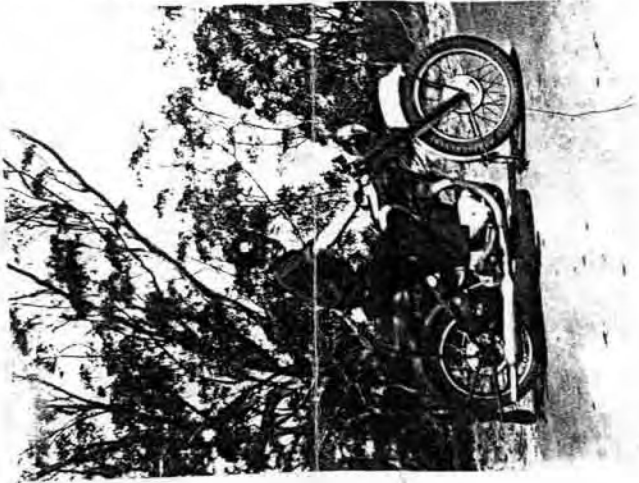
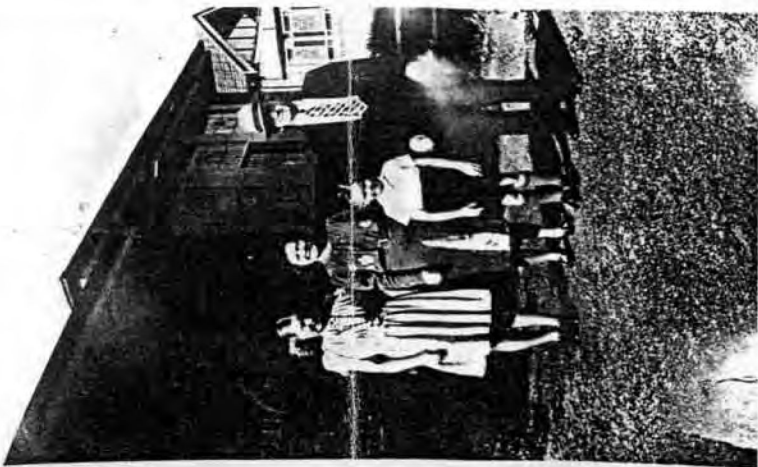
ing to about \$1 million for the multi-level, palatial waterfront homes with water views.

Typical of Oatley's mid-price family homes is Beverley Ferguson's Llewellyn Street property, set on 784 square metres of land. Listed for December 17 auction with Christine Castle, of Nationwide Realty, the two-storey, four-bedroom, two-bathroom home is expected to fetch about \$550,000.

Rebuilt in the early '80s with original sandstock bricks taken from the demolition site of Tulloch House in Rhodes, the home also has etched glass pub windows bought when the Blackmarket Hotel near Central railway station was renovated.



Home of the Tennant Family, Asquith St., Oatley - (Oatley east)



To Tennant family
Asquith Street, Oatley

Merle J Stone
Unit 67 "Panorama Towers"
91/95 John Whiteway Drive
Gosford. 2250 NSW Australia

Phone & Fax 02 43253441
Mobile 0417 443503
E mail mrstone@acay.com.au
28th February 2000

Glenn Stevens
22 Kitchener St.,
Oatley 2223

Dear Glenn,

When your recent (February) Newsletter arrived I remembered my neatly filed away November Newsletter with the notation "Attend to in New Year" scribbled on the envelope. I have just found the November Newsletter of the Oatley Heritage Group in which you asked if it were possible for those receiving the Newsletter by mail to supply stamps to cover the postage on them. I am pleased to do so and enclose a book of 45c stamps for that purpose.

I am most interested your group but find it impossible to attend meetings. I was born in Oatley and lived there for almost 21 (years till the time of my marriage) with my parents both being long time residents of Oatley. My mother was a child of about 4 when her parents (Alfred & Annie Ward) moved to Oatley around 1904. She would have turned 100 last week. My father came a little later in 1915 when aged 13 with his parents Charles & Mary Ann Small, who ran a small corner store in Waratah and Oatley Pde, so you can see why I am so interested in anything you may discuss and the history you uncover. When you print your addresses and findings I will be most keen to receive a copy. Please reserve one for me.

I am well acquainted with your President Russell Gibbs as we were next door neighbours in Annette St when I was a child. Your Vice President Alex Leach and his mother are also part of my memory of Oatley. The name Stevens is also well known to me. I wonder are you related to Clive & Diane or Frank? It is most interesting to know they are part of your group.

Best wishes for a successful year

Yours sincerely



Merle J Stone (Nee Small)

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

9629-1284

20/2/00

Dear Mrs Stevens:

Thank you for sending me the newsletters concerning the Oatley Heritage Group. I fully endorse the endeavours that the Group are making. I am very interested in the garnering of historical information. I have lived in Kellyville since 1947, and have written and published a history book about Kellyville called "Kellyville - The Pleasant Village", which only went to the early 1950's. I am at present engaged in research on a second book which will be called "Kellyville - And The Village Grew". This involves a great expenditure of time on my part.

However, back to Oatley. I was born in 1924 in Russell Street, Oatley and lived there until my marriage in 1947. We had a water frontage and it was an absolutely wonderful situation in which to grow up. At that time no roads were "tarred" in Oatley. There were very many blocks vacant everywhere. In my memory the Headmaster, Mr Fitzgerald, had an "upmarket" house on a very large block on the corner of Neville and Annette Streets, (the Bay Hill). That hill was a great place for kids to run down on their "Billy Carts". This practice was forbidden by my parents to my brothers, who nevertheless indulged in this practice from time to time. They were forbidden on the grounds of unsafety due to 'TRAFFIC!' Huh! The daughter of the Fitzgeralds gave music lessons, her name escapes me. Both she and her mother were very gentle folk, at the time of which I speak she was unmarried. I know she gave lessons to Gwynneth Lawson, daughter of the postmaster and to myself. Gwen was an apt pupil, I was not.

Across the road diagonally from the Fitzgerald's was the also, for the area, outstanding house of the Moore's. Guy Moore had a bookshop in Pitt Street, Sydney, and travelled to and from daily by train, as almost everyone in Oatley did, as car ownership was practically nil. Mrs Moore was a lovely woman. She used to oblige by telephoning the doctor on occasion when requested via a note from my deaf mother. They had a large block also and on the corner of Neville St and Ada Ave. One pre-Christmas a friend gave them two geese to have for Christmas. Those geese lived happily for years in the Moore garden. I thought the geese were Wonderful! One of their sons was at primary when I was, I think a little older than I, and he went to, I think, Hawkesbury College to study apiary.

I remember when Rosa Street was "tarred" and blue metal was laid. From my home in Russell Street the sound of cart wheels traversing the road could clearly be heard until the blue metal settled in. On the corner of Neville and Rosa was the Davis', later I think to become Curtis', but I would not be sure. Davis store was run by widow Davis and her daughter, whose name may have been Gwen. I do know that her son and his, I think seven, sons, at least five, lived on the block next door to my parents in the boatshed. That may sound, in these times, dreadful, but you must remember that by the time I was aware of such things, the Davis boys were well housed. I was eight years old in the midst of the Depression (the year the Bridge was opened, 1932) and people were living, existing in very bad conditions. The Davis boatshed was a very up-market one with an ornamented pier, and a enclosed swimming area built of very large blocks of stone, nicely painted and quite trim. The mother of the boys had died. The boys were very well-behaved. One of them lives now in Westmead, and some have died.

Neville Street hill rising from Russell Street, was in my growing up years "paved" with very large rounded stones, similar to cobble stones but large. I remember I used to love walking up that hill. As you walked up the hill, on my left was a stretch of natural bush from Neville Street to Thorburns house in Russell Street. The bush was mostly ti-tree with some low growing wattles, but right on the edge of Neville Street hill was a most beautiful wattle tree, and it would bloom most enthusiastically, and in my mind I called it the "Fairy Tree". on the right hand side there was a house also standing on a large block, owned by a lady who owned quite a few houses in Oatley and who rented this house at that time to ??????????. I don't remember him having a wife, but he would catch fish on the river and smoke them for sale.

On that right hand side of the road the water made its own way down the unmade gutter and I loved to walk to school up this gutter, in bare feet, on rainy days, imagining all sorts of things up the slopes of the miniature waterfalls and pools and rivers. I had a great imagination. There was a large shelf of rock in the houseblock adjoining just at the top of the rise.

As I was a girl, my mother would not allow me to go to the "Bay" unaccompanied by an adult. This I felt at the time was a great deprivation as they had a small "zoo" - a collection of monkeys, peacocks, snakes etc. However, there was also a winebar, so that barred me from solitary excursions, as "You don't know WHO might be there!" The "Bay" had a large netted enclosure for swimming, but you had to be there at high tide to really swim. When the tide went out there was this delightful stretch of firm sandy bottom and I loved to see the great armies of soldier crabs wheeling and marching about on that sand.

The "Point" was a wonderful place. Nowadays it is so hemmed in by houses that it is impossible to imagine what it was like when I was a child. It was a very large area of native grasses and some trees which was a wonderful place. I remember, I think it was possibly in 1939, that the whole Point was ablaze one Saturday. It made a spectacular sight. Just offshore of the Point there were some quite large outcrops of rock. My family had a boatshed, private, with a rowing boat and a canoe. When I would come home from school, and on Sundays, I would take the canoe out and be an adventurer out to the Point and "discover" islands and so on around the Point. A wonderful place to grow up. Sometimes my father would install the mast and sails into the rowing boat on a lovely windy day and take us sailing out on the River. Also we, my brothers and I would row around to Connells Bay, though we did not have a name for it then, and picnic, and row back. That was on the other side of Connells Point which was directly opposite where we lived. We also used to row round to there to get day-old chickens from the hatchery when we had a broody hen.

We had a cow which it was my beloved duty to lead out to the various empty housing blocks and tether her for the day. (I just love animals still, I have 7 sheep and 2 donkeys and 1 dog now). In order not to have to buy hay for her, remember there was no money in those days, my father would take myself and my foster-brother Ken, in the boat to cut grass. He would cut it, and we would stow it in feed bags and tow it down to the boat. We would go to the Point or to Oyster Bay. We also had similar wood-gathering forays to Oyster Bay and use the same method. Of course it did not occur to us what a labour it was for my father to transport these commodities to the house which was perched on the road level and required getting it up hundreds of literal steps from the water. I used to milk and tether the cow before I went to school, both later primary and at high school.

My mother and father began life in Oatley living in the boatshed, which was really quite well fitted out for those times, and my father was a prodigious worker and very clever with his hands. My mother was a wonderful woman who was good to all and who could concoct wonderful meals with very little. I was the first and only child, I am the youngest, to be born in the house which my father built. My parents lived in the boatshed with my sister and my two brothers. The boatshed had one very large room with a mezzanine floor. The kitchen was fitted with a fuel stove, sink with a tap from the tank outside. There was a little bridge which went from the shed to the shore, a long pier from the shore to well out to the water, and a sloping area down which, eventually, boats could be launched from the shed, with its big double doors. My mother washed outside with water from the stream which ran down to the Bay and had what would today be called a barbecue against the cliff face to cook on also.

My very hard working father built a retaining wall and filled it with mud from the Bay and built steps down to the water. It was a very well-constructed living area. Of course there was no electricity or gas but then no one else had such things. There was a cave just across in the next block and in that from time to time a friend of my father's "Danny Grey", a dear old man used often to live for period of time. The roof of the cave was beautifully water marked and the floor was lovely white sand.

My father's block and the next-door Davis block were originally one 66 foot wide block which had been cut down the middle to make two 33 foot wide blocks, but they were very deep, running right down to the water. The man who had owned the block also owned the very large next door, on the right when facing the Bay, land. His name was Fletcher and he lived in the Rockdale/Kogarah area.

He was interest in beautiful horses, and I was awed when he would pull up in front of our place in his turnout. He would sometimes spell a horse on the level at which we had our potato patch and chook sheds. He had a galvanised iron shed there for a stable.

The block he owned was absolutely fabulous. As an adult I think it was probably three 66 ft blocks wide, but I could be wrong. There was a weatherboard shed in a very unpainted condition but quite strong condition on the road level. Inside this shed was an old car which my husband said was a "Brush" of about 1910 vintage. A very fascinating object to peep at through the crack in the garage doors.

The property was a popular place for out-of-town gaiety in my parent's early times in Oatley. Surely the clientelle had to walk down the very wide, paved winding walkway with one step every now and then which wound down to the Hall. On the same level and roughly opposite on the Point side of the Hall was a house, which during my lifetime in Oatley was occupied by the Dodd family. Below this house was a sloping lawn, which had two very high swing frames. (Only one operating in my time as a child). On the Pleasure Grounds side, facing the Bay was another house, which was empty when I was a child and in which we kids used to play, but never destructively.

Then lower still, right on the waterfront, were the boat sheds, from which could be hired boats when I was quite young. As part of this complex there was another house, the one which Mr Fletcher reserved for his own use, and he would come and stay sometimes with friends in that house. The most fascinating part of this area was the little shop. It was really a cave which had been fixed up with shelves, a counter and a front wall with a door and a lift-up wooden shutter which lifted up and was propped open. For a large part of my childhood we, Catherine Dodd and I, were free to play "shops" in this. What a wonderful thing to be able to do. There was a quite wide pier from which people could enter their boats, either their own which were kept there, or the ones they had hired. There was a very wide sloping wooden for the launching and re-housing of boats, under the Fletcher house. A stairway led from the house down to the water-level. Between the lawn and the water side, a set of steps led up (or down!) and along this edge was a thing to stir the imagination. Blocks of stone, cut into little pillars, were set along with a one sideways block making a wall similar to that seen in picture books of English castles. This went not only across the bottom of the lawn but around the cliff-face which curved around to above the cave where Danny sometimes stayed. From this cliff edge my brother Jock used to dive into the little inlet which was between the cave and our block. He could only do this with the Christmas tide, and even as a child I was glad he did not break his neck which I expected him to do.

The Hall was a most wonderful place. It was large, with a central long hall, side-on to the waterfront, but a long way from the water. The entrance to this long hall was through a vestibule which had a little ticket-vending booth. Around both sides of this main hall were double french doors, and between each set of doors there was a long rectangular mirror hanging. The mirrors were decorated with flamingos, stepping in a stately fashions among the reeds. On the side of the long hall facing the water, but with no view of the water in my time, only of large gum trees, was a wooden verandah with iron lacework for a balustrade. The french doors on the road-side opened, down two steps, into a supper room. It had a concrete floor, a solid wall about four feet high all around, and above this low wall was lattice to the roof. It was cool on the hottest day. Still standing around this area, as though it had not yet been straightened from its last usage, were long trestle wooden tables, smooth topped, and the long seats, which had iron stays to hold the polished wooden backs in place. Altogether it was a place to stir the imagination.

But! wait! there is more!! At the end of the long hall, the way you would face when you entered the hall was a large stage. This still had painted scenery for a backdrop, it was wide and deep. From each side doors led to dressing rooms. The one of the water side was level, but the one on the road side had a little flight of about five or six wooden steps. BUT under the stage, entry was obtained by opening wooden doors and bending, were puppets. Life size puppets. All clothed and marvellous. Truly a child's wonderland.

Mr Fletcher used to come sometimes in his beautiful turnout, driving one horse and leading two others. He would unhitch all the horses, take them down to the Bay and swim them in the Bay. I was

rapt. When he would leave one for a spell I used to hang around gathering grass to tempt it with, but they were really quite above such lowly offerings.

My family consisted of my mother, born Rubina Jessie Dixon in Egremont, near Liverpool, England; my father, William Hourston Drever, born in the Orkney Islands of Scotland, my sister, Iris Hourston Drever, who still lives in Brisbane, 86 years, my brother also William Hourston Drever, who now lives in the Tamworth area, 82 years, my brother John Law Drever, "Jock", now deceased, who lived, and his widow still lives, in Banksia, myself, Daisy Dixon Drever, now Ardley, still living in Kellyville at 75, and my foster-brother Ken, who chose to return to his mother when he was 14 and with whom we were able to keep in touch for many years, but now don't know where he is.

My parents came to Oatley from Hurstville Grove after my sister was born, but I think before my brothers were born, certainly before Jock was born. My mother was tended by a midwife "Granny" Clarke, who had an establishment in Hurstville, but who also had a house in, I think, Algernon Street in Oatley. My mother 24 years, married my father when he was 36, and they were, I think, remarkable that they were married just a couple of months short of 60 years, when he died in his 96th year. They lived a long and respected lifetime in Oatley, in the same place.

In my growing up years, Mr Lawson was the Postmaster and he delivered the mail on horseback twice a day. I was thrilled when I was home and he would bring his horse down to the verandah to hand the mail to my mother. Marsh's delivered milk, but we had our own cow for most of the time. Ice was delivered from Kogarah in a big covered waggon and we kids would crowd around the back of the vehicle hoping for "chips" as ice was a novelty. Garthon Bros delivered their feed produce by a small truck, as did Diments of Hurstville. Icecream was kept in the shop, the delicatessen on the corner of Frederick and Letitia Streets, in green round calico bag things with dry ice in them. We got hot-cross buns from the bakery next to the Masonic Hall, and opposite the garage with petrol bowsers on the footpath which had to be hand pumped to fill the bowl to gravity feed into the car. My mother had her every day bread delived by Mr Palmer in his horse-drawn cart from Packham's bakery at Penshurst. There was a bootshop on the diagonally opposite corner to the delicatessan. Mrs Seymour had her drapery shop just down from Nicholson's newsagency. About opposite was the butcher with sawdust on the floor, striped aprons and tiles with cow, sheep and pig heads outside. They were raised and one could run her fingers over them. The Post Office was next to the butcher and there was a lending library in the P.O. at twopence per book.

Oatley is now transformed from the days when the old railway station was clearly defined by the two sides in front of the Pub. The parklands right along the old railway and the treatment of the station entrance are great. When my sibilings started school there was no school in Oatley, the older two began their school life at Mortdale, then a school was begun in the School of Arts, and the Oatley school was opened in the year of my birth 1924. By the time I began school the much revered headmaster Fitzgerald had died. In my time the long-standing teachers were Miss Hodge, 3rd class, who lived on the other side of the "line", nearly another country then because you had to walk everywhere or else row. Mr Powell, 4th class, and a very kind man. Mr Hefren, 5th class, the organiser of the yearly school concert, but we didn't have one in my year because someone told what one of the items was to be, so we all missed out. I remember one day he was standing at the board and he looked out the window and saw Keith Petherbridge who was obviously not in class, riding his bicycle along the footpath across the road. The Petherbridge family lived opposite the little tuckshop. He said "I see Petherbridge breaking the law by riding on the footpath, but I am not going to report him. However, should he knock someone down while he is doing it, then I would." He was a man who had high principles I thought, even at that age. He would cheerfully call someone "a guttersnipe" but was always fair. After all, we had been warned that there would be no concert if anyone tattled. He put on good concerts. I remember Ruth Roeder, older than me, in one concert dressed as an Indian, she had long plaits anyway, singing "There once was an Indian maid, a shy little indian maid, she sang all day a love song gay, as o'er the fields she wandered....." and so on.

Mr Nelson was the Headmaster until I was due to go into sixth class. I don't know if he became ill, or whether the thought of teaching us "guttersnipes" decided him to retire or not, but we did not have him in sixth class. We had a man who had obviously been in WWI and had received dreadful wounds to his face. I was sorry for him then, and I shudder at the thought of what it must have meant to him