

*Oatley Heritage Group Projects.*

<i>Month &amp; Year of Topic</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Written &amp; Spoken Presenters</i>
February 2010	Oatley Personalities – Gordon Andrews	Cliff Crane

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**Oatley Heritage Group Meeting**  
Friday 29 May 2009

**Personalities Of Oatley**  
**Gordon McLeod Andrews MBE**

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This paper, prepared by Cliff Crane, Archivist, Oatley Heritage Group, is mainly based on information sourced from Gordon and Jean Andrews, of 2A Oatley Avenue, Oatley; some information about Andrews descendants supplied by Lynette Smith (neè Andrews) is gratefully acknowledged.

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Though containing details of other Andrews family members, most of whom spent large parts of their lives in Oatley – this record for Oatley Heritage Group is predominantly about Gordon McLeod ‘*Gordon*’ Andrews.



**Gordon Andrews 28 April 2009**  
**90 years young!**

Oatley has been “home” to Gordon Andrews for just short of 90 years, since his parents moved to Llewellyn Street in June 1919, when Gordon was 9 months old. Apart from his first 9 months of life, the only period Gordon has not been actually living in Oatley was during his service in World War II.

Oatley community has been, and is, proud to have had Gordon as a well-liked and respected citizen for all those years, and feels the same way about his wife Jean who has shared the last 68 years of Gordon’s Oatley life. How could it be otherwise? This Oatley boy who had walked through “*Grumpy’s Paddock*” to school in Oatley – whose RAAF service saw him awarded an MBE at 26 years of age, but would,

typically, describe his 4 ½ years of service thus - *“I started off as the Pay Clerk, but I went through the ranks to Squadron Leader, and finally was in charge of the liaison office because my Chief, Air Vice-Marshal Goble had gone back to Australia, and I was left in charge in Ottawa and was Liaison Officer, with rank of Squadron Leader”*

Until he married in 1941 Gordon lived with his parents *Les* and *Bess* Andrews at 48 Llewellyn Street. From 1941 Gordon and his wife Jean lived in the home they had had built for them at 32 Lloyd Street, moving in 1951 to another home they had built at 80 Lansdowne Parade. The last of the Andrews moves, in 1985, was to their present home in Unit 11, at 2A Oatley Avenue, Oatley.

Gordon’s parents - Leslie Norman (*Les*) Andrews and Elizabeth Gove (*Bess*) nee Small had been married in 1914 in the Congregational Church in Cleveland Street, Redfern where the assisting Minister at that time was Reverend John Collier, one of Les Andrews’ uncles. Reverend Collier, a Methodist Minister, would subsequently become a missionary to Samoa.

I thought this photograph of four male generations, Gordon’s father Les at rear, and Gordon’s brother Alan between their (Alan and Gordon’s) grandfather and great-grandfather, too unique to miss!



*Bess*’s parents, Charles and Mary Small, some few years before Gordon’s birth, had moved to Oatley and set up a general store with residence, on the corner of Waratah Street and Woonona Parade West.

*Les* and *Bess* Andrews, as they were known, had six children – five boys and, finally, a daughter. Alan and Gordon (b. 27 September 1918), had been born prior to the move to Oatley. Gordon's second name 'McLeod' comes from his Scottish-born maternal grandmother Mary A. McLeod who had married Charles Small in Redfern in 1886.

When Gordon was 9 months old, his family moved from St. Peters to a waterfront block at Llewellyn Street in Gungah Bay, Oatley, which they bought from a family named Rowlands. The weekender on that property, at the street frontage, became the Andrews residence, being added to bit by bit as the family grew. The property later was allocated the number 48 Llewellyn Street. In the 1950s the block was subdivided to provide a block at the rear (waterfront end) - 48A Llewellyn Street.- for Betty and husband Len Harnwell to build their home.

Life on the waterfront block gave the Andrews a lot of freedom compared with their St. Peters home, which was in a completely built up area.

The Gungah Bay area at the time the Andrews moved there had hardly any houses apart from some scattered weekenders at the waterfront, and its only formed street of any real kind was the unsurfaced Yarran Road which was trafficable to what is now the top end of Southern Street, where the Sylvester Castle was.

At the time there were no services to the property. All the Andrews' furniture, and any sizeable goods, had to be sent to Como Railway station, and would then be transported by boat to the Llewellyn Street property. There was no electricity – light was from kerosene lamps. It was not until Gordon was at school that roads were built in Gungah Bay or electricity connected. For a long while there was no sewerage or even sanitary pan service – his job, with his brothers, was to “empty the can” and he has often thought how fertile that soil must be!

Electricity was finally connected during Gordon's time attending Oatley School – he remembers the power poles being hauled there on bullock drays.

The Andrews home was reached by going along Yarran Road, and then down through what Gordon remembers was called “*Grumpy's Paddock*”, which had a cricket pitch in it – the ‘*Buffalos*’, members of the Buffalo Lodge, used to come there at weekends and have their quite boozy cricket matches. The pitch was on quite a big flat area, off Yarran Road, about four or five house frontages north of the Victory Road intersection. Gordon doesn't recall knowing how ‘*Grumpy's Paddock*’ got its name.

There was a lot of tea-tree scrub in Gungah Bay. Although there were very few houses Gordon remembered one house part way along Yarran Road on its eastern side – the home of the local stonemason, “old Jock Gold”, and there was a couple of sculptures of bunches of fruit – sculptured from sandstone – in front of his house.

*Les* and *Bess* Andrews, as they were known, had four more children after their move to Gungah Bay– three more boys and, finally, a daughter. Alan, then Gordon, had been born prior to the move to Oatley, in the home of a midwife Nurse Shepherd in Yelburton Street, St. Peters. *Bess* Andrews returned to the midwife at St. Peters for Norman's birth, but *Les*, *Don* and then *Elizabeth* (‘*Betty*’) were born in the Andrews home in Llewellyn Street, the midwife in each case being Nurse Newcombe who lived in Waratah Street, Oatley.



## GORDON'S SIBLINGS

Alan Leslie Alan Andrews, born 1915, married Gwen Dye of Hurstville, in 1942. With help from brother Norman, Alan built their family home on the north-eastern corner of Boorara Avenue and Victory Road. Alan, the only one of the Andrews boys not to serve during WW2; worked on the city tram services, in his latter years a time-checker at depots and special venues such as the cricket ground. Alan survived Gwen (b. 1917) who died in 1995 – Alan passed away in 2002. Alan and Gwen had a son, Ian, who worked in the accounting field, and a daughter Lynette. Ian, who never married, died over 10 years ago. Lynette, married Graham Smith, a printer – having lived in a few places including homes in Oatley and South Hurstville, Graham and Lynette live now at 38 Baker Street, Oatley West. Their three children, Matthew b. 1974, Michelle b. 1975, and Tracey b. 1978, all attended Oatley West school.

Norman Collier 'Norm' Andrews b. 8 November 1919, married Noelene Harrap of Mi Mi Street, Oatley, in 1945; for a period of time they lived in a house in Boorara Avenue, south of Victory Road, which Norm built for them - opposite where Alan & Jean Hamilton had lived years ago at No. 46 Boorara Avenue. They built before Alan Andrews – then Norman helped Alan build his house. Norm and Noelene had three children, a son, Ron Andrews, and two daughters, Lorraine and Maureen. Norm served over 4 years in the Army, at discharge being a Corporal in Army Postal Department. After discharge he had a varied career; including working in a number of locations and jobs for the (then) PMG Department, in mail sorting centres and in post offices. It was while Norman was Postmaster at Nambucca that Gordon and Jean went there as part of their second – but first real – honeymoon, after Gordon's return to Australia in 1946. Norman died some years ago; Noelene had predeceased him, but after they had been divorced. Norman later re-married to Betty Best, a divorcee of Boorara Avenue, Oatley. There were no children from the second marriage

Donald Kevin 'Don' Andrews, b. 12 August 1927, served 2 years in the RAN until discharge in November 1946; he was a Coder with HMAS 'Bataan' at time of discharge. Don married Beryl Mary Findlay of Lloyd Street in 1948. Don and Beryl at one stage lived in Llewellyn Street, Gungah Bay, at its northern end near Mimosa Street. Afterward they lived a number of years in Wagga Wagga, then to the south coast for a number of years, during which period Don & Beryl were a formidable pairing as mixed pairs bowls champions in the area. They moved again – to Port Macquarie, where Beryl died. Don moved from Port Macquarie to Richmond, where he now lives. Don and Beryl's surviving offspring are Brian and Judith, while a son Raymond was killed at about 2 years of age in tragic circumstances.

'Les' Andrews also served in the Navy. After discharge he resumed living with his parents, and for a while lived with his widowed mother Bess when she moved into a home unit in Letitia Street, Oatley following the death of 'Les' Andrews, Senior. Les married reasonably late in life to Gloria. Les died about 1995, and Gloria, though still alive, is in a care situation.

The youngest of the Andrews siblings, Elizabeth Gove Betty Andrews, married Leonard George 'Len' Harnwell in 1955. They built on the waterfrontage of 48 Llewellyn Street property – subdivided off for them as 48A Llewellyn Street. (The brothers had unanimously agreed that Betty get the block to build on, so that as the

only daughter, she would be near her parents later on.) Len Harnwell worked as an electrician. *Betty* and Len had three children - Stephen, Mark, and Linda. Some time after her father had died, and her mother *Bess* had moved to a Letitia Street unit, *Betty* and Len sold 48 Llewellyn Street and moved into a house in Letitia Street, Oatley, opposite the Masonic Hall. After Letitia Street they moved quite a few times -- first to Engadine, then to Sussex Inlet, and to Mudgeribar in Queensland, before returning to the south coast of NSW, their present home being 3 Crag Road, Batehaven on the south coast..

Children of those Andrews siblings who lived in Oatley East after marriage, like their parents, all attended Oatley School.

### **ABOUT OATLEY SCHOOL**

Gordon attended Oatley Public School; he got there by walking from Llewellyn Street up the line of what is now Victory Street across the then unformed Waratah Street (now Boorara Avenue), to Yarran Road, which he followed to Mimosa Street. Alan Andrews would later build his home on the north-eastern corner of the Boorara Avenue and Victory Road intersection.

The main structure of the school along Letitia Street was much the same then as it is today, Gordon says – during Gordon’s time they had large shelter sheds – weathersheds – in which the children would sit to have morning and afternoon teas, and lunch.

There was no sewerage or septic toilets then – toilets were of the pan system, located around where the School Hall/Community Hall building is now, near to the entrance gate from Neville Street to the southern part of the school campus.

Alan Andrews had started school when the Oatley School was down in the School of Arts (now part of the Oatley Library, in Letitia Street). Gordon said Alan claimed he carried the school flag when they marched up from the School of Arts to commence in the “new” school.

Gordon, though, started in the school in Letitia Street; he remembers Miss Ritchie, Miss Boland and Miss Hodge were teachers in the kindergarten area – Mr. Fitzgerald was the headmaster at the time – Mr. Powell was the teacher he had in most of the older years. Gordon’s memory is that he was in composite classes right through Oatley school.

To the south of the school along the Letitia Street frontage, about where the tennis courts are today, was a small general store, run by a family called Sloman. The store provided lunches – he remembers pies and sandwiches and rolls. A lot of the kids would not have had the money to buy lunch there, and a lot of them went home for lunch in those days.

A number of kids, the boys particularly, didn’t wear shoes to school because their families couldn’t afford to buy shoes for them. Among the barefoot ones Gordon remembers were the Dodds twins, and Billie Dever. He also remembers Tweedale girls, and Allsop girls – Dorothy, Gwen & Beryl Allsop - who lived opposite the

Andrews in Llewellyn Street. Beryl Allsop still lives in Gungah Bay, in Boorara Avenue – she married a Jack Percival.

Gordon says he enjoyed his school days –he remembered the day, once a year, being taken by the school to the picture show at Mortdale – a galvanized iron building with dirt floor. Gordon said there was always a bit of a ruckus between the Oatley kids and the ‘*Morty-ites*’ as they had called them. The picture theatre site was on the corner of Morts Road and Newman Street.

On occasions there were cricket and football matches arranged between the Oatley and Mortdale schools and Gordon said there wasn’t a lot of love lost between the two groups. Mortdale then was a pretty rough, old railway, town – there was a junction for the railway – and a lot of railway workers lived at Mortdale.

There were three years between the Andrews children. They all went to Oatley school, but because of the age gaps there were only two Andrews children at the school at any one time.

Gordon doesn’t recall getting any special awards at Oatley School.

### **Gordon’s parents – music - and family life on Gungah Bay waterfront**

Gordon’s father, Les Andrews, had started off working for the PMG Department, delivering mail on horseback – when motor vehicles were introduced for use in the Department, they then established a classification of driver/mechanic. Les Andrews was selected as a driver/mechanic on the first motor vehicles, and that would have been his job at the time of the Andrews family move to Llewellyn Street; he rose up through the ranks, eventually becoming assistant transport officer for the Metropolitan area.

Gordon’s mother *Bess* spent her youth at Morshead Street in Redfern, and attended Fort Street Girls high school; her mother, Mary, was Scottish born – when *Bess* was in her late teens her mother took a trip back to Scotland – in those days with long travel times it meant Mary was away 6 months – and *Bess* ran the home.

*Bess* was a trained musician and in piano playing had her ALCM (Associate of the London College of Music). It was *Bess* who started her younger brother Alec Small off with learning the piano – he later went on to other people for training and became a skilled pianist. Brother and sister *Bess* and Alec were very close all their lives.

*Bess* didn’t teach music, being pretty much completely tied to home duties; Gordon thinks she would not have had time to play the piano away from the home. He said with the rugged conditions in which they lived, managing with a fuel stove, and rudimentary clothes washing and drying facilities, for the number in the family, she would have had a pretty torrid time of it. Gordon recalls his mother having to wash the clothes outdoors, in a kerosene tin bucket over a wood fire.

There was a piano in the house which *Bess* played when she could snatch time to do so. Les, Gordon’s father, had never been taught music, but had taught himself to play the violin by ear. Among Gordon’s fond memories of childhood is of Sunday afternoons when his parents would play, she on the piano and he on the violin.

Gordon's generation did not take up music – apart from Norman who taught himself to play a bit by ear, mainly *boogie-woogie* stuff. The next generations, *Bess* and *Les*'s grandchildren and great-grandchildren, though, are into music.

The Andrews boys spent a lot of time around the rocks, and on the river – Gordon thinks it was lucky they all survived. One time they built their own canoe out of galvanized iron, covering the joints with pitch, without any keel or anything, and took it out in the middle of the river – that was pretty hairy, Gordon said, Brother Alan was very well known around the place as a keen fisherman – *if anyone was catching fish, it was Alan!*

### **Secondary schooling and first employment for Gordon.**

After Oatley School, Gordon went to a commercial school at Arncliffe for one year; somehow he'd missed out on getting into Kogarah High School, a commercial school which he would have preferred – in those days they had technical high schools and other schools that favoured the commercial subjects - Gordon said that, largely influenced by Alec Small, he thinks, he wanted to follow the commercial side. Although Gordon doesn't know the reason he didn't get to Kogarah High in the first year, he did qualify to go to second year at Kogarah after one year in Arncliffe School. He naturally travelled to school by train.

To get from home to Oatley Railway Gordon would sometimes go through “what we called *“the gully”*”, but usually would go up to Yarran Road, along to Mimosa Street and that way to the Station - it was mainly bush and tea-tree along most of the route at that time.

Having finished his Intermediate Certificate at Kogarah School Gordon went on from there to Central Technical High School at Enmore, but toward the end of his first year there his parents – very foolishly he now thinks – allowed him to leave school and go to Anthony Horderns in the Jewelry Department at 12/3d. per week.

### **Gordon's early moves to a career path.**

Gordon had really wanted to get a clerical job, and after 6 months left Anthony Horderns because he had got a clerical job at Schweppes which was then a well-established organization. By this time he was attending Metropolitan Business College in the evenings, training as an accountant. When about 18 years old, Gordon decided to make a move and went to Tucker and Company, in Sussex Street, as an Assistant Accountant.

### **Gordon's path to enlistment in the RAAF**

Gordon stayed with Tucker and Company about 4 years until he joined the forces, in June, 1940, when 22 years of age

Among the employees at Tucker and Company was Major Mills, who was Commanding Officer of the Remount Squadron - the Army Service Corps - out at



Holsworthy. Major Mills wanted somebody to be a pay officer, and he got Gordon to join the CMF, giving him the rank of Corporal. Gordon did the wages and that sort of thing for the boys out at Holsworthy, on a part-time basis while continuing employment at Tucker and Company.

One of Gordon's memories of that time, having set off by train for Holsworthy, from home at Oatley - "*they met me at Liverpool Station with a horse, and we rode from Liverpool Station out to Holsworthy - I hadn't ridden a horse before very much, but we managed O.K.*".

Then Gordon decided to join the RAAF full time, joining as a Pay Clerk; he was still living with his parents at Oatley at that time. There was no stated arrangement with Tucker and Company that they would re-employ Gordon after his service, but he thinks that was implied - that that would happen



**Les & Bess (front, with Betty) in 1941 and (rear) Norman, Les, Alan, Don & Gordon**

### **Adolescence, socialization, romance, marriage and first independent home.**

As an adolescent Gordon joined a dance club and enjoyed dances at The Strand at Hurstville - which he said "*really was the place to be for old time dancing; we'd had a few lessons at a place at Penshurst - Hodgsons ran a dance class there; and while we were at The Strand - while I didn't actually meet my wife there, she attended The Strand, and after we got together we enjoyed many happy years of dancing at The Strand*".

Gordon and his future wife Jean met through involvement with the Methodist Church youth organizations, one for boys and one for girls. *The Order of Knights*, based on

the story of King Arthur and his knights, was the boys organization, the girls organization being *The Comradeship*. Gordon explained *“For the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of The Order of Knights – which incidentally was founded at Hurstville – and that anniversary was held at Hurstville – I was the District Knight Commander of the Order of Knights at the time, and of course I attended – I would have been 17 or 18 at the time – and who should be sitting next to me at the table was Jean Jenkins with a tall fellow who had brought her along, Arthur Sampson; we became very friendly, and with the shared interest of dancing in The Strand, the friendship just built from there”*.

The old Oatley Uniting Church had a tennis court alongside it – on the Frederick Street side, where the car-park is today and Gordon was among those who played tennis there on Saturday afternoons. Although he’d played in Oatley school cricket teams against Mortdale he didn’t get involved with cricket after leaving school.

By the time Gordon enlisted in June 1940, Jean and he had been engaged for about a year; and about 6 months later they were married – he in his RAAF uniform - on 4<sup>th</sup> January, 1941 in the Carlton Methodist Church which was Jean’s family church and where Jean had been christened– in fact she was the first baby christened in that church - as Jean Loane Jenkins. Her Jenkins family lived at Carlton.



Brother Alan was best man at the wedding, and Gwen McPherson (later Gwen Day) was Jean’s bridesmaid. Gordon told the interesting story of Gwen’s meeting and marrying her husband – *“ .....Later, when I was based in Canada, as Liaison Officer in Ottawa, we had an RAF officer come through on his way to train Australians in radar operation - he was George Day – and because he said he didn’t know anybody in Australia I gave him Gwen McPherson’s name, and they finished up marrying. When they were first married they lived in Carlton, but they later moved to the north shore”*.

Marrying and settling in Australia, George Day later worked for CSIRO and it was on his recommendation that Parkes became the site for the radio telescope. George was first manager of the installation, and the Day family lived a number of years at Parkes.

At the time he was married Gordon was posted to the Central Area Headquarters, which was out at Point Piper. Accommodation there was the old German’s Consul’s place.



Gordon and Jean had bought a vacant block of ground at 32 Lloyd Street, Oatley – 50 foot by 150 foot for £85 – to have a new home built for them to move into when they married. James Goyan, a builder, did the building - it was a 10 square solid brick and tile house, built for a cost of £880 – all up for less than \$2,000 they had their home up in Lloyd Street - a new home built for them, ready to move into – so they had their honeymoon at 32 Lloyd Street. (1941 Photo shows them outside their Lloyd Street home). The land purchase and house

building was arranged through the local building society – the Secretary of the Society being the well known Mrs. Bertha York. - Gordon said that property recently sold for over \$700,000 – and knocked down, and another house built on it.

After the wedding, Gordon was able to continue living at Oatley for only about the next 6 months of his RAAF service. By that time he had been moved up to the 2ITS which was the Initial Training School at Lindfield – Gordon says it was a bit of a rush getting between Oatley and Lindfield each day.

### **Gordon's posting overseas and Jean in Oatley.**

In June 1941 Gordon received advice of his posting, originally to India, but that was cancelled and, instead, he was sent as a Sergeant to the Air Liaison Office in Ottawa, which was responsible for the welfare of the troops in training throughout Canada. As I recorded earlier, Gordon recounted passage of his next 4½ years, in his typical under-stated way *“I started off as the Pay Clerk there, but I went through the ranks to Squadron Leader, and finally was in charge of the office because my Chief, Air Vice-Marshall Goble had gone back to Australia, and I was left in charge in Ottawa and was Liaison Officer, with rank of Squadron Leader”*.

Gordon spent 4 ½ years in Canada while Jean was back home in Oatley, keeping the home fires burning. The Andrews hadn't had any children at this stage. Although Jean was not working at the time, she was involved with some community work at the Hospitality Centre for Servicemen down in the city. – When the Tasmanians were posted over in Oatley Park she was prevailed upon by Ernie Lawson to attend some of the social activities he arranged for them - dances and social activities – which Jean was reluctant to do, as a married woman.

During the 4 ½ year posting in Ottawa, Gordon got back to Australia only once – he came back to Melbourne on a special job –the place they'd found as accommodation in Melbourne for he and Jean, who came from Oatley to be with him there, was pretty disgraceful, Gordon said. In total Gordon was away from Ottawa only 4 weeks. For that one brief return trip, Gordon came in a United States Air Force Liberator aircraft from Hamilton field in San Francisco , to Amberley in Queensland, and then by rail down to Sydney and through to Melbourne

The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan involved training of English, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand air force personnel as pilots, navigators, gunners, etc. A small number of Norwegians who'd escaped when Norway was occupied, along with some Americans prior to the United States joining the War, were also trained.

Gordon said *“....our boys mostly had done their elementary training in Australia then went into training for service flying in Canada, and then on to operational training in places like Nassau in the Bahamas, which I visited in 1943, I think - in the early 1940s anyway – I went down there as the Electoral Officer for the elections. I went down through Bermuda to Nassau in an RAF Air Force Command plane, again it was a Liberator.”*

Gordon remained in Ottawa until early December, 1945 – he remembers having to wait a long time at Vancouver for his ship, leaving there Christmas Eve 1945 for his return to Australia.



Air Vice Marshall Stanley Goble, Gordon's chief in Ottawa, had returned to Australia after peace was declared, because training was then ceased – and Gordon remained in charge there and represented Australia at the winding up of the Commonwealth Air Training Plan at Canada.

### **Gordon's return to Australia and civvy street.**

On return to Australia Gordon was not required to remain on a Reserve – he just finished his service – he came back to Oatley – and back to Tucker and Company.

But first, Jean and Gordon had what was virtually their honeymoon– they went up to Nambucca where Gordon's brother Norman was in charge of the Post Office, and Gordon said they had "*a really nice visit up there*".

Back at Tucker and Company, who were wine and spirit and general merchants – Chateau Tanunda Brandy was their main item - Gordon was put in charge of their general merchant division. He stayed there for about 10 or 11 months, but having decided "*....I wanted to make my way, but in no way associated with the liquor industry ...*", he moved from there to Nock and Kirby, at 417 George Street, near the corner with Market Street, as Assistant Company Secretary. Gordon remained with Nock & Kirby, until retiring from there as Company Secretary and Finance Director.

Garnet Nock, Managing Director of Nock and Kirby, had a property called '*Trig Hill*' near Yeoval. Gordon recalled with obvious pleasure, Jean and the kids and he went to "*Trig Hill*" and had a great time there – "*there were sheep dogs with puppies and the kids thought that was wonderful – it was just a lovely weekend*".

The Andrews brought a load of sheep manure back with them from "*Trig Hill*" to their home, which by then was at 80 Lansdowne Parade. "*Not a very good move, because it took a long time and a lot of work to eventually eradicate the weeds we'd imported with that sheep manure*", Gordon said.

The Andrews in 1951 had built a new home on a vacant block at 80 Lansdowne Parade – the block, on the non-waterfront side; ran through from Lansdowne Parade to Raymond Street.

Jean and Gordon stayed living at Lansdowne Parade till they moved to their present home, Unit 11 at 2A Oatley Avenue in August 1985, having moved to make way for their eldest daughter to move into the Lansdowne Parade house to accommodate her growing family.

### **The Andrews association with Methodist/Uniting Church**

*Les* and *Bess* belonged to the Methodist Church, *Bess* prior to marriage having been a member of the Congregationalist Church. From arrival in Oatley the Andrews family became firmly linked with the Oatley Methodist Church – later Oatley Uniting Church. Gordon's early association with the Methodist/Uniting Church was sustained throughout his life, the lives of he and Jean and their children having been closely linked to the church, and very much part of it. When the Methodist Church developed in West Oatley, and a church was built there, Gordon was very much involved as a



foundation member, and all the family attended there. Gordon was also quite involved with the wider church, the Synod of New South Wales. He was a director for 20 years of the investment arm of the church, the Methodist (later Uniting) Church Trust Association, and was its chairman for 8 years.

### Gordon's association with Freemasons

Gordon originally joined Lodge Commonwealth of United Grand Lodge of New South Wales – his father's lodge. Later with creation of Oatley-based Lodge Ashlar they would transfer to that Lodge, which subsequently by amalgamations became Lodge Oatley, of which Gordon continues as a member, having held senior positions over the years – at one stage Master of Lodge Ashlar.

### Gordon's involvement with the Australian Society of Accountants

The Society showed its appreciation of Gordon's services to the professional body with the following (mounted) award -



### Gordon as a Board Member of NRMA

Gordon served as a member Roads and Motorists was during that period this for an NRMA publication.



of the Board of the National Association for 9 years, and it photograph was taken of him

## **Jean and Gordon's offspring.**

Gordon's resumption of 'civvy life' after his long absence saw enlargement of the Andrew's family – Jean and Gordon had three children, all of whom attended Oatley West Public School.

1. Jeanette Roslyn Andrews was born in 1946, attended St. George Girls High School, obtained her degree in Food Technology from University of New South Wales, and had a career in food technology. Jeanette married James Gray, a food technician. Jeanette and James' children - David b. 1973, Iain b. 1976, and Elizabeth Clair b. 1979 – are all married, and living in their own homes. David and his wife Janet (neè Robinson, of Oatley West) are expecting Gordon & Jean's first great grandchild later this year (2009).

Jeanette & James lived at Lansdowne Parade, Oatley, while the children were growing up, but now live at North Epping.

2. Leonie McLure Andrews was born in 1948, and after attending Oatley West School went on to Penshurst Girls High School. She lives at Bangor with her husband Wayne John Berry. They have children Michelle Lee b. 1978 who married Chris Lee in February 2009 (so Michelle is now Michelle Lee Lee!); and Nicole Jean b. 1980, who married Jason Churchill in February 2008.

3. Robert McLeod Andrews, born 29<sup>th</sup> September 1951, 2 days after Gordon's 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday. He went onto Hurstville Boys High School after Oatley West School, becoming a technical officer with Telecom/Telstra. Having taken early redundancy from Telecom, Robert is now driving for Australia Post. In 1979 Robert married Lindy Millward from Maroubra and they have lived since then at Peakhurst. Brent McLeod Andrews, their first child, was born on 5 February 1983 (sharing a birthday with his great-grandmother Bess. Kayley Louise was born in 1985. Brent has his own mobile marine service, and Kayley has her own hairdressing salon at Peakhurst. Both are unmarried as yet.

## **AWARD OF MBE**

Gordon says it was strange how he heard about the award to him of an MBE; the first hint he had being when he got a telegram from Jim Nicholson of Oatley, telling him of the award of an MBE to 'a Gordon Andrews' – then another one came – so, as Gordon says “ *I was attached to the High Commissioner's office – so I got onto the High Commissioner and found it was in the King's Birthday Honours – nobody had even mentioned it to me – so there wasn't any fanfare – it was all over. It came out of the blue – I had no knowledge of it. It obviously was recommended by Air Vice Marshall Goble. I subsequently got a letter from him, congratulating me. I was still in Canada at that time – the King's Birthday was somewhere in the middle of the year, and I didn't leave there till the end of the year*”.

Presentation of Gordon's MBE was made at Government House, Sydney, by The Duke of Gloucester, then Governor General, on 9<sup>th</sup> August, 1946, a lovely fine day, wife Jean and his mother accompanying him to Government House for the awarding ceremony. Gordon's father was still alive then, but the invitation only provided for two others to accompany him.

So, 12 months to the day after the dropping of the second of the two Hiroshima Atomic Bombs, the Oatley man, Gordon McLeod Andrews, still only 26 years of age, only 6 months back to the wife and the home from which he'd been separated for 4 ½ years, was bestowed with an honour reserved for a select few – the right to couple MBE with his name. I suspect the number of times Gordon has done that would be extremely few! In fact, throughout my discussions with Gordon I noticed how consistently unpretentious he was in all that he told me of his life – it was only when he got to mention Jean and his mother being with him when he got his MBE that he allowed (but even then only a hint of) remembered emotion and pride to come into his voice.



**Gordon and Jean Andrews 28 April 2009**

Gordon is – and I'm sure always has been - a dignified and thinking man, worthy of complete respect. Only in recent months I was instrumental in him telling his Oatley life story to children at Oatley School, an occasion I'm sure the children greatly enjoyed and will have spoken about often – I thoroughly enjoyed being there listening. It has been a real delight to obtain the details to record some of Gordon's life for the Oatley Heritage Group.

Regretfully I find I have not allowed time to include more information about gracious Jean Andrews who I am sure is deserving of a far greater mention in this account of the man she has shared her life with, the pain of separation from whom she had to bear for such a vital part of a young couple's shared life, and who doubtless has so ably supported Gordon in his career, family life, and 'maturing years'.

Cliff Crane  
Archivist, Oatley Heritage Group,  
29 May, 2009.