

MR McALISTER  
48A ANNETTE ST  
OATLEY 2203

A BRUCE FLETCHER  
SUNSTRIP VAN PARK  
PACIFIC HIGHWAY  
SWANSEA NSW 2281  
PH. (049) 71 4070

FEBRUARY 28 1997

DEAR MR McALISTER: (I DIDN'T GET YOUR FIRST NAME)

TWO WEEKS HAVE GONE BY SINCE I MET YOU AND YOUR WIFE IN FRONT OF 48 ON SUNDAY FEBRUARY 12, AND IT OCCURED TO ME THAT I COULD RELATE WHAT INFORMATION I HAVE TO OFFER BY LETTER AS IT COULD BE SOME TIME BEFORE I CAN GET DOWN TO SEE YOU, NEVERTHELESS I WOULD STILL LIKE TO DROP IN AT SOME TIME FOR A FRIENDLY CHAT.

IN 1908 ALBERT CHARLES FLETCHER MOVED FROM BERRYS BAY ON SYDNEY HARBOUR (JUST ABOUT WHERE LUNA PARK IS) OUT TO 48 ANNETTE ST OATLEY. HE BOUGHT THE WHOLE BLOCK FROM THE STREET TO THE WATER WHERE HE AND HIS SON ALFRED BUILT A LARGE BOATSHED (45 FT X 35 FT) SUITABLE FOR BOATBUILDING. ALSO, THERE WAS ANOTHER SON, FRED, AND A DAUGHTER NELLIE. ALFRED OPENED UP A BOATBUILDING BUSINESS WITH A FRIEND NAMED HINCE. ALFRED HAD SERVED HIS BOATBUILDING APPRENTICESHIP AT HOLMES & CO OF BERRYS BAY, AND THEIR HOUSE WAS UP ON THE ROAD BEHIND HOLMES. ALFRED WOULD START WORK AT 6 AM, GO UP HOME FOR BREAKFAST AT 8 AM, AND AGAIN AT MIDAY FOR LUNCH. THEN WORK TILL 6 PM. MY GRANDMOTHER (ALBERT'S WIFE) TOLD ME THE FURNITURE WAGON WITH 6 HORSES LEFT AT 6 AM FROM BERRYS BAY AND ARRIVED AT 48 ANNETTE ST ABOUT 6 or 7 PM. WHERE THE SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE IS NOW, WAS A VEHICLE FERRY AND THIS

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IS HOW THEY CROSSED THE HARBOUR. THE BRIDGE WAS NOT READY FOR USE UNTIL 1932. MY GRANDFATHER WORKED AT SAUNDERS AS A WATCH REPAIRER AND NOW HAD TO WALK TO HURSTVILLE EACH DAY BECAUSE THAT WAS THE END OF THE LINE AT THAT TIME ALTHOUGH WHEN COMD TRAIN BRIDGE WAS BUILT HE COULD THEN CATCH A TRAIN FROM OATLEY. BEFORE THEY BUILT THE BOATSHED, OF COURSE, THEY HAD TO BUILD THE HOUSE AND I WOULD SAY IT WAS RIGHT WHERE YOUR HOUSE STANDS NOW BUT I WILL CONFIRM THE EXACT SPOT WHEN I COME DOWN. BEHIND THE HOUSE (THE FRONT FACED THE WATER) AND UP TO THE STREET WERE VEGETABLE GARDENS, FRUIT TREES OF EVERY TYPE, A LARGE FOWL YARD WITH GRAPE VINES ALL OVER IT, AND A DUCK YARD. IN EVERY SPARE SPACE MY GRANDMOTHER HAD FLOWERS GROWING. OF COURSE THE COOKING MEDIUM WAS A WOOD & COAL STOVE WHERE GREAT SKILL WAS REQUIRED TO GET THE TEMPERATURE RIGHT. SHE COULD MAKE, BAKE AND SERVE SCONES WITH STRAWBERRY JAM (GROWN ON THE PREMISES) AND CREAM IN 10 MINUTES. WHEN I WAS A BOY I WOULD VISIT HER AND CHOP UP THE WOOD AFTER ME AND MY GRANDFATHER HAD CUT UP THE TREE WITH A CROSSCUT SAW. FROM THE HOUSE DOWN TO THE BOATSHED WAS ALWAYS VIRGIN RIGHT UP TILL MY GRANDMOTHERS DEATH ON SEPTEMBER 1 1951. MY GRANDFATHER DIED ON SEPTEMBER 28 1935. GOING BACK TO THE 14-18 WAR. ALFRED BEFORE THE WAR WAS IN THE "BLACK WATCH" A SCOTISH REGIMENT WHICH WAS PART OF THE ARMY RESERVES. HE BECAME A SERGANT, SO THAT WHEN AUSTRALIA ENTERED THE WAR IN 1915, ALFRED (23) AND FRED (19)

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JOINED THE A. I. F. (AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCES). THEY BOTH WENT TO FRANCE WHERE FRED WAS KILLED SOON AFTER LANDING BUT ALFRED SURVIVED TILL 1918 HAVING COME UP THRU THE RANKS TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL. HE DID NOT GO BACK INTO THE RESERVES BUT WENT TO WORK AT COCKATOO DOCK IN SYDNEY THEN LATER TRANSFERRED TO GARDEN ISLAND NAVAL DOCKYARD. THEN I REACHED 16 YRS AND WENT TO COCKATOO DOCK TO SERVE MY APPRENTICESHIP. ON COMPLETION I GOT A JOB IN THE DRAWING OFFICE AT THE AUSTRALIAN SHIPBUILDING BOARD AND AFTER THE 39-45 WAR MY FATHER RESUMED THE BOATBUILDING BUSINESS AT 48. A SIGN WAS ERECTED UP AT STREET LEVEL. IT SAID A. FLETCHER & SONS  
BOATBUILDERS & DESIGNERS BUT THE WAR STARTED TO TAKE ITS TOLL. HE HAD BEEN Gassed AND HIS NERVES WERE SHATTERED THRU SHELL SHOCK. HE DIED IN NOVEMBER 1947. AS YOU CAN SEE HE PRE-DECEASED HIS MOTHER BY 12 YEARS SO THAT SHE THEN LEFT THE PROPERTY TO HER DAUGHTER WHO BY NOW HAD A HOME IN CANBERRA SO SHE SOLD ~~IT FOR~~ <sup>NO 48 FOR</sup> £ 3000 (POUNDS) ALBERT CHARLES HAD NINE BROTHERS AND SISTERS AND ONE RICHARD HARTLEY FLETCHER WAS A JEWELLER WITH SEVERAL SHOPS IN SYDNEY AND NORTH SYDNEY. HE RETIRED EARLY AND BOUGHT A LOT OF PROPERTY IN OATLEY WHERE HIS BROTHER, ALBERT, HAD MOVED TO. IN RUSSELL STREET HE HAD A LARGE PICNIC GROUND WITH ROW BOATS FOR HIRE AND HE BUILT AN ENTERTAINMENT HALL CALLED THE QUEENS HALL. HE WAS SOMEWHAT OF AN ENTERTAINER HIMSELF, HAVIN MARIONETTES AND ABLE TO PLAY

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SEVERAL INSTRUMENTS. HE OWNED A LOT OF HOUSES IN NEWTOWN AND OTHER SUBURBS AND A SERVICE STATION ON THE PRINCES HWY TEMPE. HE WAS BORN OCTOBER 8 1873 AND DIED <sup>OCT. 9</sup> 1956 - MARRIED TO AICE JANE FREW, ALBERT WAS BORN FEB 21 1869 - DIED SEPTEMBER 28 1934. OTHER PROPERTY IN OATLEY HE OWNED WAS SEVERAL BLOCKS IN LETETIA STREET WHERE OATLEY PICTURE THEATRE WAS BUILT (NOW RSL I THINK).

THEY MUST HAVE DONE SOME GOOD RESEACH ABOUT TIDES BECAUSE IN ALL MY TIME DOWN AT "THE SHED" FROM 1921 TO 1951 I NEVER DID SEE A KING TIDE (XMAS TIDE) COME OVER THE SHED FLOOR, BUT I SAW SOME COME UP TO WITHIN 2" OF IT, NEXT DOOR TO 48 (IN 50) WAS AN EX BOXER AND HE BUILT A GYMNASIAM DOWN ON THE WATER ALONGSIDE THE BOATSHED. HIS NAME WAS SLAM SULLIVAN, AND EVERY MORNING MY GRANDMOTHER WOULD PUT A LARGE BUNCH OF FLOWERS ON A BOARD WHICH WAS ON TOP OF THE FENCE, AND EACH NIGHT WHEN SLAM CAME HOME HE LEFT A BIG PLATE OF MEAT THERE. HE USED THE FLOWERS FOR THE TABLES IN HIS RESTUARANT IN THE CITY. IN 1936 SLAM BOUGHT A NEW CHEV AND YEARS LATER HE STOPPED THE CAR IN FRONT OF THE GARAGE, AS USUAL, BUT THIS TIME HE DIDN'T PULL THE HANDBRAKE ON TIGHT ENOUGH AND AS HE WAS UNDOING THE GARAGE DOOR THE CAR RAN INTO HIM. IT DIDN'T KILL HIM BUT MADE A MESS OF HIM AND HE STOPPED TRAINING AFTER THAT.

SINCERELY

A. BRUCE FLETCHER

