

# OATLEY SUB - BRANCH

RETURNED SAILORS, SOLDIERS & AIRMEN'S IMPERIAL LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA

## *Souvenir*

OF THE NEW  
OATLEY WAR MEMORIAL

DEDICATED 31st MARCH 1962



*"The price of Liberty is eternal Vigilance"*

# Oatley War Memorial

The Oatley R.S.S. & A.I.L.A. Sub-Branch is pledged, as are all Sub-Branches, to uphold the defined "Objects of the League". One of these is "to preserve the memory and records of those who suffered and died for the nation — to erect monuments to their valour — to provide them with suitable burial places and establish in their Honour an Annual Commemoration Day".

We of Oatley Sub-Branch have long felt the need for a complete memorial. One which would combine the existing monument erected in 1924 with a memorial wall to commemorate not only the 1914-18 war, but also the 1939-45 war, Korea and Malaya campaigns.

A place of dignity and quiet is needed where memorial services can be held by the citizens of Oatley or children from the local schools.

We consider it our duty to continue with the good work of the Oatley Soldiers' Memorial Committee 1923. Therefore, the 1914-18 Memorial has been transferred to the Oatley Reserve and incorporated in the new memorial wall and flower garden. A suitable plaque has been placed on the original site, at

the Oatley school, so that this position will retain its historical significance.

Oatley can now be proud of a memorial placed in a central position. It is a shrine to honour and revere our fellow men and women who died in the fury of war, most of them at a great distance from Australia.

This will be a shrine which will also remind us of the complete and utter futility of war. It will not be a shrine to honour war.

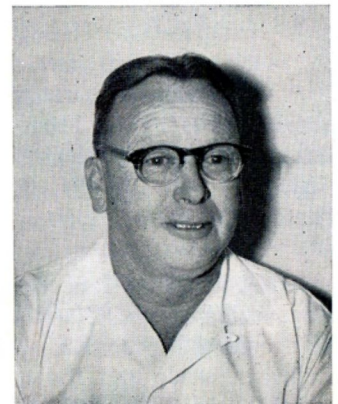
Let us remember the Sudan Contingent, the South African War, the Boxer Rebellion, the 1914-18 and 1939-45 World Wars, the Korean and Malayan Campaigns.

In this, let us all work for the day when war is finished on earth for all time.

"Ye who come after them forget not their sacrifice, claim as your heritage a portion of their spirit and in peace or in war take up their swords of service, so shall the living and the dead be for all time bound in one fellowship."

"Lest We Forget."

CHAS. BEMROSE, President  
Oatley Returned Sailors, Soldiers and  
Airmen's Imperial League of Australia.



# HISTORY OF OATLEY WAR MEMORIAL

After the first world war many war memorial committees were formed. Their work was to provide war memorials within local centres. To ensure that these memorials would be suitable, the government of this period appointed a Public Monuments' Advisory Board.

The Oatley Soldiers' Memorial Committee was elected in 1923.

*President:* Alderman Colbourne.

*Treasurer:* W. Desmond.

*Minute Secretary:* W. Savage.

*Organising Secretary:* Mrs. M. Cole.

*Committee Members:* Messrs. Perry, Alf Ward, Ludwig, Cuthbertson, Phillips, Pratt, Bennett, Maddocks.

Mesdames Davidson, Perry, Peasley, Pickering, Ward, Riley, Mobb, and Miss Stubbs.

Mrs. Cole of Oatley is now the only surviving member of this committee. The older residents of Oatley recall her many years of social work with admiration and respect. With her wonderful personality — sometimes dominating, other times appealing — she achieved success in all her voluntary tasks. Mrs. Cole assisted the Church, School, Red Cross, School of Arts, Charities and other local activities.

In an interview with Mr. Jack Fisher of the Oatley R.S.S. & A.I.L.A., Mrs. Cole spoke of her recollections.

The Oatley Committee submitted their proposed design to the Public Monuments' Advisory Board by letter on the 3rd December, 1923. This letter was signed by Mr. R. W. Pratt, "Tasma", Woronora Parade, Oatley, as Honorary Secretary.

Mr. Pratt advised that Alderman Colbourne of Kogarah Municipal Council was investigating a site to be provided by the Railway Commissioners, between Railway Parade and Railway Avenue, near Frederick Street.

This area — now all parklands — was once the site of the original railway and Oatley Station. For many years it was an untidy area. The original road-bed could be seen from the Mortdale Railway Sheds to the cutting where the Scouts' Hall is now situated. Also visible was the old platform. It is assumed that this untidy area could not be considered for the setting of a War Memorial and the Committee looked elsewhere.

Mrs. Cole suggested that the Education Department be asked if the Oatley Committee could use a corner of the local school ground.

On the 27th December, 1923, the Education Department gave approval. The Public Monuments' Advisory Board approved the design. On 10th January, 1924, the Department of Local Government advised Mr. Pratt that the design was suitable, subject to certain modification. The records do not show what modification was necessary, how much the monument cost, or who were the builders.

Prior to this, Mrs. Cole had been the organiser of an Honour Roll which now hangs in the School of Arts.

Mrs. Cole described some of the methods used to raise finance for the memorial.

Included in the list were:—

A Children's Concert,  
Dance Evening,  
Afternoon Fete and Art Union.

In the organising of the Art Union, Mrs. Cole wrote letters to many city business houses requesting articles which could be donated as prizes. In every case Mrs. Cole made personal calls on the business managers as a "follow-up" to her letter.

The Art Union was successful and the finance was available.

The Oatley War Memorial was then erected on the corner of the local school ground in 1924.

The present school ground was not the original site in Oatley.

A site for the proposed Oatley School was first purchased from Mr. B. GRIFFITH in 1883. The area of one acre was part of the estate known as Oatley's Grant. It was situated at the south-east side of the Rosa and Neville Streets intersection.

In 1912, Mr. VARNEY PARKES, M.L.A., forwarded a petition from the local residents urging the establishment of a school in Oatley. The petition was dismissed because Mortdale School was considered to be close enough for Oatley children.

A second petition in 1914 met with some agreement but, as the First World War was in progress, no action was taken.

In July, 1917, Mr. T. Ley, M.L.A., suggested that the local School of Arts could be used as a school if funds were not available for building. The School of Arts was subsequently rented for 25/- per week. It was opened on 2nd October, 1917, with Mr. Walter Horne as teacher.

As time went on and plans were made for building, it became apparent that the old school-site would be unsuitable.

A new site was re-secured at the corner of Letitia and Neville Streets.

The school building was completed there in June, 1921.

After the War Memorial had been erected in 1924 Annual Anzac Day Services were held.

Mrs. Cole has a photograph of the first service. In the photograph are a group of Red Cross girls who were in attendance.

Local ex-servicemen who attended these services afterwards proceeded to the Mortdale-Oatley West Sub-Branch.

During the Second World War the Oatley Service League was formed to assist the war effort.

The League raised £5,000 in five years. They organised and despatched parcels and comforts to the

servicemen. Their work was continuous throughout the war years and on one occasion when 250 Tasmanian troops arrived in camp at Oatley Park they fed the men for some days until their army kitchen arrived.

Mrs. Cole was again very active in these years and worked with other ladies in the spinning of "greasy-wool". This wool was knitted into garments for use by Navy men at sea.

After the Second World War many of the men who had worked in the Service League became foundation members of the Oatley R.S.S. & A.I.L.A. Sub-Branch with Mr. Jim Brown as their first president. Many of the Service League ladies then formed the Sub-Branch's Ladies' Auxiliary.

The Sub-Branch was formed on 23rd August, 1944.

The first of the Anzac Services to be held in the Oatley Theatre was in 1945 with the assistance of Rector SIDDONS, of North Sydney.

This service has been held annually by the Oatley Sub-Branch. During this period Mr. E. LAWSON has taken an active part in their presentation.

In 1951 the Sub-Branch planted a number of poplar trees in the Oatley Reserve in memory of fallen comrades. The Sub-Branch Club Rooms were built in 1956 and a Memorial Hall made available to the R.S.L. Youth Club and Women's Auxiliary in 1961.

The need for a War Memorial in a central position in Oatley was often discussed at Sub-Branch meetings. Finally, in 1962, the original War Memorial was incorporated in a new Memorial at Oatley Reserve. A plaque was placed on the original school site.

The Dedication Service for the new Memorial was held on the 31st March, 1962.

At 2.30 p.m. the Oatley ex-servicemen marched from the Memorial Hall to the Memorial. The address was made by the Sub-Branch President, Mr. C. M. Bemrose, and the Dedication by the Rev. H. C. Lundy.

The guest of honour was Mrs. M. Cole.

# SOME ASPECTS OF OATLEY HISTORY

1770: On May 4 Captain Cook set out to explore what is now known as Georges River, the only record made, however, was a reference to a spring of fresh water found at Shipwright Bay, near the present Tom Ugly's Bridge. Therefore it is believed that in January, 1788, Governor Phillip landed on the shores of the Hurstville area in search of grazing meadows to which Capt. Cook had referred. From then to 1810 the area was left to the aborigines with only an occasional visit by escaped convicts and Government hunters.

The grants of Captain John Townson were allotted on April 11, 1810, by Governor Macquarie — one of 1,950 acres, "Townson's Farm", the second of 50 acres, "The Retreat", and the third which adjoined his main grant was 250 acres. On December 31, 1812, the three grants were sold to Simeon Lord, Sydney merchant, for the sum of £800. The latter's executors sold the estate to John Rose Holden and James Holt, who in turn sold the major portion to Michael Gannon on 18th November, 1850, for £732.

At this time, the starting point in the description of the land was a dead stringy bark tree at the S.W. corner of James Chandler's grant called "Bexley". Another reference was that the area ran down to a new line of road "from the dam on Cook's River to Woronora ferry".

The early name of the district was "Gannon's Forest" and the nucleus of Hurstville today was known as "Gannon's Village". The name Hurstville was probably derived from the town of Hurst in Lancashire, England.

The next large grant in the Hurstville district was made to James Oatley. Oatley Bay, Oatley Park and Oatley Railway Station perpetuate the name of this pioneer. The grant is dated 31st August, 1833, by Governor Bourke and it is noted that the grant is issued in pursuance of a promise given by Governor Brisbane. The area was 300 acres, and was described

as bounded on the north by "Dr. Townson's Farm" and on the south by Georges River.

James Oatley was a watch and clock maker whose premises stood in George St., Sydney, opposite the Town Hall. The story is that Governor Macquarie wanted a turret clock for the prisoners' barracks at the top of King St. (the present law courts) and he offered Oatley a grant of land in exchange for the clock and his offer was accepted. It is possible that this grant was the reward for the clock, although, as stated, it was given on a promise from Brisbane, Macquarie's successor.

James Oatley died on the 8th October, 1839, and he bequeathed the 300 acres, which was referred to in his will as the "Needwood Forest", to his adopted son, Frederick Stokes, otherwise Oatley. In March, 1881, Frederick Oatley sold the 300 acres to Charles Cecil Griffiths for the sum of £10,000. Today the land comprising the grant is partly in Hurstville and partly in Kogarah, the railway line approaching Georges River being the dividing line.

When he received this grant, Oatley was already settled in the neighbourhood, for, on the 19th October, 1831, he had received from Governor Darling a grant of 175 acres which is described as adjoining Miller's and Lee's Farms. The grant adjoined, on the west, Captain Townson's 250 acres. On the 28th December, 1835, Oatley received a further grant dated 5th August, 1824, of 40 acres under the hand of Governor Brisbane.

When James Oatley died on 8th October, 1839, he was buried on his estate, and in 1925, Mr. W. Sivertsen of Bexley found the tombstone lying on vacant land on the Moorefield estate. The approximate position of the stone was 433 feet from Pallamana Parade towards Kooemba Road.

Adjoining the Oatley and Townson grants was one of 500 acres to Hannah Laycock, known as Kingsgrove Farm. Following the large grants of land

in the Hurstville District came the smaller grants, and the ultimate division of the large grants.

In the Sydney "Echo" of 25th October, 1890, a writer has given a list of some of the pioneers of the Hurstville district:

Donnelly Fisher, Jewfish Point, 116 acres.

John A. White, 80 acres, Georges River.

T. Lawrence, 120 acres at "Soily Bottom", Lugarno.

While Frewin Sloath, James Draper, James Eaves, James Willshire, Mary Shapley, Thomas McCaffray, Jane Trotter, Patrick Galvin, James Ryan, John Lacky, and others had grants varying from 30 to 80 acres.

Peakhurst derives its name from Mr. Peake, who was an early settler. Dumbleton Farm gave its name to the centre. When the "Echo" article was written, the old farm house was still standing.

Mr. Edward Flood had a large pear orchard at Peakhurst and in 1890 a fine pear tree was still flourishing.

It has been claimed that Dr. Townson farmed portion of his grant and erected a house on it. If he did so, his produce must have been carried to Sydney by boat, as there were no roads in the locality in his day. This may have been possible, as lime produced by burning shells in the vicinity of Lime Kiln Bay (Oatley West) was carried to Sydney by luggers.

The major portion of the now Municipality of Hurstville was covered by a forest of trees, and one of the earliest industries was timber-getting. Later the charcoal burners came and numbers of purchasers of blocks of land in Hurstville must have wondered at their inheritance of large deposits of ashes.

The first hotel was the Blue Post Inn, a weather-board building erected in 1850, which was built by Richard Fulljames. It stood in Forest Road nearly opposite to where the Public School now stands. In 1852 the opposition hotel, Currency Lass Inn, was built near the present Post Office. Other early hotels were "Man of Kent" at Kingsgrove and the "Robin Hood & Little John" at Dumbleton.

In the early days Cooks River presented a formidable obstacle in the direct path between Sydney and the Hurstville district. First there was a ford and after building a dam at the Cooks River Road, a bridge was built higher up and this was called Unwin's Bridge, after Unwin's Sugar Manufactory. Both the bridge and dam were shown on a plan published in 1856.

In 1843 Surveyor General Mitchell conceived the idea of connecting Sydney with the Illawarra District with a more direct road than the existing one by way of Liverpool and Appin. This road was completed in 1845, and apart from a few slight deviations, Mitchell's Road through Peakhurst to Lugarno is the Forest Road of today.

In the seventies coaches ran from the city to the Cooks River Dam and as the population grew the service was extended over the river to Kogarah and Hurstville. Mr. Daniel Joseph Treacy established a direct bus line to Hurstville, but on December 8, 1881, it was sold to Charles Fripps of Cooks River for £113 sterling. However, on the 15th October, 1884, the first portion of the railway line from Sydney to Hurstville was opened with nine stations from start to finish. The first railway was from Sydney to Parramatta Junction, opened on 26th September, 1855.

The Hurstville railway was built mainly by pressure and agitation from the Illawarra District and was considered as being the first stage of the Sydney-Illawarra District Railway. The railway line from Hurstville to Sutherland was opened on December 20th, 1885.

The first district to become a Municipality was Rockdale in 1871. Then came Kogarah in 1885 and Hurstville in 1887. Mr. Milsop was Hurstville's first Mayor.

In 1897 the population had grown to 4,000 and a new ward was created and called Kingsgrove Ward. In 1920 the municipality on the south side of the Georges River came up for decision and was handed over to the Sutherland Shire. In 1922 the name of Peakhurst Park was changed to Oatley Park and was proclaimed a bird and animal sanctuary in 1926.

*(Information supplied by Hurstville Council)*

# DEDICATION OF NEW WAR MEMORIAL

At 2.30 p.m., March 31, 1962, The Returned Servicemen of Oatley marched from the R.S.L. Memorial Hall to the New Oatley War Memorial.

The march was led by the Kogarah Band.

In his opening address the President, Mr. Chas. Bemrose, welcomed the Guest of Honour, Mrs. Cole.

Mr. Bemrose spoke of the aims and principles of the R.S.S. & A.I.L.A. and emphasised the point of erecting Memorials. In this respect Oatley Sub-Branch have kept faith and had completed the work of the Memorial Committee of 1924.

Mrs. Cole then replied and said how happy she was to see the original work carried to a successful conclusion and offered her congratulations to the Oatley R.S.L.

Mr. Doug Cross, M.L.A., then spoke on behalf of the Kogarah Council who assisted in the positioning of the Memorial. The next speaker was Mr. L. Reynolds, M.H.R., who spoke on behalf of the citizens of Oatley and submitted his congratulations to the Sub-Branch for that which they had achieved.

Then followed the Dedication Service by the Rev. H. C. Lundy.

After the Service the official Guests were entertained at the Memorial Hall, when formal afternoon tea was served.

Those amongst the official guests were:—

Mrs. M. Cole and Mrs. Propstring; Mr. L. Reynolds, M.H.R., and Mrs. Reynolds; Mr. Cross, M.L.A., and Mrs. Cross; Justice Nield; Alderman Duggan, Kogarah Council; Alderman and Mrs. Nielson, Hurstville Council; Mr. and Mrs. G. Brown, Oatley Parents and Citizens; Mrs. A. Brierley, Oatley Red Cross.

—Arnold Bryden,  
Editor.

# Sub-Branch Office-Bearers 1962



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Patron: MR. P. J. DRAKE

President: MR. C. M. BEMROSE

Vice-Presidents:

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Treasurer: MR. R. D. THIBOU

Secretary: MR. L. C. MUMFORD

Minute Secretary: MR. A. J. FISHER

Social Secretary: MR. D. ARTHUR

S.M.D.C.: MR. H. MILLER

Welfare Officers:

MR. E. LAWSON, MR. S. JACKSON and MR. J. VERHEES

Review Editor: MR. A. BRYDEN

Building and Finance Secretary:

MR. C. M. BEMROSE

Building and Finance Committee:

MESSRS. W. HORSINGTON, FISHER, E. HEATON, E. LAWSON,  
R. MILLER, J. VERHEES, N. WALKER, F. LEATE with power to add.

Liaison Officer: MR. C. M. BEMROSE

Auditor: MR. R. A. STEVENS



# "Lest We Forget"

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## OATLEY HONOUR ROLL

1914-18

Agate, G.	Lawler, R. C.
Brown, H. H.	Lemon, W.
Chandler, A.	McMillan, A.
Coleborne, W. E.	Merton, G.
Cuthbertson, A. E.	Murray, R. C.
Davidson, W.	New, W. F.
Dunn, C. A.	Pearson, A. D.
Evans, J. D.	Perry, H.
Fletcher, C. A.	Pickering, S. J.
Fletcher, F.	Small, C.
Forrest, P. N.	Stead, R. P. H.
Gill, G. A.	Thompson, F. D.
Jones, H.	Whyte, C. S.
Kendall, W. J.	Whalling, A.
	Walton, G.

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1939-45

Atkins, L. J.	Greig, G.
Armstrong, K.	Hart, G. F.
Auld, A.	Hawkins, A.
Bambury, A.	Hubbard, G.
Barry, A.	Joyce, L.
Barry, A. W. F.	King, F. J.
Bennett, R. C.	Knox, E.
Briggs, W. S.	Lawler, V. R.
Buttel, A. F.	Mason, E. P.
Cowling, A. J.	McDowell, F. R. J.
Doyle, K. N.	Nelson, S.
Downey, L.	Roper, R. J.
Garratt, V.	Tinsley, W. F.



*"Give us peace in our time, O Lord!"*