

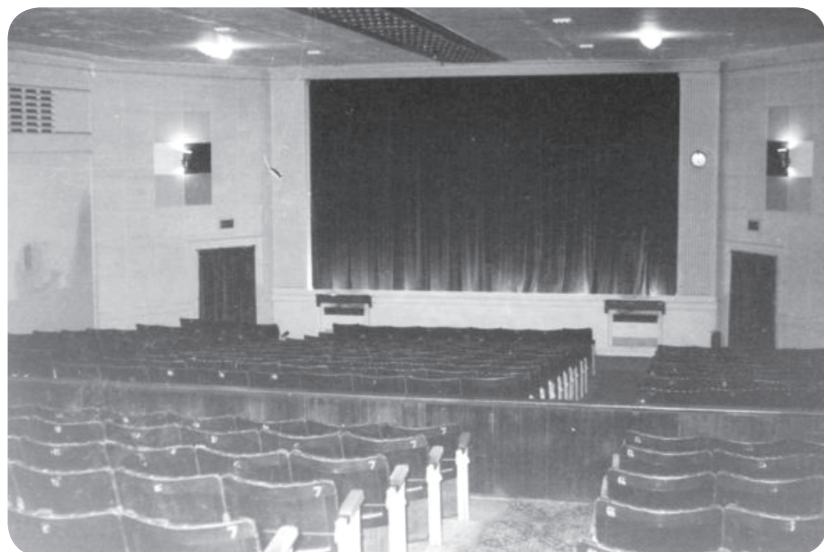
Oatley Radio Theatre, 1942



The Radio Theatre was built in 1942 as a movie theatre. It was modelled on New York's Radio City Music Hall, built by millionaire J.D. Rockefeller, in the exotic and expensive Art Deco style. The Oatley counterpart had a more modest budget but it tried to get the same Art Deco feel. The architect was Aaron Bolot who designed other Art Deco style structures around Sydney. It was owned and operated by Ken and Thelma Fidden. Their daughter Geraldine was an usherette and their son Ken was a projectionist, as was George Kendall. The Oatley bus service ran especially for residents; before and after the movie. The Fiddens sold the theatre to Noel and Sylvia Bevan in 1953, who on sold it to John Waters in 1955. The advent of television in 1956 saw the decline of the theatre's popularity. In 1962 it was sold to Oatley RSL. Features of the old theatre are still visible throughout the building.

The building is now called the Jack Fisher Hall (Jack being the prime organiser in the purchase and reconfiguration of the hall). The hall has been used for ballroom dancing, and is now used by Oatley RSL Youth Club for gymnastics and aerobics.

Pictured: theatre usherettes Val Thompson and Joyce Marks (née Bray), 1940s (top left); inside the theatre (bottom left); outside the theatre (below).



Oatley Heritage & Historical Society, 2016

For more information visit oatleyhistory.org.au

Our thanks to Kevin Brown (husband of Geraldine) for information and support to create this plaque.