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The Origins of some of the Street Names in Oatley

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I'm told that there are more than 70 streets, avenues, lanes, parades etc. in Oatley (78).

For convenience I have categorised their names into four groups:

Street names associated with the Griffiths family

Names associated with native plants

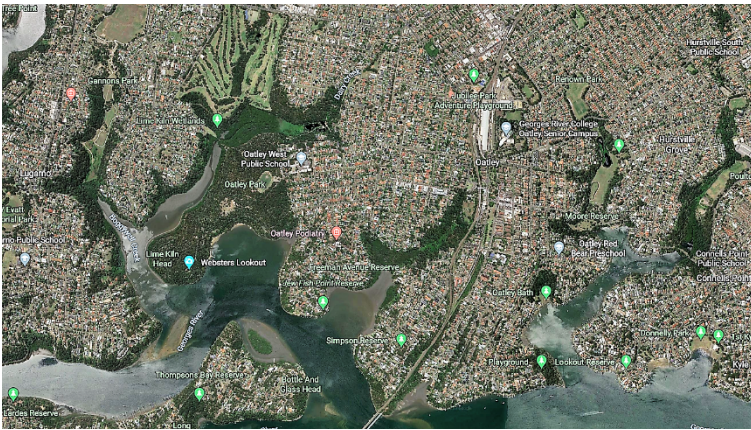Names that arose from war

Others

The boundary of the Oatley 300 acre grant (121 hectares) clearly defined in the 1825 promise or commitment of land to James Oatley by Governor Brisbane was and is well documented and understood. The bicentenary of this landmark event is next year. Three addition areas have enlarged the Oatley estate:

First is the 80 acres granted to J White in 1859. This land runs along Gungah (Bay) Road and to the west down to what we now know as Dairy Creek. The second is land around Jewfish Bay and the third is the area west of Hurstville Road including Judd Street to Renown Park. Together these lands bring the total area of Oatley up to around 500 acres (200 hectares).

Since the original grant was finalised in 1833 the boundary of Oatley has expanded powered by the growth of population. This is particularly the case west of Gungah Bay Road as Oatley became associated with land all the way to Peakhurst Park. The very name change of the park illustrates the expansion. Peakhurst Park was a proper name until 1922 when that the border of the park was far from land grants and settlements of the Oatley township.

Oatley also became associated with land to the west of Hurstville Road, the original boundary. So the original 300 acres (120 hectares) has grown to something like 500 acres (200 hectares).

Names connected to the Griffiths Family

It is very unlikely that James Oatley or his son Frederick contributed any street names to his grant because at the time Oatley's 300 acre Needwood Forest had no streets. Things changed when Frederick decided to sell his holding. He had no intention of developing the land and its use as collateral for various loans and cash advances became less attractive to the old man. Charles Griffiths' consortium bought the land in March 1881, paying £10 000 for it, not only a large sum, it was a sum that Griffiths and his family might not afford. But Griffiths knew the railway was coming and he was depending on this to secure his fortune. He needed to start selling land quickly.

There were thirteen streets named in East Oatley by 1886

Very quickly Griffiths had plans drawn up, streets and housing blocks established and offered for sale. Streets and building blocks required addresses: street names. So, as the surveys planned the streets on the eastern side of the railway names had to be devised. The streets of course

were not much more than nominal except around the early railway station. A grid of street designs was drawn up on a north-south axis and on an east west axis. Perhaps the family sat around a candle or gas lit dinner table and drew up a list of names.

Male names were to follow the east/west layout and female names would be uses for the north/south axis.

The documentation of streets needed by buyers and their financiers to locate property entailed giving the streets identity – names - even if they were no more than rough tracks. So, the process of naming the streets of Oatley began.

Street Names

I have grouped the street names into four categories:

Names connected to the Griffiths family. Whether the Griffiths family sat around a family dinner in 1881 with paper and pencil and distributed the names I do not know. The Griffiths names were distributed so that male named streets ran east to west and female names ran north to south.

Names taken from Australian plants

Names connected to war

Others

The Griffiths family

Charles Cecil Griffiths who is listed as the purchaser of the Oatley estate was born in 1842 in Sydney town. His parents were Richard Griffiths, a successful banker who was born in England and became in the colony a well-established banker. His wife was Letitia. Of their children George Neville Griffiths was born in 1840 and Charles in 1842. Frederick was an older brother. The male children of the family were sent to England and Germany to be educated. Two boys went to Eton before enrolling at Cambridge.

George married Ada Scott in Brisbane in 1874.

Members of the Griffiths family who were given street names include:

Louisa
Letitia
William Russell
Charles Cecil
Algernon
Llewellyn
Herbert
Ada Blanche
Griffiths Alice? Harold?

Ada Street – Ada was the wife of George Neville Griffiths and Charles Griffiths' sister-in-law. She is mentioned in Sands Directory 1898

Algernon Street: Algernon Griffiths was a relative of Charles Griffiths. He is mentioned in Sands 1908

Alice Street: was also a relative of the Griffiths brothers. She lost her title when her street was renamed Asquith Street in 1915

Annette Street: Named after Annette Agnes Willis who married Fredrick Griffiths (Charles' elder brother).

Blanche Street: Ada Blanche Griffiths (see above) mentioned in Sands directory 1908. Ada had a second dig at street naming.

Cecil Street: (after Charles Cecil Griffiths) Changed to Wyong Street in about 1915.

Charles Street: (after Charles Cecil Griffiths)

Frederick Street (1839 – 1907) : Elder brother of Charles and son of George and Letitia Griffiths. Frederick was a member of the four-man consortium which purchased Oatley's 300 acre grant in 1881.

Griffiths Street: The only street in west Oatley that carries a Griffiths name. It was named when the short road, in two parts, was created later, after world war one.

Herbert Street: Herbert Tyrell Griffiths (C1850 – 1910) Brother of Charles

Letitia Street: Daughter of George and Letitia Griffiths. Born in 1849

Louisa Street: Named after Fanny Louisa Verta Tracy – Wife of Charles Griffiths. Married 1871

Neville Street: Named after George Neville Griffiths Brother of Charles (1840-1905) MLA for East Sydney 1882

Rosa Street: Rosa was the sister of Charles born 1865

Russell Street: Named after William Russel Griffiths younger brother of Charles (1845-1910)
William Street: Named after William Russell Griffiths Brother of Charles (later had a name change)

There is no clear reference to Charles' father Richard.

Griffiths Brothers Teas connected to this family of Griffiths? This is doubtful.

Names connected to native plants

These names are a characteristic of west Oatley. Names put in place in 1880s to expedite land sales. Hurstville council proceeded to adopt these names
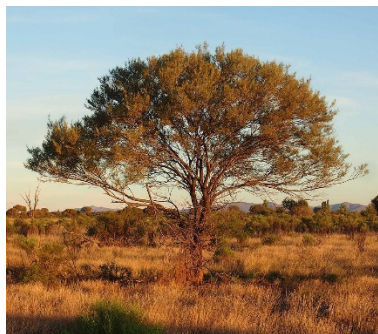
Acacia street. The genus Acacia. In Australia better known as Wattle, covers over 1000 Australian species as well as many overseas.

Mimosa Street Mimosa is a genus native to the Americas, east Africa and India. Related to Acacia.

Mulga Road Mulga is a hardy Australian native plant suited to arid and desert regions Member of the Acacia family.

Myall Street Myall is an Australian plant, species of wattle (or acacia pendura) Best known as the weeping myall Suitable for urban landscapes. Found in Eastern Australia west of the Great Divide

lula — Weeping Acacia tree, foliage. Maranoa Gardens, Balwyn, Victoria, Australia.

Waratah or Telopea: Australian native species. NSW floral emblem

Yarran Road : Yarran is a small Australian acacia that is a minor fodder tree and an important source of firewood and fenceposts.
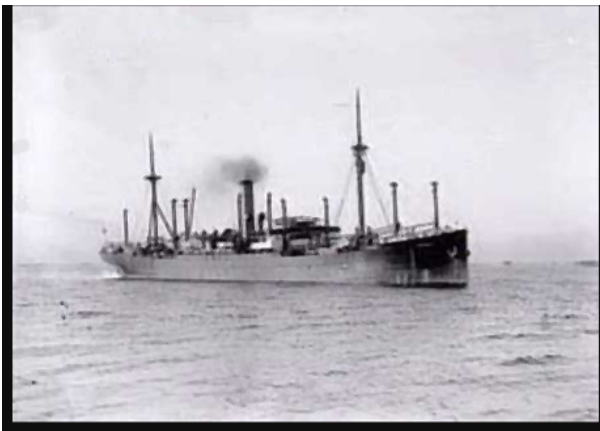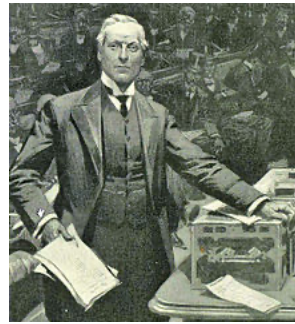

Mi Mi Street is not named after a plant Described as a fairy like being of the Arnhem land Thin, human like shape in rock art mischievous and capricious spirit who possessed mystical powers.
Myall Street Myall is an Australian plant, species of wattle (or acacia pendura) Best known as the weeping myall Suitable for urban landscapes. Found in Eastern Australia west of the Great Divide.

Images of the fantastic creatures known as Mi Mi.

Names connected to world war

Asquith Street   Formally Alice Street Renamed in 1915 in honour of the British prime minister.

Boorara Avenue Named by Alderman Hedley Mallard as he had sailed in a military transport of that name in world war I. HMAT Boorara (A42) was built in Germany and called SS Pfalz. Pfalz was in Melbourne with cargo in August 1914. She attempted to leave Port Philip on the day war was declared A shot across her bows stopped the ship and she returned to port where she was commandeered and renamed Boorara (Boorara is a West Australian gold mining area). This shot was the first fired by the British Empire in World War 1.There followed many adventures

Douglas Haig Street In honour of the British Field Marshall (1861-1928) Commander in chief of British, Australian and other national armies.

Kitchener (Field Marshall, Earl) Street (Previously William Street, name change in August 1915.) began as George Street (as in George Griffiths). Kitchener died in June 1916 under mysterious circumstances.

Llewellen Street named after HMS Llewellen, destroyer and Welsh folk hero, built in 1913. Active service in World War 1 Damaged by a torpedo in March 1917 in the straits of Dover.
Scrapped in 1922.

Lloyd (George) Street David Lloyd George was British prime minister from 1916 to 1922 he died in 1945 at the age of 82.

Mountbatten Street named after Earl Louis Mountbatten of Burma who was ADC to the Prince of Wales he visited Australia in 1920. He was assassinated in 1979

Renown Avenue (part of) Formally Harold Street. HMS Renown a Battle cruiser launched in 1916 that brought Edward the Prince of Wales to Australia in 1920. The last battlecruiser, she was scrapped in 1948. Also Renown Park, in fact several streets and a park were names to celebrate

the visit of the Prince of Wales aboard HMS Renown demonstrating the loyalty to the empire that continued after the end of World War 1

Victory Road

A selection of other street names

Baker Street named after EH Baker elected in 1914. Mayor in 1914,17,18 1nd 22.

Boundary Road a long and rich history **(Photo)**

Burke Street named after T M Burke a real estate agent

Cecil Street changed to **Wyong** Street by 1915

Clifton Street named in 1929 was confused with Phipps Street

Dame Mary Gilmore Road named after the famous writer, journalist and poet Mary Gilmore in 1954……Details
Mary Gilmore (nee Cameron) 1865 -1962 Born in southern NSW trained to be a teacher. Well connected to the Labour movement. Relationship with Henry Lawson. Devotee of William Lane and moved to the utopian settlement in Paraguay in 1902 Became DBE Dame of the British Empire in 1937 Appeared om the $10 note since 1993.
In 1954 Dame Mary Gilmore attended a ceremony in Oatley to recognise the naming of the street that runs as boundary to Oatley Park. The seat is inscribed with the message "Given by Dame Mary Gilmore – for tired people".

Dinjerra Crescent Dinjerra is a local aboriginal term indicating West

Freeman Avenue. Named after A. Freeman who was elected to Hurstville Municipal Council

Glen Road named by McRae

Macken Crescent named after WT Macken elected to HMC in 1914 Was mayor in 1921

Grigg Street Oatley. Edward Grigg was in 1920 a real estate agent. In 1920 he was secretary of his company.

Judd Street – the boundary of Oatley

Larool Avenue

Oatley Park Avenue
Peakhurst Park Avenue changed to Oatley Park Avenue following the name change of Oatley Park in 1822.

Phipps Street Erroneously labelled Clifton Street in 1929

Judd's brickworks

Obviously named streets

Oatley Parade and Oatley Avenue

Oatley Park Avenue (previously known as Peakhurst Park Avenue).

Sources

This topic has been covered before – In May 1998 Betty Goodger, Jan Crane and Russel Gibbs made a presentation to the Oatley Heritage Group titled "Early Oatley Street Names" that has been valuable to me.

Also Kogarah Historical Society had formulated a list of street names relating to the old Kogarah municipal area that has been very useful.