

OATLEY WAR MONUMENT AND PUBLIC SCHOOL

(Written by Jack Fisher and Published in "Review" Nov. 1960)

Radio Theatre to RSL Youth Club

Since the suggestion made several months ago by our Secretary, Les Mumford, that we consider the re-positioning of the local War Monument, a great deal of research has brought to light some interesting facts regarding the monument, its erection and connection with the local school, and how it came to be placed on school ground. For the benefit of members, the following may be of interest:-

Despite our request for information regarding the monument, it appeared there was no person in the district who knew a great deal about it, or at least no one came forward with any authentic information. There must have been a committee formed; there must have been finance raised; but by whom? These were some of the many questions that remained unanswered until I suddenly remembered the one person in the district who had always been to the forefront in any local civic, church, social or charitable organisation when I was a schoolboy,

The question was, "Could she still be alive after all the years of hard work she had put into the district?" It did not take long to find this out. The person whose name was a byword in the district many years ago was very much alive, although graciously retired. - *Age 83*

I met this grand old lady once again quite recently, and it was a privilege and pleasure to talk with her for a couple of hours. She was very informative, and still takes great pleasure in the affairs of the district, although age does not allow her to take an active part.

The name of this remarkable old lady is Mrs. M. Cole. The older residents of Oatley will remember her very well. Sometimes domineering, sometimes appealing, but always with terrific personality, she drove to a successful conclusion any voluntary task to assist the church, school, Red Cross, School of Arts, Charities and the hundred and one other projects she undertook in her lifetime in Oatley.

She it was, who told me that of the original committee formed to raise funds for the purchase of a Memorial, she was the only one left alive today. Therefore all local records of this side of the project would most likely have been disposed of long ago. But she remembered the names of the committee and they are as follows:-

President:
Treasurer:
Minute Secretary:
Organising Secretary:
Committee Members:

Alderman Colebourne.
W. Desmond.
W. Savage.
Mrs. M. Cole.
Messrs. Perry, Alf. Ward, Ludwig, Guthbertson, Phillips, Pratt, Bennett, Madocks, Mesdames Davidson, Perry, Peasley, Pickering, Ward, Riley, Mobb, Miss Stubbs.

Functions Organised by Mrs. Cole:-

1. Children's Concert.
2. Afternoon Fete & Art Union.
3. Dance Evening.

Soon after the first World War ended, there were many Memorial Committees busy with plans, and the Government of the day set up a Public Monuments' Advisory Board to ensure that such monuments were of a suitable type. The original design of the Oatley Memorial was submitted to this Board on 3rd December, 1923. In a covering letter to the Board, signed by Mr. R. W. Pratt, "Tasman" Woronora Parade, Oatley, as Hon. Sec. Oatley Soldiers' Memorial Committee, it was stated 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 St. This area, which is now all parkland, was once the roadbed and site of the original Oatley Station. For years it was rather an untidy area with the old station platform showing, and the permanent way roadbed remains stretching from the cutting (now the site of the Scouts' Hall) right up to the side of the Mortdale Rail sheds.

I cannot be sure, but it was probably the unsightliness of this particular area that made the committee seek a more suitable site. Once again it was our old friend, Mrs. Cole, who suggested the Education Department be approached requesting permission for use of a corner block, the present site.

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

Prior to all this, Mrs. Cole had also been the prime mover in having an Honour Roll made, which now hangs in the School of Arts. The actual design and style of this Honour Roll was left in the hands of someone else, and when Mrs. Cole saw the finished article, she was so disappointed that she "blew her top" and soundly "ticked off" the committee man responsible. She told me she made it so strong that the gentleman in question did not speak to her for a long time afterwards.

She described to me some of the methods she used to raise finance for the Monument. She organised an Art Union, writing to dozens of city business houses requesting articles for prizes for it. Then she presented herself personally to the managers of these houses, and putting them right on the spot she said, "I have come to pick up the donations for our Memorial Art Union". With this approach who could refuse her? A concert was organised in the School of Arts, and so an organising secretary, she finally raised the necessary finance.

Ern Lawson and some of our older members are under the impression that at one time there were crossed swords super-imposed on the Monument, but just what has become of them no-one seems to know. I cannot find anything to confirm this impression and Mrs. Cole assures me that the only sword was that which is on the Monument at present; but at one stage this sword was removed by one of the schoolboys. The then headmaster of the school, Mr. Fitzgerald, had the whole school assembled and spoke of the desecration in such terms that the sword was returned, thrown on the grass plot, next morning. A member of Mortdale-Oatley West Sub-branch then remounted the sword back in its original position.

*He possessed
ingressive
thoughts*

I spoke at length to Mrs. Cole about the idea the Sub-branch had of removing the Monument to a more prominent and central position in the park, and our idea of improving and enlarging it and bringing it up-to-date for the Second World War and the Korean Members. I also described how we proposed to retain a commemorative plaque designating the site of the original monument at the school, probably on a small marble block. She was most enthusiastic about the idea and said, "Oatley had had a park in the early days that's where I would have had the Memorial placed, as it would be the natural position." She offered and said she was prepared to come along and give a talk on the history of the Monument at any time the Sub-branch wished.

THE SCHOOL

A site for a school at Oatley was first purchased in 1883 from Mr. B. Griffith. The area was one acre and was part of an estate known as Oatley's Grant (Capt. Oatley).

Nothing further was done until 1912 when Mr. Varney Parkes M.L.A., the local member, forwarded a petition from residents urging the establishment of a school. This application was declined because Mortdale School was quite handy.

A second application in 1914 was more favourably received, but was dropped due to the outbreak of war in August of that year. The natural increase in population caused further demands and in July 1917, Mr. T. Ley, M.L.A., urged the building of a school and suggested that the Department, if it could not incur the expense of building, might rent the School of Arts for the purpose. This suggestion was adopted. The School of Arts was rented for 25/- per week and school opened there on 2nd October 1917 with a Mr. Walter Horne as teacher.

As a matter of passing interest, it may be remembered that the same T. J. Ley was later, in England, charged and convicted of murder and sentenced to death. This sentence was never carried out as he was committed to Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum where he subsequently died. He had been our local member for some years.

As time went on it became evident that a school building would have to be erected soon and some thought was given to the best position for it. On examination of the site chosen (it was on the south-east side of the Rosa and Neville Sts. intersection) it was found to be unsuitable, and it was decided to acquire a new one. Nearly 2½ acres was then resumed on 11th July 1919, and is part of the present site. The sum of £731 was paid in compensation.

Soon afterwards, the old site was handed over to the Trustees for Soldiers' Homes, for the provision of homes for soldiers' wives and dependents.

Before the school was opened, estimates of the number of children who would attend were hard to arrive at, as some children were already going to Mortdale. The School of Arts would only hold 100, and it was decided that only pupils up to 3rd Class would be admitted. But in December 1917 Mr. Horne reported that the enrolment was only 69, so it was decided to also admit 4th Class pupils when school re-opened. By the first week of February 1918, the number rose to 95. Early in 1920, the P. & C. Association requested a 5th

THIS PLAQUE WAS ERECTED TO
COMMEMORATE THE SERVICE GIVEN BY

MRS. MINNIE COLE

IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OATLEY
SCHOOL OF ARTS WHICH PROVIDED THE
FIRST LIBRARY SERVICE IN OATLEY.

GIVEN TO OAHHS
BY BERYL BUTTERS
JULY 2016

"Princess Chrysanthemum" At Oatley School of Arts

BY OUR SPECIAL REPORTER

The performance of the above pretty little operetta was staged before a large audience at the School of Arts Oatley, on Saturday evening 20th Oct., it was arranged by Mrs. Coles, to assist the Fencing Fund of St. Paul's Church of England, Oatley and the result must be very gratifying to Mrs. Coles and all members of St. Paul's.

The Operetta was well performed by an Amateur company of talented artists whose singing was particularly pleasing. Unfortunately the stage accommodation was very limited and did not give the Chorus and Ballet a fair chance. Although it no doubt cramped their actions, everyone present must admit they made up for it in their singing, which frequently drew forth merited applause.

Miss Grace Smith, as Princess Chrysanthemum, played her part well and the rendering of her several songs was particularly good.

Mr. George Dodd, as the Merciful? Monarch, The Emperor, handled a difficult part meritoriously. Prince So-Tru, was taken by Mr. L. Lewis, who was also in good voice, but could relax more in his part. Prince So-Su, was very creditably performed by Mr. W. Siddens.

Miss Alys Cole was exceptionally good as the Frizard Cat and her song, "A Kitten's Tale" well merited the applause extended to her. Top-Not, the Court Chamberlain, Mr. F. Miller, also did well with his part. Others of this clever cast, who cannot be passed over without a word of mention, were:—Miss M. Nicholls as Fairy Moonbeam and Miss Roberts as Tulip, Maiden's attendant on Princess. Spirit of the Night, Fairies, Courtiers and Populace all helped towards the success of the performance.

Mrs. Terry very ably filled her old and difficult position behind the scenes.

The prologue to the Operetta was a very clever performance, by the Juvenile section, among the items standing out for special mention was the song by Master Jack O'Connell, supported by a chorus of four lads.

The Tambourie dance, very pretty, spectacular and ably performed by four maids.

The Chorus, "Going to Write to Daddy" by members of the Junior Red-Cross was particularly pleasing, as also, was the several items rendered by Emily Miller, Nellie Teasley, Eric Jones and the three little girls as "Statues".

Piano accompaniste Mrs. Coles, was

in her usual brilliant form, she was excellently supported by an Orchestra of three young and very clever violinists, viz., Miss Sylvia Ward, Masters Jeff Miller and Fred Ludwig.

Rev. Birke, on behalf of himself and members of St. Paul's, at the conclusion of the performance, thanked Mrs. Coles and all present for their hearty support. Three cheers were then called for Mrs. Coles, who is always to the fore when any help is needed to help along anything of a charitable nature.

TERMINUS NOTES

16/6
7/4
19/3.3
11/1
Informer
Informer

GIVEN TO CHHS BY BERYL + NORM BUTTERS 22/8/2016

MRS. COLE



Above: This is our Senior Sunday School in session. Almost every Sunday the Church is completely filled, making efficient division into classes impossible. The new building will enable us to have Senior, Primary, and Kindergarten sections with appropriate instruction and equipment in each.

Clive Ross - All Saints - archivist

Below: Our Kindergarten Hall. Only 3 years old, it is already crowded to capacity by over a hundred children.





1941
MR PARSONS
CHOIR MASTER



JUNIOR
CHOIR

1941

GIVEN TO OHS BY
BERYL + NORM BUTERS

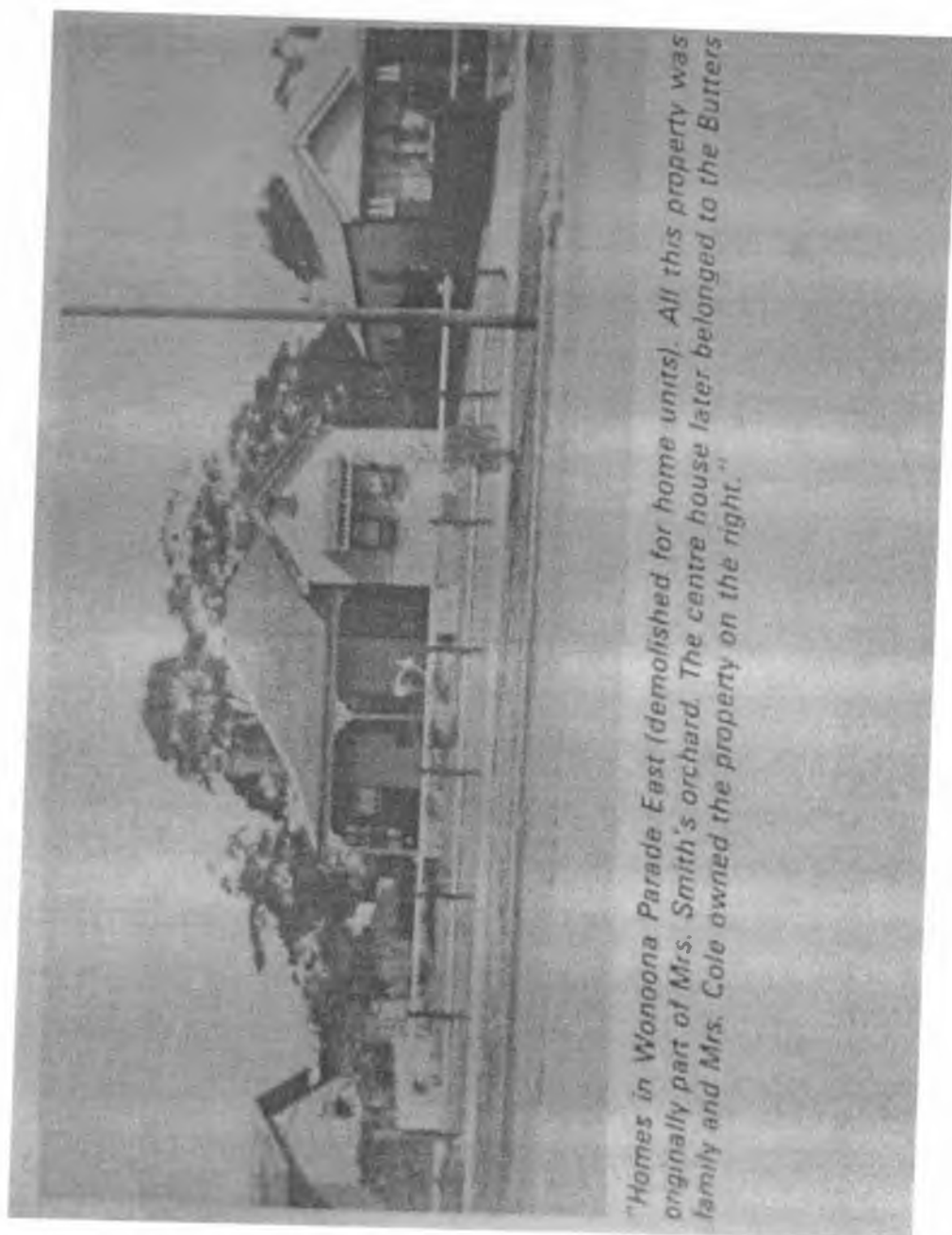
22/8/2016



1943



MOTHERS' UNION
(WAR YEARS)



"Homes in Wonoona Parade East (demolished for home units). All this property was originally part of Mrs. Smith's orchard. The centre house later belonged to the Butters family and Mrs. Cole owned the property on the right."

The plaque is shown below.

Original Oatley War Memorial, 1924



Oatley Heritage & Historical Society

For more information visit oatleyhistory.org.au

This plaque was built in 2016 with support from Oatley Public School, Oatley Heritage and Historical Society, Oatley RSL Sub Branch and Commonwealth and NSW Government assistance

This was the site of the first war memorial for Oatley. It was built in 1924 at this site because the current site in the Oatley Memorial Park was still in a poor state after the relocation of the railway line in 1905.

The Oatley Soldiers' Memorial Committee was elected in 1923 comprising

President: Alderman Coleborne

Treasurer: W. Desmond

Minute Secretary: W. Savage

Organising Secretary: Mrs. M. Cole

Committee Members: Messrs. Perry, Ward, Ludwig, Cuthbertson, Phillips, Pratt, Bennett, Maddocks, Mesdames Davidson, Perry, Peasley, Pickering, Ward, Riley, Mobb, and Miss Stubbs

Mrs. Cole of Oatley was reputed to be the driving force of this committee. The older residents of Oatley recall her many years of social work with admiration and respect. With her wonderful personality she achieved success in all her voluntary tasks. Mrs. Cole assisted the church, school, Red Cross, School of Arts, charities and other local activities.

Mrs. Cole described some of the methods used to raise finance for the memorial. Included in the list were a children's concert, a dance evening, an afternoon fete and art union (i.e. lottery). The art union was successful and the finance was available. The Oatley War Memorial was then erected on this site in 1924. The memorial honoured 21 servicemen from Oatley. After the memorial had been erected, annual Anzac Day services were held at this site until 1962.

The War Memorial was moved and incorporated in a new memorial at the current location in 1962. At the dedication service on 31 March 1962 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.

Opening Ceremony

The opening of the site was conducted on 24th March 2016. Invitees included the Member for Banks, David Coleman, State Member for



ALL SAINTS CHURCH OF ENGLAND

OATLEY WEST



Early Photo

The photo below is from October 1924 when the War Memorial was opened in the north eastern section of the school grounds. The records are incomplete as to how the land title was transferred to this use but here stood Oatley's War Memorial until 1962. There is a plaque there today.



Mrs Cole was a local identity who worked well for the community - she led the local move for the War Memorial, and was responsible for the children at OPS to have a dress up festival in the mid 1920s.



IN LOVING MEMORY OF
MINNIE MARY COLE
BORN MO LONG 14TH SEPT. 1877
A LIFE-LONG CHURCH AND
COMMUNITY WORKER
DIED 13TH FEBRUARY 1969
LOVED WIFE OF ARTHUR
MOTHER OF NORMAN AND ALYS

CECIL FREDERICK
PROBSTING

BORN 9TH APRIL 1903, HOBART, TASMANIA

OLD BOY OF

THE FRIENDS' SCHOOL, HOBART

HON. TREASURER OF ALL SAINTS' CHURCH
1953-63

AT REST 19TH JANUARY 1966, OATLEY, N.S.W.

HUSBAND OF ALYS AND

FATHER OF EUNICE

ALYS FRANCES PROPSTING

BORN 6TH MAY, 1913

AN ACTIVE CHURCH MEMBER.

CHOIR MEMBER.

LEADER OF G.F.S.

AND SUNDAY SCHOOL PRIMARY DEPT.

ENTERED INTO REST

22ND NOVEMBER, 1968.

FOND WIFE OF CECIL

MOTHER OF EUNICE

ne has notice. Election to administer the estate, with the will dated 6th March, 1970, was filed by the Public Trustee on 29th August, 1974. F. GILLET, Branch Manager, Public Trust Office, 4 Baker Street, Gosford. 3666—\$4

IN the Supreme Court of New South Wales.—Probate Division.—In the will of NORMAN ROSS COLE, late of Turramurra, in the State of New South Wales, retired pharmacist, deceased.—Probate granted by the Supreme Court of New South Wales on 3rd May, 1974.—Pursuant to the Wills, Probate and Administration Act, 1898, Testator's Family Maintenance and Guardianship of Infants Act, 1916, and Trustee Act, 1925, Ian Burnard Ross Cole and Eunice Dorothea Baxter, the executor and executrix of the will of the said Norman Ross Cole, who died on the 26th October, 1973, hereby give notice that creditors and others having any claim against or to the estate of the said deceased are required to send particulars of their claims to the said executor and executrix at c/o Messrs Robert Burge & Co., Solicitors, 2 O'Connell Street, Sydney, on or before the 15th November, 1974, at the expiration of which time the said executor and executrix will distribute the assets, having regard only to the claims of which they then have notice.—Dated the 10th day of September, 1974. ROBERT BURGE & CO., Solicitors, 2 O'Connell Street, Sydney, N.S.W. 2000. 3692—\$4

IN the Supreme Court of New South Wales.—Notice of intended distribution of undermentioned estate.—Any person having any claim upon the estate of TREVOR WAYNE COLLINS, known as Loneragan, of Hebersham, railway employee, died 6th December, 1973, intestate, must send particulars of his claim to the Public Trustee at the address appearing below on or before 11th November, 1974. The Public Trustee will distribute the assets of the estate, having regard only to the claims of

the 2nd December, 1974, at the expiration of which time the said administrators will distribute the assets of the said deceased to the persons entitled, having regard only to the claims of which they then have notice.—Dated this 2nd day of September, 1974. WARREN & COMPANY, Proctors for the Administrators, 1041-1047 Old Princes Highway, Engadine, N.S.W. 2233. 3637—\$4

IN the will of JOHN CAMILLUS DONNAN, of 23 Gower Street, Summer Hill, in the State of New South Wales, fitter, deceased.—Probate No. 771189 granted by Supreme Court of New South Wales on 27th May, 1974.—Pursuant to the Wills, Probate and Administration Act, 1898-1940 (Testator's Family Maintenance and Guardianship of Infants Act, 1916-1954, and Trustee Act, 1925-1942), Eileen Catherine Donnan and John Francis Donnan, the executors of the will of the said John Camillus Donnan, who died on the 29th December, 1973, hereby give notice that creditors and others having any claim against or to the estate of the said deceased are required to send particulars of the claims to the said executors at c/o Murray and Moloney, Solicitors, 29 South Street, Granville, in the State of New South Wales on or before the 8th November, 1974, at the expiration of which time the said executors will distribute the assets of the said deceased to the persons entitled, having regard only to the claims of which they then have notice.—Dated the 5th day of September, 1974. MURRAY & MOLONEY, Solicitors, 29 South Street, Granville, N.S.W. 2142. 3675—\$4

RE will of MARY IOHANNA DONNELLAN, late of Darling Point, widow, deceased.—Probate granted by Supreme Court of New South Wales on 27th August, 1974.—Pursuant to the Wills, Probate and Administration Act, 1898-1965 (Testator's

Fr 13 Sep 1974 - Government Gazette of the State of New South Wales (Sydney, NSW : 1901 - 2001)
Page 3602 - IN the Supreme Court of New South Wales.—Probate Division.—In the will of NORMAN ROSS COLE, late of

IN the Supreme Court of New South Wales.—Probate Division.—In the will of NORMAN ROSS COLE, late of Turramurra, in the State of New South Wales, retired pharmacist, deceased.—Probate granted by the Supreme Court of New South Wales on 3rd May, 1974.—Pursuant to the Wills, Probate and Administration Act, 1898, Testator's Family Maintenance and Guardianship of Infants Act, 1916, and Trustee Act, 1925, Ian Burnard Ross Cole and Eunice Dorothea Baxter, the executor and executrix of the will of the said Norman Ross Cole, who died on the 26th October, 1973, hereby give notice that creditors and others having any claim against or to the estate of the said deceased are required to send particulars of their claims to the said executor and executrix at c/o Messrs Robert Burge & Co., Solicitors, 2 O'Connell Street, Sydney, on or before the 15th November, 1974, at the expiration of which time the said executor and executrix will distribute the assets, having regard only to the claims of which they then have notice.—Dated the 10th day of September, 1974. ROBERT BURGE & CO., Solicitors, 2 O'Connell Street, Sydney, N.S.W. 2000. 3692—\$4