RESEARCH ON JAMES OATLEY

Where was James Oatley born and when?
What was his occupation?
How did he arrive in Australia?
When did he acquire land in the St. George area?
Why was he given a land grant?
What were the names of his children and how are they remembered in the suburb today?
WHAT was erected by the citizens of Oatley for the 150th anniversary of Oatley? Explain its significance.

CONSIDER: What do you think life would have been like as a convict?

How do you think James Oatley would have felt changing from convict to land owner?
Headstone of James Oatley as it was in 1968. The headstone was subsequently restored and placed in the Society’s Museum, Civic Centre, Hurstville.
James Oatley

When James Oatley was committed at Southampton Assizes on March 7, 1814 to transportation for life to Australia, his fate could have been as obscure as many hundreds of other English convicts who were herded for trivial offences out to a strange and unknown land.

At the time of his sentence, he was a little-known watch and clockmaker, living at Stafford, England, married, and 44 years of age. He was fortunate in not only having the stamina to endure the forced living conditions on the convict ships, but also to be able to make a fresh start in this new country, to win the support of important people, and later to obtain land grants which now comprise the thriving domestic suburb south of Sydney which is named after him.

James Oatley arrived in Sydney on the “Marquis of Wellington” on January 27, 1815. History is vague about his offence, but it is known that his wife, Mary, was allowed to travel as a free settler to join him, and she landed in Sydney on June 18, 1815 in the “Northampton”. During the voyage she gave birth to their first son.

Sydney Town could well use his specialised talents, and soon after his arrival he was permitted to set up in business in George Street, on a site opposite the present Town Hall. Governor Macquarie took a personal interest in his work, and commissioned him to make the turret clock in the prisoners’ barracks, a building now in use as law courts but then being constructed by fellow convict and architect Francis Greenway on the corner of King and Macquarie Streets.

For this service, which was completed in June, 1819, Oatley was paid the sum of £75. This was followed by a conditional pardon on October 25, 1821, and subsequent grants of bush lands which were to become important in the later development of the metropolitan area.

While waiting for these grants, he continued his trade, and is reputed to have made at least six grandfather clocks, in addition to other distinctive timepieces of his day.

He settled in 1831 on 175 acres of land in the Hurstville district, on a site designated as adjoining Miller’s and Lee’s farms. Two years later, Governor Bourke honoured a promise made to Oatley as far back as August 15, 1825 by Governor Brisbane, granting a further 300 acres nearby, at an annual rent of £2.10s.

In the Governor’s order dated August 31, 1833, this was described as being in the Parish of St. George, and adjoining a property known as Townsend’s Farm, which had originally been owned by an early pioneer, Captain John Townson. Oatley named this property, “Needwood Forest”.

Oatley added a final 40 acres to his estates in December, 1835, based on an order dated August 5, 1824 under the hand of Governor Brisbane. In addition to retaining his lucrative business in George Street, he had now acquired valuable properties which he developed and farmed. On October 8, 1839 he died and was buried in a family vault on his farm “Snugborough”, located in the Beverley Hills area.

His George Street business and the Needwood Forest passed to a foster son, Frederick Stokes, also known as Frederick Oatley, and who lived between 1819-90. In March, 1881, Frederick Oatley sold the 300 acre grant to Charles Cecil Griffith for subdivision and home building blocks; this land is identified as being partly in present-day Hurstville and Kogarah.

A second son, James, born in 1817, was apprenticed to a coach builder, and subsequently took over the licence of the “Sportsman’s Arms” Hotel at the corner of Pitt and Goulburn Streets, in Sydney.

James Oatley’s grave lay forgotten for many years, and his name stirred few memories. In September, 1904, a local resident, Mary Salmon, recalled that a condition of the sale of Oatley’s farm at Moorfields was that the purchaser would also take over the family sepulches.

An anonymous correspondent of the newspaper, “Truth”, in May, 1921 came up with an intriguing paragraph: “While out for a stroll yesterday, I came across an old grave, near what appears to have been a farm many years ago. This farm is situated in the country between Penshurst and Lakemba. On the slab of stone covering the grave is the following inscription: ‘Sacred to the memory of James Oatley. Obi. October 8th, 1839. Aetat 70 years.’”

Clock No. 16, built by James Oatley in 1822, the property of Mr. W. F. Bradshaw of Woollahra.
A second chance discovery of the stone has ensured its preservation. Mr. W. Sivertsen wrote under the date of March 29, 1925: "On rambling over the Moorefield estate yesterday I noticed a large stone engraved: 'Sacred to the memory of James Oatley. Obit. October 8th, 1839. Aetat 70 years.' It has recently been broken, probably by being dropped where it now lies."

Mr. Sivertsen took the headstone to his home where it remained in a garden shed for 43 years until after his death it passed to the Hurstville Historical Society. An investigation of the family vault made in the intervening years showed that it was empty.

In addition to the headstone and the general name for the suburb, James Oatley is also commemorated in the district by Oatley Bay and Oatley Park.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mr. S. Allen for restoration of the headstone.
Mr. W. F. Bradshaw for the photo of the clock.
Miss M. E. Clark for research work on James Oatley.
Hurstville Municipal Council for the site map.
Royal Australian Historical Society for the grant to produce this brochure.
Mrs. M. Woods, daughter of Mr. W. Sivertsen, for making the headstone available to the Hurstville Historical Society.
SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

DIVISION

2 January 1840

JOHN URQUHART one of the executors named therein (James Cooper, the other executor was not in the Colony of New South Wales at this time)

David died

14 March 1979
In the Name of God Amen I JAMES OATLEY of George Street in the Town of Sydney in the County of Cumberland and Territory of New South Wales Watchmaker being of sound mind and memory by the blessing of God and calling into consideration that it is appointed for all men to die Do hereby make and declare this my last Will and Testament That is to say principally and first of all I GIVE AND recommend my Soul into the merciful hands of my Creator hoping to receive Salvation through the mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ And my Body after my decease I give to the Earth from whence it originally came, therein to be buried in a decent and christian like manner, After which I order that all my just and lawful debts, Funeral expenses Mourning and necessary charges of proving in a legal manner to the World this as my last Will and Testament be in the first place fully and justly paid and satisfied out of my effects After which as touching such Worldly Properties wherewith it hath pleased God to endow me with I give demise bequeath and dispose of the same as follows viz:

FIRST I give and bequeath to my adopted Son JAMES STOKES otherwise commonly and usually called JAMES OATLEY the son of MARY STOKES a native of Birmingham in Warwickshire at the date hereof the wife of CHARLES HOWELL of Sydney Shoemaker a piece or parcel of land or ground containing Forty two perches, or thereabouts a portion of a grant from the Crown to myself lying and situate in the Parish of Saint Lawrence in the Town of Sydney aforesaid, being bounded on the north by Goulburn Street 80 feet 10 inches on the East by Pitt Street 161 feet on the South by a Westerly line of 96 feet 6 inches and on the West by 3 Northerly lines making a Total of 120 feet to the commencing corner in Goulburn Street on which at the date hereof stands erected 3 brick built houses and a weather boarded cottage together with any other building standing thereon at my decease a Drawn Plan of which is hereunto attached marked A

ITEM I further give and bequeath to my said adopted Son JAMES STOKES otherwise JAMES OATLEY aforesaid an Estate of Land containing 280 acres or thereabouts called "Snugborough Park" lying and situate in the Parish of Saint George and County of Cumberland being a consolidation of the following Grants and parts Grants of Land from the Crown to the Individual hereinafter named but the boundaries of which will more fully appear in a Drawn Plan hereunto annexed marked C viz. A Grant of 80 Acres to JOHN LEADBETTER a Grant of 40 acres to CHRISTOPHER COLEMAN Part of a Grant of 100 Acres to WILLIAM LEE and part of a Grant from the Crown to myself of 175 Acres, together with all Buildings etc.
ITEM I Give and Bequeath to my other adopted Son FREDERICK STOKES otherwise commonly and usually called FREDERICK OATLEY and also the son of MARY STOKES hereinbefore particularly described my House and Premises in which I at the date hereof carry on the business as a Watchmaker lying and situate in the Parish of Saint Lawrence in the Town of Sydney aforesaid containing 16 Perches Bounded on the West by George Street bearing South 3°45' East 50 links on the South by No. 14 Allotment bearing East 2° North 202 links on the East by No. 6 Allotment bearing North 4° West 49 links and on the North by No. 12 Allotment bearing West 2° South 203 links agreeable to the description contained in a Deed of Grant dated 11th July 1835 from Sir Richard Bourke, Governor to myself together with all the Stock in Trade of every description, Tools, Household Furniture, Plate and Books which may be in and in the aforesaid Premises on the day of my Decease.

ITEM I further give and bequeath to my said other adopted Son FREDERICK STOKES otherwise FREDERICK OATLEY aforesaid a piece or parcel of land or Ground containing Thirty Three Perches, or thereabouts, a portion of a Grant to myself and A. Adams from the Crown lying and situate in the Parish of Saint Lawrence in the Town of Sydney aforesaid being bounded on the North by Goulburn Street 60 feet 10 inches on the West by Adam's Lane 103 feet on the South by an Easterly line of 72 feet and in the East by 4 Northerly lines making a total of 154 feet 6 in to the commencing corner in Goulburn Street on which at the date hereof stand erected 3 weatherboarded cottages together with any other buildings standing thereon at my decease - A Drawn Plan of which is hereunto annexed marked B

ITEM I further give and bequeath to my last named adopted son FREDERICK STOKES otherwise FREDERICK OATLEY aforesaid a Farm of Land containing 175 Acres or thereabouts situate lying and being in the Parish of Saint George in the County of Cumberland aforesaid consisting of 90 Acres Grant by the Crown to JOHN MILLER, from whom I purchased it and the residue being a portion of 175 Acres before named granted me by the Crown together with all buildings and improvements thereon a Drawn Plan of the boundaries of this Estate is hereunto annexed marked D

ITEM I further give and bequeath to my last named adopted son FREDERICK STOKES otherwise FREDERICK OATLEY aforesaid an Estate of Land named "Needwood Forest" containing 300 Acres more or less, lying and situate in the Parish of Saint George in the County of Cumberland aforesaid Bounded on the South by Georges River and on other sides as described in a Deed of Grant from the Crown to myself the same having been given me by Sir Thomas Brisbane when Governor
I further give and bequeath to my aforesaid two adopted sons
JAMES STOKES otherwise JAMES OATLEY and FREDERICK STOKES otherwise
FREDERICK OATLEY before described the whole of the Cash or Money
I may be possessed of at the date of my decease subject to such
reservations and deductions of legacies and bequests as is herein
heretofore and hereinafter named the Nett Proceeds of which to be
fair and equally divided between them share and share alike.

I further give and bequeath to my aforesaid two adopted sons
JAMES STOKES otherwise JAMES OATLEY and FREDERICK STOKES otherwise
FREDERICK OATLEY before described, the whole of my live Stock
consisting of Horses, Horned Cattle, Sheep, Swine and Poultry in
whatever parts or places in the Colony they may be situated in
ALSO all my Carriages, Waggons, Carts, Implements and Tools of
Husbandry, Harness etc.to be fair and equally divided between them
share and share alike.

I give and bequeath to my lawful wife MARY ANN OATLEY for
her sole use benefit and disposal a Stone built house and Premises
lying and situated in the Parish of St. Lawrence, in the Town of
Sydney aforesaid bounded on the West by Elizabeth Street South
on the North by the Premises of Clarke & Co.in the East by a
stream of water at the date hereof tenanted by Mr. Bates Also
a Farm of Land called "Newton" containing 40 Acres lying and situate
in the Parish of Saint George aforesaid Granted by the Crown to
myself a plan of which is appended marked F Also the whole of the
House hold Furniture, Wearing Apparel Plate and Books which may be
on my Estate named "Snugborough Park" at the date of my decease
(James Oatley)

I give and bequeath to an adopted child ROBERT STOKES
otherwise called ROBERT OATLEY the son of MARY STOKES aforesaid the
sum of One hundred pounds in Money, Fifty Pounds of which to be paid
him by each of my two adopted sons JAMES STOKES otherwise OATLEY
and FREDERICK STOKES otherwise OATLEY Also a suit of Mourning.
And by these presents nominated and appointed
LASTLY I hereby nominate constitute and appoint/my trusty and
beloved friends JOHN URQUHART of George Street Sydney, Coachmaker
and JAMES COOPER son of ROBERT COOPER Senr. of Lake George in the
County of Argyle Grazier Sole Executors to this my Last Will and
Testament hereby working and making Null and void all former or
other Will or Wills which at any time heretofore have been made
by or for me or at my request And I hereby solemnly pronounce and
declare this to be my last Will and Testament

In Witness whereof I the said Testator JAMES OATLEY have to this Instrument in writing
(engrossed on two skins of parchment set my hand and affixed my
seal this twenty fourth day of March in the Year of Our Lord One
thousand eight hundred and thirty seven
Signed Sealed Published and Declared by the within named
JAMES OATLEY as and for his last Will and Testament in the
presence of us the undersigned who at his request and in his
own personal presence have subscribed our names as Witnesses
hereeto the day and year herein written

Capper Pass
Edward Flood
Peter Louis Bernie

CODICIL to this the last Will and Testament of JAMES OATLEY
of Sydney Watchmaker but at the date hereof residing in
"Snugborough Park"

WHEREAS I the said JAMES OATLEY being of perfect sound mind
and memory am desirous that the undermentioned additions and
alterations to my said Will which is dated the twenty fourth
day of March in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred
and thirty seven be made and published FIRST this my most
earnest wish and desire that the various States of Lane houses
and Tenements which I have therein respectively and severally
bequeathed to my two adopted sons JAMES STOKES or as he is
otherwise commonly and usually called JAMES OATLEY and FREDERICK
STOKES or as he is commonly or ususally called FREDERICK OATLEY
shall be not only for the sole use and benefit of themselves but
for each of their heirs or assigns For Ever free of all
Controul by from or under any person or persons whomsoever
AND whereas in consequence of the extreme ill conduct of my wife
MARY ANN OATLEY who absconded from me about eighteen months past
and is at the date hereof living in a state of adultery I hereby
revoke cancel and make null and void a certain bequest made by
me to her in the said Will of an Estate of land called "Newton"
containing forty acres lying and situate in the Parish of
Saint George and County of Cumberland which was granted by the
Crown to me and as to the disposal thereof I give and bequeath
the said Farm or Estate of Land to my adopted son FREDERICK
STOKES or as he otherwise commonly or usually called FREDERICK
OATLEY for the sole use and benefit of himself his Heirs or
Assigns For Ever In Witness whereof I the said JAMES OATLEY
have hereunto set my hand and Seal at "Snugborough Park" this
twenty seventh day of September in the Year of Our Lord one
thousand eight hundred and thirty nine.

JAMES OATLEY

SIGNED sealed published and declare by the said JAMES OATLEY as

aforesaid last Will and Testament in the presence of us,
James Oatley, England

James Oatley was born in Staffordshire about 1770. He married Sarah Bennett at St Martin's Church, Birmingham, on 27 October, 1802. He was described as a watch maker and his bondsman was John Barnes. On 21st of March, 1806, James Oatley aged 35, and John Barnes, aged 33, were found guilty of grand larceny, at Warwickshire, of stealing about a ton weight of cheese, the property of Mr. Robert Proudman of Tamworth, which is about twelve miles from Birmingham. They were sentenced to transportation for seven years. In the same court sitting, the sentence for stealing a petticoat was six months' gaol, for stealing geese or barley was one month and for shoes was one week.

Despite the sentence they were not transported but were immediately removed to the Portland Hulk on Langstone Harbour. This is on the south coast of England Next to Portsmouth Harbour. At that time prisoners awaiting transportation were held on hulls on the Thames or at Portsmouth, wherein both places they provided labour for the dockyards. As James Oatley's sentence was only seven years, it would not have been economical for the government to transport him, as they would have had only a few years' labour from him as a "government servant" in the colony. In October, 1812, both James Oatley and John Barnes received free pardons when representations on their behalf were made to the Prince Regent who was graciously pleased to extend his grace and mercy.

On his release from prison, James Oatley found himself in Portsea in Hampshire. Within twelve months he was in gaol again. By Warrant dated August 21, 1813, at the age of forty three years he was "committed by James Carters and Edward Carters Esquires charged with having privately and feloniously at the Parish of Portsea stolen from out of the Dwelling House of William Loves Esquire, Two bed, the Valance of a window curtain, a pair of glass salts, a tea caddie and others. Value Thirty Pounds his property."

He was held in the gaol at the Castle of Winchester until his trial at the Southampton Lent Circuit, on 10 March, 1814, before Sir John Bayley and Sir Henry Dampier. The charge was larceny above two pounds in a dwelling house, and James Oatley pleaded not guilty. The indictment was that "James Oatley, late of the Parish of Portsea in the Count of Southampton, labourer, on the nineteenth day of April in the fifty third year of the Reign of our
on his release from prison, Oatley took his abode in Portsea in Hampshire. Within twelve months he was in gaol again. By Warrant dated August 21, 1813, at the age of forty three years he was "committed by James Carters and Edward Carters Esquires charged with having privately and feloniously at the Parish of Portsea stolen from out of the Dwelling House of William Loves Esquire, two bed, the Valance of a window curtain, a pair of glass salts, a tea caddie and others. Value Thirty Pounds his property."

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The total value of the goods was sixteen pounds five shillings and sixpence and no goods were present in the Court. The witnesses at the hearing were the Rev. Thomas Beckley, Thos. Hill, David Lazarus and George Sutton. He was found guilty, and the sentence was death—but he was reprieved, to be transported beyond the seas for the term of his natural life.

James Oatley remained in Winchester Gaol for almost six months when he sailed from England forever on the "Marquis of Wellington" on 1st of September, 1814.
Oatley Outward Bound with trust fund

The Oatley 150th anniversary celebrations last year were so successful that $9500 raised will be used to benefit Oatley youth.

The anniversary celebrations extended over several weeks and culminated in the Oatley festival on October 29.

A total of $40,250 was raised by the organising committee, headed by Alec Leach.

Of this, $24,500 went to Kogarah Council to build the memorial clock in Oatley shopping centre and provide for its maintenance.

The committee also financed the preparation of a book, Oatley Writes, and this cost $6250.

The book was written by Oatley residents and edited by students and tutors at the St George Institute of Advanced Education, Oatley.

Proceeds of the sale of the book will benefit local community projects undertaken by Oatley Lions.

After all pay-outs the organising committee had a surplus of $9500, and with this a trust is to be set up and administered by the Lions Club of Oatley.

Income from the trust will be used to send an Oatley boy or girl each year on an Outward Bound course.

"This will be a perpetual memory of Oatley's 150th anniversary," Mr Leach said.

In the committee's income there were donations of about $4500, mostly of amounts ranging from $100 to $2.

Most of the other money came from the proceeds on the festival day and the sale of souvenirs, including specially inscribed clocks.

About $3000 was raised from the sale of more than 7000 first day postal covers.

"The committee thanks the Oatley community for its generosity in establishing a true memorial to James Oatley," Mr Leach said.

THE CLOCK in Oatley shopping centre stands as a memorial to the colony's first clockmaker who gave his name to the suburb.
CONCERTS WITH THE CONVICTS ON SUNDAYS AT THE BARRACKS

ALL THROUGH November and early December, the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences will be running a series of concerts on Sundays, at 6 pm, in the Hyde Park Barracks.

Since the late seventies, the Barracks (the large, light-toned brick building next door to the Mint, on Macquarie Street) has gradually been restored. In June next year the building will be opened as a museum of social history. At present the Barracks are quite bare inside — just the shell of the original structure.

Rosanne Hunt, assistant publicity officer for the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences said: "The idea of the concert series is to give people a look at the building in its raw state, before it is turned into a museum, and to entertain them at the same time."

The Barracks building is widely regarded as one of Sydney's finest examples of colonial architecture. It opened on June 4, 1819. The building was designed by Francis Greenway to house convicts, who worked around Sydney on the public works gangs. At times the building housed incredibly up to 750 convicts, who slept in hammocks slung side by side, completely filling all three stories.

"It's quite ironic actually," Robert Barton, the assistant curator, said. "Francis Greenway was a convict himself originally — sent out here for forgery. Now he's on the $10 note."

The barracks was built from pink convict-made, sandstone bricks. Many of the original ironbark beams and floorboards are still serviceable and have been retained in the restoration. The interior walls have been painted cream, in keeping with the original tone.

"It's a fairly stark, severe-looking building really — I once heard it described as a big, handsome barn. I think that's quite apt," Barton said.

"The imposing black and gold clock, at the front of the building, was a gift from George IV to the infant colony. It is the oldest surviving public clock in Australia."

"The man who installed it, James Oatley, was sent out here for stealing two feather beds," Barton said. "He's the Oatley the suburb was named after."

When transportation was stopped in 1848, the Barracks served for a time as a refuge for destitute women. Later it became a psychiatric institution (there is still a sign inside, on one wall, pointing to the office of the Master of Lunacy) and finally, after 1888, it was converted into law courts.

The concerts — there will be five — will be held on the top floor of the Barracks, where the rooms are the closest to their original state.

The first Sunday is a family night, with medieval and traditional songs. Electric guitars, flutes and saxophones will be combined with lutes, bazoukis, tambourines and dulcimers, in what promises to be an interesting mix of instruments.

Children are especially invited to participate.

A concert by the Don Burrows Jazz Trio on the following Sunday (Nov 13) is already sold-out; but there are still tickets for the last three Sunday concerts.

On November 20 the Ensemble De La Reine presents Baroque music — illustrating the expressive tones of the Viola Da Gamba — accompanied by the Early Dance Consort who will melt in the heat as they perform in full baroque costume.

The University of NSW Ensemble will perform on November 27 with a program including Mozart's Clarinet Quintet and works by Rossini, Schubert and Ginastera; while on the final Sunday (Dec 4) the Conservatorium Chamber Choir will sing pieces from medieval to modern times, including a selection of Christmas carols.

After each concert, supper will be served on the ground floor. For more information phone the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences on 217 0111.

Andrew Schiller
SHIP NEWS
Yesterday arrived the transport ship Marquis Wellington, Capt. Betham, with 199 male prisoners, under guard of a detachment of the 46th Regt. commanded by Lieutenant Nunn. She left England the 1st of September; touched at Madeira, and afterwards at Rio de Janeiro, which she left the 29th of November, after a three weeks stay.
James Oatley was on this ship.

SHIP NEWS---The ship Northampton, Captain Tween, arrived from England on Sunday with 106 female prisoners, having lost 4 of her original complement during the voyage; namely Eliz. Cowan, and Ann Turner, at Rio; the latter of whom fell overboard and was drowned; Susan Frost died at sea after leaving Rio; and Mrs. Shirwell died a fortnight before the vessel's arrival at this Port. Mrs. Dudman, a free passenger and her two children, were buried at Rio; Mrs. Noble lost one child, Mrs. Drake two, and Mrs. Higgins one. The prisoners were landed yesterday morning, and appear all to be very healthy, and well satisfied at their usage during the passage. A number of free women have also arrived, some of whom have families, to join their husbands.
James Oatley's wife was on this ship.
OATLEY TOWN CLOCK DONOR LIST

Thanks to the Oatley Community for helping in many ways to organise, assist and support the celebrations.

Oatley's Town Clock will have a special meaning to many. These are the people who have supported the concept, offered assistance to raise money in the many entertaining ways and of the generous donations received.

To make a special mention of any particular person or group would be unfair. These celebrations could be compared with a Defiance excellence, for every one person seen helping ten others are in the background out of sight.

Alphabetically listed are the groups and individuals who made a donation of $20 or more.

Georges River Ferry Co.
Harrisdale Pharmacy
Oatley Bowling Amateur Wine Bertling Club
1st Oatley Bay Sea Scouts
Oatley Catering Centre
Oatley Horsewomen's Club
Oatley West Public School
St. George Institute of Education Staff and Friends
St. Joseph's School Oatley
St. Joseph's Oatley Playgroup
Southside Montessori
Yellow Band Bus Service

Adams, Mrs E
Adam, Mrs friend of
Adams, Janine & D
Adams, Mrs Elizabeth
Adams, Mrs Asher
Adams, George & Ephraim
Adams, Mrs Elizabeth (Rees)
Adams, Mr & Mrs George
Adams, Mr & Mrs Gordon
Adey, Mrs 
Adams, Mrs Eileen
Adams, Mrs Eileen
Adams, Ashley & Tony
Adams, George & Ephraim
Adams, Mrs Elizabeth (Rees)
Adams, Mr & Mrs George
Adams, Mr & Mrs Gordon
Adey, Mrs
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Adams, George & Ephraim
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Adams, Ashley & Tony
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THE DESIGN OF OATLEY’S TOWN CLOCK

Mr Clive Stevens, architect, was born in Oatley, lived his childhood in the suburb and now resides at Cronulla. He designed the Oatley Uniting Church situated on the corner of Leititia and Frederick Streets.

When Mr Stevens designed Oatley’s Town Clock his main inspiration came from analysing the history of James Oatley. From this he has endeavoured to capture some of his character in the clock.

This can be explained when looking towards the front of the clock, reading the inscription “James Oatley Colonial Clockmaker 1769-1839”.

Half bricks can be seen protruding from the tower spaced across the front rising vertically to the level of the memorial stone. This represents symbolic bars a token of his time spent in gaol as a convict.

At the memorial stone level he was granted his freedom and from there upwards he continued his clockmaking, depicted by the four sided roman numeral faces of the clock.

The cast lace panel to the chiming outlet has been used as a frame of reference to the 19th century.

From there he looked to the future where the top of the tower angles away.

As Mr Stevens said when discussing the final draft with committee he couldn’t design a town clock for Oatley without inspiration.

James Oatley provided him with that.

Our thanks again to Clive for a pleasing and thoughtful design.

The Committee of the 150th Anniversary of Oatley Celebrations on behalf of the Oatley citizens.

150th ANNIVERSARY OF OATLEY COMMITTEE

Co-ordinator: Alec Leach
Committee: Beryl Butters
June Leach
Philip White (Oatley Lions Club)
Russell Marsh
George Kendall
Ken Warren (Oatley Lions Club)

THE CONSTRUCTION OF OATLEY’S TOWN CLOCK

The idea of Oatley’s Town Clock was conceived by Mr Alec Leach who called a public meeting in November 1981 to plan celebrations for the 150th Anniversary of Oatley.

In early 1983 students of the University of N.S.W. School of Architecture, led by Mr Clive Stevens, accepted an assignment to design Oatley’s Town Clock. From nearly forty designs seven were selected for final consideration. Mr Stevens drew the final design.

Preliminary work began in mid-August 1983 and on 31st August 1983, 150 years after James Oatley was granted its original deed, the site for the clock was marked out.

Kogarah Municipal Council Services, co-ordinated by the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, Mr Geoff Lawless, worked in close harmony with all concerned during the planning and building of the clock.

Brickwork was carried out by the students from the pre-apprentice school in Bricklaying at Miller Technical College whose Principal, Mr Ron Wilkins, consented to Mr Peter Hemmings and Noel Shields leading the boys to construct the clock tower. Their job began from assembling the reinforcing rods, pouring the foundations, building the tower to general overseer.

Two sandstone memorial stones, the one at the front with the inscription; James Oatley Colonial Clockmaker 1769-1839, the other at the rear reading; ERECTED BY THE COMMUNITY OF OATLEY DEDICATED BY ROBERT OATLEY 29TH OCTOBER, 1983 were obtained from Gosford Quarries.

Simplex International constructed and installed the clock mechanism. This consists of four Roman numeral 30” diameter faces, driven by a Model 2350 Master Time Control System. Provision in this system allows chimes to be installed later.

The four faces of the clock are back-lit with fluorescent lighting to eliminate shadows and are connected to the street lighting circuit.

Wiring within the tower was undertaken by the Gymea Technical College. The roof was fabricated at the Miller Technical College, sheathed with the copper cladding, transported to the site and positioned.

Costs for construction of the clock totalled $15,000. An additional $2,000 was lodged with Kogarah Municipal Council so that the interest from the principal will maintain the clock.

The services of everyone who participated in this project are appreciated by the community of Oatley.