

<i>Month &amp; Year of Topic</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Written &amp; Spoken Presenters</i>
August 2007	<b>Oatley Park</b>	Joyce Marks. Bill Stewart. Dorothy (Mallard) Walker. Ray Stevens.
	Two Poems by Joy (Auld) McMillan.	

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OATLEY HERITAGE GROUP

MEETING DATE: 31st AUGUST 2007

TOPIC: OATLEY PARK

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PAPERS BY:

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# OATLEY PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A HURSTVILLE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEMBERS OF RECONSTITUTED COMMITTEE 1983



RATEPAYER REPRESENTATIVES:

Mr Alan CUTHBERTSON,  
121B Myall Street,  
OATLEY. 2223. 572305.

Mrs Tricia KOFFEL,  
4 Dame Mary Gilmore Road,  
OATLEY. 2223. 5795661.

Mr Keith UNDERWOOD,  
48 Oatley Park Avenue,  
OATLEY. 2223. 5701149.

(HURSTVILLE)  
COUNCIL

H.M.C. DELEGATES:

Ald. Mrs Joan LOEW,  
44 Baker Street,  
OATLEY. 2223. 577479.

Ald. Julian SHEEN,  
40 Woronora Parade,  
OATLEY. 2223. 5792746.


CHAIRMAN: J. Sheen  
DEPUTY: G. Quint  
SECRETARY/TREASURER: r.Koffel

# OATLEY PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A HURSTVILLE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEMBERS OF RECONSTITUTED COMMITTEE 1983

## GROUPS' REPRESENTATIVES:



Mrs Val ARGALL,  
6 Dame Mary Gilmore Road, (Flora & Fauna)  
OATLEY. 2223. 5791874.  
( O.F.F. )

Mr John BLACKER,  
110 Woronora Parade, (Flora & Fauna)  
OATLEY. 2223. 5795356.  
( O.F.F. )

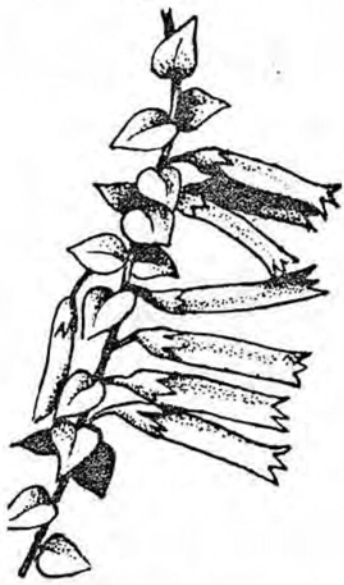
Mrs Jean BURG,  
40A Lansdowne Parade,  
OATLEY. 2223. 5702942. (Jewfish Point)

Mr Graham JOHNSTON,  
14/43 Ocean Street,  
PENSHURST. 2222. 5705053. (All Saints)

Mr Graham QUINT,  
16 Evans Street,  
PEASHURST. 2210. 5303239. (L.K.B.)  
(LIME KILN BAY)

Mr Ron STEVENS,  
36 Glen Road,  
OATLEY. 2223. 5793496. (Swimming Club)

Mr Terry WALKER,  
42 Glen Road,  
OATLEY. 2223. 5701748. (Water Activities)



# OATLEY PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A HURSTVILLE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD TUESDAY, 11TH OCTOBER, 1983,  
AT OATLEY WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL.

Meeting commenced 7.40 p.m.

PRESENT: V. Argall, J. Blacker, A. Cuthbertson, G. Johnston,  
T. Koffel, Ald. J. Loew, G. Quint, R. Stevens,  
T. Walker, K. Underwood.

APOLOGIES: Ald. D. Swanton.

The Minutes of the August Meeting were confirmed.

TREASURERS REPORT:

Bank Balance as at 11.10.83 is \$112.79.

Secretary's expenses :: 33 telephone calls and 3 postage stamps. It was agreed that the Secretary should be reimbursed 20c per telephone call.

Secretary's expenses to 11.10.83 - \$7.41.

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. H.M.C.: Bush Regeneration Programme - May Report.
2. H.M.C. : Request for Permission to sell Ice Cream.
3. H.M.C. : Horse Riding on Oatley Park Oval.
4. H.M.C. : Installation of Additional 'Anti-Litter' Signs in Oatley Park.
5. H.M.C. : G.R.W.A.T.C. - Use of Oatley Park Baths 1983/84 Summer Season.
6. H.M.C. : National Trust Bush Regeneration Reports - Back Copies.
7. Willoughby Municipal Council : Speed Humps.
8. Lane Cove Municipal Council : Speed Humps.
9. Canterbury Municipal Council : Speed Humps.
10. H.M.C. : Election of Delegates - O.P.A.C.

BUSINESS ARISING:

1. New chairman of this Committee - Ald. J. Loew. Deputy Chairman - J. Blacker.
2. National Trust Regeneration Programme Report of May, 1983, was read. The Committee noted the pleasing results of the programme.
3. It was decided to sent separate copies of O.P.A.C. minutes to Peakhurst Ward Aldermen, Messrs Benn, Pickering and Simpson, and to Penshurst Ward Aldermen, Mr Dearing and Miss Ficarro. Letter also to be sent to newly elected aldermen explaining role of this Committee and its members.
3. Items from O.P.A.C. to be referred to Mr Little, Deputy Engineer, as the Community Services and Environment Committee of H.M.C. no longer exists.
4. Speed Humps - Secretary to write to Traffic Authority of N.S.W. for a copy of the manual on traffic speed control devices.
5. It was decided to endorse Council's decision on not approving an application by a vendor to sell ice cream. The Committee also decided to recommend to Council that a kiosk was not needed in Oatley Park.
6. The Committee decided that there was no need for additional anti-litter signs but rather more signs on existing bins and more frequent emptying of existing bins. It was decided to recommend to Council to investigate whether more bins are needed in Oatley Park.

# OATLEY PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A HURSTVILLE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## MINUTES OF OCTOBER MEETING CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

7. G.R.W.A.T.C. : T. Walker showed Committee members the plan for the floating lock-up boat shed to be used on Saturdays. Cost is \$20,000 with half of this amount to be raised by the G.R.W.A.T.C. and the other half by the grant from the Department of Leisure, Sport and Tourism. Dimensions of shed - 24 ft x 12 ft x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$  ft high. Mr Walker reported that youths were driving speed boats into the swimming net at the baths on the weekends. Ald. Loew offered to follow up this complaint.

8. Hand clearing in Oatley Park - National Trust Bush Regeneration Team would work with Council in clearing areas A and B. The work at the bottom of Dame Mary Gilmore Road by L.K.B. members and local residents was continuing. L.K.B. had written to gain permission to burn the collected timber and then redistribute the ashes over the hand-cleared areas. Before this could be carried out, persons unknown had set fire to the collected timber on the October long weekend. G. Quint reported that Council had already removed piles of collected excess timber and that the hop bush was being removed and then shredded and then spread over the cleared areas.

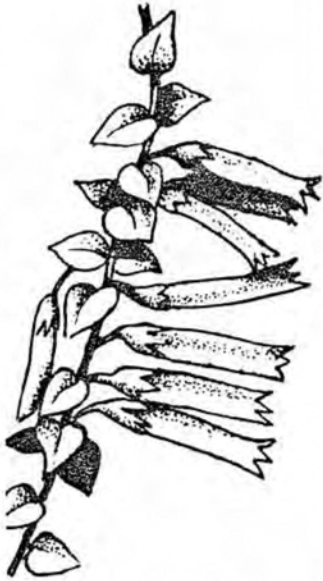
### GENERAL BUSINESS:

1. J. Blacker asked whether the Job Creation Programme could be utilised in Hurstville Municipality by tree planting in Oatley Park and other park areas.
2. Ald. Loew reported that, prior to the municipal elections, Council had approved the need for improvements to toilets and showers in Oatley Park and that Council should employ a tiler and bricklayer.

Meeting closed at 8.55 p.m.

NEXT MEETING : TUESDAY, 8TH NOVEMBER, 1983, at 7.30 p.m.  
in the Oatley West School Library.

Tricia Koffel  
Secretary.





# OATLEY PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A HURSTVILLE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD TUESDAY, 13TH DECEMBER, 1983,  
AT OATLEY WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL

Meeting commenced 7.40 p.m.

PRESENT: V. Argall, J. Blacker, J. Burg, A. Cuthbertson,  
G. Johnston, G. Quint, T. Walker.

APOLOGIES: T. Koffel, Ald. J. Loew.

The Minutes of the November meeting were confirmed.

## Arising from the Minutes

1. John Blacker on behalf of Ald. Loew, reported that an application had been made by H.M.C. for a grant to upgrade toilet facilities in Oatley Park.
2. Graham Quint advised that hand clearing by L.K.B.P.S. members at Dame Mary Gilmore Road, will continue for the next three months.
3. John Blacker reported re motion to disband OPAC which was debated at the Council meeting on 9th November, 1983. He also advised that Council had allocated funds for 1984 for the National Trust bush regeneration programme.

## CORRESPONDENCE

1. H.M.C. Re provision of anti-litter stickers on existing bins and provision of additional bins. Also investigation of container-type bins in Oatley Park.  
Council's action appreciated by OPAC.
2. H.M.C. Re tenders to be called for mobile kiosks in Oatley Park.  
H.M.C. to be thanked for information and advised that OPAC is concerned about the traffic hazards which may be created.
3. Commonwealth Bank statement dated 5th December, 1983. Bank balance - \$102.58. Received and noted.
4. H.M.C. Re cleanup of Oatley Park by 2nd Mortdale Scout Group.  
Received and noted.
5. Traffic Authority of N.S.W. Two publications:-  
(a) Provisional Guidelines for Local Area Traffic Management.  
(b) Policy and Guidelines for Traffic Generating Developments.  
Graham Johnston to read publications and report to OPAC re speed humps.

2.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Reference was made to electrical work being carried out near the baths. Information was sought as to whether the work was to improve security and to reduce vandalism around the baths.
2. As suggested by Ald. Loew, through John Blacker, it was decided to contact Willoughby Municipal Council to arrange an inspection in early March, by OPAC and Aldermen of H.M.C., of bushland regeneration in that municipality, followed by an inspection of Oatley Park.
3. Reference was made to the need for improved lighting at the oval.
4. OPAC to investigate the possible fencing off with single strand wire of specific parts of Oatley Park so that bush regeneration can occur.
5. It was decided to seek advice re safety problems concerning bicycles in Oatley Park, and to invite representatives of the St. George Bicycle Club to the next meeting in February, 1984.
6. It was resolved that a Christmas card be sent to Julian Sheen thanking him for his support and assistance over the past six years.

Meeting closed at 8.35 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, 14TH FEBRUARY, 1984, AT 7.30 P.M.  
in the Oatley West School Library.

Val Argall  
Acting Secretary.



# OATLEY PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A HURSTVILLE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD  
TUESDAY, 12TH JUNE, 1984, AT  
THE OATLEY WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL.

Meeting commenced at 7.45 p.m.

PRESENT: V. Argall, J. Blacker, J. Burg, A. Cuthbertson,  
G. Johnston, T. Koffel, R. Stevens, K. Underwood,  
Ald. J. Loew, Ald. R. Dearing.

APOLOGIES: G. Quint.

The Minutes of the April Meeting were confirmed.

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. H.M.C. : Mobile Kiosks in Oatley Park.
2. H.M.C. : National Trust Regeneration School in Oatley Park.
3. Telephone calls - i. from Jim Mason re the recommendations made by this Committee in the February meeting.  
ii. from a student re when H.M.C. would be clearing bushland behind the Oatley Bowling Club by using the Bradley Method.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Secretary's expenses for postage \$7.90. Passed for payment.

MOTION ON NOTICE:

- \* The motion for the dissolution of the Committee was moved formally by J. Blacker and J. Burg.  
There was discussion of the motion. A letter from G. Quint was tabled and discussed.  
The motion was put and carried unanimously by the Committee.

The following statement was endorsed unanimously by the Committee :

"It is most regrettable that, despite the persistent efforts and goodwill of the Committee, its role appears to have been so down-graded that its further operation appears pointless.

It is puzzling to have a Committee established on the initiative of Hurstville Municipal Council which is finally disbanding through lack of Council support. In retrospect we believe that the Committee's role was never properly defined. Nor was its access to information and the decision-making process in Council ever formalised.

Serving on an advisory committee whose advice appeared unwelcome and whose operation was so restricted has been extremely frustrating



# OATLEY PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A HURSTVILLE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

June Meeting Minutes Continued

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for all Committee members. It is obvious from our experience that this Committee was not a successful avenue for resident participation. We believe that a reformed liaison group of the various community bodies interested in Oatley Park would be a more effective organisation for advising Hurstville Municipal Council of the views of the community in regard to Oatley Park."

Copies of this statement will be sent to the Town Clerk, the community groups with representatives on the Committee and 'The Leader'.

It was decided that the Committee's files should be given to Hurstville Municipal Library so that they could be made available for public scrutiny.

The Secretary will contact the Town Clerk to make all necessary final arrangements for the dissolution of the Committee.

Meeting closed 8.15 p.m.

Tricia Koffel  
Secretary

Mrs Tricia Koffel,  
Secretary,  
Oatley Park Advisory Committee,  
Dame Mary Gilmore Road,  
OATLEY 2223.

16 Evans Street,  
Peakhurst. 2210.  
11th June, 1984.

Dear Tricia,

Thank you for the last Committee Newsletter advising that a motion disbanding the Committee has been placed on the Agenda for the June meeting.

Unfortunately I will be unable to attend the meeting as I have had to replace Ev Hickey as a speaker at the Friends of the Botanic Gardens talk on the same evening.

However, I would appreciate your tabling of this letter at the Committee meeting and the recording in your Minutes of my support for disbandment of the Committee.

Please also pass on to the other Committee Members my best wishes and an invitation to continue the liaison which was the most fruitful aspect of the Committee's operation.

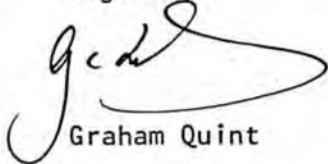
It is most regrettable that despite the persistent efforts and goodwill of the Committee its role appears to have been so downgraded that its further operation appears pointless.

It is puzzling to have a Committee established on the initiative of Hurstville Municipal Council finally disbanding through lack of Council support. In retrospect I believe that the Committee's role was never properly defined. Nor was its access to information and the decision-making process in the Council ever formalised.

Serving on an advisory committee whose advice appeared unwelcome and whose operation was so restricted has been extremely frustrating.

I believe that a reformed liaison group of the various community bodies interested in Oatley Park would be a much more effective organisation for advising Hurstville Municipal Council of the views of the Community in regard to Oatley Park.

Regards,

  
Graham Quint

*Living Memories of Oatley Park*  
*Compiled by*  
**THE OATLEY HERITAGE GROUP**

*Presented to the Oatley Heritage Group's quarterly meeting Friday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2007.*

Many publications have been written about Oatley Park. It is not the intention of this Group to reproduce them. To familiarise folk who are not aware of the Park or its history it is intended to briefly mention some historical facts and list publications which detail specific topics.

It is hoped that member's reports giving personal memories of their association with the Park will make our contribution about Oatley Park different.

Oatley Park, then Peakhurst Park was proclaimed on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 1888. In 1922 it was changed to Oatley Park with a total of 112 acres. (45ha)

The depression years saw major improvements to the walking tracks roads and the building of the Castle, it being a feature in the picnic area above the Swimming Bathes.

In 1927 the Oatley Swimming Club was established and is still active today.

Cycling races were held within the Park; however at this stage our Group has not been able to establish further details.

During World War11 the Park was occupied by The Royal Australian Engineers from Mid 1942 until the end of October 1943. They consisted of the 26<sup>th</sup> Field Company and the 12<sup>th</sup> Field Company R.A.E.

Oatley people associate the Park's occupation by being soldiers from Tasmania. They made up the 12<sup>th</sup> Field Company. However, the 26<sup>th</sup> Field Company, who previously were encamped at Carrs Park was made up of local men.

Ray Stevens, one of our members was with the 26<sup>th</sup> Field Company.

They were preparing to go to New Guinea and at the same time in training were responsible for the defence of the coastline from Maroubra to Wollongong.

Oatley people warmed to the soldiers and showed their hospitality by opening up their homes to the men who were so far from home.

It is hoped this introduction gives an insight into why to the Oatley people; Oatley Park is not just a Park but a place with living memories.

As with many publications there is only a limited number printed. Although these publications are listed they may only be available from the local libraries.

*JUBILEE HISTORY OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF HURSTVILLE 1887 - 1937*

*OATLEY PARK: Alan Fairley for Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society.*

*OATLEY AMATEUR SWIMMING CLUB HISTORY 1927 – 1982 by Ray Stevens*

*OATLEY AMATEUR SWIMMING CLUB 70<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary 1927 – 1997: Oatley Swimming Club.*

*THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS IN OATLEY PARK. 1942 TO 1943.*

*Hazel Blair and June Lane for Hurstville Historical Society.*

*OATLEY the working man's paradise Elaine Howard*

*OATLEY IN EARLY DAYS: D.J. Hatton for Hurstville Historical Society*

*OATLEY WRITES: A Souvenir Publication of Oatley's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1833 – 1983.*

*Pictorial memories ST. GEORGE. Rockdale, Kogarah, Hurstville: Joan Lawrence.*

## OATLEY PARK

### A Bibliography of its use

Oatley Heritage Group, in its Vol. 5, has a report on OATLEY PARK CENTENARY 1988 by the Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society  
It records that the Park was dedicated on 25 March 1887 and proclaimed on 29 May 1888.  
The land was originally two grants to Donnelly Fisher and John William Alec White.  
It was first named Penshurst Park, and changed to Oatley Park on 23 June 1922.  
Mortdale P. & C. Association applied for a Bath Site in December 1919.  
The Oatley Swimming Club was formed in 1929.  
The present Pool dates from 1935.

The Royal Australian Engineers in Oatley Park 1942 to 1943, by Hazel Blair and June Lane. Published by Hurstville Historical Society 1992 ISBN 0 949733 17 2 Cost \$2.50

Hurstville City Council Community Report 2001 Cover shows pictures of children in the Park on front and back. It is entitled Play Oatley Park 2001. In a list of sporting facilities, The Council lists, Oatley Park Oval - Cricket and Rugby, and Oatley Park Tidal Baths - Swimming

The Hurstville Story, A History of the Hurstville Municipality 1887-1987, by Pedr Davis P. 178 Oatley Park comprises 45 hectares. It was proclaimed in May 1888, as Penshurst Park. Hurstville Council was appointed trustee in 1908.

The date the baths were built is not recorded, but they were in use in 1919.

There are photos of the baths and the Kiosk in the 1930s on pp 181 and 182.

Oatley Writes contains a section. Poems from Three Generations. Two poems on Oatley Park are included, one by Laura Partlett (p.47) and one by Heath Vincent, a pupil of Oatley West Public School.

It reprints articles from the local historical societies. L. K. Stevens of Hurstville Historical Society wrote in their Newsletter, of June 1975, describing the improvements made under the Unemployment Relief Scheme during the Great Depression  
Colleen McEwen, of Kogarah Historical Society wrote in their Newsletter of February 1974, about the work of the West Oatley Progress Association, renaming Park Road as Dame Mary Gilmore Road and the placing "A seat for tired people" in her honour.

Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society are well represented in the Library catalogue for their work in listing and preserving the elements of the Park.

So this short bibliography will reveal the use of the Park for sport and recreation, for study and for shelter in time of war besides the enjoyment of its space, tranquility and beauty.

*B. Goodger*  
30-8-07

Alec. a lot of imp' for the  
next meeting "Dalley Park"

I joined the Army in 1942  
& my first posting was to  
Narrow Rd Besley. to a  
"Camp Staff" as it was called.

We had to bring a  
Brigade up from Tasmania  
(over 1,000 men) & they were  
put under canvas on the  
Creech pitch near the entrance  
at Dalley Park.

They came up in  
companies of about 100. We  
fed clothed & saw to their  
daily needs before they went on  
to a Jungle Training Camp in  
Old then on to New Guinea -  
took us over 12 months

then I was treated on to  
" bigger & better things in  
my Army career.

This may fill in a  
few lines to help you in  
your research.

See you . June around  
Joyce Martas

## ELAEOCARPUS RETICULATUS - BLUEBERRY ASH

(Laurel like leaves slightly toothed and delicately fringed flowers which peak mid November and last about 2 weeks)

By Vincent Serventy

"One of the most attractive trees of the moist forests of eastern Australia is the Blueberry Ash.

Each blossom, usually snowy but occasionally pink, has the appearance of a tiny ballerina with a fringed skirt. The flowers grow in rows along the stems and when seen at night look like a line of dancers. They develop into striking blue fruits almost as attractive as the flowers."

### A DECADE OF OBSERVATIONS 1996 - 2006

For over 40 years I have been an admirer of the Flora in Oatley Park, particularly the Eucalypts, Acacias, Christmas Trees and the Flannel Flowers.

The year 1996 will long live in my memory. During that year I experienced several sightings of a kangaroo and one wallaby. But in particular I started to be aware of the Blueberry Ash and I would like to share my subsequent amateurish observations.

In November 1996 I could not help but notice and admire the magnificent clusters of the white bell shaped delicately fringed petals on the trees I now know as Blueberry Ash. These trees are enhanced by random red leaves and are most spectacular in the early morning sunlight when moist with dew.

I now regularly observe these trees with anticipation.

All the trees do not flower every year and those that do have varying crops from season to season. It would appear that climatic conditions play a vital role in the welfare of the Blueberry Ash. The flowering in 1997 and 1998 was only mediocre.

There was another excellent display in November 1999 so I set about counting the trees in flower that I could see from the sealed roads, the number was 500.

In November 2000 and 2001, I estimated the display was only about 30% of that in 1999. In 2002 my estimate was down to 5% probably due to the very dry season. The trees that did flower only produced a small number of petals. Likewise there were very few petals on the Christmas Trees and most of the flannel flowers shrivelled up.

I was rewarded again in November 2003 when there was another magnificent display of the Blueberry Ash in flower so I set about another count. In the same area as 1999 the number increased by 300 to 800. I then added the number I could see from the main walking tracks, which was 450 making the total 1,250. The petals are mainly white. The total number counted included 5 with pink petals and I think 3 of these were planted by the council.

Blueberry Ash trees planted by the council in areas outside the park are predominantly pink.

The trees are easy to count when in flower. Where a cluster of trees appear to emanate from the same root system, I count these as one.

The petals peak during mid November and last about 2 weeks. In December the berries start to develop and change colour from white to green. By January the berries are fully-grown and in February change colour to dark blue. The berries usually last throughout the winter (sometimes longer) and then turn to brown and shrivel up during the spring and drop off. The new season buds start to appear in September.

On rare occasions I have seen small flocks of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos feasting on the berries, usually in February and March.

I have also noticed that a few trees die every year and they do not survive after fire.

It is not uncommon for a tree to die after a magnificent flowering the previous season.

However it is pleasing to note that my counts seem to indicate the trees are multiplying. I estimate there would be at least 3,000 trees in the park.

Several trees died in 2004 probably due to the drought and sadly a few near Webster's Lookout were vandalised.

In November 2004 I could only find 13 trees in flower; two with white petals and 11 with pink petals. The least flowering since 1996. The two trees with white petals were inconspicuous with flowering on only one or two branches. The 11 trees with pink petals were magnificent. These were near the Rangers Hut and would have been planted by the council.

November 2005 was another mediocre season. I estimated 60% of the trees flowered and of those only about 30% produced a good crop of flowers. The tree I chose to have had the best display died suddenly early in 2006. It was near Webster's Lookout.

The year 2006 was a dismal failure for the Blueberry Ash trees in Oatley Park. The pink varieties near the Rangers Hut had only a mediocre flowering during November but there was **not one** white petal to be seen. Several trees died during the year.

Hopefully the display in 2007 will be comparable to that in 1996 and 2003.

Bill Stewart

9 December 2006

### **My Memories of Oatley Park 1923—2007**

Dorothy Walker nee Mallard.

7 Marine Drive, Oatley.

My parents built a home at 8 Douglas Haig St. Oatley in 1923. I was one year old, Dad had lived in Mortdale and had grown up loving Oatley Park and the Georges River area. He was elected as an alderman in Hurstville Council in 1925 and was always on call from people with blocked or overflowing drains. Oatley had very few bitumen roads in those days. In Lloyd St. the one behind my home in Douglas Haig St, many Ex-servicemen purchased a house and land, on the south side, between Gungahbay Rd. and Short St. financed through the War Service Homes Dept. It was locally and popularly called The Soldiers Settlement. Everybody was very friendly and helpful in those days—if there was a bushfire in the park—all who could, would go to help fight the blaze. Nearly all the children became members of the Oatley Swimming Club and were soon joined by others from Mortdale and Oatley East. Races were held each Sunday when tides were high enough, and through the years, picnics were often held at Stanwell Park. Many people of the area have made friendships and partners over the years. When the Park was being improved during the Big Depression, my Dad was still an Alderman with Mr Fred Walker, Mr Christianson, Mr Hill and I think I remember Mr Webster was the Engineer. The names of some of these men are commemorated in names of the lookouts and roads in the park. To name one or two there is Mallard Drive, Christianson Crescent, Walkers Promenade (his name was removed from the walkway along the pathway at the swimming baths) but Webster's and Hill's Lookout still remain.

#### **Re the Army in the Park**

We had no trouble with the Tasmanian soldiers who were camped in the park early in the WW2. There were not many young girls in the area but a few of us were taken to the pictures at Mortdale and I think a small number eventually married some of the soldiers. They were very respectful young men in the camp and were followed by some of our own Aussie boys later.

Jack and I look at Oatley Park and Baths every day from our home and have great memories of our children and their children swimming in the races.

OATLEY PARK - FUN & GAMES

RAY STEVENS

Plenty has been written about the Flora & Fauna of the Park, but what is not known, who uses the Park!

The Park was officially taken over by Hurstville Council in 1888 and amenities have been built over the years.

FISHING - The first users would have been aborigines for fishing and living in the caves. However, conditions are not good, the water is too shallow, but there is a continual presence of hope by fishermen who come here. The most enthusiastic are Chinese people and children getting their first fishing rod for Xmas. (I say the best of luck to them all.)

WALKING - The greatest number would be walkers. After the mothers deliver the kids to school, it is surprising how many continue to walk around the park and then, the large number of locals walking their dogs.

SWIMMING CLUB - The original baths were built about 1924 and in 1926, the swimming club was formed. It was the earliest club in the St. George area. In the Depression and 1930-1940, major building works were carried out. The baths were doubled in size, the promenade was built as was the "Castle". The Club is the largest that it has ever been, conducting races on Sundays when the tides are O.K. "Morning Tea by the Water" is popular. The baths are used by the public,

The oval was built in the 1930's and has been used by CRICKET TEAMS for many years.

RUGBY & LEAGUE FOOTBALL - In 1937 the Swim Club formed a soccer team from members for playing in the winter. This Team was called ALL SAINTS OATLEY WEST and now comprises of 25 teams - Junior, Senior and Ladies. It is a separate body from the Swim Club.

ARMY - In 1942, the Army occupied the park with local residents forming 26th Field Company RAE. It consisted of 240 members and was based around the oval and children's playing ground. The soldiers assisted the 45th Infantry Battalion in making the Cronulla beaches free from invasion by the Japanese.

After about 9 months of camping there, the 26th Field Coy. RAE was shifted to New Guinea and then a Tasmanian Unit marched in and they stayed for several months.

KITE FLYING - I have seen a few Chinese children carrying on this hobby.

BICYCLE RACING: - Every winter on a Saturday, half of the park is closed and the St. George Bicycle Club holds races around the park. This has been carried on for many years.

SENIOR CITIZENS - Many of the local senior citizens' busses visit the park for morning teas as the facility is suitable.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES - A large number of schools use the park for study of flora and fauna.

BARBEQUES - The barbeque facilities are heavily used by the public, winter and summer.

SCOUTS USE - Scout Troops use the park for tracking, abseiling and other studies.

BILLYCART RACES - There have been some races carried out.

TRIATHLETICS - These have also been held.

FILMS - Over the years, many short films for educational purposes plus films for theatres have been produced also films for advertising.

BIRTHDAYS & WEDDINGS - Many of these are held in the park, particularly the castle being the centre of celebrations.

RELIGION - The Baptist Church use the baths for baptising its flock.

HOCKEY - A rough form of hockey, the sticks being cut from the bush, was played by kids in the paddocks.

CANOES - The Department of Sport keep these and use the park for exercise during the year.

AMBULANCE - Opened in 1931, the Casualty Room of St. George and Sutherland Shire Ambulance is staffed by skilled people to look after the park's visitors.

SUMMARY - I have tried to include all the uses by the public and it can be seen that the public has had a wide and varied use over the years.

*May you can add info about the ambulance people -*

OATLEY PARK USES!



OATLEY Flora and Fauna Society members, from left, Keith and June Underwood and Alan Fairley, the only people celebrating Oatley Park's 100th birthday.

# Park centenary goes out with a whimper

THE 100th birthday of Oatley Park will go off not with a bang but with a whimper this weekend.

The Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society is the only body which has recognised the centenary of the most significant area of bushland in St George.

In a year of Bicentennial hype, the 100th year since the park was proclaimed will go unnoticed.

When first proclaimed, on May 29, 1888, the land at

Lime Kiln Bay, on the Georges River, was named Peak-hurst Park.

Trustees were appointed to oversee the new 112-acre park, but in 1906 Hurstville Council asked the Department of Lands to put the trusteeship in its hands.

The council asked the trustees to resign, but one of them, a local landowner named Myles McRae, refused.

In a bitter letter to the council, Mr McRae accused the civic fathers of trying to persuade the Government to sell part of the park for subdivision and of doing nothing to make it accessible to the public.

But by the end of the year Mr McRae relented and resigned on the condition the council preserve and improve the park.

On May 20, 1908, the council became trustee of the park.

The name was changed to Oatley Park by proclamation on June 23, 1922.

The council's promised improvements came to fruition during the Great Depression, when unemployed men were given work in road gangs for two weeks at a time.

The existing roadway entrance at the end of Oatley Park Avenue was extended down to the baths, with a return road back around the oval.

At this time a stonemason constructed the kiosk and castellated lookout near the baths. Several other look-outs were built along the river.

During World War II, two units of the Royal Australian Engineers, the 26th Field Company and an engineering unit from Tasmania, were stationed in the park.

The concrete floor of a mess hut and kitchen and a small cement map of Tasmania can still be seen.

The Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society, which provided the information for this article, meets on the fourth Monday of each month at the Uniting Church hall in Frederick Street, Oatley, from 7.45 pm.

## DEADLINE CHANGES

### Tuesday 14/6/88 Issue

Classified Deadline: 12 noon Friday 10/6/88

Trade Directory: 4 pm Thursday 9/6/88

Display Deadline: 10 am Wednesday 8/6/88

### Thursday 16/6/88 Issue

Display Deadline: 4 pm Friday 10/6/88

Other Deadlines are unchanged

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WINNAPINE

## Drug unit in timely raid

DETECTIVES from the Miranda Drug Unit believe they raided the home of a cannabis supplier at Bexley, just before his illicit packages were about to hit the streets.

They swooped on a house in Regent Street on Monday where a 25-year-old Bexley man had parcelled \$8000 worth of foils.

They found another marijuana plant being processed and dried, as well as smoking implements.

Three charges were laid and a man is expected to appear in Kooragang Court early next month.

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1-7-07

Dear Len + Dorothy,

You asked about information on cycling in Oatley.

During 1950-52 I was a member of St George Pro. Cycling Club. We rode in handicap races around a street circuit in Oatley. The start/finish line was at the bottom of the hill in Annette Street, with the course (from memory) going along Herbert + Rose Streets, Woonona Pde + back along Letitia St + Neville St. Our club was mainly run by the Cresswell family who were builders and lived locally. Sometimes riders and bikes would crowd onto their truck to race at places like Appin and Stanwell Park.

I think that St George Amateur Cycle Club raced around Oatley Park but I was never involved there.

In 1953 I gave away cycling when Lakemba Meths Soccer Club entered an all age team in P.C.S.F.A.

To-morrow we are flying to Alice Springs. After a few days there we are joining a camping trip from Alice Springs to Broome, staying in reserves and private properties along the way. Cheers for now

Eric.

'THE GOOD OLD DAYS'

BACK IN THE TWENTIES, THAT WAS THE START,  
SETTLERS WERE SWIMMING AT OATLEY PARK.  
A MEETING WAS HELD AND ALL WOULD AGREE,  
ONE POUND FOR A FAMILY, WAS THE FEE.

NOT ALL COULD SWIM THEN YOU MUST AGREE,  
SOME LEARNED WITH A FULL PACK IN THE DEAD SEA.  
DOG PADDLE WAS THE START FOR ALL,  
PROGRESSING TO THE AUSTRALIAN CRAWL.

LAND WAS BOUGHT AND THEY BUILT THE HALL,  
WHERE PICTURES OF WATERLOO, HUNG ON THE WALL.  
CARNIVALS EUCHRE AND BOTTLE DRIVES  
HELPED TO KEEP THE CLUB ALIVE.

DURING THE DEPRESSION THE PARK JUST GREW,  
ROADS WERE NAMED AFTER MEN WE KNEW.  
OUR BATHS THE LONGEST IN THE LAND,  
DANCES AND PICNICS WERE ALWAYS WELL PLANED,

OUR CAMP UP THE WONNIE WAS ALWAYS GOOD FUN.  
AND PICNICS ENJOYED BY EVERYONE .  
RETURNING FROM STANWELL PARK BY TRAIN,  
BETTER NOT TELL THAT STORY AGAIN.

REMOVING BLUBBERS HAD IT'S TRICKS,  
ALL DID LIFESAVING AND DIVING FOR BRICKS.  
LOW TIDE MUD FIGHTS ,GOT US IN A MESS,  
BUT 'FLIX FOR NIX' WAS A GREAT SUCCESS.

SANDY BEACH DOWN AT OATLEY PARK ,  
HAS A SPECIAL SPOT IN MY HEART,  
AS WE GIT OLDER OUR MEMORIES FADE,  
BUT WE NEVER FORGET OLD FRIENDSHIPS MADE.

JOY 'AULD' McMILLAN, 2002.

'OUR OATLEY PARK' .

BACK IN THE TWENTIES, THAT WAS THE START,  
SETTLERS FOUND WONDERFUL, OATLEY PARK.  
DURING THE DEPRESSION ROADS WERE PUT THROUGH,  
AND NAMED AFTER COUNCIL MEN WE KNEW.

INSIDE THE PARK GATES , GROWS A BIG PINE TREE,  
SEED, OWEN DAVIES BROUGHT FROM GALLIPOLI.  
ASHES ARE SCATTERED, WHEN LOVED ONES DEPART,  
AT THIS SPECIAL SPOT , CLOSE TO THE HEART.

ANGOPHORA BANKSIA AND SCRIBBLY GUMS,  
AND OLD MAN'S WHISKERS LOVED BY OUR MUMS.  
SANDSTONE CAVES A GREAT PLACE TO HIDE,  
AND LOOKING FOR OYSTERS ON THE LOW TIDE.

CHRISTMAS BUSH PUFF BALLS AND TRIGGER PLANTS,  
KEEPING WATCH FOR THE DREADED BULL ANT.  
FEATHERY GEEBUNGS WITH IT'S BERRYS TART.  
BUT THE FLANNEL FLOWER ALWAYS STEALS MY HEART.

ERIOSTEMON, ALONGSIDE THE BACON AND EGGS,  
SWIPING SANDFLYS BITING OUR LEGS.  
THE HORSE TROUGH IS GONE BUT THE STEAMROLLER STAYS,  
IN MEMORY OF THE 'GOOD OLD DAYS' .

AS BAREFOOT KIDS WE ROAMED THE PARK,  
SO MUCH TO DISCOVER AND BE HOME BEFORE DARK.  
THE OVAL IN SUMMER, CRICKET WAS PLAYED,  
ON THE CONCRETE PITCH MATS WERE LAID.

THE TASMANIANS CAME AND WE SHARED OUR PARK,  
WHILE THEY TRAINED AND PREPARED TO EMBARK.  
CHANGING GEAR WITH DAD AT THEIR SIDE,  
HOW MANY YOUNGSTERS LEARNED TO DRIVE.

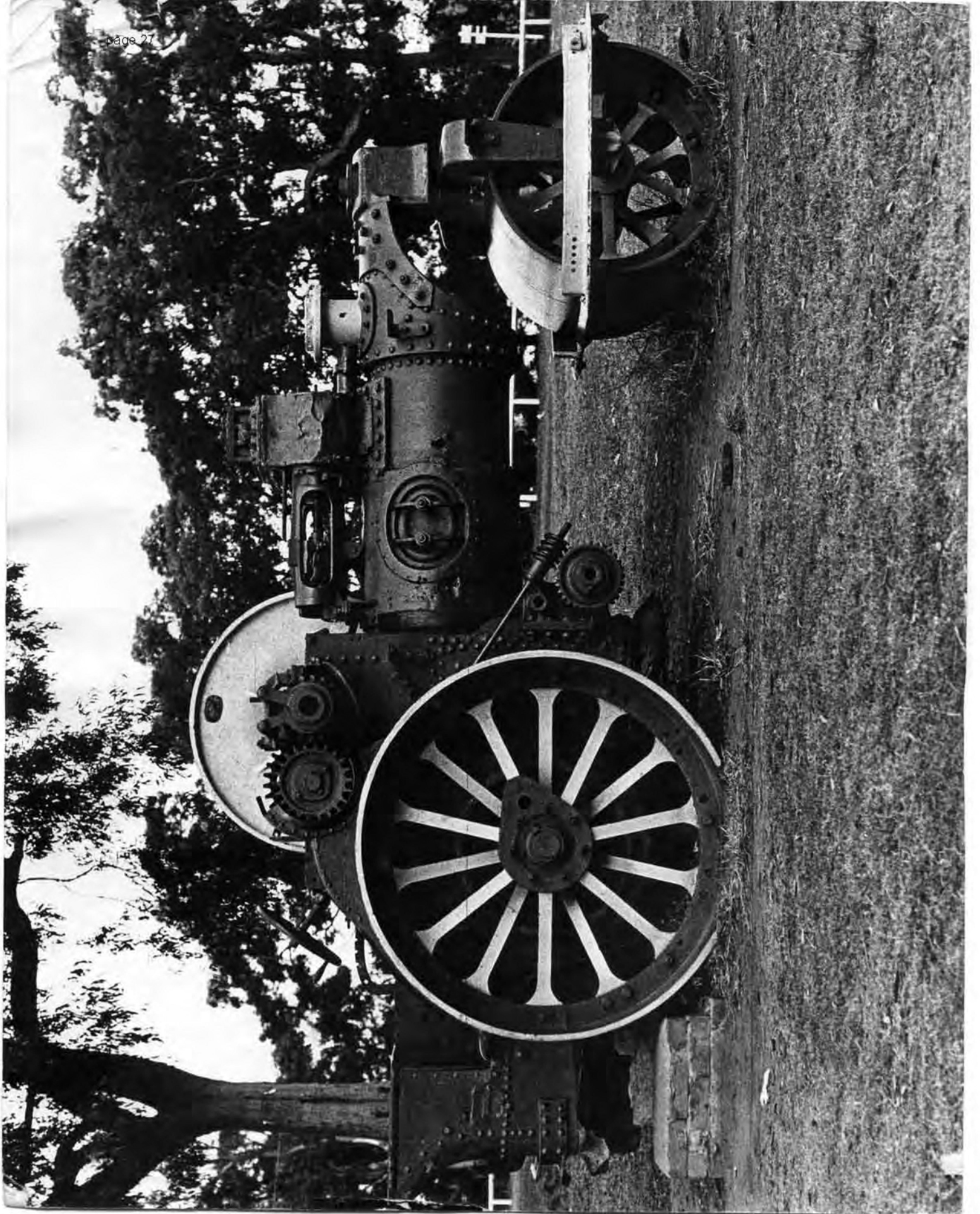
THE BUS WAS PACKED WHEN IT MET THE TRAIN,  
AND FOLKS WENT WALKING AFTER THE RAIN.  
WALK ALL THESE TRACKS AND YOU'LL SOON SEE,  
WHY OATLEY PARK, ON THE GEORGE'S IS SO SPECIAL TO ME.

JOY 'AULD' McMILLAN 2007.

**An Oatley Park Incident Anzac Day and Night 1946.**  
Told by Dorothy Walker (nee Mallard) August 2007

It was 1946 and the war had been over for one year. Jack Walker, Geoff Hand, Dudley Shaw, Jack and Les Lawler and possibly others, had been celebrating in the Oatley RSL Club which was founded in this hall behind the Library. (where we are now). Anzac Day was a Victory Celebration Day but they had to be out of the premises by 22.30 (10.30pm). Being young ex-Soldiers, Airmen and Sailors it was thought it was too early to go home. Geoff had his Dad's old sedan (I can't remember the name) so they all piled in with enough bottles to carry on for a while. He drove quickly over to the Park via Douglas Haig St., weaving across the road, trying to give them all a thrill by going as close to the cliff as possible. He continued on right down the Lime Kiln Road to where there is now a walking bridge. The road did not go further than where the Bay stops but Geoff must have decided he could drive right across and went straight into the shallow muddy water. Luckily the tide was out so they had a conference and some refreshment. The conference decided that Jack Lawler would go to Mascot and get an Air force Rescue Truck to get the car out of the river. The "Boys" waited patiently, singing, telling stories and probably lies.

I remember being woken up with my six months old baby Terry, about midnight. Jack, who was covered with mud, told me what had happened and then he was going back to try and help. We were living in Mum and Dad's garage, and when he arrived at dawn, I could not let him go into the house to clean up as he was still covered in mud. I thought of a good idea. I managed to get him to stand still behind the garage while I hosed him clean. It was a good idea because it sobered him up and he was able to go to work. He was back at his old job as a window dresser at David Jones. The car was eventually hauled out, but Geoff's Dad, Ray Hand, was not very impressed. Ray Hand was a very respected Father who was one of the founders of the Oatley Bowling Club.



OATLEY BARK

TAKEN 1971

PHOTO TAKEN BY JOHN BILDARH

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MARYLAND

U.S.A

THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS

IN OATLEY PARK

1942 to 1943

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BY

HAZEL BLAIR AND JUNE LANE

THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS  
IN OATLEY PARK  
1942 to 1943

BY  
HAZEL BLAIR AND JUNE LANE

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**Oatley Amateur Swimming Club History  
1927—1982  
By  
Ray Stevens. President**

## ORIGIN OF OATLEY PARK

Before going into the history of the Club we must consider the location where we compete.

On the 25th March 1887, 45.32 hectares of land was dedicated as a park and on the 29th May 1888 it was declared as a native animal and wildlife sanctuary.

Hurstville Council commenced the same day as the park was declared, the railway came through Oatley in 1886 so the park was declared when the population of the suburb was very small.

## THE BATHS

The date of the construction of the first baths is unknown. Its site stretched from the edge of lane 6 down the outside of the turning board to a point meeting a fence coming out from the main beach where there is a rocky outcrop.

During the depression era 1930-35 men on the "dole" did not receive any money instead they worked for it mostly on heavy laboring road work. As Oatley Park was undeveloped after nearly 50 years the council then placed a large number of men on Park improvements, this resulted in roads, the rock castle, the oval and the building of the baths as we know it.

The park was originally known as Sandy Beach, a name not known to the present population.

The park has always had two beaches and the northern one was originally outside the first baths and on the weekends when the tide was suitable fisherman used to bring in their boats to sell fresh fish to the public.

In the 30's 40's and 50's members used to catch prawns in the baths.

With the baths being 365 Yards long it has been recognised as the largest baths in Australia and the around the baths race every year would be the longest straight race in Australia inside a baths area.

One of the major problems has been to keep the baths sharkproof. Over the many years a fairly large wire mesh has been used. A large amount of wire was required but due to rust about 3 years was the life of the wire and it had to be replaced which was rather a expensive exercise for the council. With the large mesh users of the baths were often plagued with jelly blubbers with painful results for the users of the baths.

For a couple of years in the late 70's the club purchased a fishing net which was placed around our swimming area and allowing us to swim free of them. In 1980 Hurstville Council installed a fibre glass net of smaller mesh size which has been of great benefit to the public. Except for an odd jelly blubber it has kept the baths practically free of them and being rust free will last longer though it is showing signs of wear where the public are hitting it with boats or climbing up on it.

## FORMATION OF THE CLUB

On the 13th January 1927 a meeting was held at Alderman Hedley Mallards house in Douglas Haig Street for the purpose of forming a Swimming Club.

The people who attended and were the foundation members of the Club were H. Mallard, P. Murray, J. Salmon, A. Stead, S. Christie, V. Kaysen, H. Cohen, B. Salmon, A. Auld, W. Jones, A. Wilson, I. Montague, J. Wilcox, I. Prior, F. Smedley, G. Montague, G. Lyndon, L. Mallard, P. Phipps, W. Stevens, B. Shew, D. Shew, S. Hodgson, Misses V. Green, M. Smedley, V. Brown, A. Smedley, M. Murray, M. Crofts and Christie.

The Club was originally called and operated under the name of Oatley District Amateur Swimming Club until we were forced by the N.S.W. Amateur Swimming Club in the 60's to drop the word District out of the name due to some regulation.

The first President was Hedley Mallard, Harley Cohen Secretary and Bill Stevens Treasurer.

In page 83 a rather unusual move for those days it was to be a combined men and ladies swimming club. This led to many clashes with the N.S.W. Ladies Swimming Association where policy was that men and women must not belong to the same club.

They said it was immoral and for a while when we ran swimming carnivals they insisted that only women were to be time keepers, judges and starters. When they rang the President they insisted they would only speak to a woman President. Eventually Ray Stevens and ex member Brian Ogle moved at Headquarters to disbandon the Womens Swimming Association and they now all belong to the mens Association.

The first membership fees were 50 cents Men, 30 cents Ladies, Juniors 25 cents and Senior Members 6d a race.

The first carnival was held on the 26th January 1927, and was opened by the Mayor of Hurstville D. Webb. All city and suburban newspaper reporters attended and gave a tremendous amount of publicity.

The next meeting was held at the home of Mr & Mrs Wilcox in Douglas Haig Street where there was more room.

Due to increasing membership and many socials being held a large galvanised shed was rented in Mulga Road. Many meetings and socials were held in this shed and eventually it was decided to purchase land on the corner of Woonona Pde and Myall Streets Oatley. An offer of \$10 was made to Hurstville Council to purchase an old dressing shed from Oatley Park. This was dismantled and shifted to the land and with other materials the present hall was erected and beside it a tennis court. Members then completely furnished the club with piano, urns and furniture. It was actually the forerunner of clubs that we know today.

To pay for the land a rather unique scheme was installed, it was called the Land Scheme. For 10 cents a week each child could be a member until the age of 16 years.

During the 1930's this was a great boon as during the "Depression Years" money was very scarce.

The club room became the social centre of West Oatley, which looking back was a very isolated area. You had to make your own entertainment. Meetings were held twice a month and every now and then they ended up in wild disarray. Members would appear to argue about anything and it was considered a good night out. Card evenings were held, dances and parties and once a week lifesaving classes were held under the eagle eye of Dud Shaw. For a while the club was the best lifesaving club in N.S.W. winning the highly coveted Welso King Shield beating the N.S.W. Police.

One of the greatest highlights of the season would be our annual picnic to Thirroul. The club would hire two railway carriages with the train stopping at Oatley to pick up the large crowd. Community singing was one of the main features of the trip.

Pre War there were only two other clubs operating in the St George area Ramsgate & St George operating out of Brighton Baths. The Club also played water polo and were fairly successful playing at Ramsgate Baths on a Sunday Night.

Due to the small number of clubs operating there was not many carnivals but they were keenly contested.

The best swimmers in these years were Cheshire Fuimini, Fred & Jack Smith The Davies Boys, Roy Rushworth, Jack Lawler and not forgetting The Belcher Girls. Cheshire was an outstanding sprinter, swimming 50 yards in 25 seconds which was an outstanding time and even by todays standards pretty fast, and he swam that time as a junior.

Then came the 1939-45 war. Many members enlisted and the club became mostly operating with juniors. Three members were killed and they were all Air Force, Jack McDowell, Ted Ricketts and Ian Thompson. During these years the club was held together by Bill Stevens, Ron Stevens, Noel Hammond and Tim Murnby.

Country trips to Bathurst, Orange Dubbo and the Entrance were greatly enjoyed by members. As many as a dozen vehicles would take members away for a weekend to compete against country Clubs and enjoy a social outing as well.

Our club was very strong in "Club Swimmers" particularly in the Seniors and during these trips we were very successful. Members enjoyed themselves immensely and when members meet they still talk about the various incidents that happened. The trips to the Entrance Club were the most hilarious. With the co-operation of Fred and Ade Montague and the Club we rented a cottage for the weekend and as many as 60 members would attend. Water pistol fights became famous and our "subsidiary" Woronora Club (The Fowler Boys) always attended. Who would forget "Chook" Fowler and his beat up cars.

#### FLIX FOR NIX

During the early years the "Flix for Nix" era was born. Every month the club arranged Films from Shell, Health Department, Travel Companies and the State Film Library.

The Club room used to be packed by members and funds were raised by selling drinks etc, and members led by Jim Burke placed the signs in chalk around the district. This entertainment went on for many years and gradually faded out when television took over.

For a couple of years, 2 nights a week physical training classes were run for members by Frank Jorian, a well known coach.

The Club formed a Junior and Senior Soccer team which had mixed success but better results were obtained by the Ladies & Mens Basketball teams.

Many bus picnics, socials and some classical launch picnics up the Woronora River were held. Members still talk about the time when the boats were taken up at high tide but unfortunately the tide went out and the members had to carry the heavy wooden boats down the river.

Membership reached a peak in the late 50's and 60's but today we still have a steady membership consisting mainly of family groups and I think we could be one of the few clubs where father, mother and the children race together.

#### LEARN TO SWIM

For children learning to swim today there are plenty of facilities, Government Sponsored on school holidays, private coaches etc, but in the 1950's and 1960's the Learn to Swim campaign was conducted by Swimming Clubs. There were not any real public pools, a very few coaches and so the club used to teach at the baths on Saturdays allowing for the tide. Our facilities were very poor for teaching the children but hundreds of children were taught. It was nothing to have 100 children turn up. All club members helped and the chief organisers were Mrs Phil Pomfret, Mrs Peg Rogers, Les Boods, Nola Stevens and many more members both Junior and Senior.

As more local facilities became available we were required less and it eventually faded out.

#### PARK RANGERS

The most famous of the Rangers (Caretakers) was George Prentice. He was employed by Hurstville Council practically since the inception of the baths. He was absent for a while during the war years but back again after the war for many years. He was a real character and many stories are told of his unusual behaviour. The kids in the early days worried the life out of him, floating his wheelbarrows in the water, adults not parking their cars properly. Every one knew George but no one can deny he was a great worker. A lot of the rock work around the baths was placed by him and he kept the place spotless. After George retired we had Jack Neild for many years and since then we have had a bit of a change with many rangers. All through these years the club has greatly appreciated the assistance and co-operation of the rangers and we have co-operated in keeping the baths clean and controlling people who create a nuisance.

BOTTLE DRIVES

In the late 50's and 60's the club to raise funds decided to have bottle drives organised by Bill Mitchell, they were a great success. We have now reduced to a bottle yard at the club and they have been a ready source of income to the Club.

TURNING BOARDS

The supply of a turning board and also starting wall has been a major problem to the club until recent years when Hurstville Council has supplied a good concrete starting wall and a large steel floating pontoon.

The first finishing wall was a permanent wooden fixture and lasted for many years though repaired regularly. This eventually collapsed and we had some real trouble for many years.

We had a floating pontoon made up of 40 gallon drums. That lasted for a couple of years and then collapsed. Next was an electric light pole we chopped down but to our surprise it did not float. It was a problem with the pole but eventually the Council supplied a couple of steel pontoons until they rusted away and we have our present one.

DRESSING SHEDS

The first one was half way up the ramp down to the baths and a piece of the concrete floor can still be seen and also a couple of slots in the rock where the rafters went.

The shed was very small and would not hold more than a dozen people at a time and with large crowds at the baths you had to queue up. Then the ramp was put in, the shed was pulled down and two large tin sheds were built on the flat, one for the men which had a partition in it for the club to put their lanes in.

These sheds were not the best, bare floors no showers but they served there purpose.

In 1959 the present sheds were built by Hurstville Council which were a great improvement both from the public and club view.

The facilities have been a great help to the club as basically we are a social swimming club.

SWIMMERS

As we are a swimming club, we cannot go without mentioning them. We have and have had all ages from 3 years old to swimmers in their 60's. We have had slow and fast swimmers but over the 55 years we have escaped the "fanaticism" of other clubs who concentrate on their champions and not on the club swimmers. We have always operated as a family club, dad mum and the kids and our main object is to enjoy ourselves and I think we have done this remarkably well. We would have the largest senior membership in the district.

But as in any sport there will be always the swimmers who are natural athletes and stand above the rest.

To name these swimmers is very hard, but in my opinion and many may disagree with me, I would nominate the following, Cheshire Fuimini for (pre war) a sprinter, Frank Stevens for backstroke who competed in the Empire Games and Australian Junior Champion, Bob Bouffler probably our best all round swimmer with the greatest potential, Richard Quinn a versatile all round swimmer, John Stevens as a butterfly swimmer, for an older swimmer Jack Campbell, and last but not least Herb Akerman. Herb has been in the club for 25 years and he is swimming as fast as he was 25 years ago. In the ladies our most outstanding would be Carol Steamer, Win Belcher, Diane Campbell, Helen Thibou and Val Lynch.

MEMBERSHIP

One feature of our club has been the long time members have competed. The Stevens, John Ron and myself have been competing for 50 years which is something of a record. There are members who have been competing over 20 years, Jim Yeomans, Herb Akerman, Col Lynch, Val Lynch & Alan Smith.

5

It is in this long period that the club strength is. The members have raced, then their children and grandchildren. Thousands of members have gone through the club, and it is very pleasing to meet people who were in the club many years ago and still ask about us and still read the results in the "Leader". These ex members still have fond memories of the club and still talk about the picnics barbeques and socials as if it was yesterday.

#### OTHER CLUBS

Prewar we had other clubs to compete against, North Kamsgate & St George (Brighton Baths). We competed regularly against them at swimming and water polo. After the war more clubs sprung up with the building of more Olympic Pools. We used to compete regularly at carnivals but over recent years not at so many as unfortunately the other clubs do not have many senior swimmers, as our strength are in the seniors we have drifted apart from the carnivals as they seem to have lost their social aspect. I think that with large numbers of clubs and members practically 100% juniors the carnivals take too long.

#### OFFICIALS

The club cannot operate without officials. Reading through old minute books, names keep appearing year after year. Bill Stevens, Fred Meyers, Bernie Howard, Jack Maples, Harold Coates, Bill Mitchell, Ron and Esma Holt, Jim Burke, K. Patterson, Bob Bennett and many more. But without them no club operates.

#### PUBLICITY

Over the years we have had great co-operation from the local media who have always published our results which lets the public know we are still operating. In recent years we must thank the St George Leader for their assistance.

#### HURSTVILLE COUNCIL

We must not forget to mention Hurstville Council, for without their foresight back in 1887 there would be no baths and no swimming club. We can safely say Ostley Park is one of the most pleasant places to have our unusual swimming club.

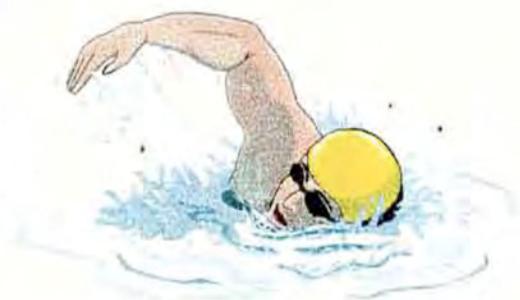
We have difference of opinions over the years with the council but our both objects is to make the baths more pleasant for the public.

The large paths have always created problems but it is a unique baths and the only type in Australia and we must thank the council for their co-operation in helping us with our facilities for racing. It could be improved but due to unique problems it is a problem and we are working on it.

#### SUMMING UP

We are a unique club in the swimming world, being for members to enjoy themselves both socially and swimming. Whether we be fast or slow swimmers it doesn't matter. We are a family club and our long serving members back this up.

We invite all locals whether they can swim or not to come along and join us.



**OATLEY AMATEUR  
SWIMMING CLUB (Incorp).**

**70th ANNIVERSARY**

**1927- 1997**



***OATLEY AMATEUR SWIMMING CLUB INCORPORATED***

**OFFICIALS 1996\_1997**

**PRESIDENT:**

**RAY STEVENS**

**VICE PRESIDENTS:**

**RON STEVENS**

**VALERIE LYNCH**

**SECRETARY AND TREASURER:**

**MOYIA SKOWRONSKI**

**SENIOR HANDICAPPER:**

**COLIN LYNCH**

**JUNIOR, FORM STROKE  
HANDICAPPER:**

**MARGARET WILLIS**

**SOCIAL SECRETARY:**

**RODNEY MAYNELL**

# 1937 SEASON



Back Row  
Front Row

P.Wison, P.Lawler, F.Davies, J.Robertson, J.Walker, D.Mallard, K.Teague.  
B.Corbett, J.Ryland, B.,Bates, J.Williams, B.Ryland.

## **What was Oatley like in 1927, when the Club was formed**

page 40

The way of life in the 1920's, when the club was formed is entirely different to what we see and hear today.

Oatley was considered out in the bush, Sydney stopped at Hurstville . If you told people that you lived at Oatley they would say Where?.

Electric trains had just started to Oatley taking over from steam trains, there were gas light on the station and in my parents house we had two gas lights that were used only in emergency.

One steam train still operated and did for many years as the funeral train. This would take mourners from the mortuary station at Central to Wononora Cemetery for the funeral services, as motor vehicle were very rare.

The roads around Oatley had some bitumen, but were mostly dirt any very few had concrete kerb and gutters or footpaths. Horse and carts were popular and were used to deliver of Bread, Milk, Produce, Garbage carts. The local postmen delivered mail on a horse up to the 1950's.

Oatley was split into mini suburbs, divided up by the George's River, the Railway and many paddocks. So we were a rural area, as there were no hotels or picture theatre's, the main source of home entertainment would have been listening to your radio if you were wealthy enough to own one. Another source of entertainment was house parties(BBQ's were not thought of)

Taking in consideration the above situations the formation of the club in 1927 was an unusual step, and after talking to older members, the decision to form the club was twofold in that it would serve primarily as a swimming club and also as a social meeting place brining residents together. Due to the shortage of money and poor transport facilities, the Baths and Oatley bay were the only places to swim, and the prevalence of sharks on the river made it very dangerous to swim outside the enclosed baths.

In the 1930's a bus service operated by the Lawler family used to run down to the baths on Saturdays and Sundays, and as can be seen by some of the photos large numbers of people used the area despite the facilities being almost no existent.

In this atmosphere the club was formed. With invent of the modern pools and facilities your club has consolidated into a more socially structured one with a very relaxed theme which includes a little bit of swimming and a lot of socializing.



**NORTHERN END OF BATHS**  
Where we start length of baths race



**Club Room in Myall St, Oatley.**



Back Row: E.Burke, F.Meyer, J.Lawler, F.Smith, G.Muir, J.McDowell, J.Smith, J.Stevens, Ray Stevens, J. Williams

Third Row: N.Short, R.Rushworth, P.Bowman-Prescott, B.Howard, R.Nash, C.Fuimin, N.Burke, W.Craven, A.Jones(sec), J.Stevens, F.Williams.

Second Row C.Wellington, R.Barry, P.Teague, W.Packenham, W.Stevens, Ald H.Mallard(Patron in Chief), Ald D Cross(Patron), J.Postill(Judge), J.Burke, P.Hand, R.Hand.

Front Row L.Lawler, G.Hand, E.Hand, W.Barry, R.Faulkner, H.Mallardm, G.Corbett, J.Ryland, W.Postil, A.Corbett, A.Postil, G.Taylor.

## 1936-1937 St. George District Water Polo Champions



Back Row F.O'Sulliavn, J.Sdmith, W. Dews, J.Lawler, F.Meyer  
Front Row E.Dews, B.Howard, F.Smith (Captain)

**1927- 1997**

## **PREFACE**

To prepare a history of the club, it is essential to look at many facets that have occurred over the seventy years contributing to the operations of the club

We have endeavoured to give the history of the club, from the minutes of club meetings of what events took place, from the memories of members and my own recollections, as you can appreciate most of the early records have been lost over the years.

## **HISTORY OF OATLEY PARK**

We must commence here; because without the park, no club would exist.

On March, 25 1887, 45.32 hectares of land were dedicated as a park. On May 29, 1888, the park was declared a native animal and wildlife sanctuary, with Hurstville Council also being declared on the same day.

For many years no improvements were made to the park; then a fence and a gate was installed. A dirt road the only entrance and you had to open and shut the gate when you entered

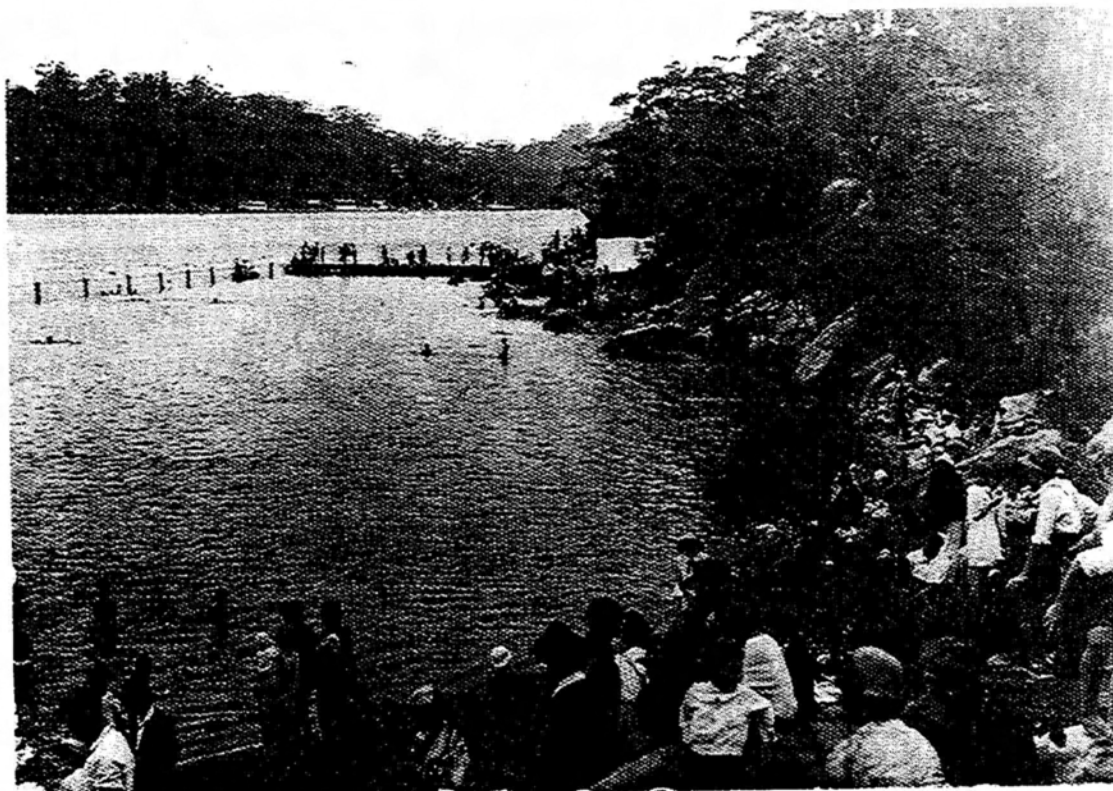
## **FORMATION OF THE CLUB YEARS 1927- 1940**

On January 13, 1927, a meeting was held at Alderman Hedley Mallards house in Douglas Haig Street, for the sole purpose of forming a swimming club.

The club was originally called and operated under the name of Oatley District Amateur Swimming Club. In the sixties we were requested by the N.S.W Amateur Swimming Association to drop the District from the name due to some regulation.

The first President was Hedley Mallard, Secretary Harley Cohen, Treasurer Bill Stevens.

PICTURES OF THE BATHS 1927 TO 1930



This was taken in the late twenties, due to the fact there is no finishing board, no lanes and the promenade as we know it was not built



This was taken before the new baths were built, again no promenade and notice the small poles holding net in place.

Present at the inaugural meeting were H.Mallard, P.Murray, J.Salmon, A.Stead, S.Christie, V.Kaysen, H.Cohen, B.Salmon, A. Auld, W.Jones, A.Wilson, I Montague, J.Wilcox, I. Prior, F.Smedley, C.Montague, G.Lyndon, L.Mallard, P.Phipps, W.Stevens, B.Shaw, D.Shaw, S.Hodgson, Mrs V.Green, M.Smedley, V.Brown, A.Smedley, M.Murray, M.Crofts and --- Christie.

The first membership fees were Men (50) fifty cents, Ladies (30) thirty cents, Juniors (5) five cents, on top of that the senior members had to pay (5) five cents per race.

The first carnival was conducted on January, 26, 1927, and was opened by the Mayor of Hurstville a Dr Webb. The city and suburban newspaper's reporters attended and gave it a tremendous amount of publicity.

Oatley in those days was an unusual suburb, because of the river we were split into many mini- suburbs, in which people lived and even used their mini- suburb as their address. These were The Soldiers Settlement (Lloyd St), Jewfish Point (Baker St, Lansdowne Pde & Marine Drive), Oatley West around the shopping centre, Oatley main shopping area, Oatley Bay, Gungah Bay, Neverfail Bay.

The original members of the club came from the first three.

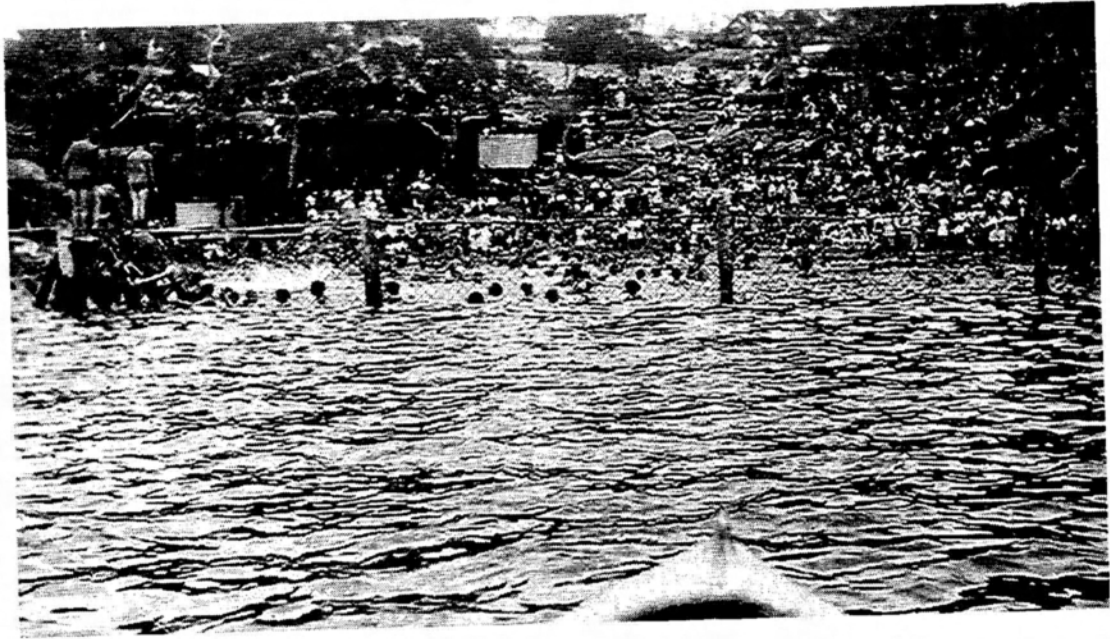
Due to increasing membership and many socials being held in the large galvanized shed in Mulga Rd, it was decided to purchase two blocks of land at the corner of Woonoona Pde and Myall St, Oatley.

An offer of \$10.00 was made to Hurstville Council to purchase an old dressing shed from Oatley Park

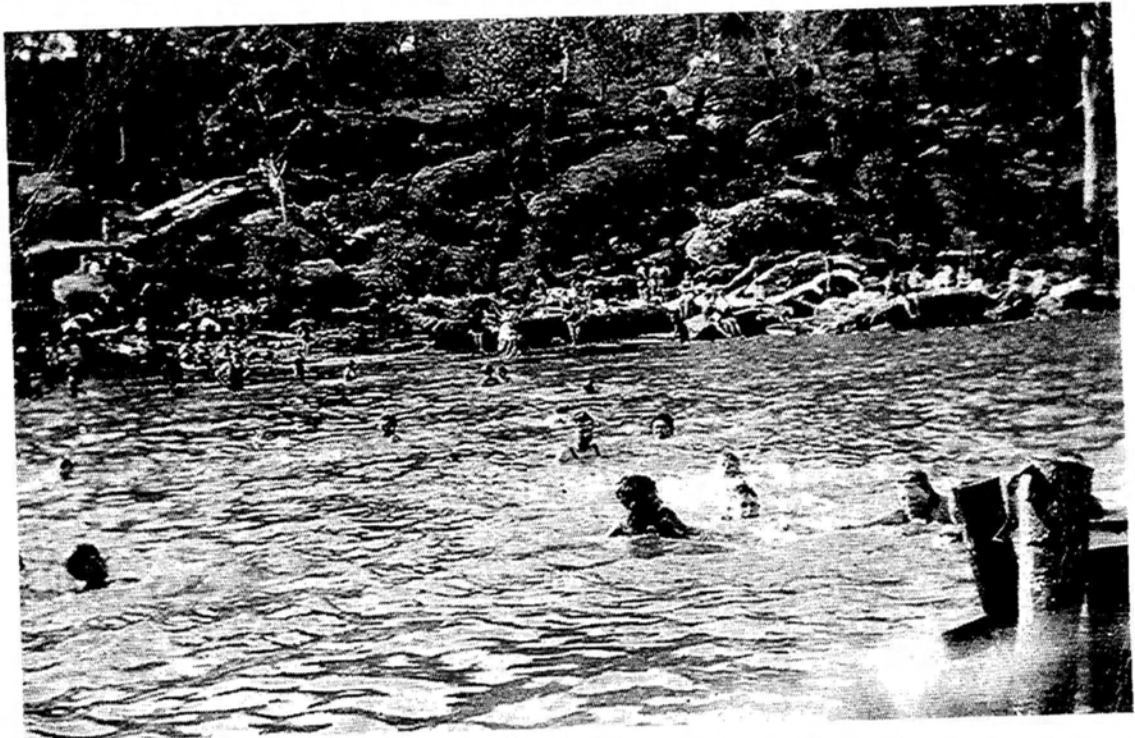
This was dismantled and shifted to the land and with other material from Penshurst Park, the hall was erected and beside it a tennis court was built. Members then furnished it with a piano, urns and other pieces.

To pay for the land a rather unusual scheme was developed. It was called the Land Scheme. The joining fee was \$2.00 and for (10) ten cents a week, each child could become a member until the age of (16) sixteen years. This scheme was a great boon during the "Depression Years" as money was scarce.

PICTURES OF THE BATHS IN THE 1930's



This was photographed about 1930, The baths use to attract large crowds  
The two white panels were the original dressing sheds. They would not accommodate  
any more than 12 people at a time and they had no showers.



This was also photographed around 1930. This was the main beach and it shows the large  
rock structures.

The club room became the social centre of West Oatley, which looking back was a very isolated area; there were no Hotels, Clubs or Picture Theatre's: you had to make your own entertainment

Club meetings were held twice a month; and every now and then they ended up in wild disarray. Members would appear to argue about anything, particularly about handicapping and finance (these are still subjects that are high on the agenda every week). These were still regarded as a great night.

Once a week Lifesaving classes were held under the eagle eye of Dudley Shaw. At the time the club was the best Lifesaving club in NSW, winning the highly coveted Kelso King Shield beating the NSW Police

We conducted other social nights; these included Dances, Parties and Card evenings

Two carnivals were held every year; based on handicaps, with special scratch races. A Water Polo competition was held every Sunday night during the summer; these were very vigorous games, more like rugby league

The best swimmers in these years were Cheshire Fuimini, Jack & Fred Smith, the Dews boys, Jack Lawler and not forgetting the Belcher girls

Cheshire was an outstanding sprinter swimming 50 yards in 25 seconds which in those days was really fast, and he swam that time whilst he was still a junior.

There were two swimmers from Ramsgate that were faster; one was Doug Black he could swim 23 seconds for 55 yards, the splash he made was tremendous; arms and legs going like a thrashing machine. Another great swimmer was Geoff Valentine who would win the District 220 yards Championship by nearly 30 metres

Unfortunately he was killed during the war in New Guinea.

One of the greatest highlights of the season would be the annual picnic to Thirroul. The club would hire two railway carriages; with the steam train stopping at Oatley to pick up the large crowd. Community singing was one of the main features of the trip; quite a few of the younger members did not buy tickets.

## PICTURES OF THE BATHS IN THE 1930's



This was photographed about 1930, races were held from the beach to the wire netting. Notice that lanes were used  
In the background is the boat shed which was used by the Jewfish Point Boat Club.  
Notice there is only one house on the point and the old Como rail bridge.



This was photographed just after the opening of the present baths around 1934/35. The dressing shed is still there and the first turning board has been installed.  
Notice again the large number of people in the background

## **FORMATION OF THE BATHS: YEARS 1927- 1940**

### **THE BATHS**

The date of construction of the first baths is unknown. Its site stretched from the edge of lane 6 down the outside of the turning board to a point meeting a fence out from the main beach where there is a rocky outcrop.

During the Depression Years 1930-1935 men on the (dole) did not receive any money, instead they worked for it mostly on heavy laboring road work. As Oatley Park was undeveloped after nearly 50 years; the Council placed a large number of men on Park improvements. This resulted in roads, the stone castle, the oval and the building of the baths as we now know it.

The original name for the park was Sandy Beach, a name not known to the present population.

The Park has always had two beaches, the northern one was originally outside the first baths.

On weekends when the tide was suitable fisherman would bring in their boats to sell fish to the public

In the 30's, 40's and 50's; members used to catch prawns in the baths.

With the baths being 365 yards long it has been recognized as the largest baths in Australia. Every year we held an around the baths race, this would be the longest straight race in Australia inside a baths area. We now hold a 1 Kilometer race consisting of 'around the baths' plus a length of the baths.

One of the major problems has been to keep the baths shark proof. Over the many years a fairly large wire mesh has been used, a large amount of wire was required but due to rust the life of this was about 3 years and it had to be replaced. This was rather an expensive exercise for the council. With the large mesh swimmers were often plagued with jelly blubbers resulting in very painful stings and rashes.

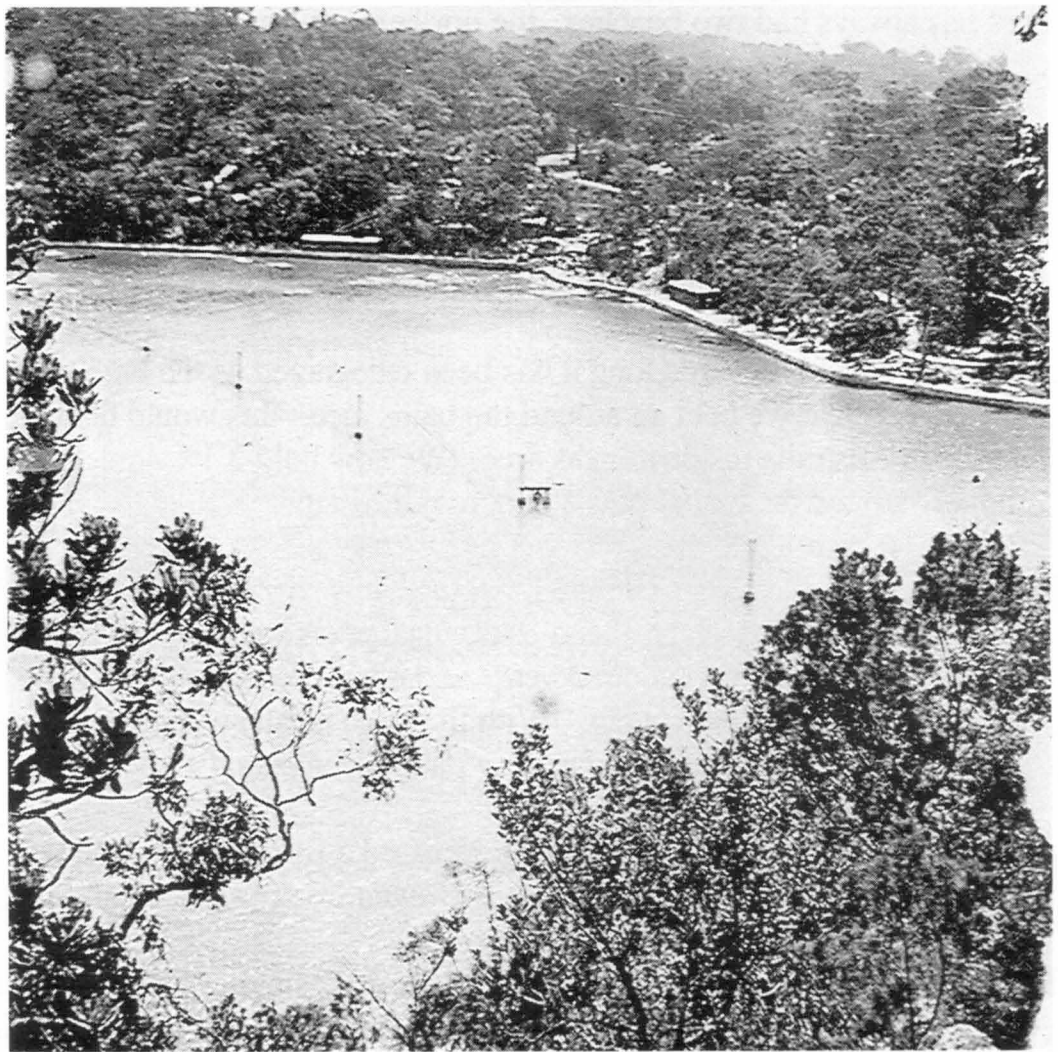
For a couple of years in the 70's the club purchased a fishing net which was placed around our swimming area thus allowing us to swim free of these menaces.

In 1980 Hurstville Council installed a fibre glass net of smaller mesh size which has been of great benefit to the public, except for an odd one it has kept the baths practically free of them., and being rust free will last longer though it showing signs of

PICTURES OF THE BATHS IN THE 1940 & 1950's



This was photographed in the late 40s or early 50s. It shows the new promenade and also the turning board which was a fixture like a wharf. Take note of the fashions in the costumes



This was photographed prior to 1959. It shows the two old dressing sheds on the promenade.

wear due too the boats hitting it and the public climbing onto it.

The park has always had a Park Ranger (Caretaker) and the most famous was George Prentice. He was employed by Hurstville Council. George was a real character and many stories have been told about his unusual behavior. The kids used to worry the daylight out him (floating his wheelbarrow in the baths ), He would get very cranky with the adults who would not park their cars properly. George was a very hard worker and much of the rock work around the baths was done by him and the park area was always spotless. When George retired Jack Nield replaced him and he too kept the area in a very tidy state. One of the longer serving rangers was Ray Duggan

We now have Louie Russo in the position and he too is keeping the area in a spotless condition. All through the years the club has appreciated their assistance and co-operation in keeping the area clean and controlling the visitors who create a nuisance.

The State Government has now declared the baths as a State heritage for preservation

## **TURNING BOARDS:**

The supply of a turning board and also a starting wall has been a major concern to the club, until recent years when Hurstville Council supplied a concrete wall and a large floating pontoon. The first finishing wall was a wooden fixture which lasted for many years though repaired regularly, This eventually collapsed and we had some real for many years.

The replacement was a pontoon made up of 44 gallon drums, This lasted for a couple of years. Next was an electric light pole we chopped down and to our surprise it did not float, but eventually the council supplied a couple of steel pontoons until they too rusted away and they have replace these with our present one. The only problem now is the barnacles that grow on the pontoon under the water resulting in many lacerated feet..

Our members regularly cleans these off during the low tide

A couple of years ago the concrete starting wall started to collapse. The council decided to build a new one, but on trying to demolish it, found that it was filled with old railway lines. They then decided to put a new front only onto the existing wall 1 metre out and raise the height 6 inches. The distance now is a little short of 50 metres

## Ladies Basketball Team



Back Row  
Front Row

R.Churchill, D.Ward, S.Parker, R. Roclandts, S.Sedgeman  
J.Parker, P.Williamson, S.Lenchan.

## **DRESSING SHEDS:**

The original dressing sheds down at the baths are the two small white walls, one in the middle and the other on the left hand side.

These were made of galvanized iron, with partly concrete and dirt floors. The middle one was the men's which held about 12 people at the time, the women's about 8. You can appreciate with the crowd there it took a long time for your turn to come around. There were no showers or toilets, you had to use a tap which was located away from the sheds to wash yourself. The timber roofs were supported by beams that were held in holes cut into the rock, these holes can still be seen.

When the large baths were built two large sheds were built (see on the promenade) the left one for men and the other for the women, these were quite large with concrete floors, but still no showers or toilets. In the men's there was a partition closing off about a 1/3 of the area where we stored our lanes

When the present brick building were built; the men's and women's were separated by our present club room, and these had cold showers. In 1995 Hot showers, toilets and tile floors were installed.

## **AFFILIATES:**

At the same time as our club commenced , Oatley Bay Amateur Swimming Club was started at the Oatley Pleasure Grounds on the other side of Oatley.

Our family (the Stevens) joined this first, and a photo in my possession shows (60) male members both junior and seniors ( no women). Being young at the time I cannot remember much about it, but the grounds had a wine salon, which (illegally) opened before the races, which I'm sure effected the performances of many of the swimmers. This club only lasted a few years and our family then joined the present club We had a subsidiary club from the Woronora River, made up of two families, the Fowlers and the Mosses, they owned one beat up car which regularly broke down.

## **WAR YEARS: 1939\_ 1945**

The second world war caused many problems for sporting clubs, particularly among the senior members between the ages of 18 and 45 years. They were either in the forces or in war production.

In 1942 Oatley Park was taken over by the Army, which they occupied for about 12 months. Army engineers occupied the oval and the area around the children's

## Ladies Netball Team 1954



Back Row  
Front Row

N.Stevens, P.Howes, V.Hammill, M.Jones.  
Unknown, J.Glover, UnKnown.

## Mens 1947 Champion Soccer Team



Back Row: Ray Stevens, W.Jones, G.Mollett, J.Stevens, W.Bell.  
Middle Row: A.Thode, G.Mckenzie, A.Burgess, R.Falconer, R.Rushworth..  
Front Row: J.Thode, G.Mollett (Mascot), R.Thode (Linesman).

Unfortunately we had three members all pilots in the Air Force who died in action. They were Jack McDowell, Cec Rickets and Ian Thompson!

Luckily the club carried on mostly by the efforts of Bill Stevens, Frank Stevens and many older members with help also from Juniors Ron Stevens, Noel Hammond and Tim Murphy

## **1945 ONWARDS: CLUB ACTIVITIES**

When the members returned from war service, the club expanded and many pre war activities were resumed.

Monthly dances were held and a monthly newsletter called the "SPLASH" was introduced. This was jointly produced with Oatley West School and Oatley West Progress Association. It became an Oatley West local paper and was available at the local Newsagent, shops and was delivered to local houses. The first edition was prepared by Mick Staples.

## **FLIXS FOR NIX:**

During the early years the Flix for Nix era was born, where the club would arrange films from Shell, Health Department, Travel companies and the State Film Library.

The club room would be packed and we raised funds by selling drinks etc. to advertise these nights; Jim Burke and other members would place signs written in chalk around the district (now I believe this is called graffiti).

These nights went on for many years and gradually faded out due to the invent of television.

## **BOTTLE DRIVES:**

During the 50's and 60's to raise funds the club went into collecting bottles. Billy Mitchell drove his 3 ton truck while members went door to door picking up the bottles.

The number of bottles people had accumulated amazed us, some had their backyards full and one reason for this was that their neighbors use to throw theirs over the fence. We established a bottle yard at the club room in Myall St up to 1990, then the council commenced a collecting service for recycling, we decided to give these drives away.

### MEMBERS IN THE EARLY 50's



Back Row R. Moss, Unknown,  
Second Row J.Stevens, L. Farrant, R.Boufler, unknown, G.Noble, J.Havilah, A.Uebel,  
P.Paterson, Ron Stevens, H.Belcher, R.Paterson.  
Front Row M.Staples, Unknown, A.Rumsey, A.Humphhries, Ray Stevens, J.Hughes,  
K.Stewart, W.Davies, D.Davies, P.Moss R.Churchill.

### Members In The Early 40's



#### Some Members Who Could Be Identified

F.Stevens, Clive Stevens, Tim Murphy, Arch Uebel, B.Grady, Alan Rumsey,  
Noel Hammond,

These funds enabled us to obtain equipment( the personalized chairs down at the club house were purchased with these funds).

## **Basket Ball:**

In the 50's and 60's the younger members, both boys and girls entered teams in the local competition. The men played in a hall at Kogarah, which was a bit short and many times the game ended out on the footpath.

Both teams had their share of success.

## **Soccer:**

During the years 1936\_37 some members used to play soccer for the Oatley West Soccer Club up at the oval in the park, although it was mostly gravel and as many as forty players would play all day.

In 1937 we decided to enter a team in this competition comprising mostly of club members. Being only young we copped a hiding in the all aged competition and in the first year we never won a game or scored a goal. In 1939\_40 we improved to win a few games. The soccer club disbanded during the war years as all members served in the armed forces.

In 1946 we reformed the soccer club and had immediate success in winning the 3<sup>rd</sup> division competition by winning all games. The club again closed after a couple more years. Many of the members joined the Oatley Methodist Church Soccer Club.

In the late 50's we again reformed the soccer team and entered a junior team with Norman Pomfret as captain, also a senior team played for a few years.

Later the original team was commenced again under the name of ALL SAINTS OATLEY WEST and now is one of the strongest clubs in the area, fielding numerous sides.

Our best older player would have been Wally Bell, who could have played at a higher level if he so desired. In the younger players it would have Derek Hawkins who went on to play for the NSW under21 team

## 1957\_1958 SEASON



Back Row N. Stanners, M. Bosward, J. McIlhoney, P. Cross, G. Uebel, D. McIlhoney, A. Wicks, C. Stanners, A. Whiteley, V. Hammill, J. Bosward, H. Hammill, K. Sandstrom, K. O'Connell, S. Hill, B. Belcher, D. Hammill, N. Lupton, M. Whiteley.

Middle Row Mystery B. Taylor, L. Bosward, G. Kemp, A. Pickering, D. Maher  
D. Stevens, K. Johnston, V. McIlhoney

Front Row C. Taylor, S. Walker, K. Short, K. Johnston, B. McIlhoney, D. Whiteley, B. Stevens, A. Stranger.



Back Row: R. Short, B. Whiteley, K. Williams, C. Wingrove, G. Kemp, R. Booker, J. Featon  
R. Milner, D. Adams, D. Knight, G. Bosward.

Middle Row: N. Pomfret, A. Elholm, T. Walker, R. Short, G. Talbot, P. Buckland, J. Whiteley.

Front Row: J. Humphries, L. Pickering, L. Yeomans, P. Pomfret, C. Yates, A. Godfrey, B. Stevens

## **CLUB PICNICS:**

Many picnics were organized some we traveled by bus and one in particular we traveled up the Woronora by a number of launches. This one is still fresh in the memories of those present as we went up on the high tide, but when we came to go back there was no water where we anchored our launches, unfortunately we had to manhandle those heavy wooden boats for about 200 metres over rocks until we met the water again. I can tell you it wasn't a very good ending to what had been a very good day.

## **LEARN TO SWIM:**

For children to learn to swim there are now many facilities, but in 50s and 60s the Learn to swim campaign was run by the swimming clubs. There were not any real public pools and very few coaches. So we gave lessons down at the baths on Saturday mornings allowing for the tide. Our facilities were very poor for teaching but hundreds of children have been taught. It was nothing to have 100 children turn up. All the members used to help and our chief organizers were Mrs Phyllis Pomfret, Mrs Peg Rogers, Mr Les Dodds and Nola Stevens. As more modern facilities became available we were required less and eventually this faded out.

## **WINTER ACTIVITIES:**

With our members getting older many have retired and meet down at the baths during the winter when the weather permits, and have morning tea and solve all the worlds troubles. These fortunate people also arrange many train trips to the south coast which are getting very popular.

## **PRESENTATION OF TROPHIES:**

This has been an annual event since the club's inception. Pre war they were presented at a yearly dance held at the Memorial Hall or the Masonic Hall at Mortdale. After the war Mortdale RSL took over the hall and we have had to hold these presentation in various locations such as The Castle and even down at the baths, the last one we returned the Mortdale RSL Club.



Back Row R.SHORT, G.BOSWARD, W.STEVENS, RON STEVENS, B.McCULLUM, J.(POP) STEVENS,  
 J.WRIGHT, G.WOOLRIDGE, P.PATERSON, R.HAMMILL, J.KEMP, L.DODD, B.PICKERING,  
 J.WALKER, W.MITCHELL(PRES), J.YEOMANS

Centre Row C.LYNCH, B.SAUNDERS, J.POMFRET, H.BELCHER, D.HAWKINS, J.MCILHONEY, A.UEBEL(SEC),  
 K.WOODS

Front Row H.AKERMAN, BKNIGHT, A.HUMPHRIES(TREAS), G.MCILHONEY, RAY, STEVENS, P.MAHER,  
 B.BUTLER, A.SMITH

## **HANDICAPPING:**

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The Club has always raced on the handicap basis ie. Points for competing, except in the longer distances where members submit their own times and the nearest to that time wins.

In earlier days they tried to handicap these races but due to a great number of shrewd swimmers (Foxes) it was found to be nearly impossible to get their correct times.

These days the points are added up and with the money available a total amount for each point is worked out. The swimmer does not receive the cash but must purchase a trophy to that amount, which is then presented to him on the presentation night, if no trophy is handed in then no funds are issued

In years gone by there were fixed amounts for winning a race, but it was found to be fairer on points, as every one is a winner..

## **CLUB ROOMS:**

When the club commenced we had no facilities at all down at the baths and no where to store our gear, and we had to use the club room in Myall Street.

This hall was the centre of our activities such as Lifesaving classes, Socials, Parties and Card nights.

This hall was the centre of our activities such as Lifesaving classes, Socials, Parties and Card nights.

It was at this hall that the club played its famous musical chair, only the senior members could play as it got very rough and a rugby league match look very tame. Luckily they were the very strong metal chairs which we still use down at the baths as they took a tremendous battering.

The club room down at the baths is now the centre of our activities, which now consist of BBQ's and PRAWN days. The area looks very colorful when the new tables and beach umbrellas are put out.



Back Row K.Uebel, S.Kay, R.Smith, C.White, M.Whitcombe, D.Campbell,  
A.Pomfret, A.O'Neil, K.Merran.  
Middle Row C.Demur, T.Demur, C.Smith, G.Uebel, H.Quinn, N.Stanners, V.Lynch,  
J.Mitchell, L.Whitcombe, K.O'Hagan  
Front Row S.O'Hagan, J.White, S.White, M.Kay, F.Lynch,  
Absent were , M.Akerman, S.Akerrman, T.Hill, E.Holt



Back Row: A.Smith, M.Crutchter, T.Lyons, J.Yeomans, T.Walker, J.Pomfret on shoulders.  
Second Row: D.O'Hagan, A.Uebel, J.Mitchell, Ray Stevens(Pres), P.White, P.Demur, D.Mitchell,  
R.Pomfret.  
B.Whitcombe, C.Stevens, K.Bullivant  
Third Row Ron Stevens, M.Boon, P.Pomfret, W.Scott, J.Cambell, G.Snell, S.Smith, M.Kay,  
K.Whitcombe, D.Lynch.  
Front Row P.Boon, D.Pomfret, J.Boon, J.Demur, M.Demur, M.Snell, T.Walker, J.Smith  
Absent: H.Akerman, C.Conroy, R.Holt, C.Lynch, R.Quinn, J.Stevens

## MEMBERS:

Like many sporting clubs our membership has varied from year to year. The records that are available do not show the number of members, but in the 30's it was quite high, dropped away in the 40's, rose considerably in the 50's and 60's and at present we have 80 members. As more Olympic pools have been built, we have lost many juniors to other clubs. Our senior membership has remained steady due to these other clubs only catering for junior swimmers.

Over the years we have had hundreds of members from all walks of life. We have had Members of Parliament, Judges, Doctors, Lawyers, Dentists, Solicitors, Chemists, Accountants, Mayors and Aldermen. Also we have Technicians and Tradesmen covering all phases of business.

We have always been a family club, and over the years six members of one family have raced. There have also been many marriages amongst our members and not only have lady swimmers been good we have had 2 Miss N.S.W in Miss Hayes and Julie Ismay.

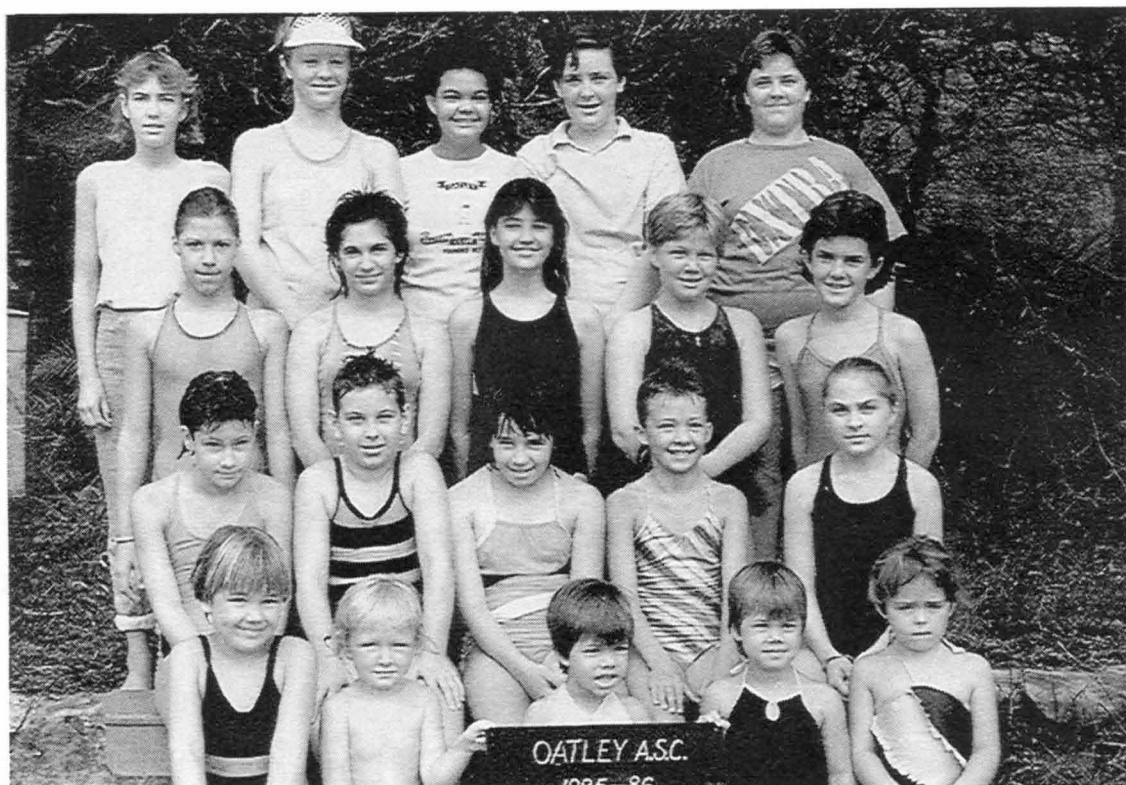
We have now found that of the ex members are living in all states of Australia and some have been able to return to the three reunions that have been held. One feature has been the length of membership.

Ray Stevens	64 years
John Stevens	64 years
Ron Stevens	64 years
Val Groves (Macilhoney)	45 years
Alan Smith	45 years
Val Lynch(Hammill)	44 years
Jim Yeomans	42 years
Harold Belcher	40 years
Betty Belcher	40 years
Barry Whitcombe	40 years
Colin Lynch	40 years
Joyce Mitchell	28 years
Kevin Bullivant	25 years

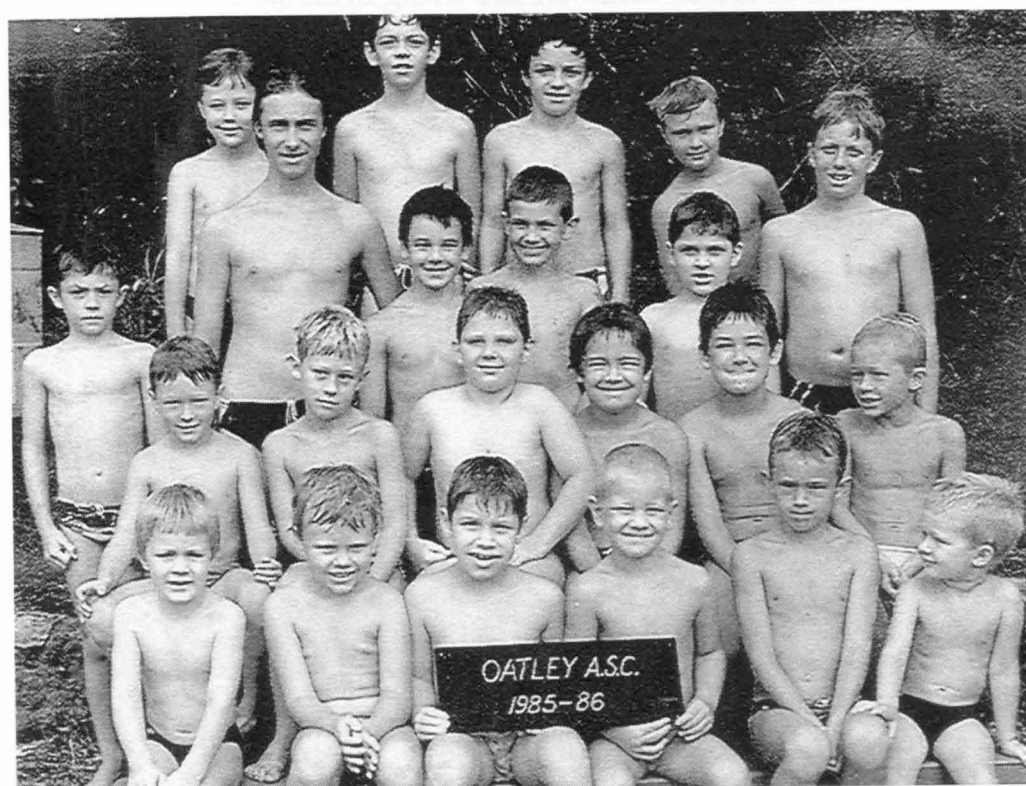
As we are a swimming club, we must record their achievements. The ages of our members over the years have ranged from 3 years to over 70 years of age.

The club has always been a social before a swimming club, under our handicapping

1985\_1986 SEASON



Back Row M.Akerman, F.Lynch, V.Kowron, K/illingworth, S.Illingworth.  
 Third Row C.Coleman, J.Larkiss, S.Drinkwater, J.Coombs, M.Frape.  
 Second Row N.Freestone, R.Illingworth, L.Whitcombe, C.Bleakley, K.Larkiss.  
 Front Row S.Millbourne, R.Maynell, M.Pomfret, S.Pomfret, G.Norton.



Back Row: M.Coleman, M.Krelle, D.Krelle, M.Demur.  
 Third Row: P.Norton, J.Demur, K.Whitcombe, T.Freestone, J.Larkiss, G.Coombs, R.Maynell.  
 Second Row J.Maynell, M.Bleakley, A.White, T.Millbourne, R.Millbourne, R.Bleakley.  
 Front Row E.Burg, J.Yeomans, D.Pomfret, P.Freestone, A.Bleakley, V.Bleakley.

system the fast and slow swimmers have an equal chance of winning races ( there will always be members that disagree with this ).

Due this system we have the largest adult membership in the area, but as in any sport there will be swimmers who are natural athletes and stand out above the rest.

To name these swimmers from memory is very difficult and many may disagree with me, I think the Belcher Girls were the fastest amongst the ladies.

I nominate the following Cheshire Fuimini, Rod Nash, Fred & Jack Smith and Roy Rushworth who between them won many club championships.

I must nominate Frank Steven's as the best ever in the club, he won many District, State and National Championships and narrowly missed selection in the 1948 Olympic Team to London, he was beaten by 1 second, but he was selected in the 1950 Commonwealth Games team to New Zealand. He was also a very fast freestyle swimmer.

John Stevens was a very fast in Breaststroke, Butterfly and Freestyle, Richard Quinn in Butterfly and Freestyle, and Jack Campbell when in his fifties won all the club championships. Herb Akerman was our fastest freestyler for many years.

Among the ladies our fastest swimmers would have been the Belcher girls, Carol Butler (Stanners), Diane Campbell, Helen Quinn (Thibou), but for consistency over the years Val Lynch (Hammill), has won numerous club championships in all strokes, and in the latter years has joined the Masters Swimming and has held many National & State Records and is also ranked in the World Top Ten in her age group.

Our most versatile swimmer with the greatest potential would have been Bob Bouffler. He also won the club championships in every stroke, and on the social scene he was a great entertainer. His fastest time over 50 metres was 26 seconds. Another great swimmer was Graham Holt, Graham was very fast in all strokes. One of our best Breaststroke swimmers was Ron Stevens.

Over the last few years the championships have been dominated by John Coleman, who as an older swimmer has been exceptional, but as time marches on he now has to compete with the younger brigade (Jeff Watts, Jeff Reece and Greg Douglas)

# 1985\_1986 SEASON



Back Row B.Wakefield, D.Larkiss, J.Frape, R.Robertson, J.Mitchell.  
 Third Row A.White, C.Illingworth, K.Maynell, V.Lynch, M.Willis.  
 Second Row S.Akerman, M.Whitcombe, M.Kowron, P.Bleakley, E.Willis.  
 Front Row J.Burg, M.Pomfret, C.Bennett-Millbourne, D.Coombs



Back Row: H.Akerman, G.White, P.Wakefield, R.McClaren, J.Stevens, J.Yeomans, Ray Stevens.  
 Third Row: A.Larter, Ron Stevens, K.Bullivant, R.Kowron, L. Yeomans, J.Cloeman, R.Maynell.  
 Second Row R.Illingworth, C.Burg, H.Siennicki, A.Smith, P.Pomfret.  
 Front Row K.Arnold, P.Demur, B.Whitcombe, T.Bleakley, R.Coombs.

## **SWIMMING STROKES:**

Over the years the rules and strokes have changed dramatically from what they were when Oatley commenced. One in particular is the Butterfly stroke; in the early days there was no such stroke and it came about as a derivative of the Breaststroke.

The following is a recap from memory of your President Ray Stevens on his first encounter with the Butterfly stroke; as far as I can ascertain this stroke was not in operation before 1940. I saw this new stroke in a newsreel at theatre, which said "it was a new form of Breaststroke with the same kick but the arms came out of the water instead of being under.

In March, 1946, I and my brother John competed in the Army Championships in Sydney. This carnival was sanctioned by the NSW Swimming Association. John, myself and another swimmer dived in and came up coming doing this new stroke much to the amazement of the other swimmers who were doing the orthodox Breaststroke. I managed to win this race in 32.5 seconds and as there was no protest from the officials it stood.

This was interesting as the official NSW learn to swim hand book of 1946 stated that this stroke was illegal in Australia.

In the Olympic Games in Helsinki in 1952, an Australian named Davies won a gold medal in the Breaststroke using this action. In 1956, the Butterfly was made an official stroke and could no longer be done in the normal Breaststroke race.

## **COUNTRY TRIPS:**

In post war period country clubs were not as strong in fast swimmers as they are today. They also had many senior swimmers and competed in handicap races, with various scratch races over 50 metres.

Each year we would visit various country clubs such as Bathurst, Orange, Mudgee, Lawson, Katoomba and The Entrance, both for swimming and social activities.

Our club has been very strong in "club swimmers" particularly in the senior ranks and we were very successful in relays and scratch races. Members enjoyed themselves immensely, being transported in cars and motorbikes.

# 1991\_1992 SEASON



Back Row R.Robertson, B. McAneny, V.Groves, V.Lynch, K.Maynell, M.Willis, L.Whitcombe, J.Sloan  
 Middle Row K.Reece & Mitchell, Mrs Willis, M.Skowronski, J.Mitchell, E.Whitcombe.  
 Front Row E.McAnaeny, K.Leone, Mystery, Mystery, C.Reece, Mystery, L.Reece, R.Maynell, Mystery



Back Row: J. Reece, K.McAneny, B.Whitcombe, R.Maynell, J.Mitchell, P.Demur, K.Bullivant, R.Coombs, G.Sloan, T.Martin, J. Lopez.  
 Second Row: Ray Stevens, A.Smith, R.Skowronski, J.Stevens, J.Yeomans.  
 Front Row J.Coleman, The Hat, B.McAneny, K.Whitcombe, C.Lynch.

The trips to The Entrance were greatly look forward to, as two old members of the club Fred & Addie Montague rented an old cottage for the weekend into which 50 members would fit. The place was regularly cleaned by water pistol fights.

## **CITY CARNIVALS:**

Over a period of twenty years (20) a carnival was held at Ramsgate baths. The races were on a handicap basis and if you broke your time by 2 seconds or more you were disqualified. Due to the better conditions at this pool it was salt water pumped from Botany Bay it was a very fast pool most of our swimmers had problems with this, but when we learned to "fox" we held our own with all the other clubs that competed.

At these carnivals there was a novelty event, 50 metres butterfly scratch race and times of 30 seconds were common; the double dolphin kick had not been yet invented so the popular kick was one breaststroke and one dolphin kick.

The most renowned swimmer to come from the Ramsgate club was Neville Hayes who represented Australia in the Olympic Games and one a silver medal.

Over the years we have not produced any state champions in butterfly but the following members have been very good:; R. Bouffler, J.Stevens, R.Quinn, J.Campbell, G.Holt and more recently J.Coleman and Jeff Reece J Watts and J.Vlassis

## **OFFICIALS:**

It is true to say that the club could not operate without officials.

Some names keep appearing year after year; Bill Stevens, Fred Meyers, Bernie Howard, Jack Maples, Harold Cooks, Bill Mitchell, Esma Holt, Jim Burke, K.Patterson, Bob Bennett, Moyia Skowronski and many others, and without these type of people, most sporting clubs would cease to exist

Of all the officials of the club over many years , the one person who would have contributed to the clubs success more than anyone else would have to be Bill Stevens (fondly known as Uncle Bill to many). During the early days he was the chief organizer in all fund raising projects Bill was always first to put his hand up to help, he organized the card parties, picnics, and other socials.

He was the caretaker of our club hall in Myall St. for many years, hiring it out to other parties, doing the maintenance, cutting the lawns not with a motor mower because they

## SNR LADIES & MEN 97



Back Row B.Belcher, M.Zahra, K.Maynell, R.Robertson, V.Lynch, E.Whitcombe  
Front Row M.Willis, V.Groves, J.Sloan, M.Skowronski, K.Reece, J.Mitchell



Back Row: J.Reece, A.Smith, Ron Stevens, K.McAneny, R.Skowronski, M.Davison, J.Watts,  
K.Bullivant, R.Rynstardt, B.Whitcombe, J.Stevens, A.Wilson.  
Middle Row: R.Clarsen, H.Belcher, J.Yeomans, J.Vlassis, G.Sloan, C.Hurrell, R.Maynell.  
Front Row: C.Lynch Ray Stevens

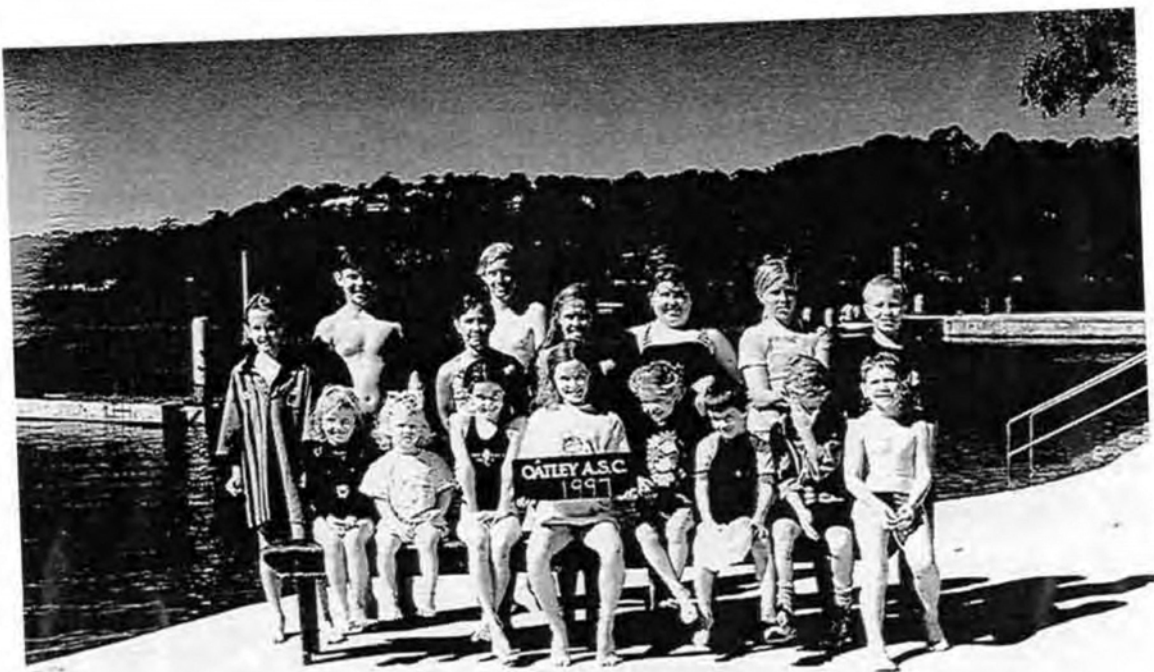
had not been invented, but with a scythe which was hard work.

There is a park in Oatley Bay Rd called Stevens Park; It was named after our Uncle Bill. Bill was a tireless worker also for the Mortdale Pensioners and the Penshurst Bowling Club.

I have known him for over forty years, and in that time he was the ultimate official always dressed in white long trousers and white shirt; never have I seen him in a swimming costume.

The following is list of officials that have served your club; has been taken from the meeting minute books that still exist.

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>PRESIDENT</b>	<b>SECRETARY</b>
1927	HEDLEY MALLARD	HARLEY COHEN
1928	HEDLEY MALLARD	HARLEY COHEN
1929	HEDLEY MALLARD	HARLEY COHEN
1930	HEDLEY MALLARD	BERNIE HOWARD
1931	HEDLEY MALLARD	W.PAKENHAN
1932	HEDLEY MALLARD	W.PAKENHAN
1933	BERNIE HOWARD	W.PAKENHAN
1934	F.WALKER	W.PAKENHAN
1935	F.WALKER	A.JONES
1936	F.WALKER	B.HOWARD
1937	J.MAPLES	B.HOWARD
1938	J.MAPLES	RAY STEVENS
1939	F.WALKER	R.FALCONER
1940	F.WALKER	L.PACKENHAM
1941	W.PACKENRHAM	L.PACKENHAM
1942	W.PACKENRHAM	L.MALLARD
1943	R.ACORN	F.MEYER
1944	H.COATES	F.MEYER
1945	H.COATES	F.MEYER
1946	H.COATES	RAY STEVENS
1947	R.PATTERSON	RAY STEVENS
1948	W.STEVENS	D.MCDOUGALL
1949	W.STEVENS	MINUTE BOOKS MISSING
1950	MINUTE BOOKS MISSING	MINUTE BOOKS MISSING
1951	MINUTE BOOKS MISSING	MINUTE BOOKS MISSING
1952	MINUTE BOOKS MISSING	MINUTE BOOKS MISSING
1953	MINUTE BOOKS MISSING	MINUTE BOOKS MISSING
1954	MINUTE BOOKS MISSING	MINUTE BOOKS MISSING
1955	MINUTE BOOKS MISSING	MINUTE BOOKS MISSING
1956	MINUTE BOOKS MISSING	MINUTE BOOKS MISSING
1957	MINUTE BOOKS MISSING	MINUTE BOOKS MISSING
1958	W.MITCHELL	A.UEBEL
1959	W.MITCHELL	D.ADAMS
1960	J.POMFRET	RON STEVENS
1961	J.POMFRET	COLIN LYNCH
1962	J.POMFRET	J.BARKER
1963	RAY STEVENS	N.POMFRET
1964 TO 1980	RAY STEVENS	ESMA HOLT
1981 TO 1986	RAY STEVENS	ALAN SMITHH
1987	RAY STEVENS	COLLEEN BENNETT
1988 TO 1996	RAY STEVENS	MOYIA SKOWRONSKI



Back Row J Sheahan, A.Davison, L Vlassis, J.Braithwaite,, J Vlassis,  
N.Davison, N Rynsaardt, ?. Rynsaardt  
Front Row ?. Sheahan, ?. Sheahan, C.Reece, L.Reece, Mystery,  
M.Reece,Unknown, A.Davison

## CLUB PHOTO 1997



Back Row: R.Rynsaardt, K.Maynell, M.Davison, H.Belcher, R.Skowronski, Ron Stevens, Ray Stevens, J.Yeomans, C.Lynch, A.Smith, V.Lynch, A.Wilson, G.Sloan, R.Clarsen, K.Bullivant, John Stevens, M.Willis, J.Reece, ,

Third Row: J.Vlassis, J.Watts, M.Zahra, C.Hurrell, B.Belcher, Joyce Stevens, J.Sloan, L.Yeomans, E.Clarsen, C.Reece.

Second Row: J.Vlassis, Rod Maynell, V.Wilson, K.McAneny, B.McAneny, R.Robertson, V.Groves, B.Whitcombe, E.Whitcombe, B.Clarsen, J.Mitchell

Front Row: L.Davison, L.Vlassis, J.Sheahan, M.Skowronski, K.Reece, L.Reece, N.Davison, R.Sheahan, R.Clarsen, S.Clarsen, M.Reece, N.Rynsaardt

# **HURSTVILLE CITY COUNCIL:**

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The story would not be complete unless reference was made of the Hurstville City Council.

The council was given charge of the park in 1888 and for the many years, it was left in its natural state. In the 1930s given cheap labor during the depression years, the baths were enlarged, the oval completed, the castle was built and roads put through the park. Further improvements were slowly made including the new dressing sheds.

In the last few years a large amount of money has been allocated, and made major improvements to make the park more user friendly with installations such as Hot Showers, Toilets down near the water, Gazebos have been built, Electric and Wood BBQ's and some very impressive landscaping down below the stone castle.

The club has taken full advantage of most of the improvements down near the water, the extended promenade has become our socializing place after the swimming is over.

During our time we have co-operated with the council in keeping the baths area clean and preventing damaged to the park by the public where ever possible and rendering minor first aid to the public when necessary.

On behalf of our members and the public we wish to congratulate the council on the progress in improvements they have carried out and the park is a credit to them on the standards they have reached. This park must be one of the best picnic areas left mostly in its natural state in the Sydney metropolitan area.

## **SUMMARY:**

The club was formed in 1927 to give local people a means of entertaining themselves and to participate in a healthy sport.

Locally there was no facilities available such as theatres, hotels or clubs; it was the beginning of the worst depression. There was 30% unemployment, these were all males as females were not treated as unemployed.

Money was very short, so members ran small socials, raffles, played cards and had picnics.

As the years progress, particularly after the war when employment grew and more money became available, the club progressed and we now find ourselves in a strong financial position.

With the change in entertainment such as television, clubs and theatres, the clubs social activities are based around the baths with barbecues and prawn days.

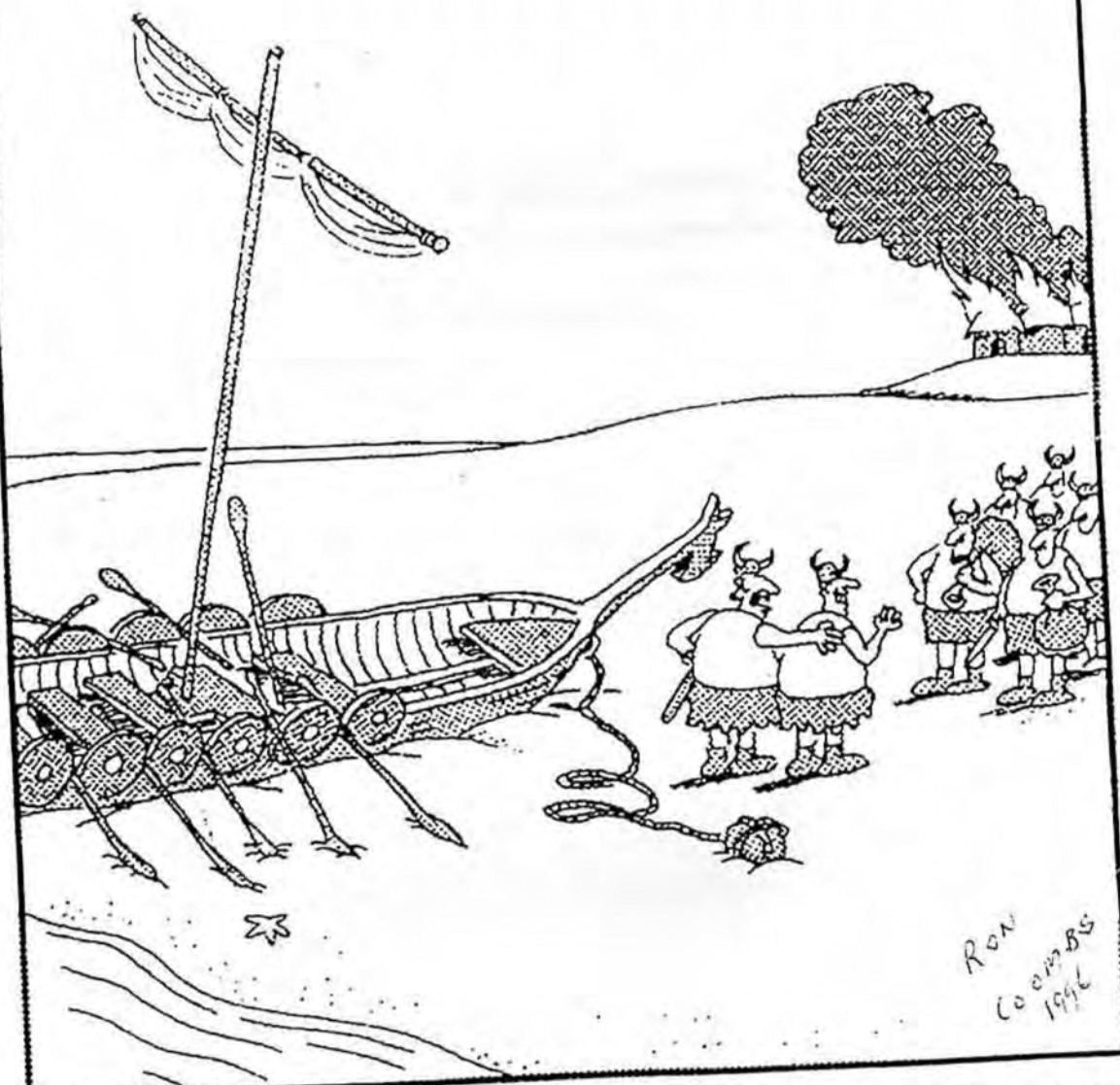
The clubs facilities have grown substantially over the years with items such as a gas barbecue, refrigerators, beach umbrellas, tables and chairs make it very comfortable to enjoy ourselves. Our activities are based around swimming races catering for both fast and slow both young and old.

We must apologize for the lack of photographs of members from the 1920 to 1950's.

I suppose due to the lack of ownership of cameras in those days, no photographs seem to have been taken.

Many thanks to Col Lynch, Jeff Watts and Dennis Woods for their help in the preparation of this booklet.

We trust that the club goes on for many more happy years.



“Everyone can just put down their loot and plunder, and RAY here — yes, old RAY, who was in charge of reading the tide chart — has something to say to us all.”

PROMENADE97



MEMBERS FACILITIES AT BARBCUES  
ON THE PROMENADE 1997

