

PRESIDENT'S REPORT
For
THE OATLEY HERITAGE GROUP

Presented to the Annual General Meeting Thursday 28th February 2002, by Alec Leach.

Before going over the events of the last twelve months, I must express my gratitude to our past President, Russell Gibbs. Russell stood down at the last elections after being our President since the Group's inauguration in 1995. Without Russell's efforts to single handedly organise us together, we would not be the respected group we are tonight.

We must not rest on our laurels. Thank you Russell.

We have had some interesting topics to discuss at our meetings this year. In **May**, Alison Grellis who is responsible for archiving and collating various documents for Kogarah Council's Library, delivered an interesting talk. We were to combine this meeting with a presentation on "Centenary of Federation – Oatley Commemorative Walk".

This had to be postponed until August as Alison was bombarded with questions after her interesting talk. Why stop an interesting person?

At the **August** meeting, we had hoped to have Peter Day talk about the "Centenary of Federation – Oatley Commemorative Walk" Peter designed and implemented the four mosaics into the pathway in the Oatley Memorial Gardens. Unfortunately Peter was unable to attend our meeting to give a first hand account of his achievement. Together with a written report, I showed some video I took on Australia Day when the path was officially opened. The segment when the open top double deck bus could not climb out of the hill from Hurstville Road to Hillcrest Avenue seemed to tickle everyone's fancy on the day.

In **November** we discussed Gungah Bay. I naturally took it that Gungah Bay took in the peninsula from crossing the railway bridge in Mimosa Street taking in the streets of Yarran Road, Southern St., Llewellyn St & Boorara Ave. We had concentrated our efforts in looking into that area. It was pointed out that there is more to Gungah Bay than that area. Namely the streets in Oatley West that front onto it and the Jewfish Point area.

If we get a volunteer to co-ordinate that end of the bay we will re visit Gungah Bay.

Rafe Kowron and I were invited by State Rail to be part of the 75th Anniversary of Electric Trains early in March. The first electric trains ran from Central to Oatley on the 1st March 1926. We rode in one of two special trains from Central to Oatley after hearing speeches from the dignitaries at Central. There were more speeches in the Memorial Gardens. It was estimated there were approximately 700 people there. Russell took video of me with the Governor. Classic to hear him politely tell Norma to get out of the picture.

Tonight George Kendall has presented the completed book of the Ex-Servicemen & Women of Oatley. It has taken George nearly four years to meticulously collect, verify & collate the information into the historical document. Thank you George and I know that the RSL appreciates your efforts.

Sadly, we have seen the passing of three of our members over the last few months, Sam Pavey, Ron Woodward & Wes Bentley. Each will be remembered by us in different ways. Sam to me from childhood fishing days around Oatley Point, whilst Ron & Wes I have only known since we came together in this group. Good men who will be remembered.

Before concluding, I wish to thank my executive & general committee for their efforts in keeping the Group functioning. There is a lot of behind the scene workings. Thank you again.