

President's Report
For
The Oatley Heritage Group's
Annual Meeting. Thursday 26th February 2004

This past year has again been a very active one for our Group. We have had a variety of topics to discuss at our quarterly meetings. This has come about with a great deal of thought and effort from our Committee. Thank you to each and every one of you, especially to Glenn our Secretary for diligently deciphering her recorded proceeds of the meeting into legible minutes that make sense. Again, when we were touring in August, Rafe ably conducted the meeting. Thank you Rafe and for the effort you put into making a display for the twentieth anniversary of the Village Clock at the Lions Festival in October. Again Ray Stevens must take top honours for his concise Treasurer reports.

Thank you, again to every member of the Committee.

To refresh your memories of the topics we have discussed, I will outline them.

Firstly, at our 2003 Annual Meeting we looked into the life of Ernie Lawson. George Kendall prepared a comprehensive report on him and with added antidotes from the meeting provided a good insight to the man.

May, we received an education. By taking on "Education in Oatley" I came away from the meeting glad I had not confronted "Miss Hodge" at Oatley Public School. Teacher's pet, Alan Cuthbertson, would have taken her an apple a day by his lone remarks of her.

She was mentioned in all correspondence received from our Oatley people who sleep elsewhere. One describing her "with her red hair.

In August, yes, Alec had gone to Queensland touring and he didn't have a care. As mentioned earlier, Rafe chaired the meeting titled "Poets of Oatley" and read poems that were submitted. I believe he really put everything into a couple of poems. Oh, they were by his wife Moyia. Another excellent meeting from all accounts. Thanks again, Rafe.

November brought a great deal of memories out of the woodwork. "Oatley in the Depression Years". A true to life well presented look at the average person in those days was presented by Joyce (Bray) Marks. I felt as though I was transported back to the early nineteen thirties. Two mentions in one report is too much, however, Ray Stevens was sizzling when he recalled a Circus coming to Oatley, opposite the Hotel in those years.

Recently, our Group has lost a couple of members. Jack Elliott, who you may recall his written description of Miss Hodge when we were discussing "Education in Oatley". "Then to 3rd class and a not to be forgotten Miss Hodge of the red hair". We will miss his contributions, especially his correspondence via George Kendall.

Joyce Cowell our inaugural Vice President, passed away on the 7th February. I have known Joyce (Mrs. Cowell), for many years. Joyce, as with anything she was involved with, gave her efforts and skills to make our group a better one. Her railway presentation on "Transport of Oatley", showed her skills in research and presentation as being superb. Danebank Girls School was privileged to have her as Principal, for over twenty years.

Again, thank you to my Executives and Committee for your efforts and to everyone who contributed to our meetings. Future generations will appreciate your input when they are researching a project.

Alec Leach.