

OATLEY HERITAGE GROUP
Annual General Meeting
President's Report
27th February 2009

President: Alec Leach

We are now into our fourteenth year since Russell Gibbs contacted various people, to see if we collectively would be interested in being formed into the group we are today. Without his perseverance with Council, his vision to capture our unwritten history of Oatley and his contact with folk who had shown some interest in being involved with some form of Oatley's history, we would not have the information that we have today.

I have been your President for eight years. At the last General Elections, I indicated that I would not be standing again for the position of President. I reiterated that stance at our last meeting. At last week's Committee meeting, it was put to me that neither of the likely candidates would be willing to stand for the position. Explanations were delivered as to why I should nominate for re election. After breaking the "June" barrier, I have decided that if I am nominated I will be willing to stand again as your President. I think the one point that convinced her, was that a great deal of work has to be accomplished to bring our archival system in order. Not only our own records but we have to acquire a new contact with Council for them to process our projects so that they are available to the general public. This I feel is a task that will have to be a team effort rather than a lone Archivist. This I consider is our top priority before we will be able to contemplate thinking of editing this material for our BOOK.

Thank you to all of my Executive and Committee members for your efforts throughout the year and especially for your confidence you delivered to me at last weeks Committee meeting.

After the last Annual Meeting, Margaret Forbes, through Cliff Crane, delivered a comprehensive report on the Oatley Guides. It was well presented, written in a manner that will make an interesting chapter in our "Book".

Cliff Crane backed up again at the May meeting to present a thorough insight into John O'Grady (Nino Culotta). John was the author of titles such as "They're a Weird Mob" and "Gone Fishin". A point of interest came to light by Jean Mayhew. John gave her away at her wedding.

At our August meeting, our Guest Speaker, Kim Wagstaff, spoke about the history of the Oatley RSL Youth Club. Kim, in conjunction with Tina Graham and Rayma Papworth, compiled a book titled "A Youthful Fifty Years". Kim's presentation was very interesting and the book is well worth having in your Oatley library.

In November our topic was "Reserves in Oatley". When we researched the Reserves, it was decided to split them into Hurstville City Council's jurisdiction for November and to carry over Kogarah Council's Reserves for tonight. Rafe Kowron compiled some excellent framed photographs of the Reserves and gave an interesting talk on each one.

We have had some success with regard to obtaining a couple of plaques. The first is one at the beginning of the Oatley – Como Cycle/Walkway to recognise the four instigators of the scheme. They were Janet & Graham Austin, Noreen Whittaker and Milton Hill. The second is here in the Community Hall. This is to recognise that the Kogarah Municipal Band, now The Kogarah Concert Band, rehearsed in the Hall from 1970 until 1998. I had input in the wording except the last line. I am against names being listed such as that, my reasoning is that who will know that name in a few years. At the moment I am working in conjunction with the Oatley RSL to erect a suitable plaque which describes the significance of the Canon, Propeller and Anchor in the Oatley Memorial Reserve beside the ANZAC Memorial.

The year again has seen the passing of members. Jim Tennent, our ex Treasurer, succumbed to cancer after a short illness and then in May, Jack Parr and as I only ever knew her, Mrs. Wingrove. If I have

missed anyone, my only excuse is the fact that my June was gravely ill with meningitis. Again, our thanks to everyone who prayed and comforted us during the ten week ordeal. Thankfully, June is nearly the full quid or should I get with it and say dollar.

In conclusion, thank you all for making my term as President a pleasant one.