

## OHHS meeting 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting

Meeting minutes

1000 Oatley RSL

Meeting attended by about 70 members- special guests included David Coleman , Mark Coure and Kevin Greene. Also invited to the book launch by author Julian Sheen were Bruce Langley and John McRitchie.

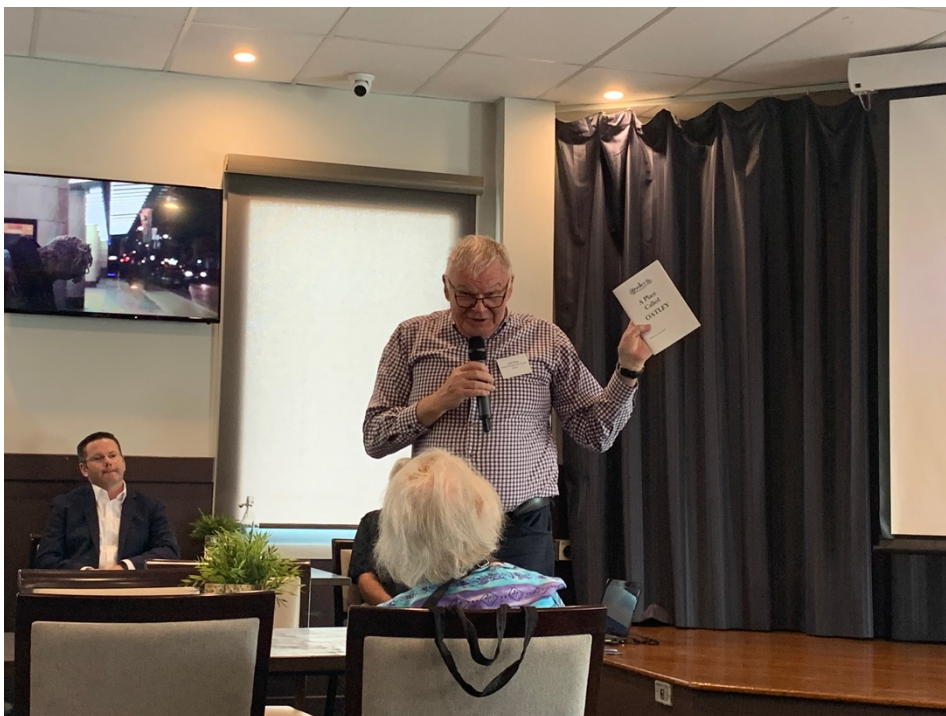


LY opened the meeting and thanked our guests for their attendance. He reminded all that we were launching our book called A Place Called Oatley “ today and invited Mark Coure to do the honours.



Mark Coure gave a short talk and provided a few extracts on Oatley history and congratulated Julian Sheen and OHHS on its production.

Julian Sheen then spoke about the book saying that it was an introduction to the story of Oatley. He thanked Bruce Langley and John MacRitchie for their



significant contributions. Julian, observing the first page of the book, remarked that as we read

the Foreword our society was looking “Forward” to the next 25 years of our history.

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## A Place Called OATLEY



By Julian Sheen

Cliff Crane then spoke about members of the past who were no longer with us and gave a rendition of a Banjo Paterson piece on remembering the past. In just a few minutes Alec Leach is going to have us looking back over “our” 25 years.

“It is my great privilege, then, to speak of those who have been part of our 25 year journey, but who are not here today to share this milestone - and for me shortly to lead us in a brief moment of reflection - or - In the words of *Banjo Paterson* - "*looking back*" .. for ... "*those who've dropped behind*".

So - what did *Banjo Paterson* say?

In 1902, at age 38, Paterson wrote - in one of his more serious moods - "*The Road to Old Man's Town*" - a bit sombre, admittedly, but I think suited to the occasion – it ran like this

*The fields of youth are full of flowers,*

*The wine of youth is strong:*

*What need have we to count the hours?*

*The summer days are long.*

*But soon we find to our dismay  
That we are drifting down  
The barren slopes that fall away  
Toward the foothills grim and grey  
That lead to Old Man's Town.*

*And marching with us on the track  
Full many friends we find:  
We see them looking sadly back  
For those who have dropped behind.*

*But God forbend a fate so dread -  
Alone to travel down  
That dreary road we all must tread,  
With faltering steps and whitening head,  
The road to Old Man's Town!*

Inevitably, any group existing over a period of 25 years, will lose some members as they reach their allotted span - but even more so is that the prospect in a society such as ours which, from its inception, has attracted mainly those of more senior years.

The 2020 sad losses of Beryl & Norm Butters, and June Bennett, for decades if not lifetimes, associated with Oatley, and Beth Oakes who over many years, with husband Robert - both physically handicapped - managed to quietly attend and get great joy from our meetings - are only recent cases of loss of truly valued friends and fellow members - but there have been many others over the years about whom we are "*sadly looking back*".

Shortly we will be hearing Alec Leach – second and long-time President - tell us of the early years of our society - when we were the Oatley Heritage Group - and there is no one in the Society more suited to give such a talk; Alec is the only one still in the society who survives from the original meeting when Russell Gibbs called on like-minded people to join together to flush out and record the heritage and history of Oatley.

Alec I am sure will talk of - and show us photos of - some of those members of the early days, and we will see and be reminded of some of "*those who have dropped behind*".

For me, enjoying friendship with almost all of those I've associated with in my 22 years of membership, has been a sustaining feature as I continued serving out my "*probationary period*" in "*the village*" since marrying an Oatley girl in

1957.... she, Jan, was the first effective archivist of Oatley Heritage Group.... a responsibility she took very seriously!

For me my most satisfying "position" with the group was, for a few years, as one of the 'tea ladies' THE ONLY BEARDED ONE! - when we used to meet in the hall at the back of the Oatley Library ...

... when the early and long-time Treasurer Ray Stevens - what was his nickname again? HORSES?? - would go around with a saucepan collecting the two dollars per meeting for members which covered the cost of morning tea and left a little for banking beside.

And there, I've done it - I've broken my resolve not to mention individuals - for there have been so many good people - ah, well, the cat's out of the bag now..... I'll make another exception by saying I recall that among my fellow "tea ladies", at least three are here today-Moya Kowron, Angelina Trimboli, and June Leach - have I missed any other former tea ladies here?

But enough!

Can I ask you all please to now join me in a short quiet period of reflection for those who did not make it to the arrival of this day - *"for those who have dropped behind"*.

Thank you - and back to President Lawrie"

Alec Leach was invited to provide the presentation on OHHS over last 25 years. He discussed the first Committee of OHG, the clock tower history, the meetings in the back of the School of Arts hall. The early meetings were not sure what to research but it was agreed that members would write their personal history at Oatley. This was achieved and the results have been published through reports. He mentioned other projects such as plaques, school involvement, Como Bridge, Kogarah Municipal Band and Oatley in the War years. The mentioned several characters of Oatley including Ray Stevens, Nola Dais, Joyce Kendall and others including several OHG members that had died. Alec then presented on the screen photos of 2018 meeting when members showed their wedding photos and then some film of the 20 years anniversary in 2015. The meeting thanked Alec by applause.



LY closed the meeting and mentioned the AGM on February 26<sup>th</sup> 2021.

Closed at 1118.am.