

President's Report to ADHS Inc 2016 AGM

In my 2015 Report I made mention of the digitisation of the "Avoca Mail" newspaper, for which this Society paid the National Library of Australia several thousand dollars to prepare and upload the first five years (1863-68) to Trove. This went live eighteen months ago, and has been very well received by many researchers into our local history. From their own resources the NLA also digitised the Avoca Mail from 1870 to 1900 and 1914-1918, plus the Avoca Free Press 1914-1918. Some researchers who have visited the Courthouse in the past year have commented that they did so to follow up on items of interest they had found on Trove. Unfortunately the budget cuts imposed by the Federal Government on the NLA have resulted in an inability to digitise any more years unless we pay for it. We are therefore continuing to seek donations to our Digitisation Fund.

During the past year we have experienced a downturn in the statistics for the numbers of enquirers using the ADHS Inc website. This has been our major source of new members, sales of our publications, and enquiries about paid research to be done by the Society. In consultation with Denis Strangman, our webmaster, we reached the conclusion that the format of the website needed refreshing, and that we needed a back-up person to assist Denis and eventually take on the responsibility of administering the website upon his retirement. Our long-time member Anne Young rose to the challenge, and in recent months has been assiduously working on transferring the content from HTML to WordPress and refreshing the appearance and layout of the data. Anne has been collaborating with Denis and believes that it will be ready to go live any day now. Please look out for it and let us have your feedback about how it can be further improved.

Our Op-Shop/Garage Sale at 182 High Street continues to be our third largest source of income, and we must thank Glenys Allen, Elizabeth Williams and Dorothy Robinson for their efforts in managing that enterprise. We also thank Peter Howell for having agreed to our use of the house rent-free "for at least two years" and we are still there seven years later! It is certainly much less labor-intensive than the old method of running the event at the Court House, and produces more income.

Our newsletter editor, and soon-to-be committee member Margaret Pilgrim recently did a great job on organising the celebration of the Avoca Railway Station's 140th anniversary. Around 150 persons (including pupils and teachers from the Primary School) attended an event conducted in what was the goods yard of the station. It could not be held at the actual station building because that is fenced off as a construction site, with work in progress. Margaret also mounted a display in the Avoca Visitor Information Centre of photos and artifacts and the story of the Official Opening in 1876.

Edna Jarvis has been a long-time supporter of ADHS Inc in many capacities too numerous to mention, and retires from the Committee today. At the recent Committee Meeting it was decided to award Edna with a "Certificate of Appreciation" for her efforts.

Tony O'Shea

12/11/2016