

President's Report ASSLH (Adelaide Branch) AGM – 23rd September 2009

Members this is my first and last report as your Branch President. I have decided not to seek re election as President, or as a committee member owing to my duties as an Adelaide City Councillor. More about that later in this report.

2008/09 has been a busy time for the Society. Whilst the latter part of 2008 had little activity, much of that was due to the lead up to Christmas and the New Year where it is difficult to organise meetings of members at a time and date which will maximise membership attendance.

In 2009 we held general meetings with terrific speakers, they were, Denis Binnion, former Director of the WEA, who spoke of the history of the WEA of SA in SA since 1913, Frances Bedford MP for Florey who hosted a meeting at Parliament House who spoke on the launching of the Muriel Matters Society (named after an Adelaide born and raised girl, who was a leading light in the Suffragette movement in England), Jim Douglas who spoke on community based activism and Peter Alexander, a former President of the Police Association, who spoke on the history of that Association.

The meeting which was most supported by our membership and interested persons was the one given by Frances Bedford. It was a great success, the reasons for its success were many, and perhaps it was the location (Parliament House), the topic or the speaker. Whatever the reason attendance was great, 28 persons in attendance. Your committee has tried to stimulate greater attendance at meetings by sponsoring some free wine and savouries for attendees and in each case securing the services of 1st grade speakers. Unfortunately despite these efforts, our attendance at meetings has been very low. If one took out the attendance of the Executive members and their partners, barely 2 or 3 general members attend our meetings (save for the Muriel Matters meeting). The Society cannot long survive on that attendance record. Our poor membership attendance is reflected in many other community organisations, aging membership and the reluctance of younger people wanting to participate in structured organisations. If I had the answer I would not be making these comments.

I have been on the committee of the Society for 6 years, 5 as secretary and the last year as President. Unfortunately I cannot continue on the committee, nor can our very efficient minute secretary and chief nagger to get things done, my partner Suzanne Green, simply because of the pressure of my Adelaide City Council commitments and the impending Council election in 2010. My focus is on the ACC election in 2010 and therefore the Society would suffer if Sue and I sought to remain on the committee of the Society.

I would like to thank my fellow committee members for their assistance and support, Kevin Kaeding, John Thomas, Greg Stevens, Robyn Garside, Murray Delaine and my partner Sue Green. I wish the Society all the best in the coming years and Sue and I will continue to remain members of the Society and hope to catch up with you over the coming months. I also express my appreciation to our former President Louise Miller and Treasurer Peter Dewhurst for their unstinting support over many years.

Ralph Clarke

President