

## OBITUARY: ALMOND THOMAS GRENFELL

The death occurred at Crookwell on 16th January last of Roy Grenfell (as he was always known to us), one of the stalwarts who set this Society up on such a sound foundation. Always gentle and cheerful in manner, a most agreeable companion, he held office as secretary or treasurer over goodness only knows how many years. Typically, he repeatedly declined nomination as president, because he was always an unobtrusive work-horse; no other term conveys the true strength and endurance of his contribution, and the modesty of his attitude.

But even that does not recall fully the true extent of Roy's prime contribution, which is readily seen from year after year of old Bulletins and Annual Reports. Although they speak for themselves, they do not tell of the other founding work he performed over decades of slogging work in assembling and cataloguing records which might otherwise have been lost. It is fitting now to recall it in some detail.

Latterday members who see a thriving society with its outstanding Museum and valuable local collection housed in the City Library may be surprised to learn that for many years the Society did not possess an inch of space it could call its own. Our growing records were housed in boxes which moved from one office-bearer's home to another in an existence which, whilst not precarious, was not at all

satisfactory, although it was the best that could be achieved in the circumstances. Then the day came when funds permitted the purchase of a good steel cabinet which was placed in a back room of the present president's office, in those years, towards the end of the 1940s. With a key to the door, a small group led by the late Alec Fleming, the late Jock Gardiner-Garden, and Roy Grenfell, used to meet there week in, week out for year after year, identifying material and cataloguing it. Painstaking though their work was, it was always done in a spirit of laughter, true comradeship, and enjoyment of work which was of the highest importance. Indeed, this remarkable trio came to be known affectionately as the Back-room Boys; and of this well-matched team of work-horses none pulled his weight harder than Roy Grenfell. So he is to be remembered as a foundation member in every sense; a founding member indeed. It is true to say that the Society of today would never have been the same without him.

Advancing years demanded some relaxation from such labours, and he gradually withdrew from active work. He richly deserved the honour the Society then bestowed upon him — its highest — in creating him an Honorary Life Member. One may be sure that he saw the continuing strength of the Society with pleasurable interest and, one hopes, a measure of truly justifiable pride.

To his widow and family the Society tenders its sincere sympathy, in deep gratitude for his sterling part in laying and building upon the firmest and best of foundations.

—E.B.

Father O'Malley, writing from New Zealand, also sent a tribute, which reads in part:

"Gentlemanly to his fingertips, he (Roy) was a good envoy with visitors to the monthly meetings and with those, beyond the Illawarra, on the monthly excursions. During his years on the committee his advice was always valuable."