

FROM THE PRESIDENT

1988 was a mixed year of hard work, achievement and some misfortunes. It saw a stage in the Society's experience when we were confronted with new problems.

Our usual activities were carried on successfully: the monthly meetings with speakers had several highlights; one was the meeting held at Wollongong Art Gallery, when Michael Organ was the joint guide with the Gallery's Deputy Director to the Bicentennial exhibition "The Illawarra and its Environs: A Pictorial Survey". Art history was further featured at other meetings with slides showing the work of Conrad Martens, R. Westmacott and J. Lycett. Another highlight was the Society's dinner in honour of past presidents Edgar Beale and Bill McDonald, when other past officers spoke of the Society's work. They included the first woman president Phyllis de Jersey, 1970 and 1971. All speakers paid tribute to the guests of honour. It was an interesting and enjoyable evening, well attended; we all grieved at the absence through illness of Edgar Beale.

The Society's funds received a gift of \$1000 from Westpac when our photographic officer and others mounted a photographic record of Illawarra's history as part of Westpac's Bicentennial travelling exhibition. Later we were able to help Mt. Kembla's historical display of local mining by lending them this photographic record.

In 1988 as usual members received regular issues of the Society's Bulletin, featuring reports and notices of its work as well as articles of historical research. Many of these came from the work of our editor Bill McDonald and from Edgar Beale, the latest from Edgar in December. We hope there will be more in future issues. The Bulletin also included reports of controversial heritage matters in which the Society has been involved, thereby adding the interest of our members.

Peter Doyle and Michael Organ together have reproduced Alexander Stewart's (Old Pioneer) Reminiscences of Illawarra; Michael followed this with The Illawarra Diary of Lady Jane Franklin in May 1839. Bill McDonald's re-issue of the Pauls-grove Diary is about to appear and further Society publications will follow.

We have adopted the policy of including for sale other local history publications. These are advertised in the Bulletin as they appear. One of these was the publication by our colleagues in the Wollongong Family History Group of its Pioneer Register.

The other arm of our historical work, the Museum, has had to occupy a great deal of the Society's attention. Joyce McCarthy has acted as Honorary Curator for years, working tirelessly to ensure that the Museum was open to the public, to school children and other groups from the Illawarra community and elsewhere. She also had to oversee the maintenance of the building itself and the collection it contains. A significant development occurred when the Wollongong Council's bicentennial grant enabled the Society to employ its first professional Curator, Dianne Schultz-Tesmar. Her work in cataloguing and re-arranging the collection as well as organising for special displays has been much appreciated. The work can continue only if further finance is obtained. We have been endeavouring to achieve this.

The Society's work on behalf of the region's heritage has always depended on the honorary labour of our while membership, whether writing local history, supervising the museum when it is open to the public, attending meetings, helping

in money raising activities or looking after expenditure. We need to add to our membership by encouraging the enrolment of the kind of men and women whom we welcomed in 1988.

Our thanks to all the committee members, to those already named, and to all the others whose generously-given time, effort, thought and money have helped to forward the work of the Society.