

The following is a reprint of Edgar Beale's report published in
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OPENING OF BAYLEY ROOM - 1 SEPTEMBER 1982
Upstairs class room.

This important occasion went very well and happily; I am sure everyone present will agree on that point. In addition to our patron (Lord Mayor , Ald. Frank Arkell) we had the Hon. L B Kelly, MP, Speaker of the House, and amongst others, representatives from other Societies, including the Royal Australian Historical Society. And most fittingly we had Mrs Phyl Bayley and the whole family and in-laws except Ron, who was detained by work. Our own members brought the total up to about a hundred.

Drinks and savouries from 7.30 pm preceded the short official programme at which it was my pleasure to preside. Speakers were the Lord Mayor, Mrs Bayley in a brief but obviously touched response, and Mr Jack Maynes, who pointed out that this night was the one-hundredth anniversary of the report that the Post and Telegraph Office (now our Museum building) was completed and open for business.

Mr Jim Boyle then presented a first day cover with special postmark to commemorate 150 years of postal services in Wollongong.

Yet even with this, it was a Bayley night, as it should have been.

Many of those present may not have known of one very pleasing but modest tribute. The framed record to Bill Bayley and a list of his books was printed by Tony Decorte of Stanwell Tops at the request of the Society. Printing is Tony's business, and the Society's approach, very properly, was commercial: naturally we could pay him. Yet such was Tony's regard for Bill Bayley that he not only rejected all attempts at payments, but at his own expense printed the memorial hand-out which every guest received. Our sincerest thanks therefore go to Tony Decorte.

We are not (thank goodness) a Society of back-slappers, but I could not let the magnificent supper which followed the formalities pass without comment. It was a *conversazione* which, as I explained, has been defined by that irrepressible wit, Frank Muir, as a soiree with a binge on top. And what a binge it was.

Which brings me to the most important point of all: the warm thanks due to Jack Maynes and his helpers in setting up the Bayley Room — a great work on its own — and in organising the whole function. It was a mighty effort. Forgetting the Army adage of no names, no pack drill, I cannot forbear mentioning, once more, Joyce McCarthy and Amelia Pezzutto, however many others there were to assist (including some willingly conscripted husbands). The amazing thing was that they all seemed to be enjoying themselves as they worked, and certainly they made the occasion most enjoyable for everyone else. You couldn't say they were shift workers, because they simply never stopped. Indeed, they kept going like a whole team of Bill Bayleys! But we all know why: it was their tribute to that indefatigable colleague we were remembering.

Edgar Beale