



Waipa welcomes Her Majesty

By Cathy Asplin

It was a trip down memory lane for many of the local residents who attended the gala Waikato premiere of Her Majesty in Te Awamutu last week.

They were either remembering the Queen's real visit here in 1953, experiencing some nostalgia about life in New Zealand during the 50's or reminiscing about their role as an extra in the movie which was made over four years ago (November 2000).

Several of the film's stars were present for the premiere - including Sally Andrews (Elizabeth Wakefield), Vicky Haughton (Hira Mata), Mark Clare (John Wakefield), Craig Elliott (Stuart Wakefield) and Anna Sheridan (Annabel Leach).

They took part in the small parade along Alexandra Street, before being welcomed by WDC Mayor Alan Livingston.

Promoter John Davies read out a speech from American writer/director Mark J. Gordon who wasn't able to be at the event, but made special mention of the late Liddy Holloway (who plays the role of Virginia Hobson).

"I would like to dedicate this screening and the release of Her Majesty throughout New Zealand to the memory of a very dear friend and exceptionally talented and gifted colleague, Liddy Holloway, who passed away on December 19. She would truly have loved to be here with you all for this special screening."



HER Majesty stars Sally Andrews and Anna Sheridan (right) get a giggle out of seeing Sally as a chubby faced 11-year-old on the promotional poster for the film currently showing at the Regent Cinema.

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He asked everyone to honour the extraordinary contributions of all the kiwis involved in the film by encouraging others to experience Her Majesty on the big screen.

For Sally Andrews (now 15) from Wellington the premiere provided an amusing look back at herself as an 11 year old.

"I certainly had a chubby little face then! It was my first screen performance, so I had plenty of help with it. Her Majesty was a wonderful experience and I'm really pleased it's finally here for people to enjoy."

She was also delighted the occasion allowed her to meet up again with Anna Sheridan (now 16) from Auckland, who plays the part of her on-screen best friend, Annabel Leach. Sally is facing her first year of NCEA and has been doing some small screen work since the making of Her Majesty, while Anna has been doing some stage work and plans to head to Germany for singing opportunities.



MARCHING girls and Te Awamutu Brass (rear) lead the small parade along Alexandra Street towards the Regent Cinema for the Waikato premiere of Her Majesty.

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NOSTALGIC VISIT

Local resident Maureen Brain attended the parade and premiere with her sister Gwenda Thorburn of Cambridge, who was an extra for Her Majesty. They remembered attending the Queen's actual visit in 1953, dressed in their white frocks, ankle socks and shoes.

"We were on the banks outside Ohaupo School, waving our flags like in the movie, when she stopped to wave to us."

This was the second time Mrs Brain and her sister have seen the movie, but it didn't dilute the enjoyment.

"I think I enjoyed it even more second time around - it's wonderful."

Local theatre director Coral Taylor also remembered the Queen's visit and says the film provided plenty of nostalgia.

"It was a real slice of life from the 50's. We've certainly moved on from those times, but it's nice to see the clothes and social life from that era, particularly the women dressing up in their hats and gloves for afternoon tea."

Mrs Taylor commended the performance of lead Sally Andrews as the royal lover Elizabeth Wakefield.

"She was a very appealing young actress - only 11 at that stage, playing a girl turning 13."

While she found one or two characters a little 'stilted' with their dialogue, she says it didn't deter from her overall enjoyment of Her Majesty.

"I even found it a little emotional at the end - I must admit I had a tear in my eye."



LOOKING much younger than the character she plays on the big screen, Vicky Haughton (centre) enjoys speeches outside the Regent Cinema. She plays the character of Hira, who also features on the film poster.

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