

December 2020 President's Report

Despite 2020 being a year of so much change and restriction due to Covid 19 the NFHS has found ways of moving forward in a very positive fashion.

At the beginning of the year all was normal - the start of a year where many good things had been planned and we all looked forward to them. So far so good for the first two and a half months. I found photos of our front office transformation in January when so many of our members worked so hard. Then came the photos of our first Genealogy Courses which had been planned so carefully to cater for the needs of our members. We met together so enthusiastically for "Getting Started Parts 1 and 2", "Getting Started Digitally" and "Organising Your Research Log and Citing Your Primary and Secondary Sources."

After March 20 we were unable to meet but the notes of the scheduled Genealogy Courses, so ably put together by those members who had volunteered to share their knowledge, were instead sent out to those who requested them.

The photos of our Seniors' Month Open Day on February 22 brought back memories of just how busy we had been and the wonderful morning tea which had been supplied by so many dedicated members.

Our monthly excursions began in the normal fashion which sometimes involved catching the early train to Sydney as a group for visits such as our most enjoyable outing to the Maritime Museum on January 31 and our fabulous trip with the Riverboat Postman on February 14.

Throughout the year our excursions, thoroughly researched and organised by Pat, have continued only slightly altered by our adherence to our Covid-Safe Plan. Many members have enjoyed each other's company while becoming more familiar with places such as Stockton, Minmi, Black Hill, Wallsend, Morpeth, Singleton, Lambton, Oakhampton and Walka Waterworks. Many have also greatly enhanced our outings by sharing their family history and their knowledge of those local areas once inhabited by their ancestors.

We have continually adapted the way we do things so that we can better cater for the needs of our members while following our Covid-Safe Plan with firm commitment. We have learnt that we can still have our monthly meetings, with the usual interesting and informative speakers, from the comfort of our own

homes via new technology called 'Zoom'. We have also moved forward by establishing Special Interest Groups according to the needs and interests of our members.

As we head into the new year we will be able to offer our members the opportunity of attending our rooms for each Monthly Meeting from February or to 'attend' from the comfort of their own homes via Zoom. This will enable members who live at a distance an opportunity to participate in meetings which has not been possible until recently. It may also be possible to offer the same opportunities for the Special Interest Groups and the Genealogy Courses if the need is there.

Although our doors were officially closed from March 20 until June 4 much was achieved by the Management Committee, Group Coordinators, the 2020 (now 2022) State Conference Sub-Committee and others during this time. We continue to reap the benefits of the planning and activities undertaken during this period and we can look forward to many good things to come in 2021.

Mel Woodford