

President's Report for March Journal 2020

Welcome to 2020 at the NFHS!!

We hope you like our new spacious look for the front office area – it will make for easier access to everything for all our members and volunteers. If you haven't visited the Mechanics' Institute recently this may be an excellent opportunity to drop in and have a look – you will always be made very welcome. A great deal of discussion, thought and effort has gone into this arrangement and we hope you like it. One very positive aspect is that you can now see two of the three original fireplaces.

You will also notice that we have new computers in the Blue Room which now total eight instead of six (with one more in the pipeline). We often become quite busy especially when our Orientation Sessions or Genealogy Courses are in progress so this will certainly help.

The year began for us on January 11 when we held the second of our two Library Volunteers' Inservice Courses (the first was on December 21). I am delighted to report that we had a very large number of people in attendance at both sessions where we discussed the procedures Library Volunteers carry out on Thursday afternoons and Saturdays. All seats were taken around the table and our library roster for 2020 is now looking very healthy indeed. If you have been considering joining our group of library volunteers you may care to read through the information on our website in the Members' Area under 'Volunteer Librarians'. You can also add your name to the roster via the website now, too. Volunteering for just one library duty per month makes a huge difference.

In recent years we have all experienced a significant increase in the cost of daily living. So too, the running costs of our Society have increased. NFHS membership fees were last updated in 2004. In the last membership year which ended on February 28 our compulsory costs totalled approximately \$11,500 (rent, electricity, insurance, internet/phone and the like). In addition, other expenses came to \$4,500. Income from Membership fees was \$7,460 – approximately half of our expenses. Because we have had some very successful publications in recent years we have been able to absorb this shortfall, however, there is no guarantee that this income stream will continue

into the future. Hence the time has come to increase our fees. From March 1, the beginning of our membership year, fees will increase by \$5 per category (please see Membership Table on the inside cover of the journal for the full breakdown). This increase will still not cover our annual overheads but it will, at least, help to bridge the gap a little. We know you will understand this necessity.

You now have access to credit card facilities at the Society when you renew your membership or purchase a publication. This will be extremely convenient when we are away from the rooms, as well. We often have publications available for sale when we man an information stall or trade table and many people don't carry much cash these days.

2020 will be a year filled with great things for our Society. We have already made a name for ourselves in the world of Family History and History Journals with a third acknowledgement of excellence via the Nick Vine Hall Award last year. We have been entrusted with hosting the 36th Annual State Conference (Family History) in September, and we have recently been invited to hold a position on the Management Committee of the NSW/ACT Association of Family History Societies. These are considerable honours.

Many of our members work tirelessly to ensure that the NFHS offers interesting and informative monthly excursions, visiting speakers, and educational classes. The Society hosts special days such as our well received Sandgate Historical Tours and popular Open Days. We hold history-based exhibitions such as our upcoming Female Bonnets Exhibition in Singleton which coincides with the 200 year celebrations of the town in mid-March, and another exhibition later in the year in Scone.

Our Society groups – Library, Planning, Snippers and Publications offer members an opportunity to contribute in a meaningful way in an atmosphere of friendly companionship. We have all made good friends amongst our like-minded fellow family historians over the years.

I am now about to sit back and enjoy the excellent articles which have been submitted for our March Journal while I sip my morning coffee. I hope you enjoy reading them as much as I know I will. Our thanks go out to contributors and the eTeam alike for all their efforts.