**Below is Marie Hart’s first report in the first newsletter that was produced by our Society. We are reprinting it in honour of Marie, our first President, who passed away on 17 March 2023, in our 40th Anniversary year. Five pages of articles, business and items of interest followed Marie’s**

**‘A Word from the President’**

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**FAR NORTH COAST FAMILY HISTORY GROUP**

**NEWSLETTER**

**No. 1 September, 1984.**

**A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Greetings from Ballina, and the Far North Coast Family History Group. I acknowledge, with gratitude, the Newsletters and good wishes received from other Groups and Societies upon the announcement of our existence in the June issue of Descent.

I suppose it could be said that history is in the making as we issue our very first newsletter! Our group is a small but enthusiastic one, which came into being on the December 17, 1983 when five ladies, in response to an item in the Notebook section of the Northern Star on December 10, gathered around my dining room table to discuss our shared interest in family history.

After three meetings, and a growth in membership to eleven, we were delighted to be given the use of the Ballina Library for our meetings at 2 p.m. on the first Saturday of each month.

We were still a small group, but had made our mark with a letter published in The Australian expressing our concern at the inability of the Public Record Office in Victoria and the State Archives in Queensland to supply information to researchers by correspondence. A note from the Director of the Society of Australian Genealogists, Mr, Nick Vine Hall, arrived to say "well done", but sadly these Departments have not yet changed their policies.

On June 29, 1984 we were privileged to be visited by Noel and Madeleine Layton. Mr. Layton is well known to genealogists as an entertaining and informative speaker and we considered ourselves honoured to have him come to our little corner of the world to talk on various methods of record keeping.

Under the direction of our Research Officer Mrs. Edna Tucker several members are assisting in the work of cemetery transcriptions begun by her some time earlier.

Our Secretary, Mrs. Betty Aberdeen, has cleverly acquired a microfiche reader for us, but since a reader is of little use without the fiche we have embarked on fund raising. To get the ball rolling our Treasurer, Mrs. Raylene McLaren, crocheted a double bedspread for us to raffle. We are still stunned at her completion of this task in the month between meetings, while caring for her family and nursing part-time at our local hospital. Perhaps her husband is the phantom crocheter!

All members have contributed in one way or another to the growth and interest of the Group, and it is vital that they continue to do so. It will only be with the consistent effort of all that we shall be able to grow, and fulfil our aims to promote the study of genealogy and associated subjects, to assist members and others in their individual research projects, and to collect and preserve material related to family, local and Australian History.

I thank all members for their co-operation, and particularly the Committee, which, like Topsy, is growing as demand for services increases:

Secretary Mrs. Betty Aberdeen

Vice President Mrs. Patricia Hughes

Treasurer Mrs. Raylene McLaren

Librarian Mrs. Dorothy Southwell

Publicity Officer Mrs. Jess Moore

Research Officer Mrs. Edna Tucker

May this be the first of many newsletters to exchange with other Societies, and to record, in a modest way, the efforts and achievements of the Far North Coast Family History Group.

Mrs. Marie Hart,

President.

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