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AWARD OF FELLOW OF QFHS INC.

Jackie Buttress, Mary Geiger and Bev Bonning have been admitted as Fellows of the Society for their devotion to advancing the work of the Society. Such a prestigious award is made to those who have given long and sustained exceptional service to the Society and to family history, and the Society permits a maximum of fifteen Fellows at any one time. A Fellow automatically confers life membership if this has not already been awarded. The Awards were presented by our patron Professor Graeme Nimmo RFD at our Research Centre on 6 February 2025.

Jackie's citation was submitted by Rosemary Kopitke and Eric Kopitke.

We nominate Jackie Buttress as a Fellow of the Queensland Family History Society.

Jackie joined the Society in January 1989 as member #1235.

The following year, in 1990, Jackie became a Library Assistant and she still assists in that role. From that early involvement as an LA, Jackie accepted the role of joint Library Coordinator along with Deanna Robertson in late 1991, taking over from Annie Thomas. By August 1995 organising the library rosters was added to her list of responsibilities. After Jackie and Deanna retired in 1998 they were replaced by a group of six people!

Jackie was elected to the Management Committee at the AGM in 1996. During her three years on the MC, she compiled the *News in Brief* for the journal to inform members what had been happening on the committee. Between 1998 and 2007, she assisted with the running of the Journal Loan Scheme whereby country members could have posted to them copies of journals received by the Society under reciprocal arrangement.

In May 1997, Jackie did a call for indexers in the journal—the task was to index names appearing in books in the Society library (sound familiar?). At the time this was separate to the projects organised by the publications group but around 58,000 entries from this project now reside online in the Name Accumulation Index. A few years later, Jackie joined Mary Geiger and Rosemary Kopitke to form a partnership publishing an incredible volume of material for use by researchers—a partnership which only ended in mid-2021.

Jackie's role in the partnership was primarily to coordinate the indexing team. In total there were over 300 different indexers, the largest number at any time being more than 100—in Brisbane, elsewhere in Australia, and even one in England. Some non-members thought our work so valuable, they asked to be part of the team. It is all very well to say Jackie “coordinated the indexing team”—what did that involve? Consider just one of our indexes, the Queensland Commonwealth Electoral Rolls. In total, there were 5,979 bundles of paperwork to be distributed and received back with the same number of Excel files to be dealt with—there were no digital copies available for circulating! The same process was required for all the bundles for school admissions, shipping lists, teachers, railway employees, public servants, brands, and many more records. Not content with just working with the indexers, Jackie also did some routine indexing (66,911 entries) and proofreading (570,203 entries) herself.

Apart from the publications mentioned above, the group worked on several projects to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the separation of Queensland from New South Wales. Of particular importance was the compilation of *Queensland Founding Families: Biographies of families living in Queensland prior to Separation from New South Wales*. This consists of 753 stories of families submitted by community members – 300 of which arrived in the week before the deadline for acceptance! Jackie corresponded with all those who submitted stories to acknowledge receipt of the story, obtain copyright clearance for photographs (where appropriate), and to request documentation verifying the presence of the family in

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Queensland prior to 10 December 1859. This publication reached beyond our membership and raised the profile of the Society in the wider community. Importantly, it received a Gold Award from the National Trust in the category of Community Awards—presented at Old Government House on 26 August 2010 by Justice Paul de Jersey.

Reaching out again beyond our membership and into that of the history community, Jackie co-ordinated the indexing of the three major Queensland Women's Suffrage Petitions of 1894 and 1897—a double petition by the Women's Equal Franchise Association in 1894 (one for women, the other for men) and the 1897 WCTU Suffrage Petition. With 15,442 entries, the index and images of the signatures are now available for all who are interested on both the Queensland Parliament and the Society websites. It was launched on 9 September 2014 by the Hon Ms Fiona Simpson, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, at Parliament House.

Jackie's interests also included other facets of the work of the Society. She:

- regularly compiled lists of “interesting websites” (before we had Snippets) for publication in the journal,
- co-ordinated the QFHS stalls at the Family History Fair in 1998 and 2004 and assisted at the Sunshine Coast Family and Local History Fair in 1999 as she did at many other similar events, and
- was an integral part of the relocation of the Society from Bowen Hills to Albion

in 1992 and then again in the move to Gaythorne in 2005.

The Services to Family History Award in 1995 recognised Jackie's contribution to the Society at that time. Her sustained, positive contribution over 34 years and the benefits to the Society both in stature and financially are now worthy of appointment as a Fellow of the Society.



Jackie receiving her certificate from Prof Nimmo

CONGRATULATIONS JACKIE

Mary's citation was submitted by Rosemary Kopittke and the late Dorothy Jeffrey

We nominate Mary Geiger as a Fellow of the Queensland Family History Society.

Mary joined the Society in July 1990 – member #1432. From the very beginning, she demonstrated her desire to assist in whatever way she was able.

Mary was elected to the Management Committee (MC) in June 1991—she says she

made the “mistake” of travelling to the general meetings with the then Secretary Pearl Mahony. She remained on the MC until retiring at the AGM in 2000, during which time she served as a committee member, Vice-President for three years, and Acting President in 1999 while the President was ill. She returned to the MC in June 2011, finally retiring from it in June 2016—a

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total of 14 years' service.

Not content with just occupying a chair on the MC, Mary took over as Bookshop Convenor at the same time as joining the committee - a job which also entailed preparing its financial reports (now the Treasurer's responsibility). Bookshop Convenor was an important role as it was the profits from the bookshop which were used to expand the resources available to the members.

The highlight of this period was organising the Society stand at the 1994 AFFHO Congress which was held in Queensland. Indeed, Mary gave up her idea of attending the Congress and used her annual leave to prepare and oversee our display and sales. She "retired" after this event but was soon back in the role again for a short while when the person who had replaced her found she was unable to continue.

Mary also served on a committee in 1991/92 to review and update our Constitution to reflect the growth of the Society. That was followed by a time from 1993 to 1996 on a subsequent committee to review and update the By-laws.

Other activities involved working as a Library Assistant in the mid-1990s and assisting to run the Trout Game from 1995 to 1997.

At the end of 1995 Mary was presented with the QFHS Services to Family History Award following her nomination by Glenys Prins. Her efforts for the Society did not cease then but rather were renewed!

Mary was keen to promote the Society and its publications at relevant events. Apart from the 1994 AFFHO Congress, she coordinated displays and sales at the Sunshine Coast Family and Local History Fair (1999), Forensic Genealogy with Colleen Fitzpatrick (2015), Footsteps in Time (2017), as well as other events at which the Society was represented and, more recently, at our own seminars at the Queensland Baptist Centre. The tables were always full of our own and other publications to ensure the widest possible attraction to those attending—always with excellent returns for the Society.

Her longest lasting contribution has been to the publications of the Society. From the mid-1990s Mary has been part of a publications team committed to indexing and making records available more widely to researchers. She has personally authored many publications, chief of which was the *Queensland Schools Past and Present* which was prepared as one of the Q150 projects by the Society. This database detailed information on over 5,100 schools—when they opened/closed, when they changed name, where they were located and any other details that could be found. Kerry Raymond has been able to use this data to incorporate information on schools in many Wikipedia articles.

Her special role in the publications group has been to source material for the indexing—preparing well over fifteen thousand indexer bundles. To source material Mary made numerous trips to the National Archives of Australia at Cannon Hill to copy electoral rolls held there, to the Education Library at Coorparoo searching for school histories, and trips to the Queensland State Archives (QSA) to locate pages missed from admission registers supplied to us. She also copied thousands of pages from the *Queensland Government Gazette*—lifting the heavy volumes was not a job for the faint-hearted. Mary is currently combing the QSA catalogue for details of school registers for the team to index—the group thinks she is doing such a great job at uncovering these there will be more than enough to outlast us all! On average, she is currently spending around 15 hours each week on tasks associated with our release of new material from school registers.

Mary has also played a part in the more usual activities of the publications group, having indexed almost 95,000 records and proofread just under 140,000 records; a not insignificant contribution.

Her efforts regarding publications are outstanding. She recognised the value of the *Queensland Government Gazettes* when they were offered to us by the Sunnybank SHS Archive Committee in 1997 and strove to use

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them to full advantage for the benefit of the Society. As well as preparing material for indexing she was involved in scanning the early gazettes, meaning we now have searchable copies of them in our resource centre.

The financial benefits to the Society of our publications have been enormous. These came initially from sales of microfiche, then CDs, then (and still) from royalties, and more recently from the sale of some of the data itself. Mary has played an integral part in all of this.

Mary deserved her award in 1995. Now it is time to recognise her sustained contribution over 33 years to the Society and the wide recognition and financial benefits she has brought to our Society through our publications – dedication and achievements which clearly deserve Mary's appointment as a Fellow of the Society.

CONGRATULATIONS MARY



Mary receiving her certificate from Prof Nimmo

Bev's citation was submitted by Rosemary Kopitke and Ann Swain.

We nominate Bev Bonning as a Fellow of the Queensland Family History Society.

Bev joined the Society in June 2001 – member #3678. Since then, she has been involved in many facets of the Society working to promote the Society to members and non-members alike.

It was not long after joining that Bev decided she should not just take from the Society but contribute towards its resources and management. She started indexing records for our publications group in 2003 and proofreading in 2010; activities she has continued until the current time. Overall, she has indexed in excess of 165,000 entries and proofread over 1.2 million records—an outstanding contribution to the data made available to our members and many researchers beyond our Society. On average Bev currently spends 40 hours each week proofreading the work of indexers to make the researchers' experience a rewarding one.

Her dedication and that of others to providing accurate resources has been of a huge financial benefit to QFHS.

From 2005 to 2019 Bev led the monthly New Members' Welcome and Orientation sessions, designed to assist new members understand the breadth of resources available to them at the Society and how those resources and other Society members could help further their research.

In 2005 Bev joined the Management Committee where she worked positively and diligently to deal with the numerous issues that arose until standing down in December 2015. When the opportunities arose, she willingly assisted at outside events, keen to make the society more widely known in the community. She is also a valued contributor to our journal both as a proof-reader (since 2007) and contributor of articles. As an ex-teacher Bev's articles are often from an educational viewpoint such as the 2015

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article, *Confessions of a Proofreader* (an article, in part, on Matilda Gaudin who served as matron on migrant ships to Brisbane from 1865 to 1888) and another in 2022, *The Cinderella of resources – school records* both articles which arose from her work with primary records being indexed for the society.

Not content with these contributions, Bev:

- worked as a library assistant for 17 years from 2002; in this role she was able to assist those with research queries directing them to resources we held which would prove useful,
- coordinated the distribution of Latter-day Saints microfilms for members of the Society from 2006 to 2016—she ordered the films, processed them on arrival, advised the researcher of their arrival, and then returned the films to Sydney after the hire period expired,
- recorded donations from 2007 to circa 2019,
- recorded member submitted pedigrees from 2010; she still holds the only complete file of submitted pedigrees with a couple still to add. While many researchers now rely on online trees to identify relatives, the pedigrees and their index continue to provide a valuable way to connect with other QFHS members with shared family interests.
- with Kerri Kleidon designed the QFHS banners, and
- updated the New Members Handbook.

She is also an active member of the English West Country Group, where she shares with other members the benefits of her extensive research experience in the area.

Bev's efforts beyond our Society (but still benefitting our members) include volunteer transcribing the parish records for Bedfordshire and Somerset for FreeREG and, indeed, being the convenor for the Bedfordshire group.

In 2017 Bev's volunteer work was more widely recognised in the local community when she was presented with the Everton Volunteer Recognition Award.

Bev received the QFHS Award for Services to Family History in 2008 for the work she had done and now, in recognition for unwavering support of the Society and the wider family history community since then, is worthy of appointment as a Fellow of the Society. She has over a long and sustained period promoted the Society in all facets of family history and genealogy, many of her ideas relating to family history and genealogy have been carried through for the benefit of the Society, raising both the Society's stature and finances, and she continues to make contributions to the running of the Society through avenues currently available to her.

The Society and the wider family history community would be the poorer without Bev's contributions.



*Bev receiving her certificate from
Professor Nimmo*

CONGRATULATIONS BEV ■