

I am pleased to present my president's report to the 2020 AGM.

The year 2020 started as usual for the Donald History and Natural History Group at our first monthly meeting on the second Monday of February when our guest speaker, Norm Hollis, spoke on the Hollis family history. In March we welcomed Linton Reilly who gave a presentation on the history and his recollections of the Donald Rifle Club.

Then along came the COVID-19 pandemic and our program for 2020 was disrupted. Our museums closed and meetings ceased until November. The Archives opened for a short time only to be closed again. It was due to the members that we found other ways during the year to promote and preserve the history of Donald and District.

Our April guest speaker and webmaster, John Kumm, uploaded a video presentation on the story of his Frederick John Cato family onto our website at donaldhistory.org.au

Archivist Anne Walsh continued to compile our monthly newsletter "The Buloke Bulletin" with Brian Brasier contributing the "Blast from the Past" component. These newsletters can be found on our website.

This year we offered an Associate Membership scheme for people from out of the area who wished to make a contribution to the Donald History and Natural History Group. Details can also be found on our website.

Our Facebook page and website requests kept Mary Archibald and Anne Walsh busy supplying information, photographs and publications for researcher in 'lockdown'.

The Archives received several requests from locals, among them "The Buloke Times" who wanted information on a number of topics including the Donald Shire Offices, Oakley Thompson Building and Scilley's Island Bridge. Anne Walsh and treasurer Harold Flett also wrote several interesting historical articles for "The Buloke Times".

Our Cope Cope project funded by a North Central, Catchment Management Authority (CMA) Victorian Landcare Grant saw 500 tube stock planted, fencing completed and signage erected at the site of the old hall in Memorial Lane. Due to COVID-19 restrictions this work was carried out by a small group of volunteers.

Beth and Norm Hollis took on a project during "lockdown" driving around the district and marking on a map the sites of the old State Schools. Their work was published in "The Buloke Times" and we now have an excellent reference tool.

During the year several articles were donated to the History Group and our Antiques and Collectables shop. A 1904 diary belonging to M. Holland of Avon Plains has also been promised to the group.

The Archives and Courthouse Museum both underwent repairs while closed.

In September the Archives and our Antiques and Collectables shop partly reopened and is now open on Tuesday, Wednesday and Fridays between 10 am and 4 pm. We have seen a steady stream of visitors return.

Colleen Raynes and Jen Campbell continue the work of indexing "The Times", and the "Donald Express", previously indexed onto cards, are presently being entered onto the computer.

I sincerely thank members who have volunteered their time keeping our Archives, Courthouse Museum, Agricultural Museum and Police Camp Museum maintained and running as smoothly as possible in an unpredictable year.