

PRESERVATION OF FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH

As we grow older many Family Historians are concerned that the work they have put so much time, effort, and money into, will not be valued and preserved for future generations.

At the General Meeting held on Friday, May 9, the Blue Mountains Family History Society Members broke up into groups to discuss ways in which we might be able to make sure our efforts will not be in vain.

Although there are a number of suggestions using computers, the general agreement was that the constantly changing and developing technology seems too impermanent for the purpose of long time preservation. **Preserving your precious research and documents in a number of ways is wise, and making a hard copy of some kind, is essential.**

Ian reminds us that beyond leaving our research in a Will, we need to do more for posterity. We need to preserve not just our family history, but the local history we have researched in relation to where our families lived and worked.

The following is a combined list of suggestions from the three groups.

- **Write a book.** Give copies of your family history to your children and perhaps your grandchildren. If they aren't interested now, they may be in the future.

It doesn't have to have an ISBN. Can be a simple A4 booklet printed at Officeworks.

If the book has an ISBN number it must be lodged with both the State and National Libraries. This ensures copyright and only costs about \$70 dollars. The book is now there for perpetuity.

Publish a few. Give copy to each niece and nephew as well as to own children.

Give a copy to your local library/Family History Society, or library/Family History Society, in area/town where family came from.

Read relevant articles in magazines for ideas on helping to write. (see Magazine Index)

- **Set up a website** with at least basic information on it. You can make the stories on your website password protected and only give access to those people to whom you wish to give access. The website can be archived on the Pandora Library archive of the National Library of Australia. Website cost for the name is about \$15 every two years and the host fee is \$99 annually. Be careful about personal information.
- **Consider using the Microsoft "Cloud".** The Cloud is in the California desert and covers 18 hectares. Apple have their own virtual storage.
- **Make one special copy of your research**, very nicely bound eg in leather, embroidered canvas and leave it to one family member in will. More likely to be kept than just a cupboard full of ringed binders! Discuss this beforehand with family.

- **Family Tree Sites.** You can put family trees on Ancestry, Rootsweb, or similar sites, without your family stories and personal information. Be aware of the problems with these sites, and consider the content carefully.
- **Give to SAG.** There are hundreds in SAG's magazine *Descent*.
- **Give it to someone you can trust.** If your family do not seem interested in family history, entrust your work and documents to someone you feel you can depend on to preserve it, just because you have asked them to do so. Leave it to them in your will, or give it to them in your lifetime.
- **Donate portions to interested parties** – eg. if your ancestor worked on the railways – the Railway Museum; a local museum, especially in smaller towns; Scottish clan research – to the Scottish Society, etc
- **Do personal narratives.** No one can write your story like you can yourself. Imagine if our ancestors had written their stories and left them for their descendants.
- **Make a scrapbook** on an ancestor or ancestors. An attractive article is more likely to survive, than a folder full of bits.
- **Articles.** You can put stories into publications, eg. *The Explorers' Tree*.
- **Make a large chart of your family tree** and laminate it. Make it as eye-catching as possible.
Laminated blank wall charts can also be purchased which can be written on with permanent markers.

Organise and prepare your research and documents carefully, so it is easier to pass on.

- Use the right materials – eg acid free paper, envelopes, pens, folders; (Anne Devrell has contact details where advice can be obtained from an address in Victoria. Scan photographs and important documents; identify photographs in pencil on the back, and store carefully; etc
- Have a system and stick to it, eg. Colour coding; a folder for all information about each person, etc.
- Keep away from moisture and insects
- Store in a sturdy container.