

NATAL INLAND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY AND NATAL INLAND BRANCH OF G.S.S.A.
CHAIRMAN'S COMBINED REPORT FOR 2007.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with some sadness that I present to you this report tonight as it is the last report that I will be presenting. As you all know I have embarked on a new career and spend the week down in Durban, only coming home for weekends. Because of the crime rate I am reluctant to drive at night. However I will still be a member and will help wherever I can with the running of the Societies albeit from a distance.

It is with sadness that we heard of the unfortunate death of Professor Ian Behrmann. When I joined the Society way back in 1983 Ian was a very active member but like most of us time has caught up with us and slowed us down. He achieved what we should all be aiming for and that is to publish all our researches into our family history into a book. I ask you all to stand for a minutes silence in memory of Ian.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen. Go well Ian we will miss you at our meetings.

Regrettably our membership continues to decrease. Our membership of the Natal Inland Family History Society stands at 26 and of the Natal Inland Branch of the G.S.S.A. at 13. This does not equate to 39 genealogists as many of the members of NIFHS are also members of NIBGSSA. We need to encourage people to become active in genealogy and to become members of the societies. We especially need younger members and members of other ethnic groups.

Our long standing treasurer Grant has left us for greener pastures overseas. Grant has been a member for many years and has been our treasurer for a long time. We wish him well in his new home. He too will continue to remain a member. Both Societies, although not rich, both have a positive bank balance as Jos, who has temporarily stepped into the breach will tell us.

Your Society/Societies have continued to arrange a monthly meeting, which we trust has been interesting to the members. This has not always been easy. It was disappointing to see that only 5 members and one spouse could make the trip to the Bergtheil Museum in Pinetown for an away meeting. The reasons for this are not clear. Your committee felt that a visit to a museum would be beneficial to members to introduce them to alternative sources for genealogical research. We ask you all to think of possible speakers and let your committee know so that they can approach the person concerned. Perhaps you can inform the new committee if you think away meetings are worthwhile arranging. Certainly the bring and share lunch part of it does encourage us to get to know our fellow members better.

Our hard working editor of GNUS has continued to produce a quarterly newsletter for NIFHS although a lack of articles has sometimes resulted in a delay in publishing. Again we ask you to please assist and try and get people to contribute. People's memories of the villages and towns that they grew up in are vital to anybody wishing to publish a history of that town or village and unless these are recorded they are lost forever when the person passes on. If any of you have letters or diaries written in bygone years or know of somebody who does have such letters or diaries please try and get permission for us to publish these. Such letters or diaries in the hands of a library, museum or archives hardly ever see the light of day and would be of interest to others.

Our library evenings too are poorly utilized with often only members of your committee turning up so that they can help anybody wishing to do research using our facilities. We have a good stock of books in our library and we have just acquired some books thanks to Jos. Anybody wishing to obtain a list of books available please consult John, our hard working librarian.

Once again we had a very pleasant Christmas party at the German Club house, a venue arranged by Jos.

And in conclusion ladies and gentlemen I ask you to think about the future of your Societies and how you can make a difference to them.

I would like to take this opportunity of personally thanking the hardworking members of your committee for all their commitment and hard work in the past year, making things work for you and I ask you all to please step forward and make yourself available as a committee member and fill the vacancies when they occur.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen.

Mike O' Connor
Chairman