



NEWSLETTER

NO. 49 AUGUST, 1990.
Genealogical Society of Victoria
Mid-Gippsland Group
P.O. Box 767
MORWELL Vic 3840

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Don Macreadie, Cowwarr 051 48 9251
SECRETARY: Miss. Melinda Van Klaveren 051 74 5452

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 1990.

The past twelve months have seen some changes in the administrative structure of the group. I believe the major change was moving the A.G.M. to July, while retaining the program on a calendar year thus enabling the new committee time to "find their feet" for a month or two before having to create a program for the following year.

The regular bi-monthly meeting of the executive committee was an improvement, but still required a special effort on behalf of those involved. The inaugural meeting of the Gippsland Groups in February was very successful and has resulted in a seminar run by the G.S.V. being offered to our area. If it goes ahead I hope all groups will be represented.

Our program was a little varied this year, but still our group has failed to attract a respectable number of new members. I am unsure of any specific reason for this but action must be taken to identify the cause and correct it fairly soon, or problems will arise that will greatly affect the functioning of the group as we know it.

To all the members who have supported our activities and helped to "run" the group in any way, thanks for your efforts. A special thanks to all those who accepted a position on the executive and assisted in the administration of the group over the last six months.

After acting as chairman for the last three terms of office, the time has come for someone else to accept the role. I have enjoyed my task as chairman and have had some very rewarding moments during my time in office, but the restrictions imposed by the demands of the twelve hour shift, the development of different interests and the feeling of "tiredness" in the position have all been instrumental in my decision to resign. I wish to remain a member of the group, but doubt my ability to attend on a regular basis.

Yours in Genealogy,

Greg Sephton

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS FOR 1990-1991.

CHAIRMAN: Don Macreadie

FIRST VICE CHAIRMAN: David MacInnes

SECOND VICE CHAIRMAN: Greg Sephton

SECRETARY: Melinda Van Klaveren

TREASURER: Jeannie Drane

LIBRARIAN: Florence Butcher

ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS: Jean MaNally and Shirely Connaghan

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE: Karen Healy and Laraine Ramselaar

PROGRAMME COORDINATOR: Second Vice Chairman

PUBLICITY OFFICER AND ANCESTOR REPORT: Dawn Cowley

PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER: First Vice Chairman

BOOK BUYING COMMITTEE: Librarian and her assistants

SUPPER COORDINATOR: Fiona Kemsley

SEMINAR COMMITTEE: Executive committee with power to add

RESEARCH OFFICERS: with people from specific areas

The membership fee for 1990-1991 is:

Ordinary Members	\$10-00
Family	\$12-00
Visitors	\$1-00 per meeting

OMISSION FROM LAST NEWSLETTER NO. 48.

For those wishing to write to the Deniliquin Historical Society, the address is:

P.O. Box 678
Deniliquin N.S.W. 2710

Taut, Titan terrific

Want to know hatched, matched and dispatched details in a hurry? KEVIN MURPHY logs into a new computer system.

If George Orwell had been Australian and written about a user-friendly Big Brother, he might have created a computer software package called Titan. He wasn't. He didn't. But a computer software team at Melbourne University did and formed a spin-off company (a rare beast in Australia) to market their world breakthrough.

Titan, a super-fast information retrieval system, could make much of the information mouldering away on library shelves and computer tapes accessible to anyone who can poke a keyboard (and has proper clearance). If that doesn't set your heart racing, how about this: Titan will soon make getting a copy of your birth certificate a walk-in, walk-out procedure. That is, if you live in Victoria.

Titan's creators fundamentally changed the logic behind operating a database. The more complicated the query, the faster it supplies the information. Need to know how many mothers of children born in Victoria last year were themselves born in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada? All you do is type in "Thunder Bay", wait a couple of nanoseconds and Titan will tell you: "one", then present the birth certificate details of the young Australian with the Thunder Bay mum.

Mother's birthplace is one of many birth certificate details which the computer can locate instantly. How many men named Felix fathered twins in the past four years? Easy. Punch in "Felix" and presto, the twins and their Felix dads appear. Amazingly, this software is so simple that the people who use the system design it themselves without calling in often expensive programmers some of whom, of course, see Titan as threatening their jobs. Any word, phrase or number on any file in the system can be located instantly. Files or texts can be searched. Imagine the possibilities.

Grahame Searle at Victoria's BDM has and he's very excited: "All of a sudden we have a tool almost beyond our comprehension." Searle leads a small team which is giving the office's huge pile of information the Titan treatment. Says his boss, acting registrar Mike Tinsely: "We haven't got our minds around it yet. We don't know what it will open up."

Titan will promote efficiency. Each year in Victoria about 60,000 babies are born, 30,000 people die and 30,000 marry. Before

Titan, clerks monthly shifted two stacks of 5000 birth certificates and hospital records to match them and find unregistered babies. Now it's done in seconds.

Staff welcome the new technology. Searle's team introduced all 120 BDM workers to Titan in groups of five. "Our people seem to like the idea that the computer comes around to human thinking rather than forcing them to think like a computer," he said. If all births back to 1965 were loaded up, there would be full cost recovery within five years through savings in salaries. The 1.2 to 1.3 million people born in the last 20 years are those most likely to require a birth certificate, for which the charge is \$22.

Apart from productivity gains, Titan is a researcher's dream. Searle's team can look at death certificates exactly as they do birth certificates. Doctors fill out specific cause-of-death forms so researchers will be able to search records quickly for patterns in deaths and illness formerly nearly impossible. For example, if a rare illness was to appear in Victoria, epidemiologists could check every personal detail listed on the death certificate for geographical, occupational, or hereditary information that could help determine who else might be at risk.

Searle's team has already worked on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. A search of Victoria's 36 cot deaths established

median figures for their ages, parent profiles and geographic locations as an example of what the system can do. Similar statistical treatment could advance knowledge about other diseases.

The system is set up so that researchers only get access to the information they need. BDM staff can blank out names and addresses on each certificate called up. For instance, research into AIDS deaths could be done without learning victims' personal details.

Michael Blaimy, director-general of Victoria's Department of Property and Services which runs BDM says he's "very impressed" with Titan. "it allows complex systems development in a very short time. It costs much less to run and we're able to provide more information than ever before." Because the system is portable, running off personal computers or mainframes, Blaimy's staff is looking at using Titan on other department databanks. The Land Titles Office is putting paper records which fill a five-storey building on 70 laser disks.

Blaimy says he can see "totally new business opportunities opening up." BDM reports to about 18 statutory bodies. Searle expects that to grow.

The Department of Property and Services' enthusiasm mirrors that of the approximately 80 other Titan users around

Australia. Says Searle, who's had several inquiries from governments about the system: "It's nice to show we bureaucrats can get something done."

Peter Reynolds, Director of Melbourne-based Knowledge Engineering, which designed and markets Titan, admits the software has done well. Some States are talking about joining WA in putting their Hansards on Titan. But real growth for the four-year-old company will come when Titan taps the Federal Government's databanks and begins to export.

Does Reynolds worry that Titan's ability to peer into our private lives will be abused? "As long as access to records is carefully controlled, this system could bring far more benefits than negatives." ■



Grahame Searle: "almost beyond our comprehension"

KIM BALBAKER

SNIPPETTS:

Yarram Genealogical Group.

On the 6th October 1990, the Yarram Genealogical Group are holding a Seminar with the following guest speakers- Sue McBeth, Wendy Baker and Frances Brown.

Any enquiries should be address to:

Esme Rash
Hon. Secretary
Yarram Genealogical Society
P O Box 42
Yarram Vic 3971

"Buried By The Sea".

A History of the Williamstown Cemetery by Andrew Lemon and Marjorie Morgan.

It offers a comprehensive list of the names of people buried there, for those who have ancestors or relatives in that area.

The book is available from:

The Memorial Park
Box 83
Altona Nth Vic 3025

Tel: (03) 314 7822

and cost is: \$29-99 plus \$5-00 for postage and handling.

Contributions are accepted in good faith and the Newsletter Committee do not accept responsibility for accuracy of information or opinions expressed.

Compiled for the Mid-Gippsland Group of The Genealogical Society of Victoria, by the Newsletter Committee.

Mrs. Karen Healy and Mrs. Laraine Ramselaar.