

## Publications Meeting Notes

16 February 2022 Friday 10.00 am at the Society rooms

Present: Jane Ison, Rosalie Bunn, Maree Shilling, Ken Shilling and Zoom (Roland Bannister Jim McDougall, Margaret Ashford)

Apologies: Pat Healion, Ros Cheetham

### 1. Copyright

This was an opportunity for members to ask questions and elicit clarification of any concerns or any elaboration regarding the Copyright document that is currently a draft with Management. Questions were answered by the President who is also a member of the Publications group. A copy of the relevant documents was sent to the Publications group and Journal group and all the group co-ordinators who may be affected by the copyright agreement.

Background: In late 2019 Jane Ison expressed concerns that NFHS's ability to reproduce historic publications (such as The Commonage; Catherine Hill Bay Cemetery ... and many more) might be affected if their copyright was challenged by the estate/s of those people who had created or contributed to the publication. There are also publications that have been given to NFHS by representatives of the estates of some authors for NFHS to freely use that need to be clearly identified as such.

Management suggested that any wording of a declaration to protect this copyright be created gratis by a group at the uni legal department to ensure it was legally sound. This statement was completed in April 2021. Management subsequently felt that the document should encompass more than just the historic publications initially considered so took control of the document and its implementation. In November a cover letter was written to explain the statement and some group coordinators were asked for feedback on both the document and the cover letter.

This copyright issue was brought up unexpectedly at the October Publications meeting with no opportunity for attendees to preview or consider any of the statement or letter and with no warning to any of the other groups, group-coordinators or members who may be or were to be affected by the copyright statement. It was therefore put on the agenda for the first Publications meeting of 2022.

In January 2022 the President was asked if Management would prefer to deal with the necessary information dissemination and discussion of the copyright issue or whether it was to be left with Publications to bring to the Publications meeting as promised at the October meeting. Sharing of the Copyright statement and the covering letter was left with Publications for this meeting.

### Results:

The group was keen to say that they were 99% in agreement in principle but were trying to avoid problems arising for a future committee by using their understanding of how their sub-committee worked by suggesting any potential issues that a problem 1% might introduce in the future by presenting all contingencies not considered by Management.

The group generally felt more at ease with how writers would be affected by the agreement and the cover letter as 1 signature was all that would be required and this signature was on an ongoing agreement where the Society retained all rights. If the agreement was not signed we would now not publish.

Even if you did not use Society material, if you presented your work to the Society then

that work would be covered under the agreement if it was signed.

If an item had been presented to the Society, then this act was also an agreement that we could publish whether the work was an entire publication or one part of a publication.

**NOTE: Mel must check with the legal team who designed the agreement as to whether part of or an entire document provided from the estate of a writer to the Society or created by them before their death is covered without this written agreement.**

**We still need an answer to the question: “Would publications or parts of those publications currently in our possession require a signature on the agreement from the estate or writers whose membership has expired?”**

**This particularly affects an increasing number of publications, viz. those written independently and donated by Merrilyn Minter and Monica Gibbs; publications written on behalf of the Society by deceased members such as Margaret Roulston (also writing as Margaret Owens) and Elaine Sheehan and publications written on behalf of the Society where the author is no longer or never was a member such as Heather Ling, Ian Lyons, Margaret Robson and Gloria Higgenbottom. There may be other authors whose work is in a similar situation. Addressing this looming problem was the purpose of Jane Ison’s initial action and the reason for the need to protect our copyright brought up by her in 2019.**

The Public Officer will coordinate the distribution of the agreement and covering letter. The Editor of the Journal and the Publications Officer will only need to be involved if a contributor of an article is not a Society member.

**NOTE: This process is not what is recorded in previous Management Minutes and Management needs to consider the process of how this information is to be most effectively disseminated throughout the Society.**

2. Roland brought up his concern that he is currently working with Paterson Historical Society to publish and whether this was a conflict for him. He was reassured that the Society supported other Societies. NFHS is happy to publicise work by members written for other Societies and stress that our copyright did not remove the copyright or intellectual property of the writer in any situation (Journal or Publications). The writer is free to publish or republish their work however and wherever they like.

### 3. Digital Publications

Publications needs to consider how to deal with constantly changing technologies and potential overseas sales of our publications as digital downloads. We agreed to ask Carol Duncan who had expressed an interest in assisting us to come and meet with the group. That date is tentatively the 22 April at the Society at 10.00am.

3. People of Newcastle Volume 3 is now with the proof readers.

4. Maree has also completed a 4<sup>th</sup> guide: Is there a Serviceman or woman in the Family? We need to consider the cost of our guides and also printing them in colour. Currently they are \$8.

Jane Ison

Next meeting will be with Carol Duncan, potentially on 22 April at the rooms.