

## AWARD FOR SERVICES TO FAMILY HISTORY

*Nominations are called each year for the QFHS Inc. Award for Services to Family History, which is reserved for QFHS members only, and in 2018 the Award was announced at our Volunteers' Morning Tea on 26 November. The nominations are considered by previous awardees as designated by the Management Committee and they form an ad hoc committee for this purpose each year.*

The nomination accepted for 2018 was Mary King, Member Number 3515. All services mentioned have been voluntary.

All QFHS members doing Irish research will forever be grateful to Mary King whose name is synonymous with Irish research. Mary, having joined in 2001, has fostered Irish research in our members since 2003.

In the May 2002 issue of the *Queensland Family Historian*, members were invited to express an interest in establishing an Irish Interest Group. Sufficient interest was indicated and the inaugural meeting was held on 1 Feb 2003. Mary King and the late Queenie Praeger agreed to share the Convenor's job, and apart from an initial period, until 2016 when Saadia Thomson Dwyer joined Mary as Co-Convenor, Mary has been the "face and name for Irish research at QFHS". It must be said that Mary and Sadia made a formidable team.

During the first year meetings were held monthly, later changing to the second Saturday of even numbered months. Mary's own research had given her a broad knowledge, and we Irish researchers benefited from many topics that Mary presented. Mary arranged for many talks that helped deepen our knowledge of the mysteries and idiosyncrasies of Irish research. We also learned through help sessions where we shared our "brick walls", and by accessing the many articles Mary filed in the Irish Research Binder found in the Print Room. Many of Mary's topics ended up being reprinted in our journal.

Mary was always prepared to give our members individual help, and there was always a queue waiting to consult her after meetings. Many members arranged to come in to QFHS at times when Mary was performing LA duties. Mary has been one of the "brilliant LA members" to serve QFHS from at least 2010.

In about 2006/7, I was present at an Irish Meeting when Mary told us about an email she had received from a woman in Ireland who wanted some help with some family information of her relative who had briefly emigrated to Brisbane in the early 1900s. When Mary revealed that this woman came from Lisburn in County Down, I couldn't get my hand up quickly enough to volunteer. I had recently tracked my Hodgen ancestors to that very place. My research effort in Queensland was not onerous and I asked this woman for advice about how I could proceed in my research. That lovely lady went to Belfast and researched the Parish Registers for my name of interest, and I received a database of dates and other useful information that helped my research immeasurably. I was blown away. It just proves the importance of attending meetings and sharing information. People can't help you if they don't know what help you need.

I would not be the only member who has a story of how the Irish Interest Group has helped unlock the mystery in family research. I'm sure that all former and current members of the group would support my assertion that Mary King is a most worthy recipient of the Award for Services to Family History. I'm proud to nominate her.



*Mary was not present at the Morning Tea and her award will be presented to her at a future event.*

*Bev Bonning reading Mary's nomination citation ■*