

President's Report BMUG October 2020

First, I'd like to acknowledge the Elders past and present who have inhabited this region for millennia. I am very grateful to them for their care and hope to learn from them how to maintain the beauty and wellness of the region.

2020 is a year that will not be quickly forgotten. It has not gone quickly for everyone and there are many who have borne the brunt of the efforts to keep us all safe. Those of us who have had a comparatively comfortable time are very grateful to them and thank them.

BMUG has been just one entity that has had to rethink its role, operations and even its survival in 2020.

As in so many organisations, BMUG has had the support of a wonderful secretary Peter Poteralski who has helped us develop systems and activities that everyone can appreciate. I wish to thank the Secretary for his efforts. We have a small budget and fewer than usual expenses for 2020. They have been successfully managed by our treasurer John Roszbach. I would like to thank him for his support throughout the year. Our Vice-Chair Carol Wilson decided to relinquish the position after many years of very helpful work within the BMUG Committee. I thank her especially and her colleague Mary-Ann Larimer who helped make our face-to-face meetings more friendly and successful (while we could still have them). And David Dixon and other members of the committee have contributed their skills and knowledge and I am grateful to them.

In particular, I would like to thank our software reviewer Peter Baldwin. Visiting our website, one can see notes and reviews and other information that has been generated by BMUG members for which we are very grateful. Thank you to all who have helped make BMUG's offerings interesting.

As Chair, I have been determined to develop systems to protect the privacy and security of members' information and their systems. I have also been concerned to ensure records of BMUG activities are properly reported and archived. This has not always resulted in simpler activities and many have had to be very tolerant while I, helped by others, have battled to fix the problems. As a tech interest group, I know that there are many who understand how complex these systems can be and are sympathetic to the mistakes I make. A number of them have been kind enough to write to me and express their support. Others are not so happy. I apologised to them recently for the difficulties they have encountered.

As we move towards 2021, I wonder what the future holds for BMUG. Our website and newsletter seem to reach a lot of people although we do not have many participating in our online Zoom meetings. A number of people who do attend, however, have told me how much fun they are having and that, in a funny way, the new medium makes it friendly and they enjoy participating. We hope that learning to meet up online has been instrumental in helping members also link up with their families and friends.

I am sure the incoming Committee will be very interested in ideas about how to make the online sessions more interesting and enjoyable and perhaps inclusive of people who would not normally be within range of our meetings. We are very pleased to have country members and think this could become a feature of BMUG in time.

Finally, in looking back we like to look forward. When there is no longer a threat from the virus, what will BMUG do? Perhaps sticking with online meetings will be good for many members. If so, we can surely organise physical meet-ups perhaps twice a year. Other models might work even better.

I wish the future of BMUG all the best and thank all members for participating this last year.

Liddy Nevile