INTERVIEW WITH MRS CAROLANNE BOWDEN REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FIRST NOOSA LIBRARY IN 1973

Following are the recollections of Mrs Carolanne Bowden, who was the President of the Noosa Library Establishment Committee, which was formed in 1971 in an endeavour to provide a free public library for the Noosa Shire. The Committee was as follows.

President Mrs Carolanne Bowden

List of members and helpers Dr Geoffrey Bowden

(incomplete) Sir Thomas Hiley

Mrs Jan Brown

Mr Graham Brown

Mr Ross McLean

Mr John Birrell

Mrs Pamela Milliner

Mr David Tilbury

There were many other helpers and supporters, and Carolanne advised that unfortunately their names could not be recalled, being over forty years ago.

The committee set to raising funds, and one of the initiatives they had was to circulate via letter boxes and other means a flyer asking residents and ratepayers to indicate by writing “yes” or “no” in a box if they were in favour, or not in favour, of convincing Noosa Council to support, and subsequently assist, with the establishment of a free public library (copy of original flyer supplied by Carolanne Bowden).

Sir Thomas Hiley, a Noosa resident and committee member, was at the time Queensland State Government Treasurer, and it is believed that his influence assisted greatly in the acquisition of the first library building. The ANZ Bank, who had their Tewantin branch set up in a temporary building in Poinciana Avenue, agreed to allow this building to be relocated to Ward Park, Moorindal Street, Tewantin. Reason for this was that a permanent building was to be erected for the ANZ bank on the same site as the temporary one.

So finally the Noosa community had at least the building that would house their first free public library, and located on land donated by the Noosa Council. And this building still stands today, and is utilised as part of the child care centre in Moorindal Street, Tewantin.

So now on to funding of the library, Cooroy veterinary surgeon Mr Ian MacDonald, was Noosa Shire Chairman at the time, and reportedly was quick to point out to the Establishment Committee that “nothing in life is free” , but the community was fully behind the committee’s efforts not only of fund raising but convincing Council that Noosa needed a library and that library should be partially funded by Council. In the end the State Government subsidised half the cost of establishment, the remainder came from local fund raising.

The committee also had good support from State Government Member Mr Gordon Simpson during this time and due to the efforts of all involved, they were successful with Council finally in agreement, and the result was the opening on Saturday, December 1, 1973 of the first Noosa Library, in a building donated by the ANZ Bank, on land donated by Council in Moorindal Street, Tewantin.

At the opening the Tewantin Noosa Lions Club made a generous donation to the Library of a caravan, which would serve as a mobile library, and would be a great asset to those people who lived in the outlying areas of Noosa Shire. Parliamentarian Mr Gordon Simpson was most supportive of the mobile library, and through his efforts greatly assisted all residents of the Noosa Shire, particularly in the outlying areas, being able to use this mobile library.

The first librarian was Mrs Margaret Schmidts , she was well known to the local community. Soon after the library opened there was a tremendous storm in the area and unfortunately the roof leaked, it was reported that water was running down the walls of the building, but it did not deter the enthusiasm of the local community, somehow the building was repaired and it was business as usual.

Carolanne Bowden and her husband Dr Geoff Bowden have lived at Tewantin around 44 years. Dr Bowden had three medical practices in the Noosa area, at Tewantin, Noosaville and Noosa Heads. Carolanne was a former school teacher and sometimes worked as a fill in teacher.