



Kapiti Branch

September 2004

THANKS go to Trish Mackay for the donation of back-issue "Australian Family Tree Connections". Also donated, anonymously, was a scrapbook collection of "Dominion" Births Marriages and Deaths cuttings 15.7.2002-29.7.2004. Other recent additions were a number of back-issue Essex FHS magazines, together with some "New Zealand Memories" magazines picked up at a Garage Sale.

CONVENOR'S COMMENT

It's that time again!! The year has flown past and on October 28 we will be holding the Annual General Meeting. I know it's "turn off" stuff and some of my colleagues tell me if I carry on about it the turnout will be poor! I'll take the risk.

We have had a very successful year. Membership continues to climb and by the time this edition hits the streets we'll be around 130 members. Attendance at monthly meetings is over 50. So we are now one of the big Branches of NZSG. The reason for this has been a very active Committee even though under-strength. This has allowed us to up the ante in a number of areas. The Newsletter has been upgraded and circulated to all by e-mail or snail mail. We have our own website. Improvements to our resources in the Paraparaumu Public Library have included substantial updating of our microfiche collection; additional publications and CDs; and 2 computers - steady usage by members is the norm. Wednesday morning help desk sessions have also been well attended. Kapiti GenForum and search facilities have been introduced. The Genealogy Computer Group merges with us in October. Our monthly meeting focus on practical tips and "how to" sessions, together with out of town visits to research days, national facilities, and sessions at other branches, have been well received. I will cover these and others in more detail in the Annual Report.

Like all voluntary groups, we depend entirely on the goodwill and interest of members. Maintenance of our activities and further improvements are wholly dependent on those willing to put that little bit extra into family history and genealogy by becoming members of the Committee, Appointed Officers or joining special groups and working bees. Several Committee members have indicated they will retire this year. We will be sorry to see them go, but respect their wish to have time out as most have been on the Committee for some years or have personal commitments that make other demands. Doreen Heron (Treasurer), Debbie Benton (Librarian), Marydell Haddock (Projects), will not seek re-election; Alison Procter (Newsletter Editor) will stand again but seeks a portfolio change. Appointed Officer George Watson (Meeting Registrar) is also stepping down. Derek Griffis (Secretary) and I are prepared to continue, together with Barry Thomson

(Webmaster) and Meryl Opie (Hostess and Magazine Circulation). So you can see why I am sticking my neck out for help!

The NZSG Constitution requires Branches to have a minimum of 5 elected Committee members, which includes the 3 Officers of Convenor, Secretary and Treasurer. In practice we require more than this and in recent years there have been 5 to 6 committee members in addition to the Officers. The more members we have the better we can spread the workload. Next year we will also have the Computer Special Interest Group to manage. The Committee can co-opt and appoint any number of Appointed Officers (non-Committee members), to carry out specific tasks. Notwithstanding this latter option, a core Committee team is vital for the future of the Branch. Committee members are elected annually, must be current NZSG members and retain their membership throughout their term.

So this is a plea to you all to participate in the AGM process and get those nominations in for the Committee. Nominations must be proposed and seconded by current members of NZSG who must also be members of the Branch, and full details will be promulgated separately from this newsletter. In addition to the 3 officers, the skills we need are those with interests in programme organisation, seeking sponsorship and fund raising, publicity, librarian, newsletter editor, projects, sales, research/help-desk and newcomer with the merger, computer special interests. You don't have to be an experienced genealogist (whatever that means), to be on the Committee - it's your support and interest that counts, irrespective of whether you've been searching for your ggg grandmother for 1 year or 21 years! Please give me a call if you require any further information.

Clive Palmer

COMPUTER CORNER

There are so many resources for genealogists, some easier to access than others. One resource that was under-used because of accessibility is newspapers. The Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington has hundreds of newspapers on microfilm some of which can now be accessed online. Most of the newspapers held on film are now on the National Libraries web site. The best way to find out which papers they have is to use the keyword search for the area you are interested in. You could try Taranaki+newspapers.

If you have access to a film reader the films can be borrowed from the library on interloan. Early newspapers have a wealth of information. Some will have passenger lists, birth, death, marriage notices though not so many in the early papers. They also cover a wide range of articles from what was happening locally to what was happening around the world. They give a wonderful insight to what events were happening at the time in the towns your ancestors were living.

One problem with viewing the online papers is download time. If you're using a dialup modem the pages can take up to five minutes to download so be prepared to

spend a bit of time at the computer waiting.

You can save the pages to your hard drive or print the pages from the site.

To access the catalogue go to <http://www.natlib.govt.nz/index.html> click on search our digital collections the Papers Past.

NOTICES

Are You Willing?.Can You Persuade Someone to Come Forward? We are looking for new Committee members, as several of the current ones will be standing down at our Annual General Meeting in October. We thank them for giving unstinted support over the years and wish them well in their retirement. But we need replacements. How about you?

Porirua Research Two items:- 1. The LDS Centre is still open Mondays & Wednesdays between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.. Frank tells me that there are problems with staffing at times, and sometimes they say it is very quiet with nobody calling in. and 2. The Porirua Public Library charge for those researching family history is still only \$3 (someone told me it had gone up to \$5)

Other Research <http://www.genofinder.com/index.html>

Isn't it amazing how many resources there are on the internet - yet, every now and then another superb site comes along. This site is an absolute brainwave, and has the potential to be one of the best websites around, and on all of our favourites along with GENUKI. This site is basically a portal for freely available databases and records. Yes, a one stop site where you can search a multitude of databases, with records from many different sources. The search mechanism is easy to use, I found it a little slow at times, but quick enough, and returning good results. The results come with a full explanation of source, which is fantastic. There is already a vast amount of records on the site, and it appears to be growing quickly. The site is extremely easy to navigate, and the design is very professional and pleasing on the eye. I was not asked for payment at any point (although of course there may be undiscovered parts that need payment!) This site is absolutely fantastic, and one of the best I have ever found. My advice is to visit straight away! <http://www.britishgenealogy.com/resources/census/index.htm> This excellent page will be a help to all those beginning family history research in Britain. The site details censuses, and how they were taken, what information they held and how useful they will be to family research. There is information on registration districts, folios, and lots of other information that will be extremely useful. Easy to navigate and well designed this is a site, certainly when starting out, you should have bookmarked. An excellent research help.

From Issue 174 Genuki Family History News

REPORTS

Special Interest Research Day

Palmerston North Branch is to be congratulated on a very successful day, and a big "Thank You" must go to the special interest group leaders who brought down so

much material from the NZSG Family Research Centre in Auckland. It was certainly an opportunity not to be missed, and about 10 of our members went for the day.

The Community Leisure Centre was an excellent venue, with plenty of space and a lot of effort must have gone into setting up everything. Each interest group had its own spot, with reference books, newsletters, and microfiche relating to that area, with one or two people hovering around to answer any questions on that particular area. They were most helpful and friendly.

During the day someone from each special interest group in turn gave a brief talk on their own area, explaining that people often joined for a short time when doing research in a particular county, then dropped out when their research moved on elsewhere.

Down the centre of the hall, about 20 microfiche readers were set up, and, for most of the day they were fully occupied, so really they could have done with a few more. There was so much information there, it was hard to know where to start, even after a wander around the hall to see what was where.

From the Region

We welcomed the Kilbirnie Branch that is now a fully fledged member of the NZSG. For years it has been an independent group delving into family history, but it finally applied to become a Branch and at this regional meeting their representative was presented with their brand-new banner. I was delighted to see Lloyd Jarden among them. Some of our members would remember him as a staunch member of the Kapiti Branch for several years, before moving to the Rita Angus Retirement Village in Wellington. Apparently this Kilbirnie group normally meets at a room in the Kilbirnie Police Station, but once recently they were unable to do so, because the room was taken up with recovered stolen goods! Lloyd came to the rescue, arranging that they use a community room at Rita Angus. He told me he was "just the chauffeur" for this meeting, and it was great to see him again, looking very much as usual.

Graeme Constable, the NZSG President, has not yet broken his ties with this region, and once again came down to chair the Region meeting. He told us that in future Brenda Joyce from Tawa, the new NZSG Officer in charge of Liaison, will be our Chairperson, but on that particular day, she was away at another meeting. Apparently Whitcoulls are updating Anne Bromell's book and it is to come out later this year. I have since heard that Anne Bromell has died. We were told that the NZSG is one of the biggest organizations in New Zealand with the 20,000th member joining up.

September is Family History Month, independent of the Heritage Month held in June. and we have set up another display in the Paraparaumu Library. Graeme advised us that all Branches were being sent NZSG posters for their own publicity uses. Whitcoulls has approached the NZSG saying there is a demand for a Family History book and can our organization help. The Ted Gilbert Literary Trust has

proposed setting up an archive on family history, which this meeting wholly supported. The Trust is to do a feasibility study and report back to NZSG Council. We learnt that Chris Fromont and Keith Bird from the Family History Centre in Panmure have regrettably both resigned. We will be notified when replacements have been found. The 2005 NZSG AGM will be held in Nelson

Californian Writing Contest. In the July/August 2004 The Genealogist NZSG members are invited to submit entries in the Southern California Genealogical Society's annual contest. There are three categories:- Category 1. For unpublished family or local history articles, character sketches or memoirs of up to 2000 words, Category 2:- articles that may have been previously published, and Category 3:- caters for 1000 words or less. Full details are available on the SCGS website at <http://www.scgsgenealogy.com>

ARTICLES

News & Tips: Discs don't last forever.

Many family historians have used recordable CDs to save digital photographs, genealogical data and backup files. However, an investigation by a Dutch magazine, PC Active, has shown that some CD-Rs are unreadable in as little as two years, because the dyes in the recording layer fade. These dyes replace the aluminium "pits" of a music CD or CD-ROM, which the laser uses to distinguish 0s from 1s. If the dye fades, there's no difference; it's just a long string of nothing to the playback laser.

The magazine's tests found unreadable data after just two years. "Though they looked fine from the outside, they turned out to be completely useless," writes the technical editor, Jeroen Horlings, who had begun testing 30 brands in 2001. He left the discs in a dark cupboard for two years, and then re-tested them in August 2003. Of the brands tested, 10% showed aging problems.

Recordable DVDs are not off the hook either. The dyes used are similar to those in CD-Rs though recording density and disc construction differ. "We're in the process of testing DVDs and we're sure that the same problems will occur," says Horlings. An alternative is to use the rewritable variety of discs (CD-RW) which use metallic materials that change the phase of light, rather than light-sensitive dyes.

In the wrong conditions, such as sunlight, humidity or upper surface damage your CD-R will slowly turn into a coaster "Discs should never be left lying in sunlight as there's an element of light sensitivity, certainly in the poor quality media," Gordon Stevenson, the managing director of Vagon International suggests, "I wouldn't rely on CD-Rs for long-term storage unless you're prepared to deal with them as recommended".

Such views are echoed by the National Archives at Kew. "Generally speaking, we don't recommend them for long-term storage," says Jeffrey Darlington from the Digital Preservation Department. TNA normally uses magnetic tape rated for a 30-

year life. They are careful to copy, check and re-copy to avoid losing information and this is also a useful strategy for CD-Rs. "If you keep doing that, so the CD-R is never more than three to five years old, you'll be safe enough," says Darlington.

Further information for more details on CD-Rs and dyes

www.burnworld.com/cdr/primer/whatis.htm

www.xdr2.com/CDR-Info/Dye.htm

Family History Month

September is Family History Month of the NZ Society of Genealogists. We have mounted a display in our research room at the Paraparaumu Public Library, will be promoting our Wednesday morning help desk session and inviting those interested in attending our September meeting. The theme of this meeting on Thursday September 23 will be an open discussion on your research highs, 'How did I get there'. It will be kick-started by a panel of Committee Members. As a special promotion we are inviting new members to pay their 2005 subscription now and get the rest of this year and access to our facilities free.

You can assist the promotion by inviting a friend or contact along to see and hear what we are all about.

ROUND & ABOUT

Bishops Transcripts

Taken from the Wellington Branch's May Newsletter.

In 1538 Thomas Cromwell, the Vicar General, ordered clergy to keep written records of baptisms, marriages and burials. These records were kept in each parish, in paper books. Not all the clergy complied with this order, so there was an injunction approved in 1598, which confirmed the mandate and ordered the clergy to copy entries from the paper registers to parchment books. The clergy were expected to copy the registers from the beginning, but many chose to interpret the ruling to mean that registers were to be copied from the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign in November 1558. Each incumbent was also obliged to copy his register every year at Easter and send it to his ecclesiastical superior; these copies are known as Bishops Transcripts even though the recipient was not always a bishop. Be aware that these are essentially copies of the parish records (therefore not necessarily accurate). As well, vicars could sometimes make entries in a notebook to be recorded later, possibly therefore also leading to omissions. However BTs can contain entries omitted from parish records and vice versa so a thorough researcher will check both. From "Suffolk Roots March 2004 & discovered in the Wairarapa Branch's newsletter

Agricultural Labourer

There was possibly no period in the history of the village labourer so black, degraded and hopeless as that between the years 1760 and 1832. The agricultural labourer at this time earned fourteen pence a day, or eight shillings a week, and his wife, were she lucky, might earn sixpence a day. Here are some of the things that

the labourer must provide for his family:- candles 3d.; bread or flour 1/8d.; yeast & salt 4d.; soap, starch 2½d; tea, sugar, butter 1/-; thread, worsted 3d. The weekly total would be some 8/4½ or £21.15.6d per annum, his earnings being £20.16.0. In addition to the weekly expenses, there were clothing, rent, fuel amounting to some £8 and leaving the happy villager with a yearly deficiency of nearly £9. He could buy neither milk nor cheese. He could not brew small beer save for some special occasion. So difficult was it to obtain soap for washing that they burned green fern and kneaded it into balls. A quarter of wheat in 1787 cost forty-eight shillings, and that amount was trebled later. Everywhere and in every way the labourer was oppressed by the farmer. Landlords and farmers were, at this time, advocating enclosures everywhere. The common field system was utterly wasteful: far better to throw all the fields into large farms.

Rogue Herries - Hugh Walpole via the NZSG Wellington Branch.

Prisoner of War Records

For WW1 most were destroyed in WW2. One of our members wrote to the German Archives and, from the reply received, he thought they saw the irony when they told him that all their records had been destroyed "by enemy action." This meant that the RAF in WW2 had done it. For WW2 more substantial records of POWs exist. Earlier this year our Branch received a copy of the 2003 edition of "Ancestral Trails" by Mark Herber which contains a lot of detail on POWs, and indeed on British Army records in general. Once this is processed through the Public Library system, it will be available to members, though maybe for reference only. More on this later.

Hearth Taxes in U.K

Was based on the number of hearths or chimneys that the occupier of the house possessed. They were liable to pay two shillings on each hearth. This was collected in two instalments, Lady Day (25th March) and Michaelmas (29th September.) The names of those who paid tax were listed, giving the number of hearths involved. Some were exempt through poverty, some by certificate, and others without are also listed. Houses where chimneys had been demolished and those that stood empty are noted.

(Excerpt from "The Hearth Tax list Skyrack Wapentake - Lady Day 1672)