



## NZSG New Plymouth Branch Newsletter



**Number 223**

**May 2009**

**Convenor:** Annette Larsen Ph 758 3320  
**Treasurer:** Lea Bellini Ph 758 0130  
**Secretary:** John Pickering Ph 758 4952

**Committee:** Marilyn Armitstead, Judy Berntsen,  
 John Berntsen, Michael Butler,  
 Karen Crowe, Elly Harrison,  
 Marjorie McMahon, Mike Merrick,  
 Marilyn Reid

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**New Plymouth Branch**  
**P.O. Box 429,**  
**New Plymouth 4340**

**Meetings:** 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday each month at  
 Branch Rooms 7.30pm, Moturoa  
 Shopping Centre  
 access off Whiteley St Carpark

**Email:**  
[newplymouth@genealogy.org.nz](mailto:newplymouth@genealogy.org.nz)

**Website:**  
<http://www.genealogynp.com>

**Branch Library:** Open free to members. A small charge to visitors.

**Opening Hours: Monday:** 10am to 3pm: **Wednesday:** 12 noon to 3pm  
**Friday & Saturday:** 10am to 12 noon

**Computer Group:** meets every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday every second month at 1.30pm in Branch Rms except  
 December and January. Open to anyone - \$2 door charge. **Convenor** – Bruce Bellini: **Treasurer** -  
 Lea Bellini.

### Branch News

#### **Last Meeting Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2009**

Michael Butler used a power-point presentation in speaking to some thirty members about his experiences over a period of twelve years in researching and publishing his book *The Luxford Saga* - the story of his wife's family.

Michael worked with consultant Ocean Reeve at local publishers PublishMe and was provided with all the criteria needed for the publishing of his book including page layout, front cover design and type and a text block giving headers footers and margin specifications.

After rigorous proofreading, a final copy in PDF format was supplied to the firm's publishing arm Zenith Print.

Michael used hundreds of research resources and these are detailed in the book's bibliography. However two of these resources stood out for him. These were

*PapersPast* for getting information and a feel for family life in nineteenth century New Zealand and *Ancestry.com* for researching members of the family who had emigrated from Britain to the United States

Contacts made with other members of the family, some for the first time, proved invaluable especially for acquiring copies of old photographs. Michael was able to use these to identify family members and place them on a timeline. Here, Ron Lambert provided significant help in the techniques of dating old photographs.

Michael touched on the need to exercise caution in dealing with the 'stories' which circulate in most families. In the Luxford family this was a supposed connection with British Royalty through King George the Fourth. Through tracing the whereabouts of the family member concerned, Michael was able to lay this particular family story to rest.

**Next Meeting: Branch  
AGM 7.30 pm May  
7<sup>th</sup> 2009 in the Branch  
Rooms.**

**Agenda:**

Apologies; Minutes of 38th AGM, 2007 & Special General Meeting 1 April 2008; Matters arising from minutes; Notices of Motion: Convenor's and Treasurer's Reports; Adoption of accounts & appointment of auditor for year to 31 March 2010. Annual subs for year to 31 March 2010; Service Awards; Election of Officers and Committee members; General Business.

**Guest Speaker:**

Gary Bastin from the Taranaki Research Centre at Puke Ariki Library will be speaking about new digital resources available to family history researchers and to a new resource "kete" (family history baskets) at the Centre.

**For Your Information**

**FHC Centre Opening Hours**

The LDS Family History Centre in Mangorei Road New Plymouth is open during May on Thursdays **only**.

1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> - 1 to 4.30pm  
2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> - 2.30 to 5pm

For information about the Centre please ring Joy Okey 757 3542 at the times above or outside these times at 753 4831.

**Refresher Course in Genealogy**

Michael Butler plans to run this popular course again in July and August of this year. It is a course suitable for both those beginning genealogy and those wishing to sharpen up their skills. Further details later.

**Welcome** to new Branch Members - Raewyn Knofflock (rejoining) Gail Prestidge, Lesley Allan and Kelly Ogle

**New Plymouth Genealogical Computing Group News**

The AGM of the Computer Group was held on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2009 at the New Plymouth NZSG Rooms.

New Officers elected were:

**Convenor:** Bruce Bellini  
**Secretary:** Position vacant  
**Treasurer:** Lea Bellini  
**Committee:** Peter Hewett

Topics covered at the AGM included presentations on changes to the way orders are made for BDM certificates: the National Maritime Heritage Seminar to be held during May 2009 in Wellington: the NZ Electronic Text Centre – in particular the six volumes of the Cyclopedia of NZ which is online at the site.

Also discussed was the matter of falling membership. It was agreed to hold meetings **every two months** from April 2009. The next meeting will be on June 21<sup>st</sup> 2009.

For enquiries regarding the Computer Group please contact Bruce on 758 0130

**On the Branch Library Shelves**

**April Issue of Family Tree Magazine**

Free Census & parish records online for Breconshire, Norfolk and Staffordshire.

Seeking out surnames on the internet.

Tracing Royal Navy personnel in the censuses.

Beyond the Parish Chest: a guide to lesser-known sources of the Parish Chest.

Scandinavian resources: Relatives in Denmark.

**April Issue of Practical Family History**

New 6 part series: Treasures from the Parish Chest.

Trace your forebears in the Scottish Highland and the Western Isles.

Web resources for researching Scottish ancestors.

Discover Irish ancestry: Part2 – branching out.

**Branch Projects**

Marilyn Reid reports that the indexing of shipping records for 1891 to 1895 by Mike Merrick is nearly completed. NPBHS school records to 1960 are complete.

Marilyn would appreciate donations of Funeral sheets for filing.

## Coming Up

40<sup>th</sup>

## Anniversary

In November this year the New Plymouth Branch will be celebrating its fortieth year as a registered Branch of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists. It is planned to mark the occasion with some form of celebration.

### British Isles Counties Night - 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2009

This is intended to be an opportunity for members to share their resources and experiences from researching British County repositories.

So please come along with anything which may be of interest including – maps, photos, lists of useful websites, County Family History Society materials, Parish Records, famous people, and family trees.

### Branch Programme for 2009

2<sup>nd</sup> June - Counties Night  
7<sup>th</sup> July – Jean Nicholls' talk –*Taranaki Between the Wars*

4<sup>th</sup> August – Waiouru Army Museum

### NZSG

Newsletters have been received recently from these Branches:

Blenheim, Canterbury, Hamilton, Motueka, Palmerston North, Stratford, Wairarapa and Wanganui

These are filed in folders on the last bay of library shelves.



## 'Nothing lasts forever'

In spite of the old saying, family genealogists naturally cling to the hope that their collections of family data recorded on various devices, will last well beyond their own passing.

However the Los Angeles Times recently carried an article in *Physics Today* (March 23 2009) which may serve as a cautionary tale.

In the 1970s NASA archives had in storage 2,500 tape disks which recorded important photos and data from the American exploration voyages to the Moon in the early 1960s.

NASA archivist Nancy Evans saved these from being destroyed in the hope that she would eventually be able to retrieve their historical data.

However she immediately ran into a major problem – only seven FR 900 drives to read these tapes had ever been built- each one being seven feet tall and weighing a ton. Worse still, all had long been scrapped. It seemed a hopeless case.

After much searching one surviving FR 900 was found but it was defunct and none of her team was knowledgeable enough about the old technology to make it work again.

Nancy Evans's luck held however. A technician from the earlier era was found who after much effort was able to repair the FR 900 and so the team retrieved and published the priceless photos and information.

This story is a warning that too much reliance should not be put upon technological gadgetry to preserve record data. CDs, DVDs, Pen drives and memory cards all have finite life spans ranging in some estimates from ten to 100 years.

However even within these life spans, technological advances and obsolescence may leave data on recording devices unreadable as in the NASA story.

Some experts claim that reliance on basic paper and ink is also risky with print from laser toner likely to fade over ten years and modern acid paper likely to last less than a hundred.

In the face of these problems the question is 'How can data best be preserved by the family historian for later generations?' The short answer is to use as many different methods for recording data as possible; use quality recording devices; spread your published data among as many of your family as possible; migrate your data to new recording devices as they are developed and consider placing your data online.

For a fuller appreciation of the problems of preservation and the solutions offered you may find the websites below worthwhile visiting.

[http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/la-na-lunar22-2009mar22\\_0931431\\_story?page=1](http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/la-na-lunar22-2009mar22_0931431_story?page=1)

[http://genealogy.com/67\\_donna.html](http://genealogy.com/67_donna.html)

<http://technicallyeasy.net/2008/08/which-storage0-devices-have-you-used/>

<http://www.cyndislist.com/preservation.htm#Electronic>

## **Of Interest**

### **National Archives UK**

April marked the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Henry V111 becoming King of England.

National Archives have set up an online exhibition Tudor Treasures which showcases some of the most beautiful documents from Henry's reign and backgrounds the social and political dimensions of his reign.

[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/henryV111/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/henryV111/)

### **More BMD Records**

100,000 records of births, baptisms, marriages, deaths and burials of British subjects overseas and on board ships have been added to the pay website [www.bmdregisters.co.uk/](http://www.bmdregisters.co.uk/)

These come from mostly the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and range from Methodists and Baptists to Presbyterians and Quakers.

### **Useful Gateway Sites**

These have useful links to other NZ sites including BDMs, cemetery databases, immigration, shipping, warbrides index, obituaries and church records.

<http://www.coraweb.com/nz/sites.htm>

<http://clanfraser.org.nz/genealogy/genlinks.html>

### **Guardian & Observer Digital Archive**

At this site you are able to search, browse, save and print articles from the Archive. Searching is free but viewing in full or printing requires paying for a timed pass.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk>

## **Notices**

### **Free Newspaper Column**

Mrs Shirley Hay of Dunedin compiles a column called *Tracing Your Ancestors* in a local Dunedin community newspaper. This comprises articles of local interest, photos, queries from researchers, and information about forthcoming genealogy events and reunions. The service is free and open to anyone.

Queries should in general relate to the Otago and Dunedin area and be sent to Mrs Shirley Hay, 13 Beach St, St Clair, Dunedin. 9012.

Include an SAE for return of photos, and any information that may arise. Include contact phone number email or fax addresses. An offer to refund postage or phone costs would be appreciated.

### **Help requested from Canada**

Susan Robinson Peters is seeking any information about Squadron Leader Albert Norman JONES, born May 13, 1911, who was Commanding Officer of No 16 Squadron RNZAF when the unit was formed in July 1942. Subsequently Jones joined 207 Squadron RAF flying Lancaster bombers.

Susan's uncle Albert Seibel, crewed with Jones as bomb-aimer on Lancaster (ME631) when it was shot down on April 26, 1944.

The pair spent time as POWs in Dulag Luft in Frankfurt and then at Stalag Luft 111 in Sagan until liberation in 1945.

After living post-war in England, Albert Jones decided to return to New Zealand by horseback in 1959. Susan has a London Times article dated March 30 1959 about this remarkable journey.

Before her uncle died Susan promised him she would try to contact his former crew mates.

Anyone with information about Albert Norman Jones in New Zealand and his journey home can contact Susan – email, [thepeters@personainternet.com](mailto:thepeters@personainternet.com) or fax (613)543-3763 or PO Box 606, Morrisburg, Ontario K0C 1X0 Canada

### **National Maritime Heritage Seminar 15-17 May**

#### **Wellington**

Things maritime - early voyages and exploration, whaling and coastal trading, immigration, ships and ships builders, the Navy and government vessels and shipwrecks are topics of this seminar with a wide range of maritime experts as speakers.

The programme includes a visit to Wellington's historic floating crane Hikitia, launch of the book *The Gold of the General Grant* and a lunch cruise on Wellington Harbour.

Further information and registration forms are available at [www.nzshipmarine.com](http://www.nzshipmarine.com)

Contributions to this newsletter are welcomed.

Email to: [wicky.family@ihug.co.nz](mailto:wicky.family@ihug.co.nz)