



NZSG New Plymouth Branch Newsletter



40th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BRANCH

Number 230

December 2009

Convenor: Annette Larsen Ph 758 3320
Treasurer: John Berntsen Ph 753 9188
Secretary: John Pickering Ph 758 4952

Committee: Lea Bellini, Judy Berntsen,
 Michael Butler,
 Elly Harrison, Charles Le Breton,
 Marjorie McMahon, Bev Mulqueen,
 Marilyn Reid, Peter Wicky

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

Meetings: 1st Tuesday each month at
 Branch Rooms 7.30pm, Moturoa
 Shopping Centre
 access off Whiteley Street Carpark

Email:
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 3rd Sunday every 2nd month at 1.30pm in the Branch Rooms starting from January 2010. No meeting in November and December 2009. Open to anyone - \$2 door charge. **Convenor** – Bruce Bellini; **Treasurer** - Lea Bellini.

Last Meeting Tuesday November 3rd

A Potpourri Evening provided a large attendance of members with a fascinating insight into techniques used by two members in researching their family history.

Annette Larsen used a power-point presentation to explain how she had made further use of GenesReunited enabling her to contact an Oamaru member of a parallel family line. Through this connection she obtained hitherto unknown family photos and information which helped her to solve a longstanding mystery arising from family accounts about the disappearance of a family ancestor. Annette emphasized that care needed to be taken in checking dates on BMD certificates when looking for possible inconsistencies in family stories.

Michael Butler entitled his power-point contribution 'The Ghost Busters' and

covered mysteries connected with his and his wife's family – the Gerse and Cann lines. In one instance an ancestor had made a name change and immigrated to New Zealand to avoid the financial consequences of bankruptcy. Similarly a second ancestor emigrated here from Belgium taking on a new name and starting a new life and family.

Michael was able to unlock the mysteries by thinking outside the square and noting name similarities in the families which backed evidence from records from a variety of records including shipping and legal sources.

Next Meeting: Tuesday 2nd February **Sharing Evening 7.30pm**

Members, who were unable to present their topics at the last meeting because time ran short, will have the opportunity to do so on February 2nd.

2010 Branch Meeting Programme

At the last Committee meeting, a number of topics for the 2010 programme were put forward including a *Special Interest Groups Weekend*.

The Committee would like to canvass Members' preferences for such a weekend. SIGs include these groups: Australian, Cornish, European, Greater London, Irish, Scottish, Maori, Midlands & Nthn England, and Sthn England & East Anglia.

You can indicate your preference at the February meeting or by phoning a Committee member.

For Your Information

Branch Library Dates

The last day the Library will be open this year is Saturday 12th December.

Please return all materials due back by this date.

The Library will re-open on Monday January 11th 2010.

Welcome to our latest new member (who is rejoining):
Lorraine Austin

Reminder: There will be no end of year social function held in December.

Results of the Christmas Hamper Draw

1st prize: Murray & Anne Evans

2nd prize: Ailsa McCrone

3rd prize: Marilyn Armitstead

Boxed Kiwi (donated by Bruce Mackay): John Pickering

On the Library Shelves

The Family Tree Magazine for November has the following articles of interest:

- Follow your ancestors to Canada: discover the unique Canadian Genealogy Centre.
- Capturing the Mood - the 1911 Census. Ruth A Symes reflects on aspects of pre-War British life soon to be changed forever.
- Research overseas: Jeremy Goldsmith visits Canada.
- Free online records for Lancashire, Cheshire and Munsley.
- Top 10 Resources: Sheena Tait explores the exhibition at the Imperial War Museum.

The Practical Family History Magazine for December has the following:

- Free online data for Herefordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire.
- Discover the Yeomanry.
- Tracing your ancestors in Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire.
- DNA the first of a two-part series explaining what DNA testing can reveal.
- The ever changing nature of communication and record keeping.

The January/February 2010 Issue of *New Zealand Memories* magazine is now available in the Branch Library.

Book Review

Census. The Expert Guide. Christopher, P and Annal, D. The National Archives. UK 2008.

Census. The Expert Guide is a practical and useful guide for the family genealogist who wishes to gain the most possible from researching the various UK census records.

Census has been written by Peter Christian, Fellow of the Society of Genealogists, author himself of *The Genealogist's Internet* and by David Annal, author of many genealogy books, who has held positions in the UK National Archives and Family Records Centre for many years.

The reader is introduced to an overview of the census in the United Kingdom, covering each census individually from 1841 to 1901, the 1911 census, various online census websites for England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, as well as free online census indexes.

There is a useful chapter comparing websites, what these offer and which are more useful. Succeeding chapters outline techniques for the researcher to use when dealing with original records, microfilms, and CD-ROMs. Included are case studies, accompanying photographs and copies of web pages.

Census. The Expert Guide is available at Puke Ariki Library in the Genealogy Section on the first floor.

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Donation of a Book: Thanks to Noeline Carey for her donation of *The Doyle Family History* to the Branch Library.

NZSG Matters

Release of new CD-Rom : the new *Victoria*

Outwards to New Zealand CD-Rom is to be released in December. This includes a transcription and index of passenger lists leaving Victoria for New Zealand over the period 1852-1923. It is possible to search by passenger name, Ship and Port of arrival. Cost \$50.

NZSG Family History Fair & AGM – Hamilton: 16-18th July 2010

Registration for this will open in February and will coincide with the distribution of the first Genealogist magazine for 2010.

Reservations for accommodation will be possible from early February.

Changes at LINZ

Land Information New Zealand

is closing three offices - at Auckland, Wellington, and Dunedin. Only Christchurch, servicing the South Island and Hamilton the North Island, will remain open.

Most of the records from closed offices will be transferred to the nearest office of Archives NZ. Lists of these records will be available through *Archway* at Archives.

Copies of land titles and other records can still be ordered by contacting LINZ and using the standard order forms. For more information refer to the NZSG website:

www.genealogy.org.nz

Identity Verification Service

This is a way for people to verify their identity to government agencies online in much the same way that a passport can be used to verify who you are while retaining your privacy.

To join the igovt Identity Verification Service, application must be made in person at one of the mobile office sessions. Currently these are only timetabled for Wellington, Auckland and Manukau over the period December and January. However further locations and timetables for these mobile offices are to be published in January 2010. Further information can be obtained by emailing igovt@dia.govt.nz

NZSG Website Links

<http://www.genealogy.org.nz> has links to a number of other genealogical sites worldwide. Two of these are:

The Charles Booth Online Archive which has new features allowing the online search and browsing of police notebooks, Stepney Union casebooks and Jewish notebooks from the later Victorian era. Charles Booth surveyed life and labour in London during the period 1886-1903.

England Jurisdictions 1851 introduced by Family Search enables the searcher to locate by map a place in England you want information about. Clicking on tabs provided gives access to details of the history of the place, the parish, what parish registers are available as well as information about the County and contiguous parishes.

OF INTEREST

The National Archives UK Guides

The researcher at TNA will find it well worthwhile reading the Guides which The National Archives provides for exploring its site: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/> Click on Research and Learning then on Research Guidance on the drop down menu

These research guides include:

- Animated introductions to using the Archive's records.
- Signposts which direct the researcher when looking for the history of an individual.
- Pointers to finding the history of places.
- Pointers to key resources when researching historical topics.
- In-depth guidance to track down resources for family, military and local history.

For example clicking on the section 'Looking for records of a person brings onscreen an extensive list of records and occupations both civilian and military

Clicking on **Masters and Apprentices** under **Occupations** takes the researcher to topics including:

What do I need to know before I start?

What records can I see online?

What records can I see at National Archives Kew?

What records can I find in other archives and organisations?

Links are provided to websites for these.

Newsletters which have been received this month from other NZSG branches include: Palmerston North, Motueka, Canterbury, Hutt Valley, Blenheim, and Wellington

The Encyclopedia of Genealogy

This is 'a free-content' and an online Encyclopedia created by its readers. It has become a compendium of tools and techniques for genealogists. It is available free of charge and contributions of information are welcomed. The site is searchable and there is also an Index to view the list of entries.

The Encyclopedia provides information about how to look up your family tree, gives explanations of genealogical research terms, and details of where to find records to research Italian, German, Polish, French- Canadian and other ancestors. It is however not a resource for looking up your ancestors themselves.

You are able to add your knowledge and expertise, to help others as well as correct any errors you might see.

Set up by Richard W Eastman, the noted American genealogist, the information provided by the Encyclopedia, is free of copyright, although copyright does apply to the name, the design, 'look and feel' of the website.

<http://www.eogen.com/> and click on *Encyclopedia of Genealogy*

Posting Board for Family History Queries

<http://www.GenQuerv.com> is a free service that provides an online database for genealogy queries and advertisements for societies, genealogical websites and researchers.

There is no fee or account; no contact information is revealed; queries remain for a year and longer-length queries are accepted.

Useful Websites

London Metropolitan Archives

If you are researching London ancestors, the LMA website <http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/lma> may prove useful.

The LMA and Guildhall Library Manuscripts have worked in partnership with Ancestry.co.uk to digitise sets of records available at the Ancestry website, but there are other databases available as well to the researcher at the LMA including:

- **London Signatures** which is an index of 10,000 wills from the Archdeaconry Court of Middlesex and 23,000 marriage bonds from the Commissary for the Archbishopric of Surrey. The index is searchable free online. If you find a document of interest, this can be purchased from this site.

- **London Generations** which is a database compiled from genealogical sources held at the LMA. It includes Anglican Parish Registers of Baptism, Marriage and Burial, Anglican Parish Poor Law Registers, Registers of Kensington, Chelsea, Shoreditch, and Hackney Boards of Guardians, Bishops Transcripts of Parish Registers and other sources, London County Council School Registers and Electoral Registers for the Counties of London and Middlesex.

- **Diocese of London Consistory Court Wills Index**

This contains 31,000 entries of wills and letters of administration compiled from London Diocesan Court registers, giving near complete coverage for the years 1514 – 1858 as several PDF files.

Note that the LMA also provides an online facility for searching its collections catalogue. There is also a Family History Research Service for those unable to visit the Archives.

New Releases of Military records

- Pay site **Familyrelatives.com** has released 1 million new military records covering the years from the Peninsular War in 1808 to WW1. Available at <http://www.familyrelatives.com/>
- Pay site **Ancestry.co.uk** has released the complete British Army WW1 Service Records online making it possible to search through 27 million images from personnel files. Available at: <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> Thanks to Michael Butler for notes on the two sites above.
- The National Archives has made 99,000 RAF officers' service records from Word War 1 available for the first time. The records are searchable by first name, surname and date of birth. Available through the Documents Online service at: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thanks to all those who helped to make our 40th such a success by: setting up St Mary's Hall; dismantling displays; supplying food and serving refreshments; supplying items for the Raffle; going on rosters; providing materials, stands and time for displays; making signs and decorations: to Hawera, Stratford and Inglewood Branches for taking part; to Jackie's Scrapbooking Inglewood; Bennys' Books, Puke Ariki & the Friends of Puke Ariki; St Mary's Church; Disabled Citizens Society; NZSG representative- Robyn Williams; to our Speakers - Jan Gow and Michael Butler. **Annette Larsen, NP Branch Convenor**

The 40th Anniversary Weekend

The Open Day

Saturday 21st November



Within a few minutes of the doors opening on the Saturday, some forty members of the public and genealogists were viewing the numerous display stands at the Family History Open Day in St Mary's Hall,

Vivian Street. The previous evening, hard working volunteers had set up fourteen display stands. These included those of sister NZSG branches from Hawera, Stratford, and Inglewood, NZSG itself, and those set up by the New Plymouth Branch – 3 Help Desks, the Taranaki Biographical Index, a Channel Islands and other Interest Groups, Charting and Power-point.

Other Displays were set up by St Mary's Church Archives, Friends of Puke Ariki and PublishMe.

The day's programme included three lectures given by Jan Gow. These explored various aspects of beginning family research, recording data and making use of resources. In a separate lecture Michael Butler outlined local resources available at Puke Ariki Library and at the New Plymouth Branch Rooms for family history researchers. The lectures, held in the adjacent lounge during the day, had audiences of between 40 and 50 for each session.

Two very welcome visitors to the Open Day were Peter White, the first Convenor of the Branch 1969/70 and Noeline Carey who was Convenor in 1990.

The Anniversary Dinner

Saturday night



Held in the Nosh Restaurant, the Dinner was attended by nearly sixty Branch members and their spouses as well as by many former members of the Branch from its early years.

Annette Larsen, present

Branch Convenor, welcomed everyone and introduced six former convenors - Heather Murdoch-Hall 1976/77, Karen Crowe, 1979/86, Wally Brown 1987/89, Anne Evans, 1994/97, Gail Tanner, 1998/01 and Michael Butler 2002/05. Annette thanked all who had helped with the organization of the Weekend. She acknowledged the great debt owed to earlier Branch Members who under difficult circumstances and with few facilities had helped to build up the extensive assets and resources enjoyed by the present-day Branch.

Robyn Williams representing NZSG congratulated the New Plymouth Branch on the occasion of its Fortieth Anniversary, noting that it was the fourth NZSG branch to open. She spoke of the fine assets the Branch possessed in its own Rooms and Library at Moturoa.

Previous Branch Convenors spoke of the Branch's early years and recalled memories of meetings in the homes of

members, in basements and various halls, of crawling under boxthorn to record headstone inscriptions in overgrown cemeteries and of building up databases by hand and typewriter.

The Fortieth Anniversary cake, baked by Marilyn Reid, was ceremonially cut by Thelma Somerville (Orr) who attended the first Branch meeting in November 1969.

Convenor Annette Larsen was presented with flowers by Marjorie McMahon on behalf of the Branch.

Branch Open Day

Sunday 22nd November



Over sixty members gathered at the Branch Rooms in Moturoa on the Sunday morning, beginning with a mix and mingle. Branch Convenor Annette Larsen followed this with her speech 'Forty Years

On' in which she covered the history of the Branch since its inception in November 1969 with ten members. Annette highlighted the sterling efforts of members in the first years, who though few in number, enthusiastically set about the task of recording inscriptions, BDMs, school records and building up hard copy and microfiche resources. By 1994 the Branch had a total of 65 members. In later years, highlights were the 2001 Taranaki Odyssey Conference, the work done in saving the Woods and Swainson Collections of photographs and the digitising of records in the TBI which now has over 500,000 entries.



In her lecture, Jan Gow continued her theme of the Spider's Web and linked this to the Internet. The Net is the way of the future; crucial in researching family history, providing unlimited access to

records worldwide, allowing us to share information with others and preserve our family history. She pointed to the value of using several search engines (Alta Vista, Ask and Clusty) as well as Google to maximize the chances of obtaining information sought. Jan demonstrated the usefulness of a personal management program such as TreePad in tracking search work done and noting that yet to be done

Jan answered questions from members about problems associated with research using maiden names and cloud computing. Her preference was for working with a personal computer database rather than online where there could security problems.

The day ended with thanks to the guest speaker and was followed by refreshments.



The New Plymouth Branch Committee take this opportunity to wish all Members a Very Happy Festive Season.

Contributions to this Newsletter are welcome. Email to: wickv.family@ihug.co.nz