New Plymouth Genealogy



ISSUE No 55 **Total Membership 115**

December 2026 In this Issue

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Hi everyone, I cannot believe that it is almost December again! I don't know about you, but, this year seems to have flown.

The last day for the library to be open this year is Monday the 14th December and we will reopen in the new year on Monday the 18th Jan.

We are running our annual Christmas Raffle again this year, and by the look of the collection we have on the table, the prizes will be worth winning. There could be three separate prizes!

You can get tickets if you are in the library before we close, and then on the day of the Christmas Celebration on Dec 5th. This is a Potluck lunch (bring your favourites) with finger food preferred. There will be a Christmas Quiz to keep you entertained.

Our first meeting of the new year will again be a Cemetery Visit. We are going to go to the Okato Cemetery. Last year we had to cancel because of the wet weather. Hopefully the Weather Gods will smile on us this year. We'll let you know the time and date closer to the time.

I have made the difficult decision to stand down as Convenor at the upcoming AGM next year. So, we will be looking for someone to replace me. If you can run meetings, and be available to help whenever it is needed, then please consider joining our committee, and or standing as the Convenor. I have been the Convenor (this time) since 2020, and prior to that I was Treasurer for a couple of years. I had held both positions a few years before, before taking a break away. If you are interested in becoming more involved, talk to a committee member. It is a great way to learn more about how our group operates, and the things that we do behind the scenes.

Anyway, if you can't make it to the Potluck lunch, I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas, get great presents, and have a happy new year. ***Gail***





Happy Xmas from the committee



150th anniversary of the opening of a railway line from New Plymouth to Waitara



This year marks the 150th anniversary of the opening of a railway line from New Plymouth to Waitara, on October 14, 1875. Here workers cart debris from Mt Eliot (formerly Puke Ariki Pā) between Egmont and Queen streets in New Plymouth for railway reclamation around 1900. ***(Photo Puke Ariki)***

February Meeting—The Okato Cemetery



Our next meeting will be a visit to the Okato Cemetery—last year we had to cancel it because of the weather, hopefully we'll have better luck this time! Tuesday February 2nd 2027 6pm start



Chairperson: Gail Tanner 027 376 0630
Secretary: Sally Morch
Treasurer: Lois Lovell
Committee: Lorraine Austin Peter Hewett
Sharyn Guthrie Glenys Krutz Russell Smith
Newsletter Editor: Hamish Guthrie
Sub Editor and contributor Sharyn Guthrie



Raffle winner—last meeting:

Peter Harris (AGAIN!)



Genealogy: Where the answer to one problem leads to two more!

Incase you hadn't heard……



DNA Painter **Jonny Perl, an English Genealogist from https://dnapainter.com/ writes a monthly newsletter which is free to receive. You also get a $5.00 (US) off his subscription if you pay for his website.**

It's worth reading – his latest one compares his review of wishes for the DNA companies from 2021 to 2026 and makes for interesting reading. His site has many helpful aspects to it that you can use for free or, if you subscribe, there are additional benefits. These include WATO Plus, Ancestral Trees, Chromosome mapping & more.

MONTHLY EMAIL TIPS

The free monthly tips email goes out towards the end of each month. As a bonus, after you sign up you can also get a discount of $5 on your next DNA Painter subscription.

Enter your email address *

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After you click 'sign up', you will receive a confirmation email.

Once you click the link in this email, your signup and discount of $5 off your next payment will be applied.

You may unsubscribe at any time using the link in our newsletter.

Mailing list FAQ

SIGN UP



BRICKWALLS – last meeting

We had a great night with a great response to our request for members to bring along their brick walls. There were walls of all sizes—not quite "The Great Wall of China" but some rather significant structures were presented.

It seems we have helped a few people to think about another approach, plus some options of what they might do next. Sharyn also showed a few websites that could potentially help. Remember stop and look at your information you have gained. What do you know? How do you know it? What do you want to know? Where could you find it?



LIBRARY DUTY

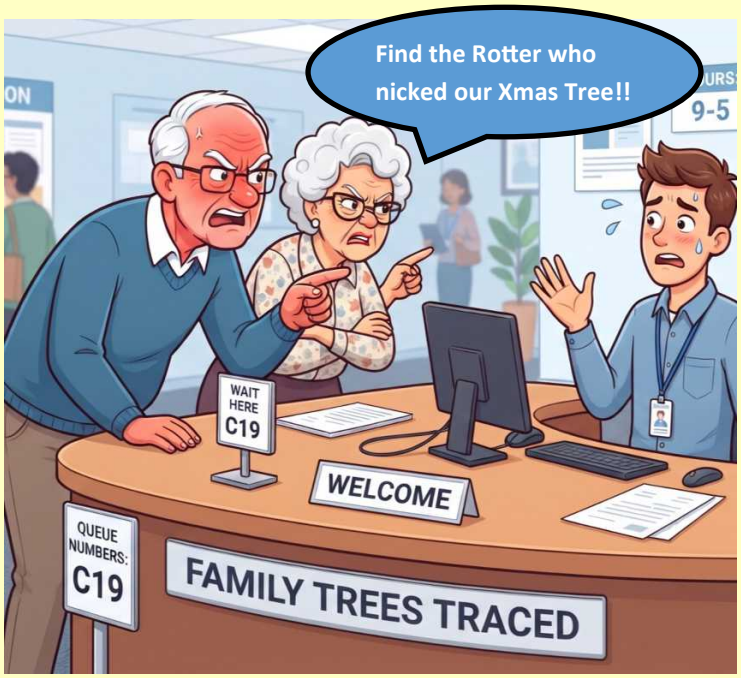
Sat 5 Dec Karen Crowe Mon 7 Dec Charles Le Breton

Sat 12 Dec Russell Smith Mon 14 Dec Lorraine Austin

Library will then be closed till January 18 unless by special arrangment







"I think my ancestors had several "bad heir" days."

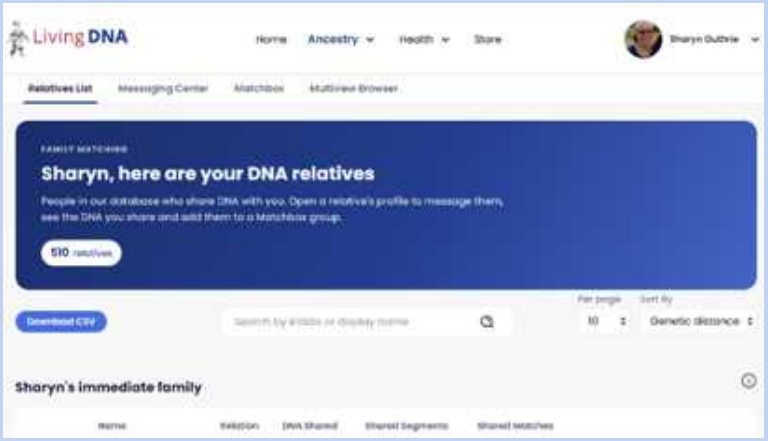
DNA CORNER

We have held the last DNA Interest Group meeting for the year. The next one is expected to be on Sunday the 14th of February – Valentine's Day! So mark that day in your new 2027 Diary or Calendar.

Have you ever looked at the DNA Company called "Living DNA". They are a UK based consumer DNA testing company founded in 2016 that offers detailed ancestry, wellbeing, and Haplogroup analyses using autosomal, mitochondrial, and Y chromosome DNA for a paid test.

You can upload for free and you will get DNA matching. For an upgrade you can get ethnicity and other information.

I have found several DNA matches that are not on other sites, and it has given me a detailed ethnicity breakdown of my UK ancestry. Ancestry.com.au now does this too and it is interesting to see where they match. They also have a feature called "Matchbox" that enables you to group your matches into family groups.





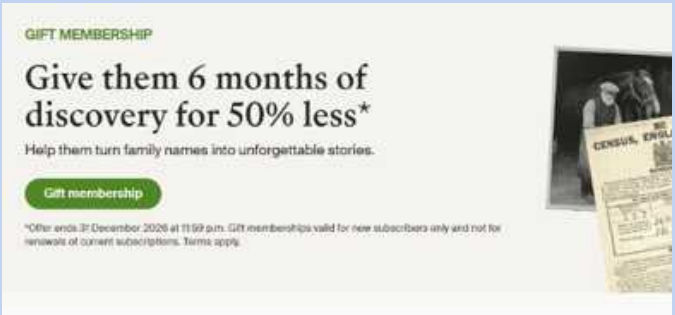
FACEBOOK

We are up to 322 members in our Facebook group. Most of the posts come from myself and my husband so I'd love to see others post too.

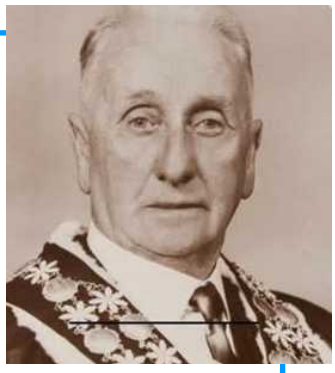
Recently Min White did just this and offered a much reduced price Ancestry subscription using the "Friends and Family" subscription. This was a great gesture of hers to offer this to someone and I believe it was quickly snapped up. You never know what you might read and it wasn't a scam!!

I'm about to post about the Ancestry DNA kit special though that finishes on the 30th Nov, I would think though there would be another one following very soon, but maybe not at this very low price. There is also a chance for an Ancestry Gift Subscription to be purchased – have you thought about asking your family to help you with this as very welcome Christmas present! Keep watching Facebook for stories and suggestions of a variety of genealogical treasures





The mayor who ruled for 20 years – and was beaten by his neighbour



Robert Cranston Gilmour

New Plymouth has had its share of colourful mayors, but few have left a bigger mark on the city's history than Everard Robert Cranston Gilmour, better known as E.R.C. Gilmour.

He was mayor for 20 consecutive years, from 1933 until 1953, making him New Plymouth's longest-serving mayor. Yet the end of his remarkable political career came with a twist worthy of a newspaper headline: the man who finally beat him was his next-door neighbour.

Born in Raglan in 1878, Gilmour moved to New Plymouth with his family when he was just nine years old.

He attended West End, Fitzroy and Central primary schools, growing up in the town that would eventually become the focus of his extraordinary public life.

His working career began in the office of estate agent P. Corkill. In 1905, he established his own business, developing an interest in property that would remain part of his professional life.

But it was public service that would make his name. His first attempt at public office came remarkably early. In 1897, aged just 19, he was elected to the Central School Committee. Unfortunately, someone discovered that he was too young to hold the position and he was forced to resign. It was an early political setback, but certainly not the last time Gilmour would put himself forward for public service.

He subsequently became involved in a remarkable range of civic responsibilities. He served on the Taranaki Hospital Board from 1917 until his retirement in 1956, a total of 39 years. He was also chief magistrate for many years and chaired the New Plymouth Patriotic Committee from its establishment during the First World War.

After two unsuccessful attempts at becoming mayor, Gilmour finally won the position in 1933. He would remain in the mayoral chair through some of the most challenging years in New Zealand's history. His mayoralty covered the Great Depression, the Second World War and the difficult post-war recovery.

For two decades, Gilmour became a familiar figure in the city's civic life. He represented a generation of local leaders for whom public service was not simply a three-year political commitment but a substantial part of their lives. His longevity was particularly impressive in an era when local politics could be fiercely contested and personal reputations mattered enormously.

However, even the longest-serving mayor is not guaranteed a lifetime appointment. In 1953, after two decades in office, Gilmour was finally defeated by E.O.E. Hill. And the result had an especially personal dimension. Hill lived next door to him. It is difficult to imagine a more unusual ending to a 20-year mayoralty. After spending two decades leading the city, Gilmour had to accept that his replacement lived just over the fence.

He died on October 29, 1958, aged 80, following a lifetime of outstanding public service. Today, his name survives in Gilmour Street, in Westown, a modest reminder of a man whose influence on New Plymouth extended well beyond his 20 years as mayor.

There have been many mayors since, but none has yet matched his record.

And perhaps the most memorable detail of all is that New Plymouth's longest-serving mayor was ultimately brought down not by a political outsider from another town, but by the neighbour living alongside him.

PRIMO

Primo supports us with a free internet connection—why not support them?
Great plans - and a friendly Taranaki person answers their helpline!
Call them on O800 123 774 www.primo.nz

How well do you know Taranaki? - Last Month's Answers



This person won a Citizen award in 2019—who is it?

It's Chaddy of course from Chaddys Charters



What street in New Plymouth is this? Photographed in 1910

Fulford St

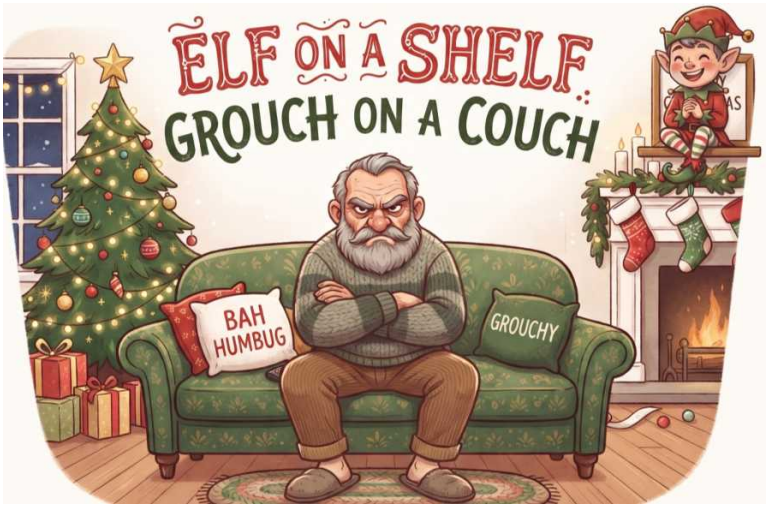
Congratulations to Vivienne Jones & Gail Tanner
The Chocolate fishing fleet is currently in "dry-dock"
but may return to sea sometime in 2027

Been to any Funerals lately?

Lorraine Austin has asked us to remind members to save the Funeral Sheets from any funerals they go to and bring a copy to the rooms if they can.

These can be for anyone anywhere in New Zealand as we all have family around the country and they give valuable information for Family History.





Correcting Our Transcribed folders

Could anyone who has a correction to be made in our Transcribed folders - e.g. Births, Deaths, Marriages, Baptisms, etc , could they please let a committee member or Lorraine Austin (Projects Person) know.
They must NOT be altered in pen or pencil. Peter Hewett or Graeme Jury can correct them on our TBI.

The policy for transcribing is that when we transcribe names we have to copy what is actually typed in the folder. We have a separate column where we enter corrections.

So many ancestors; so little time.

20 year Anniversary of the New Plymouth Genealogy Computing Group October 2012


Jill Stachurski Jill Jackson Meg Cardiff


Peter & Arlene Hewett


Ann & Murray Evans Bruce & Lea Bellini


Hamish & Sharyn Guthrie with Jan Gow


Jill O'Donnell Florence & Malcoim Potts



We want to make this a special one - but we need your help!! Please bring a suitable contribution to the next meeting, or any other time that our rooms are open. Prizes include a My Heritage DNA kit (donated by Carol Cowling) plus two vouchers for a litre tub of Hamish's famous home made icecream in the flavour of your choice! The raffle will be drawn at the Xmas Party.

For Your Information



CHRISTMAS HOURS FOR OUR ROOMS

Last day for the library open to members and the public is Monday the 14th of December. Opening again on Monday the 18th of Jan 2027. If anyone is visiting and would like access, please email us at newplymouthgenealogy@gmail.com and we will see if someone can come and open up for you. Please remember that Peter, who looks after this email address, will also be on holiday!

AFFHO—Australasian Federation FH Congress

Its now too late to get an "early bird "price to attend but not too late to attend at the standard price. DATES 11th to the 14th February 2027.

There's a great line up of speakers headed by Jonny Perl plus it's a wonderful opportunity to meet other genealogists from right around Australasia. The conference won't be back in New Zealand for quite a few years—so save the airfare– go along and have a jolly good time.

Library News Magazines received:

Who Do You Think You Are *(Still to arrive)* ***Family Tree*** *(November 2026)*

Newsletters received:

Canterbury, Feilding, Hamilton, Nelson, Palmerston North, Papakura, Papamoa, Porirua, Riccarton, and Wellington

If you would like an email copy of newsletters from another genealogy society or branch, please contact Peter Hewett
Email: newplymouthgenealogy@gmail.com



Erana Hond-Flavell

The Back Page

Hi everyone

Well here we are at the end of 2026 is it just my imagination but there seems to be less time every year to achieve all the goals that you started off with in January!

A big CONGRATULATIONS to the NP Genealogy committee for keeping the society running and providing a good mix of topics to help you all on the great genealogy search ...which never seems to end!

So what will next year bring? Maybe you have some ideas about new things our society could be doing—and better still—offer some help that would bring the idea into fruition.

We currently have well over a hundred members and yet we only ever see a fraction of them at our meetings - what could we do to encourage more of them to come along?

In the meantime have a wonderful and relaxing Xmas and I'll see you all again in 2027

Hamish

hamishg1@gmail.com



"I used to have a lot of free time… then I discovered genealogy."