



# Stratford Branch

*New Zealand Society of Genealogists.*

[www.stratfordgenealogy.homestead.com](http://www.stratfordgenealogy.homestead.com)

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Stratford Community House.

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## Convener's Comment

### Oh No!!!

I recently came across this paragraph on a genealogy website:

“Over time, you will compile more data and those seemingly contradictory pieces of evidence may prove to be just the pieces of the puzzle you need to prove or disprove your theory. Be sure to record the source of your information and the date you found it.”

How true!! Recently I needed to find some family information to “prove a point” to a relative about a family event. I found the piece of paper, but with no source or date, it was of little use. It only takes a minute or so to do the recording and can save lots of frustration in the future.

Carol



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**Next Branch Meeting**—The consensus of the Committee re the July meeting is that we won't have one. It is unrealistic to expect members to come out to a meeting on a cold and/or wet evening, such as we are currently experiencing.

## Branch Rooms

The Stratford Branch Rooms open

Tuesdays and Fridays from 10am – 3pm;

Saturdays 12 noon -2pm.

Our Branch Newsletter is now available each month on our web page-

[www.stratfordgenealogy.homestead.com](http://www.stratfordgenealogy.homestead.com)



## Web Sites

### Latest PAPERS PAST updates :

- Patea Mail 1875-1903.
- Manawatu Standard 1916-1920 and Manawatu Times 1916-1920.
- Mataura Ensign 1915-1919.
- Nelson Evening Mail 1919-1920.
- Waikato Argus 1896-1914.
- Pukekohe and Waiuku Times 1921-1924 and New Zealander 1853-1866.
- Southland Times 1906-1920

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<http://www.crafcroftspeerage.co.uk/> - The Complete Guide to the British Peerage & Baronetage. Over 3,000 pages of information.

### <http://ukga.org/>

United Kingdom Genealogy Archives. An ongoing-site with some interesting databases.

An Online Archive of Nursing Oral History in NZ - Posted by Michelle Patient on NZSG Members List

<http://www.nursinghistory.org.nz/index.php/>  
An Online Archive of Nursing Oral Histories in NZ

[www.railwayancestors.org.uk](http://www.railwayancestors.org.uk)—Track down your railway ancestors in the UK

### **The British Newspaper Archive**

You can now explore 8 million newspaper pages at The British Newspaper Archive

[www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk).

While adding editions of the Sheffield Daily Telegraph, Cheshire Observer and The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer, the counter on the homepage ticked over to display 8,000,000 pages.

You can see a list of the newspaper titles that have been added or updated in the last 30 days at:

[www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/home/LatestAdditions](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/home/LatestAdditions)

(From Wanganui Newsletter)

**Do remember to save used HP & Canon printer Cartridges and hand them in to the group . They provide an excellent fund raiser. The sales of books on Trademe are going well. Thanks to Carol for her efforts .**

### **The next version of the NZSG Kiwi collection**

The data is under testing at the moment and we are planning to launch this important resource to members on a Flash Drive during Family History Month (August).

### **Did you know???**

**Each king in a deck of playing cards represents a great king from history: Spades - King David; Hearts – Charlemagne; Clubs—Alexander, the Great; and Diamonds - Julius Caesar.**

### **POLITICAL SPIN AT ITS BEST - THE POWER OF LANGUAGE – ALWAYS CHECK YOUR FACTS**

*Following on from our story in the last newsletter with Kevin Rudd's reputed ancestors. A great story, but versions have been attributed to the family of many celebrities around the world, and apparently not true for Kevin Rudd either. Cynthia & Ken Henderson replied that they had seen exactly the same story attributed to an ancestor of NZ Minister Bill English. Also a good example of how the same events, true or false, can be reported and misreported and interpreted. Just goes to show that one should never trust the internet and always check primary sources when you can. Apparently the unfortunate pictured gentleman about to hang was in South America or Mexico. (From Canterbury Newsletter)*



## Snippets

### THE VALUE OF RESEARCH RESOURCES

Beverley Evans from Christchurch, indexes the "Christchurch Press" newspaper <http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~ashleigh/> and I often come across a Central Taranaki connection.

Recently there was a 1915 death notice for a William Thomas PEARCE of Stratford whose parents lived in Kaiapoi.

**Resource 1:** Papers Past - I found a report of his Inquest as the result of a collision with a train (NB the date of the accident was incorrect-so always check from another source).

**Resource 2:** from [www.bdm.govt.nz](http://www.bdm.govt.nz) I found his birth, marriage and the birth of two daughters.

**Resource 3:** from [www.ancestry.com.au](http://www.ancestry.com.au) I was able to find the family in Electoral Rolls.

**Resource 4:** [www.stratford.govt.nz](http://www.stratford.govt.nz) I looked for a burial, but there wasn't one. I e-mailed the Council's Archivist and asked for her help and she found him in the Burial Records as PIERCE (this has now been corrected), and I then was able to download a photo of his headstone.

**Resource 5:** The Central Taranaki school enrolments which were transcribed through a project organised by genealogists in 1980's. I found the daughters' enrolment records, which gave a hint that the mother remarried.

**Resource 6:** The NZSG Marriage CD gave me the year of the marriage and name of the mother's second husband.

**Resource 7:** On our master data base I found a reference to a Church burial record.

**Resource 8:** I belong to a genealogy facebook page and I posted a message about this family. I got a reply with scans of the wedding notices of his two daughters in Wellington.

These resources are all available at our Research Rooms, including the use of internet on our laptops. They can help you to have successful searches.

### **Heir Hunters - A little genealogy snippet which will knock your socks off!**

*"Yesterday (early May) I phoned a long time friend Heather who lives in Canada. We met in 1967 both doing our OE and have kept in touch since. Conversation came around to my Anzac research brought on by the renewed interest in all military memorabilia for the 100th anniversary this year.*

*Previously Heather had never shown much interest in her family history but she became quite animated as she related the following to me. Her father was born in early 1900s, he sowed plenty of wild oats in his youth. His first son, Heather's half brother was born. A few years later he repeated the event, and Heather then had a half sister. Heather's father eventually married her mother, and begat Heather and her 2 brothers, then father left the marriage abode, when the children were very young, never to be seen again. All of them retained the father's surname SINCLAIR.*

*Half brother was known about, he married 6 times, no children, he left his considerable estate to his half sister when he died a long time ago.*

*Heather's brother developed an interest in genealogy and posted their family tree on Ancestry.com recently, innocently. Within weeks they*

*had a call from the Toronto Public Trust who had been looking for siblings of the half sister who had died recently aged in her 90's with no*

*children, husband dead and no will and no known family. It transpired, as so often it does, that this half sister lived not far from Heather in*

*Toronto, neither knew the other existed. Heather and her two brothers are now the sole beneficiaries of this half sister's estate of \$500,000.*

*I kid you not! Who says a walk on the wild side doesn't pay!*

*Amazingly true, cheers, Diane Campbell  
(From Canterbury Newsletter)*

### **SOUTH TARANAKI MUSEUM**

#### **Eltham Exhibition:**

Seven members travelled to Patea to view an exhibition representing historical Eltham people and inventions, as well as other historical material and objects relating to South Taranaki. It was a trip down memory lane for those who attended.

The exhibition continues until 2nd August, so if you're passing through Patea, consider taking a break there.

Carol

We receive copies of branch newsletters from all over New Zealand. If anyone would like to see those we have at the moment, please email Maureen and I will send them on to you. If you don't have email let me know and I will get a copy printed for you.

**MIDHIRST, on State Highway 3 between Inglewood and Stratford:**

Ziping through this little settlement on the way to New Plymouth or Stratford or further afield, you probably hardly notice the settlement at all, but once upon a time Midhirst was more important than Stratford, and it was first envisaged that Midhirst would be the County Town.

In 1877 Mr Arthur Cracroft Fookes of New Plymouth was granted the right to take up 5000 acres of land to form the Midhirst Special Settlement. Towards the end of 1878 Robert Clegg built a store, the second building in Midhirst. The Mangonui Road Board had been formed in 1877 to begin the daunting task of providing roads where only bush tracks existed. For some years the roads around Midhirst were said to be impassable for wheeled traffic, but gradually the Road Board was able to raise sufficient loan money to clear, grade, drain, gravel or metal the roads around the township and northwards to the boundary of the Moa Road District.

For some years from 1880, Midhirst provided the only cemetery in the district, the dead being brought from Waipuku in the north and Stratford and Ngaere in the south. One pioneer made the terse observation that many children who died were buried on the farms, an obvious but tragic commentary on both the inaccessibility of immediate medical attention, and the non-existence of roads suitable to permit a dignified cortege and reasonably prompt burial.

Mr Fookes divided the settlement into quarter acre sections on each side of the railway line. His original map of Midhirst shows a neat spider-web or 'Hills Clothesline' shape of intersecting diagonal streets surrounding the central main road and railway line, which was opened for use in 1879. I don't think all of the streets on his plans were built, and some of those that were have disappeared since the Dairy Factory closed in 1983, as a lot of the houses were moved away to accommodate staff who transferred elsewhere. The Factory building still towers over Midhirst and is a very noticeable landmark.

In 1906 the township boasted a telephone exchange and various shops such as grocery stores, fruiterers, butchers, a dressmaker; also businesses such as a coachsmith, saddler, blacksmiths, contractors, builders, and even an accountant; a bank, hotel, post office and large railway station, and the population was listed as 289. However, over the next few years the saw-mills closed, and the roads improved, meaning people could travel more easily to shop and find entertainment elsewhere. Many of the houses were removed during WW1, and the bank closed at the end of the war.

The first school was opened in a private house in 1880, with a roll of a dozen pupils were taught by Mr Thompson. The school was later moved to the Railway Station, until a proper school was built in 1882. This building is still in use as part of the present school. In 2005 the roll was 98, and I believe it is about 150 now.

The first hotel, known as Mt Egmont Hotel opened in 1882 and was extended in 1893. It is now Midhirst Tavern, and is still in use. The original building was destroyed in a fire in the early days, and rebuilt within a short space of time. The present building includes this second incarnation.

Midhirst village now consists of 4 engineering firms; the 'new' hall, built in 1973; a dairy-grocery; the tavern; an upholsterers in one of the original butcher shops; a stained glass business in one of the original grocery stores; a garage workshop; the school; the old Dairy Company General store, now a second hand shop; and some other businesses such as another workshop and a trucking company, using parts of the old factory building. Another trucking company has a yard on the eastern side of the railway line. Also, of course, several houses on both sides of the line. Its quite a close-knit little community, where everyone knows everyone else and people look after each other, as people always do in small settlements.

**Members' Queries:**

Do you have any brick walls with which you need help? Don't know where else to look?

Well, come along to the Rooms at Stratford Community House, Juliet street, next to the Anglican Church.

We are there on Tuesdays and Fridays from 10am to 3pm, and Saturdays 12 noon to 2pm. We'll do our best to help you find answers. We have a lot of local school, Church and cemetery records available, also Electoral Rolls for several years.