

Stratford Branch

New Zealand Society of Genealogists.

www.stratfordgenealogy.homestead.com

2015

Stratford Community House.

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STRATFORD BRANCH NZSG

Convenor's Report AGM | April 2014-31 March 2015

This is the 28th Annual Report of the Stratford Branch and the fifth since we moved to the Community House. In many ways this past year has been very similar to the previous year. Research enquiries are received almost every week. There has been an increase in the queries received from overseas and a number that are for families which we have previously researched. Our databases of school, church, war personnel, biographical entries, surname envelopes and book entries have continued to grow and are an invaluable source when we receive research queries. Our subscription to Ancestry often helps us to get the clues we need to add information for an enquirer. One advantage of having our rooms here at the Community House is the reliable internet access to Ancestry, Papers Past, Archway, Family Search etc. BDM notices from "Daily News" are being glued into scrapbooks. Thanks to all those who assist in any way with additions to our records. Special thanks to Marie, Helen, Maureen and Lesley who work at the Rooms regularly. Thanks to Maureen for continuing her high standard of presentation with our monthly newsletters. The majority of our members don't attend monthly meetings and the newsletter is a valuable source of contact with those members and with other NZSG Branches. Maureen is also the person to thank for keeping the Minutes of meetings for us.

Thanks to Kate for her financial skills, which include successful applications to TET Trust for our rent for two years, and to TSB Trust for funds for replacement of our laptops. All three old laptops were sold and the funds have helped with our miscellaneous expenses. Three new laptops were purchased locally.

A major focus for the year was the commemoration the start of WWI on 28 July, with a 4-week display at Percy Thomson Art Gallery, which included a competition for school pupils on a WWI service person. The opening was well attended and prizes for the competition were awarded. The Archivist at Stratford District Council, Fiona Harvie and Directors of Percy Thomson Gallery, Sue Morton, Marie Wilson and their staff were very supportive. We applied to Department of Internal Affairs for a Grant to assist with expenses associated with the commemoration and were successful in being awarded \$1076. There were many visitors and compliments about the display. An artist, Elwyn Stone, displayed some of her art works, which added to the ambience of the display. The local press featured the display.

The Community House Trust Board organised a meeting with their representatives, representatives of TET Trust and representatives of the not-for-profit organisations who are tenants at the House. The outcome was that TET Trust agreed that a combined application for rent and power can be made by the Trust Board on behalf of the not-for-profit organisations. We are funded until May 2016, and an application will be made before then, which will give us ongoing security of tenancy.

Carol Spragg

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Next Branch Meeting—will be on SATURDAY 13th JUNE. Visit to Patea Museum leaving our rooms at 12.30pm. See details on page 2.

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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



Web Sites

Papers Past contains more than three million pages of digitised New Zealand newspapers and periodicals. The collection covers the years 1839 to 1948 and includes 99 publications from all regions of New Zealand.

Latest additions to Papers Past (May 2015):

[Alexandra Herald and Central Otago Gazette \(1902-1948\)](#)

[Hawke's Bay Herald \(July-December 1894, 1901-1904\)](#)

[Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser \(1888-1896\)](#)

[Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette \(1877-1881\)](#)

[Samoa Weekly Herald \(1892-1900\)](#)

[Samoanische Zeitung \(1903-1920\)](#)

[Sun \(1916-1920\)](#)

[Thames Advertiser \(April 1897-March 1898\)](#)

[Waikato Times \(July-December 1887\)](#)

[Wairarapa Standard \(1867-1887\)](#)

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 .

13th June Meeting

Our June meeting will be a visit to South Taranaki Museum, Patea, to view the 'Eltham & Beyond Exhibition : Showcasing Eltham & its Land Usage'.

At Aotea Utanganui Museum of South Taranaki at Patea is a new exhibition showcasing the various land uses and pioneering discoveries which occurred in Eltham. Includes Chew Chong, C A Wilkinson, Lake Rotokare, Texas Toys, Axeman's Carnival 1911, Ernie Tipler etc. The exhibition includes extensive Photography, ephemera, moving images and artifacts.

We will leave the Rooms at 12:30pm. Please phone Carol 765-0465 if you can take a car or would like a ride.

There will not be a meeting at the Community House on Wednesday 10th March.

Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Stratford, Taranaki

Celebrates 125 years of continuous worship in 2015. The actual anniversary is in July, but the celebration is being combined at the Patronal festival on Trinity Sunday.

A brief history of the Parish begins like any other in a newly settled area—people met for worship in each other's homes. However, when the group grew too big for this, services were held for some time in a railway goods shed.

By 1890 the parishioners had raised enough cash to build a church, and a block of land on the corner of Juliet Street and East Road (now Regan Street) was donated for the purpose by Mr T K Worthington. The church was dedicated by Bishop W G Cowie of Auckland.

This was the second Anglican Church built in the Central Taranaki Region, a small church at Cardiff being the first. The first minister to take services in the area was Rev Thomas Farley, Taranaki Missioner from 1889-91.

In 1891 the Parish of Stratford was constituted and the first Vicar appointed: Rev Alexander English. This was a busy year with a Sunday School established and a new vicarage built. Rev English was in charge of several outlying districts, including Whangamomona, Cardiff, Ngaere, Midhirst, Toko, Tariki and Inglewood. He used first a horse, then a horse and gig to travel over the horrendous roads of the time. A later Vicar, Rev Cecil Watson, used a bicycle to cover the same region! How things have changed!

Over the past few years services at the outlying churches have declined to nothing. Some of them were deconsecrated during the 1970s, and sadly in this jubilee year, two more are to be deconsecrated and returned to the local communities, leaving the parish with one remaining church out East at Purangi—St Peter's Church, which was built entirely by the local Maoris, and replaced the original historic Mission House, built in 1853. This church is maintained and a service held every year in March in memory of the Maori Martyrs, Kereopa and Manihera, who came from this area.

We hope this church will continue to be a house of worship here in Stratford for many years to come.

Remember the 'Onward Project' - which is currently looking for photographs of all those who served overseas with the NZ Expeditionary Force during the First World War 1914-18. The photographs will be published in high-quality books of 4100 photos per volume. If you have any portraits or named group photos of these men and women of the 1st NZEF, please contact the project as below: www.onwardproject.co.nz, onwardnzef.book@gmail.com or 12 Kirkdale Place, Torbay, Auckland 0632. (Sorry, my scanner is broken so couldn't copy the actual poster.)

Snippets



George MCQUAY ... A soldier lost and found...

We have such a better understanding of the impacts of post traumatic stress disorder [PTSD] nowadays. One of the tragedies of World War 1 was that of course mental illness was not perceived as an illness per se.

The impact on men suffering after witnessing horrific sights and/or battle shocks has become well known now. The angst caused to many families with men arriving back home having to recuperate, changed forever can't be imagined in some cases - very few support systems in place at that time.

I have recently found the story of a Kiwi soldier who appears to have suffered much. After absenting without leave, he was considered a deserter, only to have that status rescinded in 1928 when he was identified in a 'mental hospital' in Sydney, Australia, a decade after disappearing. The torment his family must have gone through is unimaginable. On the 28th April 1928 the Evening post reported:

IDENTIFIED SOLDIER, M'QUAY RETURNING

Arrangements are being made by the Government to have George Thomas M'Quay, the New Zealand soldier inmate of Callan Park Hospital, Sydney, whose identity has remained a mystery since he was found wandering about in an Australian uniform in London in 1918, brought to the Dominion for treatment. The Minister of Defence (the Hon. F. J. Rolleston) stated yesterday afternoon that the Government had considered M'Quay's case, and as there appeared to be no doubt as to the identification, it had agreed to accept him for treatment as a war service patient. Accordingly arrangements had been made with the Commonwealth Government for his return to New Zealand at an early date. Mrs. M'Quay, of Orlando street, Stratford, mother of M'Quay, left for Australia yesterday afternoon by the Maunganui to bring her son back, and before sailing expressed her pleasure with what the Government had done and intended doing.



A prewar photo of George McQuay—"...with fine determined face and almost sartorial fastidiousness just before he enlisted from Auckland with the Fifth Contingent."

George was born in Auckland, New Zealand on 25 August 1886, son of Emma Louisa and Robert MCQUAY. He had siblings Robert William born c1885 [who also saw service in WW1]; Emma Eliza born c1890 and Ethel May born c1892.

On enlisting, his occupation was a carpenter. His description was given as 5ft 6.5 inches, weighing 140lb with a fair complexion; blue eyes; brown hair and his religion was Church of England. He had a scar over plexus of left hand at wrist and a flag tattooed over left deltoid region He was living with 'Nurse McQuay' in Stratford - this was his mother. By 1928 his mother was living in Orlando Street in Stratford and father was living in Waihou and so appears they were separated for many years.

George was given the military service number 12/2582 and posted to the Wellington Infantry Regiment, later to be transferred to the Auckland Infantry Regiment. On 9 September 1915 he embarked at Alexandria for Gallipoli and joined his unit.

The story then goes on to detail George McQuay's military records and the various spells in hospital and on charges for going AWOL. This happened several times and he was reported as appearing dull and stupid; suffering from headaches, nightmares, etc. He disappeared for several years and was discharged as a deserter.

After he was found in Australia, this notation was removed from his record and replaced with a new note: "Desertion of this soldier assumed to be due to his mental condition and discharge has been issued to him "on account of being no longer physically fit for war service."

He received his decorations on 6 July 1928. British War Medal; Victory Medal and 1914-15 Star.

He suffered shock after being buried under sandbags as a result of shelling. The medical fraternity believed his insanity was proven by loss of memory, mental depression and mental hebetude [dull & lethargic]. They stated he was silent and melancholy; incapable of recognising his position or of keeping count of time, takes no interest in anything. The medical board attributed it to the stress of the campaign and that it was a permanent disability with total incapacity.

No 4 of our 2015 Stratford Pioneer Cemetery reports:**Francis Wilson 1811—1892**

Frances WILSON died 7th Dec 1892 and was buried in Plot 87, Stratford Pioneer Cemetery. He was my Great Great Grandfather, and I had searched for him in the UK for many years, only to find he was here in New Zealand.

Francis was born in Hull, Yorkshire in about 1811. I'm still looking for a record of his birth. His father was Isaac WILSON and his mother was Betsey TAYLOR. Francis was listed as a tailor in most records. He married Jane RICHES, born Hingham, Norfolk, on 10th July 1836 at 'St George The Martyr' Church in Southwark, Middlesex, where they became teachers at the Southwark Workhouse.

Their first daughter, Mary, was born in 1837 and by 1841 they had moved to Caistor, Lincolnshire, where he was once again a tailor. In 1851 they were back teaching in Caistor Workhouse, where their son, John was born in 1844, and my Great Grandmother, Sarah Jane, was born on 23rd June 1848.

By the 1861 Census they were farmers of 54 acres in Caistor, and by 1871 Francis was back to being a tailor in Grasby, Lincolnshire, after his wife Jane died in 1869. She is buried in the Grasby cemetery, where her headstone tells me she was 'a loving wife, a parent dear, and a virtuous woman.' For the next few years Francis was listed as a widower, and a tailor.

Sarah Jane WILSON married George MUMBY on 17th Oct 1866 in Grasby, from where they set out for New Zealand. They sailed on the ship 'Halcione', arriving in 1875 with four of their children. They wrote letters back to Francis in Grasby, some of which were published in Rollo Arnold's book, 'The Farthest Promised Land.'

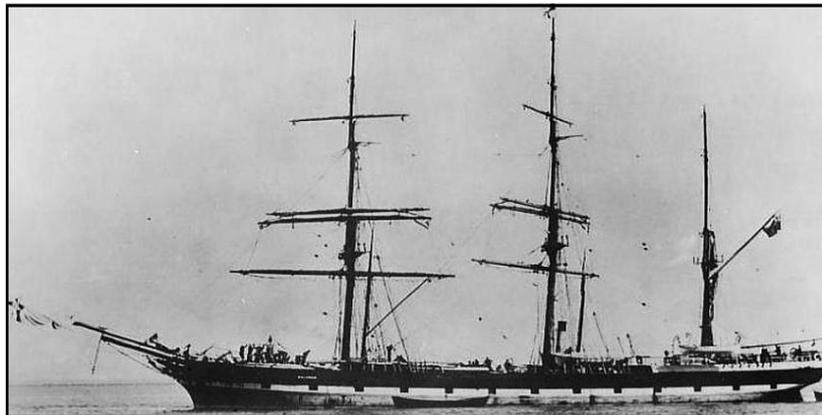
In 1876 Francis arrived in New Zealand aboard the 'Leicester' as an assisted immigrant, bringing with him his grand-daughter, Betsy, aged 9 years, daughter of Sarah Jane & George MUMBY. He settled around the Waitara-Tikorangi area as a tailor. Sadly, Betsey died aged 20 years of puerperal septicaemia and is buried in the Tikorangi cemetery. She was a dressmaker.

In 'paperspast' in 1881, Francis was complaining about the state of the footpaths outside his home in Waitara, which the Council agreed to repair. He also appears as 'St John's, Waitara Church Warden.'

I have not yet found out when he moved to Stratford. His daughter Sarah Jane was farming at Pembroke Road in Stratford, so maybe he moved to live with them. When he died on 7th Dec 1892, he had been in New Zealand for 16 years.

Helen Love

The 'Halcione' - 878 tonnes.
NZ Service 1869-96. Completed 26 voyages to NZ, until wrecked in 1896 at Wellington Heads.

**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.