



Stratford Branch

New Zealand Society of Genealogists.

Stratford Community House.

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Convener's Comment & Annual Report

On 6th May it will be one

year since we got the keys to our new Rooms and we moved in on 7th. This would not have been possible without the co-operation of the Community House Trustees and the generosity of TET Trust for their Grant to cover the rent. We knew it was going to be a different way of operating our research facilities and indexing projects, and so it has been. Many thanks to members

who have adapted to the changes and supported us in so many ways~ storing extra resources at their homes, organising storage at the Rooms, indexing, assisting with research enquiries, filing, re-organising the Envelope Collection, contributing articles for the Newsletter, delivering newsletters, saving envelopes for us, attending Regional Meetings, making suggestions for speakers etc, etc etc.

Special thanks to Lee Westfield for her years of service as Newsletter editor, and to Maureen Armstrong who offered to become Editor from January this year. Our newsletters have world-wide exposure, thanks to the Branch website and Google. Thanks also to Lee for her idea to have a writing competition each year and for encouraging us to put pen to paper. NB Maureen is waiting for your 2012 entry. Maureen is also our efficient Minutes Secretary and she offers a service e-mailing other Branch Newsletters (or printing them out) to members with interests in other areas. Thank you Maureen. We are grateful to Kate for her expertise and efficiency in managing our finances, including applying for Grants.

Something new for us is attending the Tenants' meetings where each of the permanent tenant organisations meet regularly to discuss items and problems of common interest.

Thanks to Helen and Lesley for attending those.

The Regional meetings (4 per year) provide an opportunity for members of the Taranaki NZSG Branches to meet with a representative of NZSG Council, to exchange Branch news and ideas and discuss problems. Lesley and I have attended these and would like to have others join us.

Our monthly meeting attendance averages about 10 and during the year we've had a variety of topics, many of which have had contributions from members.

Carol

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NB: Branch Annual General Meeting—Wednesday 9th May, starting at 7.30pm.

Note change of programme—our guest speaker has had to postpone again so the AGM will start at the usual meeting time, 7.30pm, followed by an opportunity to ask questions about 'breaking down your brick walls.'

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

NB: New Plymouth Branch newsletters are now available on their webpage:

[Www.genealogynp.com/newsletter.html](http://www.genealogynp.com/newsletter.html)

New Zealand Official Yearbook 1893-2008—now available online. See -
<http://www.stats.govt.nz/yearbooks>

www.marriage-locator.co.uk—set up by the Guild of One Name Studies. Find a marriage on this site and you can see the details without having to purchase a certificate.

[Www.workhouses.org.uk](http://www.workhouses.org.uk)—a mine of information about the history of various workhouses, with drawings, photos, plans and census transcriptions.

(The above are free websites)

Papers Past

<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast>

Two new papers on this site:

The Press (Canterbury) 1861—1915

The Maoriland Workers 1910-1924.

This paper was the most important publication of the Labour movement at the time.

Northland (2)

New Zealand Advertiser and Bay of Islands Gazette (Northland, 1840)

Northern Advocate (Northland, 1887-1920)

Auckland (7)

Albertland Gazette (Auckland, 1862-1864)

Auckland Star (Auckland, 1870-1903)

Daily Southern Cross (Auckland, 1843-1876)

Kaipara and Waitemata Echo (Auckland, 1911-1921)

New Zealander (Auckland, 1845-1852)

Observer (Auckland, 1880-1920)

Rodney and Otamatea Times, Waitemata and Kaipara

Gazette (Auckland, 1901-1945)

Do remember to save used 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 .

Calling all members! We would love to have some new blood on the committee. How about putting your hand up? Some of us old hands would like to take a break. What about some younger members? Genealogy is not just for the grey-haired brigade, you know. Come and have a chat with us. Come to the AGM on the 9th May—all members are entitled to attend.

From Hawera & Normanby Star 18 Jun 1917

On Wednesday evening last a public farewell, social and dance was tendered to Mr and Mrs B. Bulmer snr, and Mr and Mrs A. Bulmer. The hall was full to overflowing, and at the interval after supper Mr D.L. Astbury, on behalf of the residents, addressed the gathering. In the course of his speech he said that the first occasion he had met Mr Bulmer Snr, was at a meeting in Kaponga some 25 years before. At that time Mr Bulmer was living in Kaponga but since then had resided in Lowgarth, where he had spent the life of a pioneer, gradually becoming a successful farmer, and now he was to earn the rewards of all his hard labour. Mr & Mrs Bulmer were Canadians; descendants of French Canadians of seven generations, and in July 1868, emigrated to New Zealand in the 70-ton brigantine "Emmulus", landing at Dunedin. There a friend persuaded him to become a cotton planter of the Fijis, on the island of Vanua Levu, and for ten long years he battled against misfortune not of his own making.

On one occasion Mr Bulmer was cracked on the head by a native, and he carries the mark to this day. Eventually a hurricane ruined their plantation, and practically swept them out of house and home. With a young family these hardy pioneers came back to New Zealand, this time landing at Auckland, 'stony broke'. Mr Bulmer went from carpenter to sawmiller, and eventually to settler, an unusually eventful career.

Mr Astbury, on behalf of all friends present, wished them every success in their new home in Eltham. He said he also trusted that he would next year be able to congratulate them on their Golden Wedding.

Mr Alma Bulmer, on behalf of his wife and father and mother, thanked the Lowgarth-Mangatoki people for their fine presents and Messrs Astbury and Wilkinson for their kind references, and looked forward to welcoming friends to their new home when they were settled in.

Snippets

From Sth Canterbury Newsletter, we have a report about a Museum that sounds very interesting for those of us who have connections in the North Canterbury/Rangiora region.

This is the '**Northbrook Colonial Museum**' in Rangiora, situated in buildings behind Rossburn Receptions in Sparks Lane, Rangiora. They have a huge collection of pioneer memorabilia and many photographs.

Sounds really worth a visit. For more details visit: <http://rossburnreceptions.co.nz/4museum.html>

The April 'Hawkes Bay Twig' newsletter has a very interesting item about internet scammers and how they can seriously infect your genealogy emails. Get a copy from Maureen to see the full article. (I will have them at the AGM)

Thimblerig anyone? Ever wondered what jobs there were in a medieval city? There was of course the military, and religious vocations, but even criminals were given occupations. Examples include:

Silk-snatcher—one who steals bonnets.

Thimblerrigger—a professional sharper who runs a thimblerig (a game in which a pea is ostensibly hidden under a thimble and players guess which thimble it is under.)

Knifeman—one skilled with a knife: specifically, a soldier trained to disembowel horses.

Eggler—an egg-merchant.

Buffoon—publicly amusing person.

Tasseler—one who makes tassels.

(Via Boing Boing.net)

1911 CENSUS INFIRMITY COLUMN AVAILABLE FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME

1911 census infirmity column available for the very first time at www.findmypast.co.uk and www.1911census.co.uk

PICTURE OF LIFE IN 1911 IS COMPLETED AS REMAINING 1911 CENSUS RECORDS GO ONLINE

- o The 'infirmities' column is released online for the first time, detailing people's health conditions
- o 'Lunatic' and 'imbecile' popularly used, reflecting a different kind of society
- o Unusual entries: 'old age', 'voteless', 'bald' and 'short of cash'

For more details, ask Maureen for a copy of the Canterbury Group April Newsletter

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 (see back page) and I will send them on to you. At the moment I have Blenheim, Canterbury and Sth Canterbury, Gore, Hawkes Bay, Hutt Valley, New Plymouth, Wairarapa and Wanganui Newsletters. If you don't have email let me know and I will get a copy printed for you.

Sorry for the lateness of this notice—it should have been in the April Newsletter.
- Ed.



Calling out to all the Hamblyn clan

The descendants of Hamblyn, Hamley, Hambly, Hamlyn, Hamblin and other variant surnames will be having a family history group reunion on Queen's Birthday Weekend. This is to celebrate the 171st year anniversary of the family's arrival in New Plymouth on board the barque Amelia Thompson in 1841. Contact the secretary, Edna Wilson on 06 751 1766 or email k_e.wilson@hug.co.nz

We have a collection of the NZ Genealogist Magazine from 1994 to 2008, mostly complete years with the Indexes. If anyone would like to browse through some of these, please contact Maureen.

(762 8837, or armstrong21@slingshot.co.nz)

There are still some copies of the "Family History Notebook"

Available at the rooms. Cost \$7.00 each.

Please have a look at this book—it's a very useful one to have handy when doing your research. If necessary we can order more.

Story Writing Competition 2012
'The Most Interesting Item I Have Found'
Fact or fiction, relating to Genealogy.



A fabric family tree

The Interesting Case of Isaac Wilkins.....

Most of my ancestors were Agricultural labourers, assisted immigrants to New Zealand, who worked hard, purchased land and became farmers. The Ancestor I've found the most interesting is my maternal great-great-grandfather, Isaac WILKINS.

Initially, researching him, I questioned two great uncles who had provided me with a lot of information about their ancestors back to their Grandmother Rose Annie BERGE nee WILKINS. They both said that Rose Annie's parents were never mentioned in family discussions when they were younger. I sent for Rose Annie's death certificate which revealed when and where she had been born in England. Several visits to LDS Library in New Plymouth, winding my way through microfilms, I increased my knowledge of the family in England. Next step was to try to find them in New Zealand. Rose Annie married in Wellington, so a holiday in Wellington gave me the opportunity to do research and I discovered:

- a). that his wife, Charlotte, had died in 1877 and
- b). through Wisers Directories that Isaac had managed/owned hotels in Wellington and Hutt Valley. When I contacted my great uncles with the news that he was hotel keeper, they both roared with laughter. Their mother had married into a strict Wesleyan family, with a Temperance Union affiliation. No wonder the fact that their grandfather was a hotel owner wasn't included in family discussions!!

My next step was to find when and where Isaac died. I searched every year of the death fiche until he would have been 90, without success. Some time after that I was at a NZSG Conference and mentioned my lack of success and someone generously offered to look at National Archives for me. Several weeks later, a bulky envelope arrived and I couldn't believe what I was reading.

- a). He died in Cheltenham, England
- b). His solicitor was advised by letter from England of his death by his wife Sarah.....Sarah? Where did she come from? I fast tracked down to the Genealogy Rooms, searched the marriage fiche and discovered he had re-married in NZ. , and there's more. . .
- c). His family contested his Will because shortly before he and Sarah left New Zealand, Isaac made a new Will and left a generous amount to his Trustees, rather than his family. The witnesses signed affidavits that Isaac Wilkins was in a state of semi-consciousness, that the solicitor did not read or discuss the contents of the document with Isaac and then they witnessed a pen being put into Isaac's hand by the solicitor, who pushed his hand as he signed. "The said Isaac Wilkins did not appear to understand what he was signing". The witnesses were not aware that it was a Will and when they queried the nature of the document, were told "it is only a matter of form" and they then signed the Will as witnesses.

After a hearing in the Supreme Court, the family lost the case.

Carol

One of the other Groups publishes information requests from members, looking for contacts who can help with research. This is something I have been thinking about doing, too, especially given the success of our competition stories of the past year or two. The following is a request from me for a research project I am working on.

Maureen

Conway Giles CARTER, born 21/8/1916 in Opotiki, died 1985 in Matamata. His parents were John Henry CARTER and Lucy nee BURGESS, married 24/12/1913 in Opotiki. Lucy died in 1921, leaving John Henry with very young children. We believe he married again, but his children with Lucy were brought up by aunts. The only other child we are sure of is Mary Eliese, born in 1914.
 Can anyone give us any information about John Henry and his children; also, the BURGESS family, please? They came from Queensland to the Manawatu, and then moved up to Opotiki about the same time John Henry and Lucy were married.