

Stratford Branch

New Zealand Society of Genealogists.

www.stratfordgenealogy.homestead.com

October 2016

Stratford Community House.

52 Juliet Street

Stratford 4332

PO Box 402

Stratford. 4352.

Phone. 06 765 0913 ext. 4.

Branch Contact-

Carol Spragg.



Convener's Comment

The commemoration of WWI is now at half way. One of the local papers has a "100 Years Ago" section, and weekly there are reports of local servicemen being killed or injured, as well as reports of farewells of local men who were leaving the safety of Central & South Taranaki for the battlefields of Europe, many of whom did not return.

When we held our WWI Exhibition, now more than two years ago, I thought that the task of collating series of ring-binders, with records of those died, returned or were on the Reserve Lists was virtually complete. However, hardly a week goes by without at least one new local serviceman's name appearing in "100 Years Ago". I now realise that the number of those serving in WWI is infinite. However, the records of the men we do have, and the sacrifices they and their families made, will be a valuable record for future generations.

Carol

Inside this issue:

Page 2:

Websites; Sorensen Family Reunion; Brockenhurst Hospital Memorial Window

Page 3:

Snippets; Certificates?

Page 4:

Family History—art or science?



Next Branch Meeting—Wednesday Oct 12th at 7.30pm. Rooms open at 7pm for research. We will a). be looking at the basics of "Legacy" Family Tree programme. b). Sharing some options for our Branch operations in the future. Please bring your laptops along.

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

Editor:

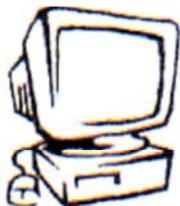
Maureen Armstrong

Email:

mearmstrong@kinect.co.nz

Phone: 06 762 8837 or

027 630 9099



Web Sites

<http://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/civil-search.jsp>—A little treat for the night owls among you, the Irish BDM certificates are available online and for free. Some privacy restrictions - Births 100 years, Marriages 75 years and Deaths 50 years.

<http://www.brockenhurst.gov.uk/16160>—to see the beautiful memorial window described in the neighbouring article.

<https://hail.to/toitu-osm/publication/NF4NoSY>—The Otago Settlers Museum.

Of military interest is the following; the colours of the NZ Scottish Regiment arrived at Toitū Otago Settlers Museum in April. This military unit, known as the 1st Bn, NZ Scottish Regt, was formed on 17 January 1939 and was mobilised after the outbreak of World War II. The Scottish Regiment (NZ Scots) underwent many re-organisations before it was disestablished in 1990, and later formally disbanded in 2013. (see site address above.)

Taranaki Cathedral of St Mary—Hatchments:

Check out last week's Taranaki Daily News for an article about the Regimental Hatchments being removed to Army Archives for safe-keeping while the Taranaki Cathedral of St Mary is being earthquake strengthened.

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. (mearmstrong@kinect.co.nz)

There are some interesting articles in the September issues of various magazines. The Whanganui Group newsletter has printed an article giving all sorts of hints about how to get the best results from searching for your ancestors, while Wellington prints an article demonstrating very clearly how some family names just disappear!

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 .

Brockenhurst Military Hospital—Memorial Window:

On 29th June 2016 the New Zealand High Commission held a service at St Nicholas Church, Brockenhurst to unveil a specifically commissioned commemorative, stained glass window honouring those who were connected to the New Zealand No. 1 General Hospital at Brockenhurst, which opened almost 100 years ago to the day.

The window tells the story of the doctors, nurses and auxiliary workers who came over from New Zealand to work at this hospital and the 21,000 troops who were treated there. Sadly not all survived and 93 men are buried in the churchyard.

The New Zealand Women's Association has contributed to this window and we are very proud to have been part of this magnificent memorial to the men and women of New Zealand who sacrificed so much 100 years ago. There is a permanent bond between the people of New Zealand and the village of Brockenhurst.

SORENSEN Family Reunion, 3rd -5th March 2017, Lincoln-Little River-Akaroa. It is for the descendants of Peter SORENSEN of Yding, Denmark, who arrived with his family in Lyttelton, November 1873. Family and descendants lived at Robinson's Bay, Little River, Akaroa, Christchurch, New Plymouth and Whangarei.

Family Names also include KOINOMOPOLOS, MCCANN, RIDER and ALLAN. Contact us at email a.degroot@xtra.co.nz, or phone 03 3253320. Over 60 people are already interested in attending.

Adriana de Groot

New NZSG Index on DVD

New Zealand Land Transactions Index.

This version, which we have recently purchased for our records, covers North Auckland, South Auckland and Taranaki.

This DVD contains almost 210,000 name searchable records extracted from 150,000 land documents held in the Land Districts of North Auckland, South Auckland and Taranaki between 1871 – 1991. Documents indexed include Declarations, Applications, Transmissions, Bankruptcies and other documents where proof of identity is required to make a change to ownership on a Title. This resource is useful for researchers who have a relationship with someone owning land in those Land Districts, but who could have been living anywhere in New Zealand or overseas.

Carol or Helen can give you more details.

Snippets



Closure:

On Sat 8th & 15th October the rooms will be closed.

Group Visit:

On Sat 15th October we will be visiting Okato Family History Group, leaving Community House at 12:30pm. Please advise Carol if you are going and/or would like a ride.

Ancestry.com went down today, so I spent some time with family.

They seem like nice people.



Twisted Twigs
on graded branches

This Month in History - 6 September 1948 - New Zealand citizenship established

On 6 September 1948, the British Nationality and New Zealand Citizenship Act was passed. Until this Act came into force, people born in New Zealand were British subjects but not New Zealand citizens.

From 1 January 1949, New Zealand citizenship could be acquired by birth in New Zealand, or by descent, registration, or naturalisation. Registration was the process through which citizens of the Commonwealth or Ireland took out citizenship.

Naturalisation was the analogous process for immigrants from other countries, or 'aliens'. The requirements for naturalisation differed from those for registration, particularly in terms of length of residence. This dual system remained until the Citizenship Act 1977.

The situation of those classed as 'enemy aliens' during and after the Second World War was particularly difficult. Herbert (Bert) Roth fell into this category, even though he had arrived as a Jewish refugee from Nazi-occupied Austria. Restrictions on his ability to hold office in public organisations in New Zealand led him to apply for naturalisation in 1944. *NZ History Online*



Are certificates proof?

A birth, marriage, or death certificate is a certified copy of an entry in the respective register - but it doesn't actually PROVE anything. The fact that the registrar has signed the certificate provides assurance that the information shown matches the register entry, but it doesn't express any opinion at all about the accuracy of the details in the register.

Marriage certificates are most likely to contain errors - some deliberate, some accidental, some the result of ignorance. I reckon that at least half of all 19th century marriage certificates include at least one error, usually the age of one or both of the parties, or the identify of one of the fathers. The fact that the marriage took place in the presence of two or more witnesses provides little reassurance - they could have been pulled in off the street.

Death certificates are another unreliable source - ages are often wrong (with a tendency to round them off as 80, 90 etc) and even if the informant was a family member you might find that the wrong forename is given. And as for birth certificates - there's no guarantee that someone who appears to be married to the mother had actually been through a formal ceremony, nor that they're the father of the child. I've even seen a certificate where the wrong mother was identified.

Tip: in general it's a mistake to assume that 'official' records are likely to be accurate - military records are a good example of their fallibility! (from Lost Cousins Newsletter)

Family history: Art or Science?

No two people approach their family history in the same way - we all have slightly different objectives and ways of working. At one end of the scale are those for whom the documented facts are little more than a framework on which to hang plausible, but imagined, stories - and at the other end are those who believe that the hard facts are all that matter.

The latter approach can be dry and uninteresting - but the former can be dangerous, because by adding our own embroidery we're creating something that could have happened but probably didn't. This is fine if you're writing historical fiction, because nobody expects it to be factual, but when we write down our family history it's important to make clear which elements are factual, which have been deduced from incomplete data, and which are figments of our imagination - otherwise future generations might take what we've written at face value.

What tempts us to turn facts into fiction? Perhaps it's the realisation that the bare facts are only likely to be of interest to the few members of our own family who share our enthusiasm for genealogy, whereas books by writers of fact-based historical fiction like Philippa Gregory sell to the multitudes. To those of you who want to become successful authors I say good luck to you - but please, when you're writing about your own family (or anyone else's, for that matter), never write fiction that masquerades as fact.

I suspect that most of us chart a middle course, discovering as many facts as we can, but filling in the many gaps with hypotheses - our best guesses. So long as we don't manage to convince ourselves that they're true (and sadly this is more easily done than you might think), there's no risk of harm - unless we start sharing them with others, when it becomes very risky. Why? Because when we pass on information to others it's likely they'll accept it as true simply because they trust us - and this will apply even if we attach a 'health warning' to certain bits.

Anyone familiar with the Internet will know that interesting and plausible fictions are more likely to be passed on than dry facts, and this is one of the reasons why so many online family trees are riddled with errors. Another reason is that sometimes the truth is hard to find - perhaps because the relevant record isn't available online or has been wrongly indexed - and in this case there's often someone who plugs the gap with a record that sort of fits, which then gets copied by others who don't know any better.

For those of us who really care about the truth genetic genealogy is a wonderful innovation, because it not only offers the potential to knock down 'brick walls' and unravel mysteries, it also provides us with the opportunity to validate our past research - and whilst DNA can be a very complex topic, the way in which it is passed from parent to child (which is all you really need to know) is remarkably easy to understand.

(From Lost Cousins newsletter)

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.