



# NZSG New Plymouth Branch Newsletter



Number 212

May 2008

**Convenor:** Annette Larsen Ph 758 3320  
**Treasurer:** Lea Bellini Ph 758 0130  
**Secretary:** John Pickering Ph 758 4952

**Committee:** Marilyn Armitstead, Judy Berntsen,  
John Berntsen, Michael Butler,  
Karen Crowe, Elly Harrison,  
Marjorie McMahon, Mike Merrick,  
Marilyn Reid

**Editor:** Peter Wicky  
Email- [wicky.family@ihug.co.nz](mailto:wicky.family@ihug.co.nz)

**New Plymouth Branch**  
**P.O. Box 429,**  
**New Plymouth 4340**

**Meetings:** 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday each month  
at Branch Rooms, Moturoa  
Shopping Centre  
access off Whiteley St Carpark

**Email:**  
[newplymouth@genealogy.co.nz](mailto:newplymouth@genealogy.co.nz)

**Website:**  
<http://www.genealogynp.com>

**Branch Library:** open free to members and to visitors for a small charge.

**Opening Hours: Monday:** 10am to 3pm **Wednesday:** 12noon to 3pm  
**Friday & Saturday:** 10am to 12 noon

**Computer Group:** meets every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday at 1.30pm in Branch Rms except December and January. All welcome- \$2 door charge. **Convenor-** Peter Hewett **Secretary/Treasurer-** John Bernsten

## Branch News

### 1<sup>st</sup> April Meeting

Mike Merrick gave a talk and power-point presentation about the life of his great – Uncle, John Gilroy Grant who was awarded the Victoria Cross in the First World War. Mike described his Uncle's early and difficult childhood. John Grant was born in 1889 in Hawera the 3<sup>rd</sup> child in a family of nine. His father died when John was only ten and subsequently he spent time with various relatives as his mother sought to bring up a large family.



In spite of hardships, John progressed well becoming a very fine athlete and an outstanding swimmer. After finishing school he became a carpenter, an active member of the local Volunteer Fire Brigade and spent over two years as a member of the Army Territorials prior to the outbreak of World War 1.

After the commencement of the War he joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Wellington Infantry and saw service with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in Egypt and on the Western Front. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for 'conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty' while leading his platoon in clearing out five German machine gun posts on high ground near Bancourt on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1918.

Upon returning to New Zealand, Grant received a hero's welcome in his home town of Hawera and served in the Territorial Force as an officer until 1929.

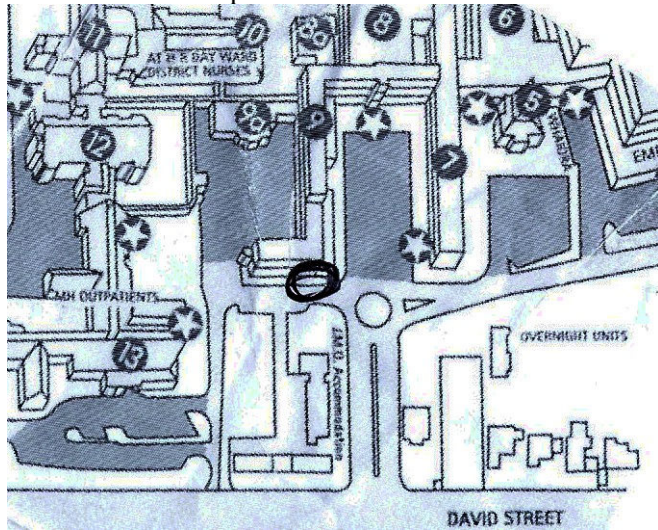
Like many other servicemen who had experienced the horrors of frontline service on the Western Front, Grant found it difficult to cope with life back home. In the years following, he experienced a marriage break-up, lost custody of his children, became bankrupt and eventually ended up on 'relief' during the Depression of the thirties.

John Gilroy Grant VC passed away at the age of 81 on November 25<sup>th</sup> 1970 in Auckland

**Next Meeting:**

**Tuesday May 6<sup>th</sup> 7.30 pm – Visit to Taranaki Base Hospital Archives Room**

There will be a Power Point presentation of what the Hospital Archives contain. Records such as Minute Books, Letter Books and Outward Correspondence will be able to be researched.



Park in David St or main car park. The Archives Room is located upstairs in the left hand wing of the Maternity block (when you face the hospital from David St) See the plan.-**Archives Room circled.** Entranceway is there and then go upstairs, turn left to Archives Room. Karen Crowe will be at the entranceway to direct you. Please be there by 7.30.

**Note: The Branch Library will be open from 7.30 pm for members not wishing to go on the Hospital visit.**

**Programme 2008**

<b>6<sup>th</sup> May</b>	NP Base Hospital Archives 7.30pm.
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> June</b>	Railway houses in Welbourn, New Plymouth. A talk by Janice Murdoch.
<b>1<sup>st</sup> July</b>	Report from Conference
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Aug</b>	Sharing Evening – Skeletons, Black Sheep and Heirlooms.
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sep</b>	Finale of 'This is Your Past'

**Members' Subscriptions are now due:** Single - \$30; Double: \$40 and Outside Taranaki \$20. The Door charge of \$2 remains the same. Payment can be made to Lea Bellini at a meeting or by post to P.O. Box 429 New Plymouth 4340.

**Welcome to New Members of the Branch-**June Butt, Glenice Dean, Tony Gellen and Elizabeth (Betty) Stuart all of New Plymouth. Also to Rex Richards who lives outside Taranaki. We hope you enjoy our monthly meetings and find the Branch Library resources helpful.

**NZSG Matters**

**Change in method of payment at Family Research Centre Research Services.**

This is outlined in the March/April *Genealogist* and requires you to make payment by unused postage stamps at the rate of 20c for each photocopy and \$1 for each microfiche printout. For photocopies you are required to send 4x 50c stamps and for printouts 10x50c stamps and an appropriate sized SAE with your research request. Refunds are made to you of unused stamps.

## From our Branch Library

**Newly arrived:** the May 2008 Issue of *Family Tree Magazine*. This includes the following articles:

- *Irish Roots*- Irish BDMs online. Alan Stewart tells you why tracing family history in Eire is set to become a lot easier P 74
- *How our ancestors lived in 1900*. Robert Burlison describes the life of different classes at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the UK. P54
- *Tracing the Upper Ten Thousand*. Not all our forbears were Ag Labs - many were landowners. Jeremy Goldsmith details the plentiful records for these. P 42.

### **Books donated recently: Thanks to -**

Rev Philip Brown - *The War Effort of New Zealand*

Glenice Dean - *Fifty Years Diving around New Plymouth 1954-2004*

**New Database** Michael Butler has installed an historical database of Anglican Ministers who have served in New Zealand. This is on the number 1 computer and contains genealogical information including marriages, births and deaths for ministers' families from early colonial times to the 1950s.

**Newsletters from other NZSG Branches:** These are received monthly from Stratford, Waitara, Wanganui, Whangarei, Matamata, Manawatu, Wairarapa, Hutt Valley, Canterbury, Blenheim and Nelson Branches and contain many items of interest and details of resources available locally, nationwide and overseas. Newsletters are filed in folders available in our Branch Library.

## Of Interest

### **Cenotaph Database**

The Auckland War Memorial Museum's Cenotaph Database has been greatly enhanced and now consists of over 115,000 entries of New Zealand Service Men and Women. It is to be found at: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com/?=130>

The Database features:

- All war dead from the Anglo Boer War to recent Peace-keeping Missions including WW1 and WW2.
- **New** – all WW1 service personnel who embarked for overseas service, taken from nominal rolls, including embarkation details such as transport and vessel.
- A large number of portraits taken from *The Auckland Weekly News*, family sources and the Auckland Library.
- Where did they come from? - includes New Zealand, Australia and many other places around the world. Search by location (locality, suburb, town) of birth (where known) enlistment address and next of kin address.
- Where did they go? Search by place of death and place of burial for WW1 in Europe and the Middle East.
- Background about WW1 troopships.
- Nurses of the Anglo-Boer War and WW1.
- Niuean and Cook Island members of the Pioneer (Maori Battalion).

You can find out on the website how you can contribute, make corrections, provide additional information and images of former servicemen and servicewomen. Contact [armoury@aucklandmuseum.com](mailto:armoury@aucklandmuseum.com) (from an Auckland Museum email flyer)

**South Taranaki Museum – Patea** Be aware that if you wish to visit the Museum's archives you need to contact the District Archivist Terry Tamakehu first. Phone him at 062738354 or email: [terry.tamakehu@stdc.govt.nz](mailto:terry.tamakehu@stdc.govt.nz)

## Strange occupations and terms from other days

Rex Dowman contributed these two examples. He was mystified by the occupation of an ancestor described as a 'Sea Fencer'. Rex investigated further and found that the man was in fact a mariner employed to build the sea walls around ports and harbours.

Another of Rex's ancestors was referred to in census information for 1851 and 1861 as a 'Half Wit'. Rex comments that the census takers in those days were obviously not as politically correct as people nowadays.

Do you know the kind of occupation followed by these? Answers next issue.

A Baxter	A Boniface	A Dowser
A Hayward	A Higglar	A Leech
An Ostler	A Scrivener	A Tide Waiter

A useful index to find out about occupations of forbears in former times can be found at <http://rmhh.co.uk/occup/> under the name of *Gareth's Pages*

## From the Puke Ariki Library: Genealogy shelves:

*Tracing Your Family History* by Stella Colwell. *Teach Yourself* Series Hodder Education 2007. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. (929.1 COL)

Stella Colwell was until recently a Specialist Reader/Adviser in Local and Family History at the National Archives in Kew. This is her 5<sup>th</sup> book on family history. Her up-to-date book deals comprehensively with the correct steps you should take in writing a family history and offers helpful advice on research techniques and the use of electronic and paper archives and resources in the United Kingdom.

## Useful Website

A website well worth exploring for those with Scottish forbears is SCAN (Scottish Archive Network) whose website is <http://www.scan.org.uk>. Set up in 2000 SCAN's initial aim was 'to revolutionise access to Scotland's archives by providing a single electronic catalogue to the holdings of more than 50 Scottish archives.' It planned 'to allow researchers access to topics of Scottish history as diverse as shipbuilding, witchcraft, and emigration'. A major SCAN project was 'to digitise all testaments registered in Scotland between 1500 and 1901' and the resulting index is available for free search on the well known site <http://www.ScotlandsPeople.gov.uk>

Popular pages at SCAN for you to browse include Research Tools, Family History Guide, Emigration Records (including a searchable database for the Highlands and Islands Emigration Society records of emigrants), Site Search, Knowledge Base, and Directory. If you are unsure of what your ancestor might have done with his *ploughgate* or why he is described as a *limmer* the Glossary of Scottish terms and words will be of great help.

### **A Little Bit of a Laugh Does You Good**

**Rewriting that Family Skeleton?** An author of a family history described his grandfather Henry's execution in the electric chair thus: "Henry occupied a chair of applied electronics at an important government institution, was attached to his position by the strongest of ties, and his death came as a great shock."

**Advice to beginners in genealogy:** Boldly start in reverse.

**Gravestone humour supplied by John Pickering:** *From a cemetery in England*

Remember man as you walk by, as you are now, so once was I.

As I am now, so shall you be. Remember that and follow me.

*To which some wag replied in writing on the tombstone*

To follow you I'll not consent, Until I know which way you went!

Your contributions for this newsletter are welcomed. Email to Peter Wicky Editor: [wicky.family@ihug.co.nz](mailto:wicky.family@ihug.co.nz)