



# NZSG New Plymouth Branch Newsletter



**Number 226**

**August 2009**

**Convenor:** Annette Larsen Ph 758 3320  
**Treasurer:** John Berntsen Ph 753 9188  
**Secretary:** John Pickering Ph 758 4952

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

**Committee:** Lea Bellini, Judy Berntsen,  
Michael Butler,  
Elly Harrison, Charles Le Breton,  
Marjorie McMahon, Bev Mulqueen,  
Marilyn Reid, Peter Wicky

**Meetings: 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday** each month at  
Branch Rooms **7.30pm**, Moturoa  
Shopping Centre  
access off Whiteley Street Carpark  
**Email:** [newplymouth@genealogy.org.nz](mailto:newplymouth@genealogy.org.nz)  
**Website:**  
<http://www.genealogynp.com>

**Branch Library:** Open free to members. A small charge to visitors.

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

**Computer Group:** meets every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday every second month at 1.30pm in Branch Rms except December and January. Open to anyone - \$2 door charge. **Convenor** – Bruce Bellini: **Treasurer** - Lea Bellini.

## Branch News

### **Last Meeting – 7<sup>th</sup> July 2009**

The guest speaker, author Jean Nicholls, gave an entertaining and informative talk about the writing of family history and in particular the writing of the book which she part-authored, *Taranaki Between the Wars*.

Jean emphasized the need for the family historian to go beyond the bare facts and find information about how social issues and historical developments have shaped peoples' lives in the past. She told of her own experience in writing about Charles and Eliza who in the early 1850s had gone to the Australian goldfields – a not unremarkable event at the time. However as Jean began researching the history of the Victorian goldfields she discovered the epic events of the Goldminers' riots and Charles' narrow escape from a threatening confrontation with a rioting mob of goldminers. What at first

had seemed ordinary had now become something exceptional and worthy of telling.

Jean and others in a local Senior Net Writing Group used this same approach in setting out to record and write the stories of ordinary people who lived in Taranaki between the two World Wars. Many of these older people were at first surprised that the stories of their lives could be of any interest to others. However their enthusiasm grew as recollections were triggered and collected.

The writing group spent many hours checking stories with their contributors. After four years' effort the group had great satisfaction in publishing the highly popular *Taranaki between the Wars* a repository of the life stories of many people whose lives were shaped by the aftermath of War, the Great Depression, the rise of Fascism and the growing threat of a second world conflict

## For Your Information

### Next Branch Meeting: **August 4<sup>th</sup> 2009** **7.30pm**

Charles LeBreton will explain how the family historian can use the RootsMagic *Family Atlas Software* to access genealogical information and interactive maps as well as add text, migration lines and photos to create personal family history maps.

### Coming Meetings:

**Tues. 1<sup>st</sup> September-**  
Members' forum on experiences in using the **Genes Reunited** website.  
[www.genesreunited.co.uk](http://www.genesreunited.co.uk)

### Regional Meeting of **Taranaki NZSG** **Branches**

This will be held at the New Plymouth Branch rooms on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August beginning at 10 am. Shared lunch.

### Opening Hours at the **Mangorei Road FHC**

#### **1st & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays**

1.30pm to 4.30pm

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays**

2.30pm to 5pm

The contact person is Lois Smith at 751 2750

## **On Branch Library Shelves**

Some articles of interest in the August issues of:

### **Family Tree**

WW2 British POWs online resources.

Finding WW2 military ancestors.

Top 10 records...Southampton Archives services.

Gretna Green marriages- discovering documents.

On the Ancestral Trail – Scotland's Homecoming.

Relatives in Portugal

### **Practical Family History**

How to pick a PC for Family History.

After the 1911 Census – what's next?

Tracing your ancestors from the Scottish Borders.

Opinion - the future of Archival resources.

Back to basics – simple steps to tracing your family History.

Web resources for Royal Navy ancestors.

Estate Duty records.

## **Book Review**

Thwaite, Ann. *Passageways – the Story of a New Zealand Family*. University Press. Dunedin New Zealand 2009.

Anne Thwaites was born in Tirau and had her early education in New Zealand before returning with her family to England where she studied at Oxford, gaining a DLitt Oxford and later becoming a Fellow of the Royal Society. She has won distinction for her writings as a biographer and won the Whitbread Book Award for Best Biography in 1990 for her book *AA Milne: His Life*.

Her book *Passageways* covers a very broad landscape telling the stories of her eight great grandparents who all emigrated from Britain to New Zealand between 1858 and 1868. It will probably hold most interest for the family historian wanting to learn something about the lives of urban and rural ancestors in 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain and the reasons why they chose to sail half way round the world to a very different life in a strange land.

*Passageways* also provides a good glimpse into the lives of early settlers in New Zealand, their expectations, struggles and disappointments, the dangers they faced in a rugged country and in the land wars.

Available from the NP NZSG Branch library.

### **Self-issuing of books at the Branch Library**

Members are welcome to take out up to 3 books at a time for one month. Your name, date of issue and telephone number should be printed on the Library card which should then be left in the Issued Cards box. It is suggested you print the date of return (one month ) on the book pocket.

## Jewish Genealogy



If you watched Series 5 and 6 of BBC 1's *Who Do You Think You Are* you may have wondered at the number of times celebrities have discovered a Jewish connection in their family trees. Jerry Springer, Esther Rantzen, Zoe Wanamaker and more recently David Suchet (the incomparable Hercule Poirot) were able to trace connections back to Jewish family members who usually had arrived in the United Kingdom from Europe.

This is not as surprising as it may seem for during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and the whole of the 19<sup>th</sup> century some 250,000 Jews fled to Britain to escape the repressive measures, persecution and threats of death they faced in the Jewish Pale – most notably as a result of Russian pogroms. Again in the 1930s, the Jewish population of the UK rose to 650,000 as a wave of Jewish refugees sought to escape internment in Nazi concentration camps.

New Zealand has never seen the same influx of Jewish immigrants as happened in the UK although some 1,000 Jews fleeing from Nazi persecution sought asylum here. However Jews have always been numbered among the earliest of New Zealand's settlers and have contributed much as traders and businessmen in the country's development. Perhaps the most notable was Julius Vogel, the Finance Minister and later Prime Minister, who initiated the rapid expansion of roads and railways in the decade of the 1870s.

Today Jews in New Zealand comprise less than 1% of the population (6,500 in the 2006 Census) and emigration, particularly of younger people to Israel contributes to this low number.

### Jewish Genealogy Resources:

#### New Zealand

[www.genealogylinks.net/jewishgenealogy/newzealand/index.html](http://www.genealogylinks.net/jewishgenealogy/newzealand/index.html) has links to NZ Jewish Archives and research service.

[www.jewishgen.org/cemetery/asia-pac-ind/newzealand.html](http://www.jewishgen.org/cemetery/asia-pac-ind/newzealand.html) has information about Jewish burial areas in NZ cemeteries as well as a link [www.bd-bd.info](http://www.bd-bd.info) which is searchable for various Jewish areas of cemeteries usually in the main centres.

#### Overseas

Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain:  
[www.jgsgb.org.uk](http://www.jgsgb.org.uk) which has many Jewish databases.

<http://www.jewishgenealogysearch.com> provides genealogy guidance and research services for a fee

### Of Interest

#### **Family History Guides from Archives New Zealand.**

Research and Family History Guides provide summaries of commonly used records held at Archives NZ.

These are downloadable in Pdf form and contain details and archives references of records held. Advice is also offered about the information contained.

Some of the many records covered by the guides include: Citizenship and Naturalisation; Alien registers, Coroners' inquests and reports, Divorces, Intentions to Marry, Probates; War, Shipping and Immigration.

<http://www.archives.govt.nz/researching/referenceguides.php>

#### **Devon Wills Project**

A German bombing raid in 1942 was responsible for the destruction of a large proportion of original Devon wills held at the Exeter Probate Registry.

The aim of the Devon Wills Project is to publish a complete index of all Devon testamentary matter, surviving and lost, up to 1857 from various surviving sources such as copies transcripts and abstracts.

The task is being carried out by volunteers and more are needed. You can obtain information at:

<http://genuki.cs.ncl.ac.uk/DEV/DevonWillsProject>

## Useful Websites

### **California Digital Newspaper Collection**

This free site has over 200,000 pages of California newspapers covering the years from the Great Gold Rush beginning in 1849 and up to 1911. Papers at present available include the Alta California 1849-1891; the San Francisco Call 1893-1910; the Amador Ledger 1900-1911; the Imperial Valley Press 1901-1911; the Sacramento Record-Union 1859-1890 and the Los Angeles Herald 1905-1907.

Two search modes are available on the site: the 'basic' which allows the entry of any word or phrase to obtain matches and the 'advanced' which allows for search results to be refined. The searcher can define which publications are to be searched by using a 'Search In field.'

The site may well hold interest for New Zealand researchers as numbers of Californian miners came from there to the later gold rushes in Australia and New Zealand.

The site is supported by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library services and is available at: <http://cdnc.ucr.edu>

### **Medieval Battle Records**

The records of 250,000 medieval British soldiers many of whom served with King Henry V at the battle of Agincourt are now online in a searchable database.

The free website has been produced through the work of Professor Anne Curry of the University of Southampton and Dr Adrian Bell of the University of Reading and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

The website has a database of soldiers, knights, longbow men, and infantry who served in the 100 Years War between England and France and details their service records, salaries, sickness records and lists of those knighted.

Dr Bell explained that the 'very modern obsession of the then English Exchequer to see that all money was spent as intended' has resulted in the survival of records which 'named every soldier from duke to bowman.'

The database is simple to navigate and the profiles of soldiers from 1369 to 1453 will allow researchers to piece together a record of their lives.

Available at: <http://www.cmacentre.ac.uk/soldier/database>

### **1911 Census - Welsh Counties go online**

Findmypast has now up-loaded the Welsh 1911 Census at [www.1911census.co.uk](http://www.1911census.co.uk) and lists some 2.4 million people within the Principality on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1911.

## Notices

### **NZ Memories**

The August and September issue of this magazine is now on the shelves and includes these articles of interest:

- The 1906-07 Christchurch Exhibition.
- Dunedin's Vauxhall Gardens of 1862
- Wellington transport
- An Immigrant's story
- Regions – Northland, Coromandel and Hawke's Bay

**Look out for the launch of the book written by Bruce Bellini and other ex-Scouts 'Scouting New Plymouth and North Taranaki - 100 Years of Scouting Memories'. 10am – 3pm at the Plymouth Hotel, New Plymouth.**

### **A New Use for GPS**

Gareth Winter an Archivist in the Wairarapa has recently used this technology in an innovative way to set up a new database for the Tinui cemetery.

This was done by taking a photograph of each headstone, obtaining its exact GPS location and entering these in the online database.

In future families and historians will be able to go online and find out exactly where their relatives are buried in the cemetery.

Contributions for the Newsletter are welcomed. Email to: [wicky.family@ihug.co.nz](mailto:wicky.family@ihug.co.nz)