

New Plymouth Genealogy

ISSUE No 50

June 2026 - In This Issue

AGM - Racing memories from Opunake - This Month's Meeting - In case you hadn't heard - DNA news - Facebook News - The Kibby Carillon - From the Archives - Gails Beginners Class - A tribute to Jan Gow - For Your Diary - Welcome New Members - The Back Page - *and a few assorted funnies—Genealogy isn't all serious work.*

2026 Committee elected at the AGM



Back row - Peter Hewett Russell Smith

*Glenys Krutz Lorraine Austin Sharyn Guthrie Gail Tanner
Sally Morch Lois Lovell*

AGM draws a good crowd

AGM's traditionally draw small numbers, but this wasn't the case for this years NP Genealogy meeting. Nearly 40 people attended and were treated to a thought provoking talk from Sharyn Guthrie on breaking through the genealogy brick walls—the wall you meet when you become hopelessly stuck with your research. There is going to be a follow up to this where you can bring your own "Brick Walls" along for a bit of Mutual help. Every one who was nominated for the committee was unanimously elected and retiring member Jeff Grange was thanked for his service along with Marilyn Armitstead who is retiring from the library leadership.

Hi everyone

We are almost at the end of May, and the year is moving fast. It is almost half over – where has that time gone?

We've had our first Committee meeting since the AGM. We welcomed our new Treasurer Lois, as Sharyn had decided it was time for someone else to take over after doing the job for several years. Lois has been on the committee but now has a new job. Sally is Minute Taker again, and Peter, Lorraine, Glenys, Sharyn and Russell make up the rest of our committee.

You are still stuck with me as Convenor for another year, but I do intend to stand down at the next AGM. (So, I will be on the lookout for my replacement). I know that being on a committee can be a big commitment, but our committee gets on well and gets on with what needs doing, and it's a great way to learn what we do and how we do it. So, think about it for next year.

The meeting this month is a "Night at the Movies" Hamish Guthrie is letting us have the first look at two documentaries that the Taranaki Media Archive made a few months ago - I'm sure you'll find them fascinating, the details are all on the next page of this newsletter. Hamish also makes seriously good icecream—there's 6 big tubs to win in our raffle - make sure you buy a ticket or ten.

The next DNA meeting is Sunday 14th June at 1.30. Come learn about how DNA works and can help you with your family tree and history.

Happy Ancestor Hunting!

Gail



Society Library: Open free to members. A \$5 charge to visitors. Opening Hours: Every Monday and Saturday: 10 am to 12 Noon Other Times by appointment

Meetings: 7:30 pm, first Tuesday each month at society rooms, Moturoa Shopping Centre — Access is off the Whiteley Street car park.

Email: newplymouthgenealogy@gmail.com Website: www.genealogynp.com

A Day at the RacesOpunake 1890



Horse racing was a big deal at Ōpunake with the district having its own grandstand in 1890. The Ōpunake Town District was established on May 6, 1882, with a population of just over 100. This image shows the racing club grandstand full of people just eight years later. *Feaver Collection — Puke Ariki*

THIS MONTH'S MEETING

A Double Feature from the Taranaki Media Archive



Come along and watch two specially commissioned documentaries featuring the Kibby Carillon and the Transport Technology & Aviation Museum on the big screen. This is the first time they have had a public screening—we're sure you are going to find them fascinating

7:30 start Tuesday June 2nd NP Genealogy Rooms Moturoa



Chairperson: Gail Tanner 027 376 0630
Secretary: Sally Morch
Treasurer: Lois Lovell
Committee: Lorraine Austin Peter Hewett
Sharyn Guthrie Glenys Krutz Russell Smith
Newsletter Editor: Hamish Guthrie
Sub Editor and contributor Sharyn Guthrie

"I'm not obsessed with genealogy; I'm just really interested in dead people."

In case you hadn't heard



The National Archives of Ireland has launched the first online release of the 1926 Census of the Irish Free State, marking a major milestone for family historians. With nearly three million records digitised, the initial phase allows users to search key details such as names and locations, making it easier to trace Irish ancestors, while further updates (adding enhanced data and search features) are set to roll out over the coming year. <https://nationalarchives.ie/search-the-1926-census-2/phased-release-of-census-1926-information/>

The UK government has unveiled Archives at the Heart of Society, a new national vision led by The National Archives to strengthen how archives in England support family history research. By prioritising accessibility, inclusivity and long-term sustainability, the initiative aims to make it easier for individuals to trace their roots, connect with community histories, and uncover personal stories preserved in archival records for generations to come. <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/our-archives-sector-role/the-governments-vision-for-archives-in-england/>

The Skibbereen Heritage Centre has completed its 2026 burial records upload, with over 109,000 records from 170 Cork graveyards now available to search for free. Covering Cork County Council burial registers and detailed graveyard surveys, the growing database offers a valuable resource for anyone tracing family roots in West Cork. <https://skibbheritage.com/west-cork-graveyards-database/>

RootsTech 2026 was held from March 5–7, 2026, in Salt Lake City and virtually, emphasizing the theme "Together." Major takeaways included advancements in AI-driven genealogy, such as MyHeritage's Scribe AI and Country Coding, along with massive, free online learning sessions and a specialized focus on Pacific-region research.

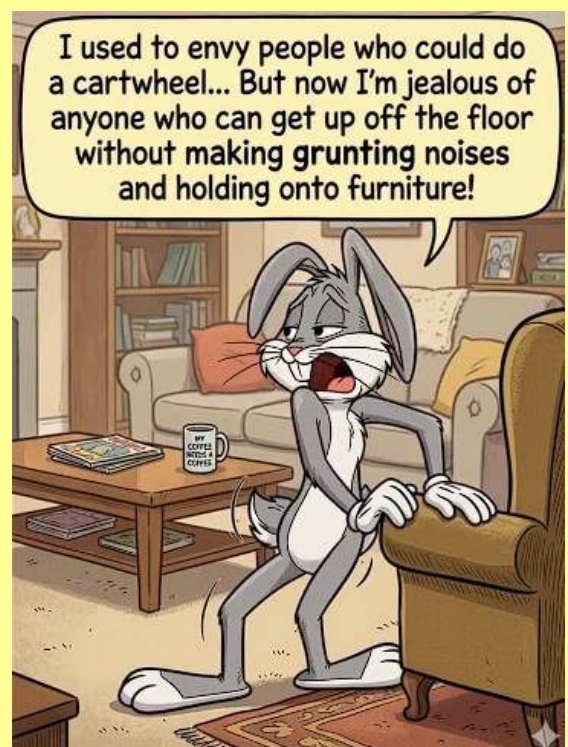
Recordings from the 2026 sessions remain accessible for continued learning through the FamilySearch site <https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/>

FAN Club Method: Researchers are increasingly using the "FAN Club" (Friends, Associates, and Neighbours) technique—pioneered by Elizabeth Shown Mills—to find clues about ancestors by researching their social circles. <https://lisalouisecooke.com/2016/10/29/genealogy-fan-club/>

Library Duty



Mon 1 June Charles Le Breton
Sat 6 June Karen Crowe
Mon 8 June Lorraine Austin
Sat 13 June Aaron Rump
Mon 15 June Annette Larsen
Sat 20 June Lea Bellini
Mon June 22 Graeme Jury
Sat 27 June Jeff Grange
Mon 29 June Sally Morch
Sat 4 July Karen Crowe
Mon 6 July Charles Le Breton



"I wish I could relate to the people I'm related to"

The Kibby Carillon



A New Plymouth Landmark is the Kibby Carillon – there are only 2 working Carillons in New Zealand. The Carillon is a set of 37 Musical Bells that currently chimes four times day in central New Plymouth, and if you don't know it's there you may wonder where the loud chimes are coming from. The Carillon is made up of 37 bells and was built by a Dutch company, Eljsbouts Bell foundry Ltd

The bells range from 3ft (0.9m) in diameter, weighing over 800lbs (363kgs) down to a nine-inch bell weighing only 3lbs (1.4kgs). The total weight of the bells is 5587lbs (2534kgs). Each bell carries an inscription or motif.

You can view the Carillon up on Marsland Hill. It was built with a \$30,000 bequest from George Kibby as a memorial to his late wife Mabel and it was completed in May 1971. The official opening ceremony drew a crowd of about 500 people and was held on Saturday May 21. It was presided over by the then Mayor of New Plymouth Denny Sutherland. George Kibby's daughter, Naera, flicked the switch to start it with music chosen by well-known local musician Ray Ashworth - who went on to be the Official Carillon player for many years after. The current Carillon player is Christopher Luke

The Carillon has not been without controversy over the years – some saying the Bells were too quiet, and at other times too loud. The ongoing maintenance of the Carillon has also been an issue with pressure placed on the council for upkeep and repairs. Eventually this repair work was carried out and today the Kibby Carillon is the last of two functioning Carillons in New Zealand - the other one is in Wellington and has just been recently refurbished and is now working.



George & Mabel Kibby



George & Naera Kibby at the opening



Naera Kibby



**Next meeting's
Raffle!!**



*6 chances to win a big tub of Hamish's
famous home made ice cream*

Butterscotch - Pumpkin Pie - Gingerbread

*Tickets : One chance \$2 3 Chances \$5
Ten chances \$10!!*



Primo supports us with a free internet connection—why not support them?

Great plans - and a friendly Taranaki person answers their helpline!



**Here's a great memory - were you there?
NZSG Genealogy Conference - Hamilton 1994**

**Back Row Murray Evans Ann Evans
Bruce Bellini Heather Hudson-Hall
Middle row Phil Haarer Shirley Thomson
Lea Bellini Beryl Spencer
Front Row Karen Crowe Sharyn Guthrie
Noreen Potts Betty Lark**



**Heather Hudson- Hall Beryl Spencer Betty Lark
Shirley Thompson Karen Crowe Noreen Potts**



**Heather Hudson- Hall Shirley Francis June Stratford
Sharyn Guthrie Ann Evans Beryl Spencer**

Look how young everyone was—hardly a grey hair in sight!!

Gail's Genealogy Beginners Class



*This is our current class brushing up on Genealogy basics. Some of these people are our members, and others come from U3A. These classes are for anyone who wants to get a good grounding in Genealogy - its also great for those who have found their skills are a bit rusty and would like to brush up their knowledge. **All things forgotten are allowed to be blamed on old age !!** Don't they look a happy bunch sitting in the Taranaki sun.*

"Genealogy is sometimes about proving that bad family traits came from the other side of the tree"

A Tribute to Jan Gow – (1939 – 2026)

From Sharyn Guthrie



Jan Gow is or was a well known name in worldwide Genealogy circles over many years. By now many of you will know that Jan died recently in Auckland. There has been much written of her life and contribution to Genealogy already, my tribute here is as her friend.

I first met Jan in January 1990 when we visited her home, this is where she had her genealogy business known as 'Beehive Books'. I had been doing Genealogy for a few years by then and had been very keen to see this place. Jan not only sold books and stationery for family history purposes, but she was, like me, keen on computers when not many were, especially in

2012 – 20-year NP Gen Computing Group Anniversary



Back: Noeline Carey, Meg Cardiff, Malcolm Potts & Peter Hewett

Front: Jan Gow & Ann Evans

genealogy circles at that time. Beehive Books was a treasure trove of genealogy miscellany, and I thought I was in heaven. I purchased some books and a copy of the genealogy program 'Pedigree' which was the first UK based genealogy program that I knew of. Jan was very keen on it and said to call her if I needed any help with it.

Well, naturally I did need help, and this was the start of our friendship. Jan was not only a passionate genealogist, but she was someone who believed in giving back and was always there to help. I moved on from 'Pedigree' to finally settle on 'Legacy'.

Jan also came down here to New Plymouth and gave freely of her time for many of our important occasions including our 20yr Genealogy Computing Group celebration and our 40yr Society celebration plus many other occasions.

Over the years I met Jan and David at many of the Genealogy conferences. I often helped them out behind the counter and remember many happy occasions at the various conferences.

Jan started her 'Hooked on Genealogy' Tours, I think in 1992 and I always dreamed of going on one. Finally, I did, along with my friend Karen Crowe in 2014. What a trip – what a lot of organisation was involved. Jan had us come up to Auckland three times to help us in our preparation. She had presentations for us to watch, helpful hints, discussions over what to take. Help

2019 DNU Down Under Conference in Sydney



From left: Sharyn Guthrie, Blaine Bettinger & Jan Gow

designing small booklets full of our information to reduce baggage on our trip. We spent 3 weeks in Salt Lake City, 10 days in London followed by 10 days in Edinburgh. A Genealogy trip of a lifetime and one I am so glad to have been able to take.

In 2009 Jan was on the committee for the AFFHO Conference and asked Hamish, my husband, to be the MC for it. It was a wonderful conference and meeting John Grenham was a highlight for me.

Jan and I went to Rootstech together in 2016, and later that year Hamish and I went across to live in the UK for 2 and a half years. We managed to meet up with Jan in London at the Public Record Office in Kew Gardens one day. Whilst Hamish spent most of the day on his iPad, Jan and I spent it researching together in the records as well as spending time with Elaine Collins.

In 2019 we went to DNA Down Under in Sydney, the last trip I had away with Jan.

I could write so much more about Jan, she was an amazing friend and a wonderful genealogist who gave so much to help so many people in her lifetime. I will never forget her.



NZ BDM prices for Printouts and Certificates to increase. *Thanks Karen Crowe.* From the 18th of June 2026 the price of a "Printout", the copy that is best for Genealogists, is increasing from \$25.00 to \$26.00. Certificates will increase from \$33.00 to \$35.00. Fortunately, only a small increase.



Do you get Chris Paton's weekly email full of Genealogy news?

It's a great read particularly related to Scottish and Irish research?

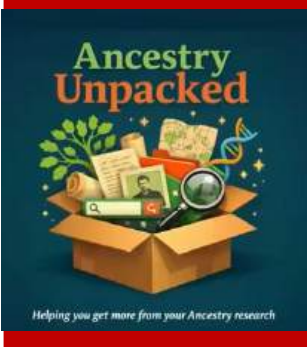
<https://scottishgenes.blogspot.com> to request it.

This Sunday morning NZ Time 6am he is doing a webinar - cost £10.00 - the subject is Irish Censuses & Substitutes for Ancestral Research.

Legacy Webinars - subscription needed except for Library

Currently they have an offer for 50% off their webinar membership - expires on May 31st. <https://familytreewebinars.com/>

Do you have German ancestry - several German webinars coming up. FREE TO REGISTER AND WATCH for a week after.



Have you caught up with the latest from 'Talking Family History'. Michelle Patient and Fiona Brooker are doing a weekly video that is released on Fridays on YouTube called 'Ancestry Unpacked'.

These videos are full of helpful hints to assist you when using the website of Ancestry.com.au.

Library News Magazines received; *Who Do You Think You Are* (March, April & May) *Family Tree* (May)

Newsletters received; Canterbury, Fielding, Kapiti, Palmerston North, Papkura, Porirua, Riccarton & Wellington.

If you would like an email copy of newsletters from another genealogy society or branch, **please contact Peter Hewett**
Email: newplymouthgenealogy@gmail.com



Carolyn Ward Martin Garcia Peter Harris Larry Peterson

The Back Page

Welcome to our newsletter! Firstly a **BIG** thank you to Peter Hewett for tirelessly presenting our newsletter for so many years.

When Newsletters change their editor there is normally a wee change of direction — different graphics—new ways of doing things—and so it is this time.

I hope you don't find the changes too alarming but I thought this was a golden opportunity to take a fresh look at how we present ourselves.

On the front page is our new committee—a big thankyou to them all for giving up some of their time to keep our society running—we can't do without them—so do give them your support!!

You will see quite a few photos of our activities—we run great classes and do some wonderful things, so lets celebrate them !

We have a rich history of activities that NP Genealogy have done in the past - many of them portrayed in the Societies' photo collection, the first ones are shared in this newsletter, and there will be many more in the Newsletters to come. Lets look and relive some of those great times - who knows we maybe able to redo them, or something similar in the future.

If you have any suggestions about other things we could include in our newsletter do get in touch with either me or Sharyn so we can see what we can do .

Look forward to hearing from you. Hamish



"Uncovering the Truth in Those Family Stories"