



New Zealand **FAMILY TREE**



Published Three Times Yearly

Te Rakau Whakapapa o Aotearoa

P.O. Box 13-301, Armagh, Christchurch 8141

Who's he?

by **Margaret White** with help from her late father, **Walter Sinton**

My father was often asked to be an after-dinner speaker in Dunedin. He had countless stories to tell, but one of my favourites was printed in the "The Evening Star" titled, "*Who's he?*". The full article is below.

"In the early 1930s an Otago University medical student lived two doors down from me in Opoho. He took part in many sports with varying degrees of success. One of these was boxing and as a lightweight he had already performed well at university tournaments.

However, he was not entirely satisfied with progress under his trainer at the time and asked me if I could get him enrolled at the boxing school I attended. It so happened that I was training under the guidance of the renowned Archie Leckie, who was quite happy to accept a new pupil.

Accordingly, I took my friend down to the school which was situated down a right-of-way at the back of Wardells in George Street and got him started. He didn't look at all like a fighter, quite the reverse in fact, but he moved nicely and had a very good left hand, plus plenty of courage.

The schedule took the usual form of sparring, skipping, "going through the hits", floor exercises and bag work etc. This programme was generally followed with a run round the hills of the town, which could be very strenuous indeed for a new chum.

The “old hands” delighted in taking out such a new starter and in the process run him off his feet. This was too good an opportunity to miss and completely unaware of my friend’s growing reputation in an entirely different sport, they issued him a cordial invitation to join them for “the road work”.

Knowing better, I declined to join them and the party left with their “victim”. Meanwhile I changed and Archie and I awaited their return with considerable interest.

In due course we heard a light feathery step coming down the lane and my friend came trotting up the stairs looking as fresh as a daisy. On inquiring about the others, he informed me they would be along shortly. He also confirmed that what I already knew would happen, did in fact take place.

The pack had started together and then, nudging one another had forged ahead to leave the new recruit behind. He in turn then caught up and passed them.



This happened many times until when it was obvious to my friend that the home straight had been reached, he really clapped on the pace and left them hopelessly in the distance.

When the weary bunch finally trudged up the stairs the opening remark was “.....who the hell is he”? Even when I told them, they didn’t fully realise just who they had been up against. But in the course of time, it was to dawn on them very dramatically.

Just as he led the field around the Dunedin streets that night, so a few years later he was to lead a much more distinguished group of runners in far off Berlin. There at the Olympic Games in 1936 he was to bring thousands to their feet, including Adolf Hitler, as he won one of the most exciting 1500 metre races of all time and New Zealand’s first Olympic Gold medal for athletics.

His name ? Jack Lovelock, of course.”

The first time my father met Jack, was when he asked to borrow the Sinton family’s large lawn roller. Later while using it, the roller got away from Jack and pulled him over the new Lovelock lawn and down several feet to the footpath. Fortunately, only the roller sustained serious injury. It was repaired and during

its long years of service it was known by the Sinton family, as the Lovelock roller.

Over the next two years they spent a lot of time together at the boxing school and according to Dad afterwards they would have a cup of tea and dry toast at the tea rooms across the road, before walking home together up to Opoho.

Dad would often watch him train on the Opoho rugby ground and was well aware of how extremely dedicated and focused on his eventual goal, he was. Jack also jogged daily between his home and the university, up and down what used to be called Cemetery Road, on the border of the Dunedin Botanic Gardens. He always refused offers of a ride.

Many years later Dad persuaded the City Council to rename Cemetery Road, Lovelock Avenue. He also arranged for his Rotary Club to place a plaque on a very large rock by the roadside. When Dad went to America touring with the National Band in 1965, he met with Jack's widow Cynthia and their two daughters, to inform them of the commemoration. He said they were thrilled.



The plaque reads LOVELOCK AVENUE named after Jack Lovelock N.Z. Gold Medallist 1500 metres.

Family History Society Programme 2023-2024

Meetings are held at 2 p.m. at the Elmwood Bowling Club, Heaton St, unless advised otherwise. A \$3 door charge applies.

Saturday 16 December 2023

Library rooms close for year

Saturday 20 January 2024

Library rooms re-open

Sunday 4 February 2024

BBQ meeting at 399 Papanui Rd 5:30 p.m.

Sunday 3 March 2024

speaker to be advised

Friday 8 - Sunday 10 March 2024

Waimate field trip

This will be an opportunity to explore Waimate's history, cultural heritage, museum, historic homes, and an optional tour of a wallaby farm or the local basilica.

We will be guided around the town by Edwina Swingler, a genealogist and member of the local Waimate historical group.

Accommodation in Waimate and nearby is limited, so book early to secure your place on this trip.

Joining St. John Ambulance Brigade

by Judith Munro (nee Chaston)

In 1957 I joined the St John Ambulance Brigade; I was 12 years old. I was in the St. Matthews Cadet Nursing Division. We met on a Monday evening at the then St. John Headquarters in Peterborough Street, Christchurch. This division was for girls and our leaders were older women, some of whom were nurses on the ambulances.



Here I am as a cadet with my medal *I was chosen to feature on a promotional brochure.*

During the evening we were taught different subjects – for which we later sat exams. They covered First Aid, hygiene, citizenship, and knowledge of the Order. In all there were 25 subjects we could choose to sit. First Aid was practiced each night. We had all the equipment to use and our leaders showed us how to use them.

By 1959 I was now in St. Matthews Nursing Division. I had passed the preliminary First Aid and preliminary home nursing exams. We resat these exams each year. I was now able to do First Aid duties at different sports events with another first aider, mainly rugby events. This was during the winter months and we were issued with warm winter coats for standing on the sidelines.

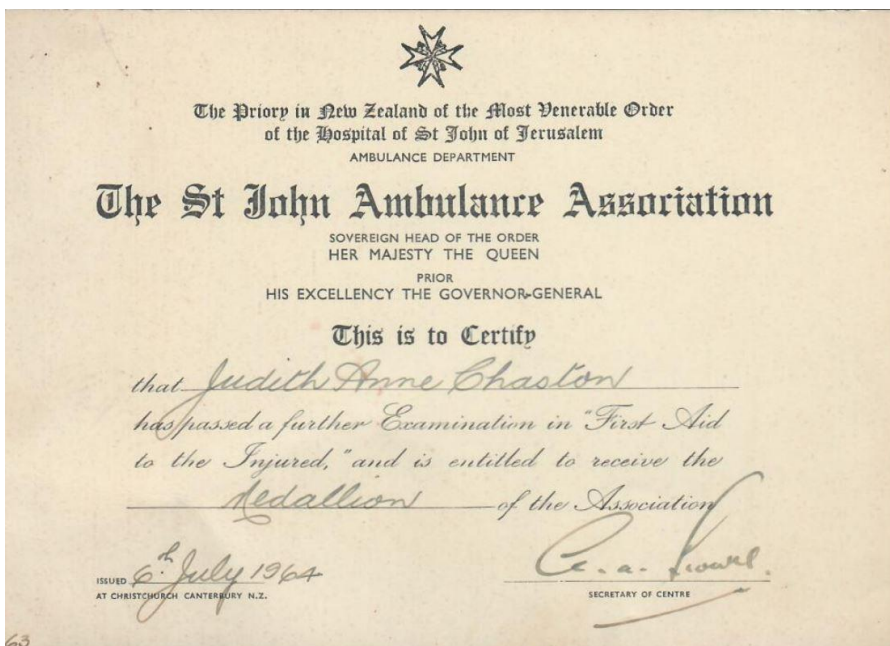
In 1963 and aged 18 years I had attended a course of “Advanced Nursing” and after passing I was able to do ambulance duty. This was another exam we resat each year. Ambulance duty was very different from sports meetings. We were issued with a new uniform and we attended accidents on the road, in the home,

transporting these patients to the A & E Department at the Christchurch hospital, also transporting some patients out to Burwood hospital. As I was working by then, I only did duty on a Saturday. Our hours were 9 a.m. until 5 p.m., then the men did the night duty.

By 1964 I had passed a further exam in "First Aid to the Injured," and was entitled to receive the "Medallion of the Association." In 1965 I was engaged to my future husband, so I decided to resign after 8 years with St. Johns. My time as a member taught me life skills in First Aid, and I made some friends with whom I still keep in contact.



We attended mock accident promotional exercises. I am second from the left



President's Message



This year, for the second time, we were invited to take part as a clan at the Hororata Highland Games. Despite an early start, we managed to get into the “display personnel only” carpark before the 8:30 a.m. deadline. After a small discussion over the placement of our gazebo, we had it ready to go by the 10 a.m. deadline.

From then on, we welcomed a steady stream of visitors to our stand as well as a number of our own members. Most of the public enquiries related to which clan the visitor's family belonged to. Others, who knew of their clans shared their stories of their travels in Scotland. We had plenty of maps and clan material at our display and were able to send our visitors away with answers to their questions. We even managed to sign up three new members.

Margaret and I were grateful for the support of the Taylors, Jill Lord and David Hill, so that we could get away and look at the multitude of stalls, displays and events on hand. Next door to the clan area was a Hororata district display. This display tent was also the venue of the “high tea” area.

We were treated to home-made cakes and our tea was served in a ceramic teapot with matching teacups – very Victorian.

As I sat looking at the displays in the Hororata marquee, I couldn't help but notice how many early 20th century homes the Hororata district has. But what was amazing to me, was of the six vintage homes on the display stands, four of them I had visited on our family history field trips over the years.

If you haven't visited the Hororata Highland Games or joined us on one of our field trips, consider doing so next year, you'll be in for an historical treat.



The Hororata Trust's Displays and tearooms



Family History Society display

The Caustic Cornish Copper Miner

by Roger Allen

About midnight on the 9 June 1891 William Penrose left his home, 220 South Montana Street in Butte, Montana and walked about 100 yards (90 metres) to the intersection of Montana and Galena streets, where he was attacked from behind, clubbed to the ground, then shot at close range with a .32 calibre pistol. The bullet entered from behind the left ear leaving powder burns.

What were the events and reasons that occurred to culminate in this treacherous act?

William John Penrose was born in Cambourne, Cornwall in 1856 to William Vivian Penrose and Jane Penrose (née Branch). Both William and Jane were children of copper miners and some records indicate William senior died at about 34 years of age in 1867. This would have left Jane a widow with three children under the age of eleven years. William John Penrose became a copper miner when very young. In about 1877 the family emigrated. Jane took her youngest son, Samuel Vivian and daughter Mary Ann (Polly) to New Zealand but William her oldest child, may have left Cornwall a year or two earlier going to Vermont U.S.A. He worked in Pennsylvania and Illinois coal mines moving west to Nevada where he drifted from mining into journalism. It was in Nevada that he married and had several children but only one survived, Maude, a bright, sweet-faced child, well loved by many. He moved to Butte and worked for the "Daily Miner" as a mining reporter. He then started the "Centerville Mining Journal", a distinctly Butte publication.

Butte at this time was a tough frontier mining town and the Indian wars were recent events. Custer's defeat at The Little Bighorn in south-east Montana had taken place only fifteen years earlier.

Montana became the 41st state of the Union in 1889. William was elected a Representative in the first Legislature, and one of the first to die, assassinated, whilst in office! Many said he was no politician because he was not prepared to lie! Along with other strong personality traits this was perhaps one of the reasons for his violent death. Labour laws to define the conditions for workers were being formulated at this time, not only in the U.S., but also all around the

world. One of the big issues was the eight-hour day to which William expressed his strong opposition both in the legislature and in his "*Centerville Mining Journal*". It was probably a good thing he did not go to New Zealand with the rest of his family as Parnell had fought that battle there sometime earlier. His stance was interesting, as he had worked in those dreadful Pennsylvanian mines where miners often got paid in "kind" and were in constant debt to the company store. The famous Pennsylvanian song of protest highlights the conditions:

*"Sixteen ton and what have you got?
Another day older and deeper in debt,
St Peter don't you call 'cos I can't come,
I owe my soul to the company store."*

William Penrose was a big strong healthy man, large-hearted, cheery, open handed and a true friend. He was always prepared to help the friendless and unfortunate. He could have made money, and did, but died comparatively poor. He never turned the needy away. On one occasion a boy arrived with a note from a woman he had never met, saying she was ill, with no money. He went with the boy to the woman's house, knocked on the door, put a \$50 note, at least five weeks wages, on the table and left.

He would give his last dollar away. He was good-natured and was able to disarm the angry with a hearty laugh but would fight if required. Self-educated, he was a natural orator and writer with a well-stored and retentive memory. Many-sided, popular and unpopular, a lion but tender hearted, rough and gentle, a hard tongue, which could praise or condemn but without sham or hypocrisy, but he would forgive and forget readily and thought everyone else was the same. Another mistake that may have cost him his life. He entered life with a zest that proved life was well worth living, giving as little pain as possible and the greatest pleasure. With force of character and energy he fought for principle in an outspoken manner. He obviously made enemies.

In the days prior to the murder, William Penrose had indicated to his friends, Michael Gill and J.B. Knight, that he had been warned and his life threatened. Mike Gill advised his friend "Pen" (William Penrose) to be careful and not

drink, and to go prepared. Penrose had been threatened before and nothing had happened, but he was obviously agitated. He said, "I had trouble with three men today, two of whom were not American citizens." Knight and Gill were later arrested for withholding information Penrose had told them. They were later released.

On the evening of the murder, William, his wife and daughter came home from town about 8.00 p.m. He seemed troubled and walked up and down in the parlour in a meditative mood, occasionally picking up Maude and chatting to her but said little to his wife. There was something on his mind, which he tried to drive out with a few drinks. About 10 p.m. he took off his shoes and went up to bed. Maude immediately hid his shoes to prevent him leaving the house again that night. Close to midnight, he got up again and said he was going downtown on business, something he often did. He used to get a cigar and come back. He had another drink and left. His wife tried to persuade him to leave it until the morning. He left and that was the last time she saw him alive.

He was seen walking leisurely up the east side of Montana Street, his left hand in his pocket and deep in thought. It was a misty dark night and the electric lights were off. A report was heard but no one went to investigate.

Some heard running footsteps. A short time later two men saw someone lying on the pavement and went to investigate and found Penrose lying on his back with his head in a pool of blood.

Daniel O'Donnell spoke to William about 20 yards (about 18 metres) from the corner. He observed a man approach a stout fellow lounging on a lamppost. A few minutes later he heard a shot, and two men ran away pursued, he thought by a policeman. One had a pistol and ordered Daniel to get off the sidewalk, which he did. The fleeing man threw something away. When found later, it was not a pistol but a "billy", a club about 1 foot (300 mm) long made from a shovel handle. A hole had been drilled down the centre and filled with lead. The top was sealed off with the same wood as a perfectly fitting cap. There are other descriptions saying an iron spike was driven roughly down the centre. It was not the work of a blacksmith. A search was carried out in the surrounding houses in an effort to find the other piece of the shovel handle but without success. The evidence shows Penrose was clubbed and then shot while on the

ground. Others reported seeing three men leave the scene. One could have possibly been a woman who was behaving in an agitated manner.

Previously William had been having some trouble from Belle Browning, a woman he had known in Eureka, Nevada six years previously. There was a suggestion she was “A Lady of the Night”. She was a nice-looking woman but had been known to dress as a man and stalk William, threatening to kill him. She was insanely jealous of him and on one occasion had stabbed another woman on his account. William was afraid of Belle’s treachery. She had thrown a brick through the “Centerville Mining Journal” office window and was being watched by a detective because she had sent obscene letters to William’s wife. William Penrose had been seen visiting Belle’s house between 6.00 and 7.00 p.m. on the night he was murdered, but they were seen to part amicably. Apparently, Belle asked William over to her place to discuss the letters she had sent. He asked her to write to his wife and apologise for the trouble she had caused.

Belle begged him to give up drinking and sober up. He said he was expecting trouble from the miners’ union and professional workingmen.

Two other men visited Belle later that evening and stayed about an hour leaving at 9.00 p.m. When the police came to Belle’s house in Lower Wyoming Street that night after the murder, she answered the door in her nightgown. On hearing of William’s death she became extremely agitated and cried bitterly, denying any knowledge of the murder. She was arrested and kept in custody until after the inquest.

A rumour circulated that William Penrose was involved with some other woman and was killed by a jealous husband.

On the same night a horse and saddle were stolen from a nearby stable at around midnight. It was originally thought the murderer(s) stole the horse to assist in their escape. The thief was found in Helena on 15 June trying to sell the animal and gear. He appeared to be extremely regretful for the trouble to which he had put the police using the excuse he was drunk at the time! This turned out to be an unrelated incident, as the thief had nothing to do with the Penrose murder.

Rumours continued to abound with motives ranging from:

- Robbery
- Revenge for what he had published
- Fear of what he might publish ruining the aspirations of some people.

Hundreds visited the scene the next day and the body looked natural as if in life except for paleness and a slight discolouration above the left ear, the entry point of the bullet. The boardwalk was stained with blood.

The death of William Penrose was mourned without parallel in the history of Montana up to that time.

At the funeral beautiful floral tributes covered a magnificent casket, which had a glass window to enable people to view his body.

At 2.00 p.m. 13 June 1891, the procession left William Penrose's house and set off to the church. Thousands attended and Montana Street was lost in a sea of people thronging every vantage point whilst the rest of the city was deserted. The sun shone on the procession, which was led by a band followed by members of the Butte Press Club and visiting members of the journalist profession from all over Montana. Three hundred members of the various lodges in the city formed the guard of honour. William Penrose's handsome pointer dog followed the procession and quietly took his place in the church during the ceremony.

When the service was over the cortege moved to the cemetery. The skies had clouded. It was pouring with rain and the thunder rolled. It was the largest funeral ever seen in Butte a testimony to the regard with which William Penrose was held. The "Sons of St George" erected the tallest tombstone in the Mount Moriah Cemetery, in his memory. It is 30 feet (about 10 metres) tall and inscribed simply with the name William J. Penrose.



Photographs of the grave of William J. Penrose, Butte Cemetery Montana

The murderers were never caught even though a reward of \$3000 was offered and the “Sons of St George” spent thousands trying to track down the killers. Belle Browning was released because none of the witnesses were prepared to identify her as the woman seen in the street at the time of the murder. Robbery was rejected as a motive. Michael P. Malone, in his book “The Battle for Butte”, says the most likely suspects were the Montana version of Pennsylvania’s violent Irish underground, the “Molly Maguires”. Maybe it was the caustic Cornishman’s opposition to the 8-hour day, which prompted the murder.

This is a true story about my great-great-uncle William John Penrose (1856 – 1891). There is conflicting information regarding his marriage. The newspaper in Butte reports he was married in Nevada, whereas other sources indicate he was married in Vermont. Some sources record that William John's daughter, Maude Penrose married and many of her descendants are living in New York. William's mother, my great-great-grandmother, Jane Penrose, visited William in Butte in 1891 and was probably on her way home to New Zealand when her son was killed.

Jane is buried in an unmarked grave in the Addington Cemetery, Christchurch along with her grandson Louis Penrose (Samuel's son) and his wife Edith (Moon). Polly, William's sister (my great-grandmother) is buried in the All Saints Churchyard Burwood Christchurch.

A man named William Vivian Penrose was buried in Sydney Australia in 1910. Is this my great-great-grandfather, Jane's husband?

I have found no official record of a W.V. Penrose arriving in New Zealand with the rest of the family. The 1871 British Census records Jane as a widow. William Vivian Penrose died in Redruth Cornwall March 1867.

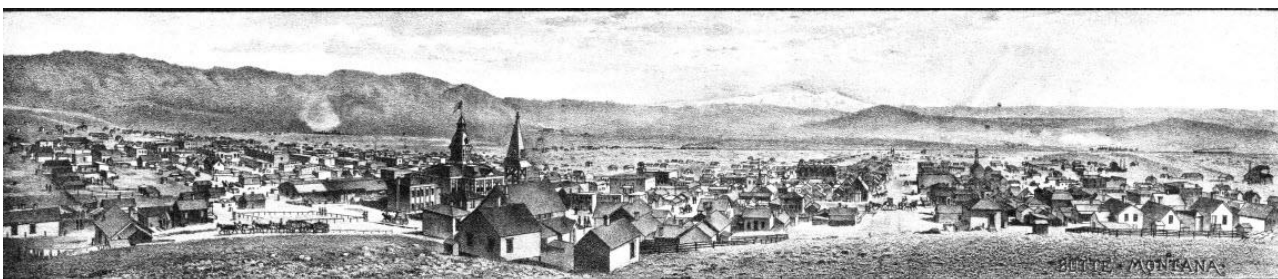
After his wife Elizabeth died, Samuel Vivian Penrose (William John's brother) went to Sydney where his daughter, Emily Lelievre, was living.

References:

Michael P. Malone *The Battle for Butte* p77

The Daily Inter-Mountain Standard Volume XI Nos. 70-79 June 10-20 1891
Nos. 81-83 June 23-25 1891

The Montana Standard Butte Montana: October 12 1980



The Ballantyne's Fire : Its impact on my family

by **Kevin White**

November the 22nd 1947 was set to be one of the happiest days of my parent's lives, it was the day they had set to get married at St. Lukes Church in central Christchurch, New Zealand. My parents were **Kenneth John White** known as Ken and **Beverley Jean Tolchard** known as Bev. Ken (my father) had recently heard that he qualified for a State Advances loan, as he had served overseas during WW2. These loan offers were dependent on a couple being married and needing accommodation. Sections were available in St. John's Street, Woolston and Ken had his eye on one. Bev was not that keen on getting married, she was only 20 and enjoying going out to dances and socialising with her netball friends and work colleagues at Lane Walker Rudkin where she was working in the sewing room. However, she knew that this loan offer was too good to turn down, so she agreed to marry. Ken was brought up in and around the suburb of Edgware and for some time lived with his parents and two sisters at 9 Dover Street. Ken's best friend was **Jeff Ward**. Jeff lived at 1 Dover Street, so it was a natural choice for Jeff to be the best man. A work colleague of Ken's, Vince, was the groomsman and Bev's bridesmaids were Ken's sister **Winnie White** and Bev's younger sister **Maisie Tolchard**.

The scene was set for a Saturday wedding, the arrangements had been made, the gowns had been fitted and the suits ordered. Great excitement surrounded the Tolchard house where Bev lived with her parents and sister Maisie. Bev's mother Fanny was extremely delighted. She had already seen the marriages of six of her children, who by now had all left home.

Then disaster struck! Four days before the wedding a fire broke out in the Ballantynes Department store on the main street of the central city.



Isobel Ward. Died aged 23

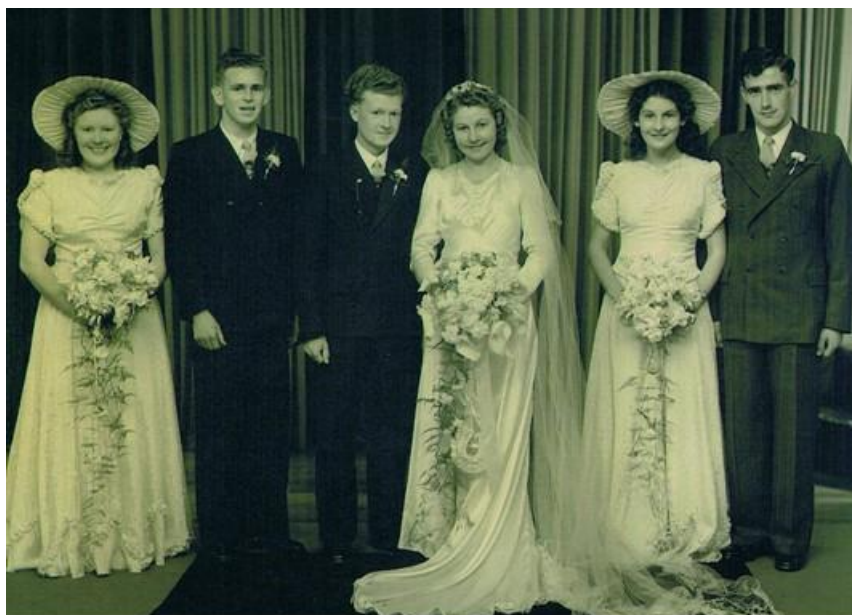
The store owners were slow to react to a smoke warning and the management insisted that everything was in order and to carry on working until further notice. Some disobeyed orders and left the building, others ran to the windows to await instructions. One of these was **Isobel Ward** born **Annie Isobel Ward** (Jeff's sister). She was 23, lived with her parents and worked in the display department and was portrayed in the made for television film **Ablaze** by Greta Gregory.



Scene from the film "Ablaze". Mr. Ballantyne asks Isobel (nearest to the tree) to turn on the Christmas lights.

In the film, Isobel (Greta Gregory) featured a number of times, firstly turning on the Christmas tree display for Mr. Ballantyne and later going up the stairs to warn the others to get out. When Mr. Ballantyne went to check the upstairs floors, he came across Isobel lying on the stairs, she was barely breathing. He carried her for a bit and then checked her pulse and found her to be dead. My father had a different version of Isobel's demise. He stated that she managed to get out, but then realised her work colleagues had not been so lucky so went back in to save them. Which version is true, nobody knows. Isobel was first reported as missing on the 18th, then as perished victim on the 19th. This news devastated the Ward family as well as my father. His best friend's sister, whom he knew very well and had gone to school with, had perished – he was gutted. It was decided that Jeff needed to take care of his family, so quickly new arrangements were made for the wedding party, with Vince stepping in as best man and another one of Ken's workmates, **Len Douglas** taking over as groomsman. If you look at the wedding photo, you will see Len, (far right) is wearing a different suit, there was no time to have a matching one fitted for him (see next page).

41 employees perished in the fire. Of the three women who jumped from the third floor of the building one died, she was the only identifiable victim. Most of the victims were unidentifiable as the building had collapsed crushing them and burning them beyond recognition. The coroner had an horrendous job identifying the bodies. The official coroner's list makes gruesome reading. Each body was numbered and any recognisable feature (male – female) or possessions such as rings and broches were listed. 28 bodies were recovered on the 19th. and a further 12 on the 20th.



A decision was quickly made that the victims would be buried in a mass grave. A semicircular grave was dug at the Ruru Lawn cemetery. The service for the victims was held at the 2:30 p.m. in the Christchurch Anglican Cathedral. Each victim was treated with dignity and afforded a coffin and a hearse. It was a very solemn procession that departed for Ruru Lawn cemetery.

The cause of the tragedy was clear. There was no emergency evacuation plan and getting employees out was the responsibility of individual department heads. Ordinary staff were unaware of escape or fire exits.

Ballantynes employed 458 people, of whom there were 300 women.

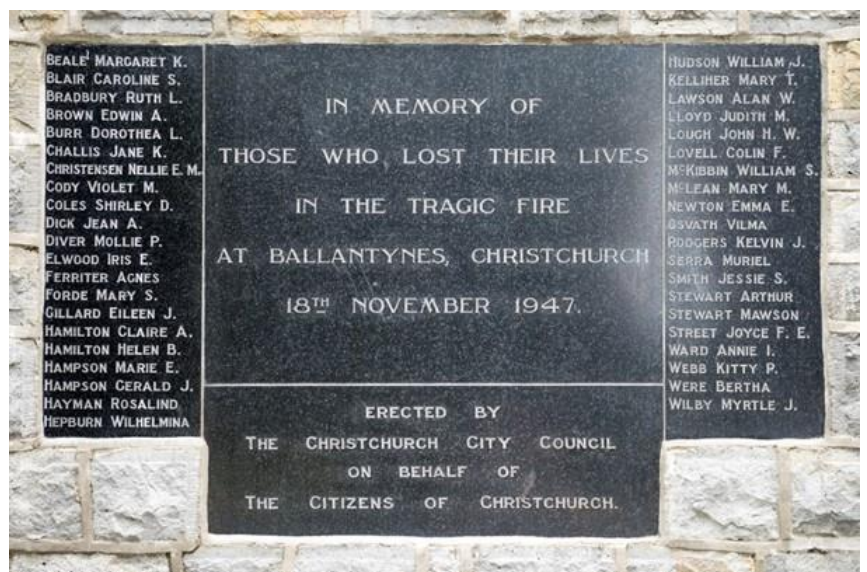
At the time of the fire, it was estimated that there were between 250 and 300 customers in the building. All the customers escaped.

The wedding went ahead. It was a very solemn affair. The mass grave funeral service for the 41 victims took place the day after the wedding on Sunday 23rd November 1947.

The fire affected my father for the rest of his life. He blamed the fire service and the management of Ballantynes for the death of his friend. I was born in 1949 and lived with my parents at our new home in St. John's Street, Woolston, Christchurch. Each week I would go with my mother as she met up with her four sisters for afternoon tea at one of the many tearooms around Christchurch. Sometimes we would go to my grandmother's home in Sydenham.

In 1951 my father was offered a job as head pattern cutter and shoe designer for Hannahs shoe factory in Wellington. My mother Bev did not want to leave Christchurch, she was so attached to her large family and couldn't bear the thought of leaving them. As a compromise my father told her that he would move the family back to Christchurch in a few years' time, after he was established as a shoe designer. He also promised to take the family to

Christchurch during each Christmas or Easter break. I loved these trips back to Christchurch on the overnight ferry. The family moved into a new home in Tui Street Alicetown, a small suburb wedged between Petone and Lower Hutt. My Mother never returned to live in Christchurch and lived in her Tui Street home for over 66 years until her death.



Back in Christchurch my mother's sister Maisie had married Len Douglas (the stand in groomsman), whom she met at my parent's wedding. My mother and Maisie were very close having had to share the same bed all their early lives.

When my mother was about to have another child, it was decided that she and I would go back to Christchurch for a month or so, so she could give birth

with the support of her family. Also, at the beginning of November, my father was to attend a footwear conference in Auckland. We stayed with my Auntie Maisie. My sister was born on the 18th of November 1953. This was the six-year anniversary of the Ballantynes fire. My father thought that fate had turned his way and wanted to call my sister Isobel. My mother did not like the idea, thinking that it was too morbid, but conceded to give her a second name Anne, Isobel's second name. So now I had a sister Lynda Anne White, who would be forever linked in the family's memory to the fire. Maisie and Len became Lynda and my godparents, and they took their role very seriously.

One year on holiday in Christchurch, I remember that our family were wandering around the central city, looking for somewhere to have afternoon tea. We ended up outside Ballantynes new store, and my mother suggested we go into the downstairs tearoom. My father refused to go into the store stating: "I'm never going into that store – ever." It was on this day that the Ballantynes' fire and my father's connection to Isobel Ward and her tragic death, was explained to me.

Many years later, when I moved to Christchurch for a new teaching promotion, I had no idea that our home in Kawau Crescent nearly backed onto the Ballantynes Memorial in the Ruru Lawn Cemetery, until we went on a walk through the cemetery. There standing out for us all to see, was Isobel's headstone. Yet another reminder of the family's tragic link to the fire.

For the last seven years, our daughter-in-law Courtney has worked as a caterer in Ballantynes. As a family we have no qualms about shopping at Ballantynes or visiting the tearooms. However earlier this month my wife Margaret was Christmas shopping in Ballantynes and on the way to the lift she noticed a plaque on the wall. On closer inspection it was a memorial plaque to the victims of the fire. She had never seen it before. Included on the list was Isobel Ward's name. What was the date when she saw it? 18th November! Spooky or what!

In Memoriam cards : a way of remembering the deceased

by Philip Creed

In my collection of family history, there are a number of small printed memorial cards with a prayer or picture on one side, and the name, date of death and sometimes place of death on the other side.

These cards were printed in Ireland, Australia, U.S.A. and New Zealand, between 1878 and 2017.

What are In Memoriam cards and where did they originate?

They are Christian devotional cards, usually with a sacred image on one side, or an image of a cross, and a scripture verse, and the name and relevant dates on the other side. They were first produced in the 17th century for Easter ceremonies, and the custom spread from Germany and Austria to the UK, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand in the 19th century.

They were produced for Catholics and Protestants alike. The earliest New Zealand card I have is for Frances Bowerman nee Foy who died in Napier in 1878. She was not a relation of my family, so must have been a friend of my ancestor. The earliest family card I have is from 1889 and is for the death of John GIBSON, my great-great-great-grandfather.

In the 1930s and 1940s, nearly every Catholic person who died had a memorial card or In Memoriam card as they are called. They were given out at the funeral or after the funeral of the deceased person, and asked for prayers to be said for them. They also reminded people of the anniversary date of the death of their loved one, so that this date might be commemorated in some way. In Catholic countries, it was the custom to visit the grave at the cemetery of family members, either on their death anniversary or during the month of November, the month when Catholics remembered their deceased family and relations.

Below are some examples of Memorial cards from my family.

In Ireland, the memorial card was often a folded two-sided card, with a saint's or holy picture on one side, and the details and sometimes a photograph of the deceased on the other side. In NZ modern memorial cards are usually two-sided, but do not have a fold.

The practice of sending out these cards probably gained popularity when postage became less expensive.

Otherwise, they became keepsakes and were inserted into prayerbooks and bibles for future reference. Modern funeral service sheets perform a similar function, to remind us of the deceased person, their life and image.





From top left the memoriam cards are for:

John Thomas BERRY died 16 October 1889 aged 60 years interred at Renwicktown cemetery

John GIBSON died 15 March 1889 aged 85 years interred at Kaituna cemetery

Amelia REARDON died at Blenheim N.Z. 10 May 1892 aged 23 years

Joseph Henry REARDON born 5 May 1895 died 9 July 1897 aged 2 years

Frances BOWERMAN formerly FOY born Taunton, Somersetshire died 28 June 1878 aged 33 years at Napier New Zealand

Sarah Horrocks HOBBS died 4 December 1903 aged 75 years, interred at Abney Park Cemetery

Eliza Mary Ann WISBEY (Poppie) the beloved wife of James Wisbey, 9 Blurton Road, Clapton N.E. who died 24 February 1898 aged 37 years, interred at Highgate Cemetery Wednesday 2 March 1898

What's new in the library

The Wakapuaka cemetery : a place to walk and wonder

Published by Rosemary Venner, 2002. ISBN 0473083485

Reprinted May 2005, Sept 2019. 148 pages + index

This splendidly illustrated spiralbound book was gifted to the society on a tour at the Wakapuaka cemetery, Nelson, in March 2023 by the Friends of the Cemetery, who restore and maintain old gravestones, install signage and conduct guided tours. It details the history of this cemetery, the fourth established in Nelson, in December 1861, as a public cemetery.

The book is very well illustrated and contains short biographies of many notable local people buried in different sections of the cemetery, Anglican, Catholic, Wesleyan Methodist, Baptist, Hebrew and General.

A history of local undertakers and funeral directors and their firms adds interest, and there are copious photos of hearses, coffin decorations, and funeral homes. Descriptions of the mortuary chapels, funeral and mourning customs in Victorian and colonial times make the past come alive.

A chapter on local monumental stonemasons contains many photos of gravestones, examples of funerary sculptures, statuettes and iconography or decorations on gravestones, advertisements of monumental masons and even advice on how to clean immortelles, the artificial flower ornaments often placed on grave plots.

As well a chapter on the Nelson crematorium (the chapel which was later used by the local genealogy society and named "Ancestors Attic") and the various buildings on the site, Father Garin memorial chapel, and the sexton's house make this a well-researched and thorough local history of an important cemetery.

Our Wishart history: from Scotland to New Zealand 1850s

Compiled and written by Judith Simon, Neville and Des Wishart. Printed 2017.
358 pages + 41 leaves of family trees, softback.

This beautifully produced softback family history is a compilation of research into the ancestors and descendants of George Wishart (1816-1892) and his two wives Mary Jack and Jane Sims. George Wishart was a handloom weaver in Paisley, Scotland and emigrated with his second wife and children from his first marriage to Victoria, Australia in 1852, probably living in Ballarat. The family then emigrated to Auckland, N.Z. in 1855. George Wishart's participation in local politics, the Presbyterian church and the Auckland militia during the Land wars are outlined.

Starting with his eldest son, the lives, occupations and residences of subsequent generations of Wisharts are described, with their photographs.

The book is very well laid out, with bold letters for all proper names, and captioned illustrations. A well-researched book, with lots of commentary on social history, for example giving probable economic reasons for emigration.

A notable descendant was Jean Wishart (1920-2016), formerly editor of N.Z. Women's Weekly magazine. Margaret White (nee Sinton) is also a descendant. An extremely well produced book, with the regrettable lack of any index.

The tables of drop line family trees at the back add considerable value to the book.

Local lives : a history of Addington by John Wilson

Published by Addington Neighbourhood Association, 2018. 320 pages, hardback. ISBN: 978-0473413231

Addington was the oldest industrial working-class suburb of Christchurch, which has more in common with Sydenham, Waltham and Woolston, lying along the railway line between Addington and Woolston.

John Wilson describes the early development of Addington, from farmland to suburb and weaves in the stories of individuals and families who settled in this district in the 19th and 20th centuries. He also describes the many institutions

which governed life there, probably more than in any other Christchurch suburb. These include the railway workshops, Addington school, the lodges, the Burgess' Association, the library, orphanage and St Mary's home, immigration barracks, and Salvation Army home, the Addington prison, Army base and Samaritan home, Protestant churches, saleyards, show grounds and the racecourse.

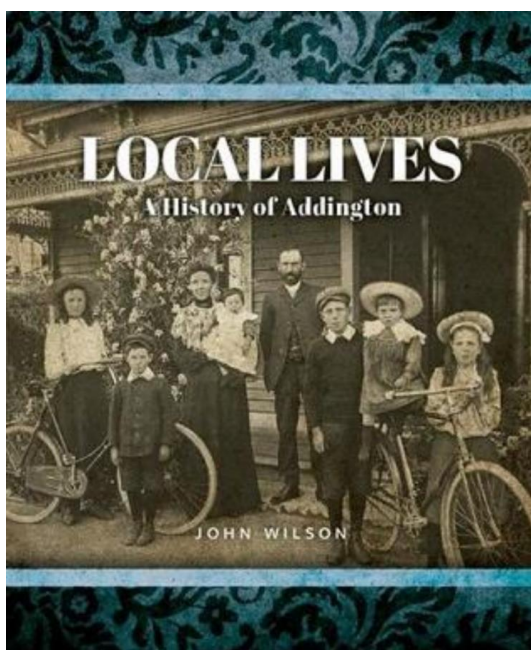
A chapter on Irish Catholic Addington looks at the cluster of immigrants from Ireland, the role of the Catholic church, social institutions, schooling and education, separatism and Catholic identity, and sectarian tensions in Addington.

Insets throughout the book provide insights from newspaper articles, personal recollections, family histories and church and business history. Copiously illustrated with photos, maps and plans of the institutions and people, this book is a model of local N.Z. history.

The book discusses the social history, politics and culture of the district, up to the Canterbury earthquakes of 2010-2011.

A good bibliography and index of names and places make this handsome book complete.

Reviews by Philip Creed



Submitting Articles

Any members who may possess an interesting story pertaining to family or early historical matters and especially to the greater Canterbury area, or anywhere in New Zealand, are invited to write about it and submit it to the editor for inclusion in our future issues.

Any matter may be written down or typewritten and provided facts of the story, names etc., are clearly indicated, we can do the editing if you consider you are not that good at putting down a story. If you have a computer and e-mail facilities, this is the best way to submit material as it can be edited on receipt and inserted directly into our publishing program.

Regarding photographs: the best way is to submit electronic images in either a JPEG, TIFF or PDF format as reproduction proves better and sharper. However, a good photocopy will generally be adequate.

If e-mail is preferred the address to send articles, photos and stories to is: **philipcreed@xtra.co.nz** or address any correspondence to: The Editor, 28 Ensors Road, Opawa, Christchurch 8023.

Our next issue will be published in APRIL 2024.

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