



# New Zealand **FAMILY TREE**



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Te Rakau Whakapapa o Aotearoa  
P.O. Box 13-301, Armagh, Christchurch 8141

## ***FHSNZ AT THE HORORATA HIGHLAND GAMES 2024***



## President's Report - David Hill



As I write this, a few of us are reflecting on a successful day at the Hororata Highland Games.

Thanks to Kevin White for organising the gazebo, some chairs and materials, to Philip for supplementing the books and bringing a table, and to Liz Geal.

I know spending the day at the highland games is not for everybody, but it is a good opportunity to promote our society.

We often talk about family history and genealogy societies struggling to survive, attract members and to fill committee positions.

But, based on the interest in the stalls in St Andrew's Square at the games (the various clans, the Canterbury Genealogy Society and Bishopdale Branch of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists stalls, and our stall), the problem is not a declining interest in family history.

We had people coming up to our stall all day wanting to know if their family was part of a clan. The clan books with maps from our society's library certainly proved to be very useful.

We signed up one new member on the day and there was certainly a lot of interest. I wouldn't be surprised if we were to get a few visitors to our library in the coming weeks, and perhaps a few will even join our society.

Compare that to our open day last month as part of Christchurch Heritage Week. We had a handful of visitors who were not already members.

I think it tells us a few things. Firstly, if we want to attract new members we can't sit and wait for them to come to us, we need to go where they are.

If you look at our success over the years from Christchurch heritage week open days and events such as the Hororata Highland Games, we have gained a number of new members from these events. I joined at a Heritage Week open day back in 1995, while Liz Geal joined at the Highland Games two years ago and two years later, she was back helping on the stall.

But it also raises a few questions. How do we measure the success of these events? Do we measure success simply from how many new members we sign up?

If that is our sole measure of success, then maybe we need to rethink our model.

Surely our reason for our existence is to help people to find their ancestors. For some, it may simply be helping them to find their clan, for others they wish to do more in-depth research.

As my daughter Sasha said on Saturday evening, *“people could have just looked up their surnames on the internet to find their clan”*.

The internet has certainly changed the way we do family history, as it has changed a lot of other things. The internet may well be one of the reasons why fewer people seem to join family history or genealogy societies.

Yes, people could look up their surname on the internet to find their clan. So, why hadn't they done it before they came to the highland games?

Perhaps for some they hadn't thought about it before they got to the games. For others, maybe they don't want to simply spend time looking stuff up on the internet, and we would certainly not want to encourage people to do all their research on the internet.

Perhaps too, people want connection – something the internet doesn't really provide. They want to come and talk to someone about their family history, rather than asking Google.

## **Auditor**

As members may recall, our auditor, Lynn Prattley, has stepped down from her role after nearly 50 years' service to our society. Auditor's fees can cost hundreds of dollars, so we were extremely fortunate that Lynn was willing to do this simply for the cost of an annual membership subscription.

Our committee has made some enquiries and found we are not required to have audited annual accounts. We simply need our treasurer to present our accounts in a format which meets the requirements of the Charities Commission, and it needs to be approved by the AGM.



## Hororata Highland Games 9 Nov 2024 - Kevin White and David Hill



It's always a rush to arrive at Hororata by 8:30 a.m., when the gate closes on the area set aside for the clans. David and Kevin made it in time and

managed to erect the gazebo before the "safety police" arrived to check it out. This year we didn't have to re-site it, just got a "pink squirt" on an illegally placed tent peg! It was great to have the extra help this year of Liz Geal and Philip Creed. This meant that we could team tag and get coffee, food and a have chance to wander around.



There were 19 clans in our U-shaped clan area, which is a hammer throw away from the main arena. This year the entertainment included highland dancing, pipe bands, hammer throw, sheaf tossing, the caber throw and a kilted mile run. There were also vintage car and traction engine displays. As well as all this entertainment there were over 50 food stalls and 120 stalls selling all things Scottish.

We had a steady stream of enquiries, mostly regarding clan names. We were able to direct quite few to their clan origins. This year we handed out home-made business cards, rather than brochures and we managed to distribute about 80 of them. We had lots of visitors promising to visit our rooms and we also signed up one new member who is keen to come to meetings and even wanted information on our next field trip.



Throughout the day we were entertained by our visitors as they regaled their family stories and their Scottish heritages. Willie McArthur, the Scottish singer, was nearby and he also entertained us with his songs and ditties about Scottish life. Yet again I was tempted into a haggis burger for my lunch, followed by a dram at the Whisky stand. Our president David Hill reluctantly tried a haggis burger as well. It will probably be his last. Another successful promotion and a fun day. We'd love you to join us next year!

## The Spoken Word - Alan Pegley

Our October meeting took a small diversion into professional cycle racing.

While tracing his own family history, Alan Pegley quickly became sidetracked into one of his other passions and began researching professional cycling races in the South Island.

Our president David Hill spoke to Alan about his research and his new book, *The Spoken Word*, ahead of the October meeting.

*The Spoken Word* traces the South Island classic Timaru to Christchurch cycle races between 1899 and 1994 and other races.

“I’ve always had an interest in cycling. I was a cyclist, and I won the Timaru to Christchurch race in 1960,” Alan says.



“I really wanted to do it because I wanted to see the history preserved.”

Alan's book tells the story of past races and race winners, taking accounts from old newspapers, scrapbooks kept by past competitors and interviews.

First held in 1899, the Timaru to Christchurch professional cycle race originally covered a distance of 112 miles.

Among the past winners was Richard Lanskey, of Southbrook, who won it in

1926 in a time of five hours, 48 minutes and 38 seconds.

Cycling was quite strong in Rangiora at the time,” Alan says.

The Rangiora Athletic and Cycling Club organised a civic reception for Lanskey, with the mayor in attendance.

Other riders included disabled riders Findlay Johnson and Ray Hubbard, who rode in the South Island classic races from the late 1940s.

Johnson turned to cycling in 1945 and had a bike built specially for him, with one pedal crank extended and the handlebars extended on the right.

Hubbard nearly lost both of his feet in a farming accident at age three.

He later took up cycling to keep fit and finished fifth in the 1947 Timaru to Christchurch race and third in 1952.

After attending high school in Christchurch, Alan joined the family business, Westland Sports Depot, on the West Coast.

He first competed in the Timaru to Christchurch race in 1958, as an 18-year-old.

In 1960, he endured a long train ride from Greymouth to Timaru.

The next day he crossed the line in Christchurch after a ride of four hours, 48 minutes and one second, to win by just half a wheel length.

Alan retired to Woodend in 2009 and now lives at Charles Upham Retirement Village in Rangiora.

The Family History Society library has a copy of his book.

### **FHSNZ Library report**

The society library has been most ably looked after by Jill Lord and a team of volunteers during the year. Apart from long holiday weekends, the library is open every Monday and Saturday from 10 a.m. until 12 p.m.

We have an extensive collection of published N.Z. family histories, which are housed in alphabetical order on special shelving. We have a collection of Wises and Stones street directories from the early 1900s until 1955, and an excellent collection of NZ electoral rolls, covering the whole country for 1999 and 2014. Selected rolls are available for 1987, 1988 and 1994. Shipping lists for Lyttelton, Timaru, Nelson and Otago and some West Coast ports are kept in the cupboard in the main library room.

We have a great collection of cemetery transcriptions for the greater Canterbury region, and some for the West Coast. The Christchurch cemetery transcripts were done in the 1970s and 1980s by members of the society. We have the complete collection of NZ Society of Genealogists cemetery microfiche, with supplements until 2006, on the shelf in the passageway leading to the microfiche room.

In that room, we have a complete collection of NZ indexes to registrations of births and deaths from 1848 till 1990, and in the passageway a complete Marriage registration index from 1856 until 1990.

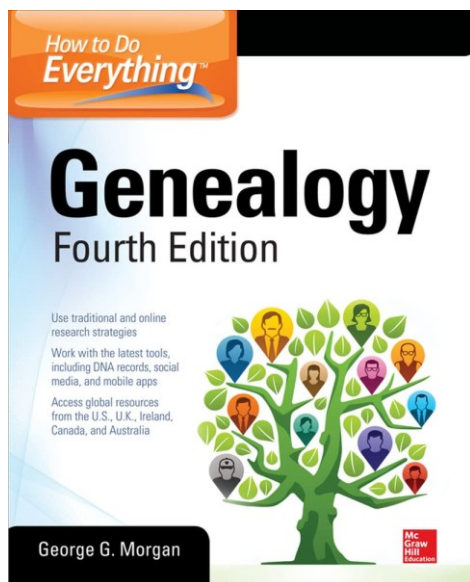
As well, there are collections of Australian BDM indexes, for NSW and Victoria, and the International Genealogical Index (IGI) for 1988 on microfiche. There are many CD-ROM disks in the computer room with



shipping, 1881, 1893, 1896 electoral rolls, WW1 military rolls, NZ Burial Locator and the NZ Marriages 1836-1956. Also, there are indexes to the 1882 NZ Freeholders list, Catholic Diocese of Christchurch baptisms from 1850-1905 and Oamaru, Waimakariri and King country-Taumarunui cemeteries. These CDs are kept in the cupboard above the society computer.

We wish to thank all of the volunteers who have willingly given their time to staffing the library this year, particularly Ray and Mary Pointon, who have sorted the family histories, and have been going through the bookshelves placing books on the correct shelves and weeding out duplicate copies. We also thank all members who have donated items to the library this year.

### **Book Review: *How to Do Everything: Genealogy, 4th Edition.***



This is a book for those who want a comprehensive guide to doing all types of research and using online research tools and smartphone apps for genealogy. Written by George C. Morgan, a well-known American genealogy speaker and expert, author of 11 previous genealogy books, including *The Official Guide to Ancestry.com*, he co-authored this guide with Drew Smith, a librarian at University of South Florida and a genealogy speaker and author of *Social Networking for Genealogists*. Part 1 shows how to begin your research, part 2 shows how to expand your research into religious, cemetery, funeral home, obituary and probate records, as well as how to obtain Social Security applications and pension data from the railroad retirement board. An excellent list of websites with historical newspapers available is given.

Chapters on placing ancestors into context and locating their basic records, using American, British, Irish and Canadian census records and the 1939 National Identity Card registration in Britain are helpful. Whole chapters on where to find and use American, British and some Australian military records, American and Canadian land records and manorial records in the U.K., immigration and naturalization records in the U.S., Canada, Australia and passport records are very useful.

This book is a reference guide which explains in some depth about e.g. the type of land records and surveying systems used in the United States and Canada. It does not give lists of where these records are held, but does give a good list of genealogical websites or archive and library websites where these types of records may be found.

In discussion of the history of immigration records, this guide gives an overview of ships' passenger lists or manifests into the USA. 1820 is the year in which Congress passed legislation calling for passenger lists to be filed by each ship's master with the customs officer of each port. Congress passed an Act in 1882 requiring federal immigration officials to record all immigrants arriving in the U.S. Lists for Philadelphia port date from 1883 and from 1891 for most other ports have been microfilmed by NARA (National Archives and Records Administration).

There is a good section on American ports of Entry and the history of Castle Garden and Ellis Island immigration depots in New York.

A chapter of the book is devoted to using indexes and finding aids referencing guides to courthouse, library and archive, immigration, land and probate indexes. Also using Family History Centres, contacting repositories, seeking help from state, provincial or national libraries or archives, contacting genealogy societies and engaging professional researchers. Keeping track of your correspondence, using a research log and setting up a filing system are all covered.

Section 3 of the book deals with advanced research strategies and electronic tools to assist your genealogical research.

A chapter on assessing genealogy websites, structuring effective searches and using search engines to get great results, using mailing lists and message boards, and fine-tuning Google searches is useful.

A chapter on genetic genealogy (DNA testing) covers test processes and results, joining a DNA surname project on the internet and further resources. Use of alternative research strategies in order to locate difficult-to-find ancestors, deals with recognising when you have a "brick wall" in your research, and how to surmount it.

Looking at different record types, taking a fresh look at your evidence, re-evaluating quality of sources, dating old photos, widening scope of research to include new and different sources, dissecting obituaries for clues, developing a



timeline, switching to researching another family member to bypass your roadblock, seeking help from libraries, archives and societies, and engaging a professional researcher are all discussed as strategies for progressing your research. A few common brick wall scenarios are dealt with at the end of this chapter.

These include: A person's parents cannot be identified, a person's previous place of residence cannot be identified, records have been discarded or destroyed, records were destroyed during wartime, no evidence exists that a person lived at a particular place, you cannot link your ancestor with possible family members, the person you seek has vanished, and adoption records are sealed. In each scenario, a possible solution strategy is described.

The last chapter of the book looks at incorporating social networking into your research. Using genealogy blogs is discussed, which are short for "web logs", and gives two websites helpful in locating genealogy blog sites. It also looks at using genealogy wikis, which are websites which allow the creation and editing of interlinked web pages using a web browser and software embedded in the wiki, e.g. Wikipedia, but there are others.

A list of genealogy podcasts and online live webinars is useful. Social media resources such as Facebook, Genealogy Wise (A free genealogy social networking website setup in 2009), Google + (Google Plus, where google Hangouts can be found) and Twitter (now X) round out this section.

Finally, a few smartphone apps for Genealogy-on-the-Go are covered, such as the BillionGraves camera app, CousinCalc, Family Search Memories, Family Search Tree, Research Logger and Wolfram Alpha Genealogy and History Research Assistant app are listed.

This 490-page genealogy guide was published by McGraw Hill in 2015, and uniquely addresses all of the major genealogy record types and explains traditional and digital genealogy research strategies. It covers the U.S., Canada, U.K., Ireland and Australia and goes into detail about how to get started on your genealogy using records in your own home and interviewing relations about family history. It is well worth browsing for research tips and for thinking about research strategies when you have exhausted your usual methods of approaching problems.

**Philip Creed**

## Quirky place names I have come across on my travels - Kevin White

Some years ago, I wrote an article about the Tolpuddle Martyrs and my visit to the Tolpuddle Museum. Whilst in Portsmouth recently I was drawn to another Tolpuddle memorial near the Plymouth steps. The memorial says *“The Tolpuddle Martyrs: This plaque placed here by members of the various Trades Unions affiliated to the Plymouth and District Trades Council, commemorates the landing near this spot on 18th March 1834, of James Loveless, James Brine, Thomas and John Stanfield (4 of the 6 Dorset Farm workers after exile in Australia). Freedom and Justice was their Cause.”*



As I was looking at the plaque a fellow tour member said “Did you know Tolpuddle is on the Piddle River? What a weird name. Just as weird as the one we saw earlier on our tour - you know the one with the long name.” I agreed with him. We had stopped for lunch whilst travelling through Wales at

**Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogoch.** Our tour guide Gary, who was Welsh, took great pleasure in repeatedly saying the name correctly over and over as we approached the town.

This got me thinking about the weird and quirky place names I’ve come across on my travels. Perhaps others would be interested in an article about some of the world’s weird and quirky place names. So here goes!

As a young scout, I was introduced to tramping around 11 years of age. I lived in Alicetown, near Lower Hutt and our scout leaders took us on many tramps, either into the Tararua Ranges, or over the Wainuiomata’s Five Mile Track which led into the Orongorongo Valley. I loved both of these tramping areas, but I didn’t love how each tramp started. The Tararua tramp involved walking up a spur called The Puffer. This spur went steadily uphill for about a kilometre. It seemed endless, especially for a young scout laden down with an



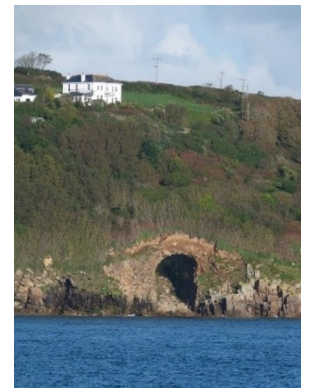
inexperienced tramper's pack with extras packed by my mother, such as: a warm jersey, hut shoes and cans of beans and a tin opener, "just in case you get lost". The Five Mile Track had a similar start with an incline called The Gutbuster. This too went on forever; each time you thought you were near the top another rise confronted you. Once over these spurs, mountains to me, you dropped down into pristine native bush, well worth the puffing.



Some years ago, whilst visiting Penzance in Cornwall, our B&B host suggested we should visit the next-door town of Mousehole. We did and what a beautiful place it was. For years a canvas print of a photo we took whilst in Mousehole,



hung on our landing. There are a number of suggestions as to how Mousehole got its name, but the one I like is that the town was named after a nearby sea cave that resembles a mousehole.



When I began teaching, I was posted to Seddon, Marlborough. Most teachers at the school helped out with the bus runs. One of the bus runs was to Otuwhero or Blind River. It got its name as it suddenly appears from nowhere. Its source is a spring which flows into Clifford Bay, not far from the Salt Works at Lake Grassmere. The main trunk



rail line crossed Blind River. Blind River became nationally known when a passenger train derailed at the Blind River curve. Six people were killed and around 40 were injured. An inquiry deemed that the locomotive was travelling too fast around the bend and that the brakes were faulty. The driver was originally charged,



but he was later released. The coroner's jury asked that all locomotives be installed with speed gauges.

Travelling between Pennsylvania and Lancaster, our tour guide told us that we were going to stop in a typical Amish town for lunch. He told us we could have stopped at Fertility, Blue Ball, Paradise, Bareville or even Mount Joy, but he really wanted us to stop at the town where Harrison Ford's film *Witness* was filmed, Intercourse.

There are many ideas as to how Intercourse got its name, three that take precedence are: (1) A racetrack entrance was nearby had a sign stating "Enter course" which slowly morphed over the years. (2) Another idea points out that the name refers to the town being at the intersection of the Old Kings Highway, which took people between Pittsburgh and



Philadelphia, and the road that people travelled to get from Wilmington, Delaware to Erie, Pennsylvania (which is how Intercourse got its original name, Cross Keys). (3) A possible explanation is that the name refers to the friendly interactions that were at the heart of the community that originally settled there, social intercourse.

Needless to say, there were a few brave souls from our tour coach, who bought and wore "I love Intercourse" T-shirts as we got back onto the bus. That night the Amish Community served us Whoopie pie.

Little did Bill Clinton and Al Gore know, that when running for Presidential office together in the 1990s, two small towns in southern New Zealand had their surnames, Clinton and Gore. Since then, the highway that links the two towns has been renamed "The Presidential Highway"



There is a small railway siding in the Waiau Valley, not far from Christchurch with the strange name Nonoti. The story goes that the local MP, when opening the station was invited to give the district a name, but modestly declined with the words, "No, not I." Legends are made from such tales. Most of the local sidings, built at the same time as Nonoti, were named after Richard John

Seddon's grandchildren, a much easier naming option, but not as colourful as Nonoti.

I had hoped to travel through Dull when travelling through Scotland. It was not to be.

Dull is a small village in Perth and Kinross. It's greatest claim to fame is its name. A sign at the village entrance states that Dull is paired with Boring in Oregon, USA and Bland in New South Wales. These towns are all members of the *League of Extraordinary Communities*. I



wonder how long it will be before the town of Heart's Delight, in Newfoundland applies to be part of the League?



## A Tragic Love Story - Kevin White

One of joys of overseas travel, is discovering new stories from the towns and cities that I visit. On a recent bus trip in Ireland, we stopped at the historic seaside town of Cobh, pronounced Cove. We were taken on a guided tour of the city market area by a local guide Meaghan, who enthusiastically explained the role her town Cobh, played in two 20th century tragedies, the sinking of the *Titanic* and the sinking of the *Lusitania*.

The *Titanic* connection is well known. Cobh was the last port of call of the *Titanic* before it headed to New York and its tragic encounter with an iceberg. Meaghen explained that what is not well known, is that the *Titanic* did not tie up at the White Star wharf, but instead stopped out in the bay. As there were only 123 passengers, three first, the rest second- and third-class passengers, it was decided to ferry them, from the White Star wharf, by paddleboats out to the waiting *Titanic*. The whole operation took less than an hour and the *Titanic* then sailed away to her doom. Only 44 of the passengers who embarked at Cobh survived. The White Star wharf is still standing today. The White Star office is now a *Titanic* museum. At the time of the tragedy in 1912, Cobh was known as Queenstown. Southern Ireland (Eire) was under British rule and English names were preferred by the administration.





Across the road from the White Star building is the market square. This square has a number of plaques, display boards and memorials explaining Cobh's involvement with the *Titanic* and the *Lusitania*. The most impressive is “*The Lusitania Peace memorial*”. The *Lusitania* was a passenger ship sailing from New York City to Liverpool. On 7 May 1915, she was steaming through the Irish Sea when struck by a torpedo, launched from a German U-boat. The torpedo struck midship and two enormous explosions were heard. The cause of the second explosion was not fully explained until many years later, when the British government finally admitted that the ship had been carrying armaments in its hold. The Germans had suspected that the British and its allied passenger ships had been carrying armaments and put an advertisement in a New York paper warning the allies that carrying arms was a risky business.



The *Lusitania* carried 1957 passengers and crew, most of whom were British citizens returning to England after the outbreak of war. When the explosions occurred, the *Lusitania* was 19 km off the coast of Ireland near Kinsale and Cobh. The SOS was sent out immediately and the coast guard and local fisherman responded. The captain of the *Lusitania* was aware that U-boats were active in the area and had pre-released the lifeboats so that they could be swung out quickly if needed. Unfortunately, the damage to the *Lusitania* was so massive that the ship began to sink before all of the lifeboats were fully released. Many of the passengers were left to fend for themselves. The memorial is dedicated to all those who lost their lives. It also highlights the tremendous effort of the local fishermen, who went to the passengers' rescue. It depicts two exhausted and upset fisherman and the angel of peace.

The locals were initially reluctant to put up any commemoration, as they were angry that the British, by stowing armaments in the hull of the *Lusitania*,

had unnecessarily risked the lives of not only the passengers, but also the rescuing fishermen.

1199 passengers and crew lost their lives on the **Lusitania**.

Near the memorial is a storyboard. relaying the journey of two of the passengers, John Welsh and Gerda Neilson.

**John Welsh** was 34 and had travelled the world as an engineer. He was returning home to see if his expertise in electrical engineering could help the local UK industries. On the first afternoon of the voyage from New York, he met 30-year-old Norwegian born, **Gerda Neilson**, who worked as a seamstress in New York. Gerda's family had moved to South Shields, Durham when Gerda was a child. She was returning to England to visit her family. From the first afternoon of the voyage onwards, John and Gerda were inseparable, it was a real shipboard romance. In an interview after the sinking John said, *"We took a strong fancy to one another."* On the evening before the tragedy, John plucked up courage and asked Gerda a to marry him, she agreed and they shared their good news with the Hook family, who they regularly dined with. Years later when **George Hook** was asked of the romance, he said that in his opinion, it was a union made in heaven. On the evening before the tragedy, the Hook's, Gerda and John, talked of the U-boat threat. *"If the worst should come,"* John said, *"we made up our minds to sink or swim together."* Little did they know of their fate the next day.



*John and Gerda on their wedding day in Manchester*

*"When the ship was struck, I was with my young lady, and we stuck to one another till the vessel sank"* John Welsh recalled. He escorted Gerda to one of the last lifeboats and fitted a lifebelt on her. The boat upended, and he jumped into the sea to rescue her.

*“In the water, she was braver than any man I’ve ever met. She encouraged me whilst I swam... I supported her in the water for half an hour till we reached a lifeboat. The people in the boat did not want to take her in, but relented.” To Gerda’s horror, the men who lifted her into the boat wanted to leave me behind, claiming that the craft was too crowded to bring him aboard. “She pleaded with them, and finally they pulled me up. “He claimed that “I sustained some slight injury to my leg and arms.” A tugboat rescued their lifeboat, and they landed in Queenstown (Cobh) later that night.*

*Talking to a reporter from the Irish Times, he said, “Here we are together safe and sound, and the wedding bells will soon be ringing.” They took the ferry to England, and in less than a week were married at the All Saints’ Registry Office. The ceremony took place on Thursday, 13 May, 1915.*

Quote from an article written by Peter Engberg-Klarström.

<https://lusitaniapage.wordpress.com/>

The Cunard line, the owners of the ***Lusitania***, must have felt some guilt for the tragedy, as they offered local fisherman and commercial shippers cash rewards for the recovery of bodies found floating in the sea. 289 bodies were found with 65 of them never identified. Many of the victims are buried in either Cobh or Kinsale, (Church of St. Multose) cemeteries. Unfortunately, 885 passengers were never found.





Sadly, for John and Gerda, their marriage was not the happy ending they had hoped for. Gerda never fully recovered from the traumatic sinking. Images of bodies floating in the water, their calls for help, her struggle with John in the sea and the sinking of the ship haunted her. Sadly too, they were unable to have children. Gerda's mental health steadily deteriorated. In those days no-one understood post-traumatic stress disorder. Sometime in the early 1930s John

had to commit her to a mental hospital. This was the only help he could give her. Gerda never recovered and spent the rest of her days in the hospital. John died in 1941 and Gerda in 1961.

Their love story is celebrated on a memorial-board in Cobh. (see picture at left).



## Electrical storm - David Hill

Amberley's role in studying the Earth's magnetic field is set to be remembered.

The Amberley Domain was home to a geophysics observatory from 1913 until 1978, playing its part in studying electrical storms and aurora.

The Hurunui District Council's south ward committee is planning to erect a park bench, picnic table and a display board in the domain to tell the story.

The process started after a letter was received from an astronomer in Rolleston, alerting the ward committee to the domain's illustrious past.

A working bee was then organised to clear the area and remove some dead trees, while the Amberley Reserve Advisory Group has applied for funding to support the project.

The concept adds value to the site, as there is nowhere for parents to sit while children are playing on the tennis and netball courts at the domain.

The observatory was originally established in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens in the 19th century, but was moved to Amberley in 1913, according to a Christchurch City Council report.

“The introduction of the electric tram system affected some of the observatory's instrumentation making it difficult to obtain accurate records,” the report says.

“In 1913 a new magnetograph was acquired and located offsite in the Amberley Domain, North Canterbury.”

Observations continued at the Christchurch site, alongside the Amberley observatory, which was tucked into an embankment.

An article on the [www.teara.govt.nz](http://www.teara.govt.nz) website states the observatory was moved to Eyrewell, near Oxford, in 1978 due to the growth of Amberley township.

The observatories have operated alongside other New Zealand magnetic observatories at Apia in Western Samoa and Scott Base in Antarctica, with the data shared as part of a global network.

The GNS Science geomagnetics team continues to measure and monitor the magnetic field from the Eyrewell observatory.

## The Mystery of the acorns from the Forest of Dean - Kevin White

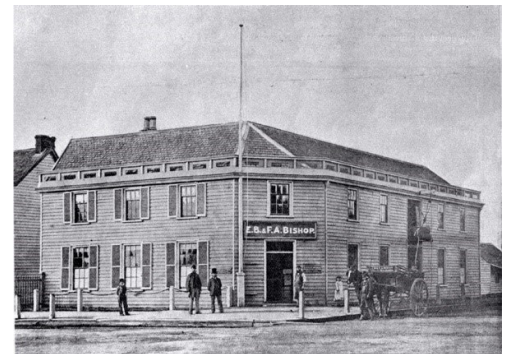
Family History can be found anywhere including local parks. On a walk through Fendalton Park I came across a plaque celebrating the oak trees planted there. It states:

*“In this park are oak trees sourced by L.T.K. and Olive Allison which originate from Quercus Robur acorns brought to New Zealand in 1850 on the 'Charlotte Jane' from the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, England by the Bishop family.”*



Who were the Bishop family?

**Edward Brenchley Bishop** and his family arrived on the *Charlotte Jane* in 1850. His siblings, **Charles, Frederick, Mary Ann** and **Emma Bishop** also arrived with him. A married sister **Susannah Alport** had arrived earlier with her husband **Augustus Alport** to assist **Captain Thomas** in setting up Lyttelton. Edward's birthplace was Somerfield House, in Maidstone, Kent. The suburb of Somerfield is named after the house built by the Bishops. The **Bishops of Somerfield** were well educated and a reasonably well-off family. They could afford to buy 100 acres of prime land on the outskirts of the developing town of Christchurch.



Edward preferred the world of commerce and politics to farming so left the farming to his brother Frederick. By 1864 the farm, Somerfield, had been sold and Edward had become a successful liquor merchant. He had his premises at the corner of Armagh and Colombo streets. The area became known as the Market Square or Bishop's Corner. He was in business with Frederick. He continued his interest in local politics and in 1872 was elected Mayor.

Edward never married and died on 25 April 1887 at his residence in Cranmer Square. He is buried in the Barbadoes Street Cemetery with siblings Charles and Emma.

However, you may think that this story about the acorns from Dean Forest has come to an end but no!



Another family of Bishops, **The Bishops of Bishopdale** also lay claim to the acorns from the Forest of Dean. The Bishop brothers **James, Robert** and **William** came to New Zealand to continue their lives as fruit farmers. Robert arrived first in 1855 on the *Caroline Agnes*. James left for New Zealand on the *Maori* on 23 May 1858 arriving in Lyttelton in July. William arrived on the *Strathallan* in 1859. James worked for while in a brickworks, before acquiring land in Bishopdale to continue his fruit growing interest.

**R. J. Bishop**, grandson of **James Bishop Snr**, of Headley, Sussex, in his memoir "*The Bishops of Bishopdale*", (1977) states that his grandfather sent the Bishop brothers a barrel with seeds that included: apple and pear pips, peach and plum stones, gooseberry and currant seeds, raspberry and strawberry seeds, flowers, vegetable seeds, herbs and forest trees including **oak**, elm, elder and privet. Once grown the seedlings, trees and plants were sent all over Canterbury. **Miss R. S. Bishop** born 1859, (R. J. Bishop's aunt) recalls in another story that her parents and uncles spent a lot of their days trying to hawk the fruit to retailers in Christchurch, but this impinged on their time as fruit growers. When the children, including **Rebecca (Miss R. S. Bishop)**, were old enough to help the family out, they would spend their days trekking around retailers, until, finally deciding to use an intermediary auctioneer to handle the fruit. In Miss R. S. Bishop's memoirs, she states:-

*"One of the elms and five oaks towering over the property are protected notable trees. **The oaks were grown from acorns gathered in Gloucestershire's Forest of Dean** where ship builders used to select spars for the British Navy. Mrs McDonald (the current owner) says two of the oaks on their property have been described as among the best specimens in Canterbury".*



Family gathering at Golden Wedding of James and Rebecca Bishop in Papanui.  
(June and Gordon Bishop)

The cluster of trees was probably planted to provide shelter behind the site of the former house pictured above.

Bishopdale School, next door, planted an oak seedling from one of the Bishop's oaks. The school itself was built on a large section of James Bishop's orchard.

These trees (in the school grounds) are on the "**Notable Trees of Canterbury Heritage Trees**" list as five oak trees and one Dutch elm.

To ascertain whether the Bishops of Somerfield and the Bishops of Bishopdale were related, I trolled through family trees for both families. I was also hoping to find a connection to the Forest of Dean. The two families were not related. The Bishops of Somerfield were from Kent and the Bishops of Bishopdale were originally from Sussex / Hampshire. I researched back to the late 1600s to make a connection to no avail, but what I did find was a connection to me! The Bishops of Bishopdale had ancestors Peter Coombs who was married to Rachel Aslett. I too had a sixth great-grandfather named Peter Coombs who had married a Rachel Aslett in Headley in 1694!

In conclusion, history is confusing and family stories and myths which are passed down from generation to generation become the legends for that family. All we can rely on for the truth is written proof and to me a diary account from the daughter of a Bishopdale Bishop, stating the oaks they planted came from the Forest of Dean, has to be the correct one. This account (to genealogists) is a primary source. Who am I to doubt a distant relative! As for the statement on the plaque in Fendalton Park, the proof has yet to be found.

## Sources

***Our Environment: Issue 23 Winter 2000 Bishops leave fruitful legacy.***

<https://www.peelingbackhistory.co.nz/historic-oaks-of-fendalton-park's>

<https://www.peelingbackhistory.co.nz/?s=Bishop>

## 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](mailto: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 2025.**

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