



Matamata Branch

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The *Firth Tower* was built in 1882 by Josiah Clifton Firth on his estate and was used as the Estate Office and as sleeping quarters for single men. It stands on rising ground commanding an extensive view of the surrounding countryside. Other historical buildings are in the reserve and the historical centre there houses the archives of the Matamata district.

February 2020

Meetings held 7.30pm on the third Thursday of the month, Feb - Nov

All Saints Anglican Parish Lounge, Hohaia Street, Matamata

Research Afternoons are held on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month at the Anglican Parish Lounge from 1.30 – 3.30pm. This is an excellent time to come and use our resources as well as get the one on one help and assistance that is often not available at the branch meetings because of time constraints etc. There is no charge for a financial member, but a visitor pays \$2.

November 2019 to February 2020 Branch Programme

February 14 - Friday Research 1.30 - 3.30pm

February 20th - Branch Meeting - What have you found/successes/problems that you need help with. Research resources available if time permits. Surplus library books for sale for a gold coin donation.

February 28 - Friday Research 1.30 - 3.30pm

March 13 - Friday Research 1.30 - 3.30pm

March 14 - Regional Meeting at Whakatane

March 19 - Branch Field Trip to The Treasury in Thames (Proposed visit)

March 25 - Friendship Circle. We provide plates for their meeting's afternoon tea.

March 27 - Friday Research 1.30 - 3.30pm

April 10 - Good Friday. No Friday Research afternoon

April 16 - Branch meeting - Genealogy Speed Meeting. Different topics - 5 to 10 minutes. Bring along your queries. Topics to be advised before meeting.

In House News

- **CD Library** - The Branch has several CD's that are available for '**members only**' to borrow and are available at each meeting or research afternoon. You just record which CD you have borrowed and when you have finished using, then return either at the next meeting or research afternoon.
- **Library Books** - The branch library has many books on various topics that are available for members to borrow. Please browse our collection when next in the Lounge. There could be one on a subject you are researching.
- **Ancestry.com** - this is available at the Public Library for members to use during opening hours.

Convenors Report

I hope you have had a good Christmas and New Year. Many of you will have had a rest over this time, others may have taken on a particular challenge, either way I hope you come back refreshed and enthusiastic as we start the new year.

Your Committee have already had their first meeting for the year and this newsletter will outline the plans we have for the coming year.

Cleaning out the research cupboard: Prior to the Committee Meeting we made a start on tidying up and cleaning out the large cupboard we rent from the church to store our things in. Although we achieved a lot, we still have to finalise the sorting of the books. Our efforts were disturbed by finding a large hole in the wall cavity with an opossum living in it!

Some books we are discarding will be for sale at the February meeting.

Years Programme: Our main emphasis has been on providing a comprehensive yet varied programme for the year for our members. In order to achieve this as well as can be expected we need some feedback from members,

So, this newsletter is accompanied by a survey. Please take the time to complete it and return it to us. The results of the survey will influence the programme and speakers we have during the year.

Field Trip: This year we are looking at a field trip to the Treasury in Thames. Members may also take the chance to visit the Thames Mining Museum as well. If there is enough interest this will be on Thursday 19th March instead of our evening meeting. The Treasury's web site has a facility to check their database before arrival to see if they hold anything pertaining to your family. Please check this out so that you are in a position to commit to the trip at the February meeting where we will be asking for expressions of interest. Search <https://thetreasury.org.nz/>

Digitization of Matamata Record: DIA advise they are behind schedule and this is likely to be completed mid-year and not January as earlier indicated. The good news is that we have not yet paid any money over.

Cemetery Records: Some time ago our Branch indexed the Matamata Cemetery. There have been additions since then and the Committee are keen to bring these records up to date. We will however need volunteers to achieve this. Volunteers, who can work in pairs or individually, would be given the necessary training and forms.

Friendship Circle: We will again be providing the afternoon tea for Friendship Circle on Wed 25th March. Bev Crabb will co-ordinate this for us. We need 12 plates so offers of help will be appreciated.

Aspire Expo: The greater Waikato Branches of the NZSG are having a stand at this on the weekend of 29 Feb/1 Mar. They need volunteers who can be available at Claudelands Event Centre for 2-3 hours. If this appeals, please let us know.

With such an interesting year planned I am sure you will want to be part of the "action".

I look forward to seeing you on Thursday 20th February when we hold our first meeting for the year.

Maxine Viggers
CONVENOR

Graeme Mackenzie, Scottish Genealogist, NZ Speakers' Tour in March

Graeme has regretfully cancelled his speaking tour of New Zealand this year due to not enough interest expressed by branches prepared to host him. He is planning on another tour in early 2021, so let's hope that this will go ahead!

This Month in History

1770 Cook completes circumnavigation of the North Island

1842 NZ Company settlers arrive in Nelson

1931 Hawkes Bay earthquake strikes

1943 49 killed in Featherston POW incident

1951 Troops deployed in Waterfront dispute

<http://nzhistory.govt.nz/browse/timeline/date>

Our AGM is scheduled for Thursday 21 May and the present committee are hoping members will give serious consideration to joining our small team. We usually have four committee meetings a year and these take place in the Lounge after a Friday Research afternoon. If interested, please contact a committee member.

Books in Our Library

'Elizabethan Handwriting 1500 - 1650'

Authors: Giles E Dawson and Laetitia Kennedy-Skipton

Throughout the 16th century and up to the Civil War, the secretary hand was the normal handwriting for correspondence, literature and business. The Gothic cursive scripts of the 15th to the 17th centuries are among the hardest to read.

More than 50 carefully chosen, representative examples are provided, in chronological order, each faced with a transcription. In addition, the authors in their six introductory chapters place the documents and their handwriting in the perspective of the period and deal with all the various difficulties that can arise in the reading of certain letters, variations of spelling and the use of abbreviations and contractions.

The examples chosen would be hard to beat for their varied historical and literary interest and sheer entertainment value.

'Finding Our Fathers' - A Guidebook to Jewish Genealogy

Author: Dan Rottenburg

This book is primarily slanted towards American Jews of European ancestry, especially Eastern European but information of use to Jews of all backgrounds and types is also included.

Nearly half the world's Jews today are American, and 85 percent of the world's Jews have their roots in Europe, especially Eastern Europe. It is in Eastern Europe that the greatest persecutions of Jews took place, along with poor record keeping, so the problem of tracing ancestors there is greatest. If your ancestors came from medieval Spain or Italy, you may find a published history of your family in a Jewish book or encyclopaedia. If they were in the United States before 1840, your ancestors are probably neatly grouped in one of the charts in Rabbi Malcolm Stern's 'Americans of Jewish Descent'.

Some of topics cover, Starting Out, Public Records in the United States, A Quick Course in Judaica, Tradition, History and the Bible, Jewish Sources in America, Back across the ocean and Back to Israel.

Also included is an alphabetical list of family names.

A very complex subject but one worth following up.

Are any members interested in contributing an article for future newsletters?
Any topic with a genealogical theme would be appreciated.

Convenor: Maxine Viggers 888 1656

Secretary: Christine Young 888 8327

Treasurer: Jennifer Couch 888 7042

Committee: Mary Cobham 888 7867
 Heather Bond 888 6823

Reminder any contributions to the newsletter would be gratefully accepted.
Please send to Maxine or Christine at matamatagenealogy@gmail.com

Next newsletter - April 2020

**The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views
of the Branch or the New Zealand Society of Genealogists Inc.**