

Riccarton
Branch

New Zealand Society of Genealogists

NEWSLETTER



March 2020
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NEXT MEETING

7.30pm on Wednesday 11 March 2020

The guest speaker this month is:

JOHN FREEBORN

on the topic of

“PHOTO RESTORATION SOFTWARE”

ARCHIVES NZ: NEW OPENING HOURS

The Chief Archivist has taken note of the many complaints by users (including genealogists) of the several regional offices of Archives NZ about the proposed new restricted hours due to take effect from 2 March (which were to be 9am to 1pm only, for all 4 offices, from Monday to Friday). The revamped plan, which is now in place, sees the two North Island offices closing on Mondays and Tuesdays but being open on the other 3 weekdays, Wednesday to Friday for a full day, from 9am until 5pm. Dunedin and Christchurch will both be open 9am to 1pm from Monday to Friday. Please take note before making travel arrangements.

Meetings: 7.30pm on the second Wednesday of each month (Feb to Nov) at the Upper Riccarton Library, 71 Main South Road. Visitors are welcome.

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FROM THE CONVENOR'S DESK

Well Autumn is with us and we will have more time inside to search for our relatives. The DNA talks are this month, presented by visiting DNA experts from USA, Blaine Bettinger and Angie Bush. As mentioned in the last newsletter, our branch is sponsoring a free event to be held at the Halswell Library, 341 Halswell Road, at 6.30pm on Friday 20 March. So come along to find out more about your roots through another increasingly useful tool. After all, it's in the blood, isn't it. This free event is in addition to the two full days of 8 talks they are giving at Turanga on Saturday and Sunday 21-22 March for which there is a charge of \$120. As always I look forward to catching up with you all at our meeting next week.

Lance

FINDMYPAST NEWS

Recent additions to this website include:

- Surrey Baptisms, Marriage and Burials
 - Hampshire Baptisms, Marriage and Burials
-

ANCESTRY.COM UPDATE

- UK Imperial Yeomanry Records 1899-1902
- Australia, Victoria, Divorce Records 1860-1940
- New York City Boroughs Birth, Death & Marriage Certificate Indexes

There are 5 boroughs that make up New York City: Bronx, Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and Richmond. The index of births covers the period 1866-1909 and the index of deaths covers the period 1862-1948. So far there are only a few marriages listed from Manhattan, but more records from there and the other 4 boroughs will be added later. There is a link from the Ancestry indexes to the appropriate municipal authority's website from where you can pay for and order an actual certificate.

However, I found that the index transcript gave a lot of information for the births, for example, the full name and date of birth of the child, the names of the parents, and their street address; which made it not necessary to order a certificate.

MORE RANDOM 2020 ANNIVERSARIES

- 1320 April 6: 700th Anniversary of the Declaration of Arbroath
 - 1520 November 27: 500th Anniversary of the Navigation of the Strait of Magellan
 - 1770 December 16: 250th Anniversary of the Birth of Ludwig van Beethoven
 - 1820 January 2: 200th Anniversary of the Discovery of Antarctica
 - 1945 January 27: 75th Anniversary of Liberation of Auschwitz Concentration Camp
 - 1945 October 24: 75th Anniversary of Founding of the United Nations
 - 1970 March 5: 50th Anniversary of the Launch of Bonus Bonds at Dunedin, New Zealand
 - 1970 April 22: 50th Anniversary of Opening Day of a new Teachers College at Ilam, Christchurch
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REPORT OF FEBRUARY MEETING

Win Loach read out a speech she had given at her nephew's wedding on 25 January in which she had told him about his ancestors. She mentioned that the young man had only 17 first cousins whereas his father had 77 of them. She told the stories of some of the more colourful ancestors. Perhaps this example is something that we genealogists could do on similar occasions, especially as you will have a captive audience.

Paul van Herpt spoke about the History of Postal Services in Christchurch and Alan Tunnicliffe spoke about How to Research NZ Post Office People. See article on next page for full details of the latter presentation.

HOW TO RESEARCH YOUR NEW ZEALAND POST OFFICE PEOPLE

by Alan Tunncliffe

This is a summary of the information I presented at the February meeting. If you have a family member involved in the NZ Post Office you are seeking more information about, then please contact me for help.

Basically there have always been, over the past 180 years, two classes of people working for the NZ Post Office: Staff and Agents (or Contractors). Staff were generally full-time (or part-time) permanent employees. whereas Agents or Contractors were self-employed persons who had their own businesses.

The NZ PO had 4 major branches: Postal, Telegraph, Telephone and Savings Bank. Within the staff jobs there were many job titles, such as Postmaster, Postmistress, Letter Carrier, Postie, Distributor, Sorter, Cadet, Clerk, Telegraphist, Engineer, Electrician, Mechanician, Message Boy, Lineman, Telephonist, Cadette, Typist, Accountant, Chauffeur, Driver.

Other staff jobs additionally performed by staff Postmasters (or Postmistresses) for other arms of the Government included: Vaccination Inspector, Registrar of Births, Deaths & Marriages, Registrar of Electors, Registrar of Deeds, Mining Registrar, Receiver of Gold Revenue, District Land Officer, Customs Officer, Harbourmaster, Government Life Insurance Agent.

The occupations that Agents or Contractors may have had, in addition to being appointed a Postmaster or Postmistress included: Pharmacist, Schoolteacher, Shopkeeper, Publican, Carrier, Sawmiller, Railway Stationmaster, Farmer, Blacksmith, Lighthouse Keeper.

Sources of information about Post Office people are: AJHRs, NZ Gazettes, PO Official Circulars, Archives NZ P.O. files, newspapers, directories, local histories, postal histories. Staff lists can be found in AJHRs (on PapersPast) from 1866 to 1912. AJHRs are located under Parliamentary Papers. Staff lists are also in NZ Gazettes (in hardcopy volumes or via lexisnexis website) from 1891 to 1941. The appointments of postmasters only (i.e. not other staff) are in the NZ Gazettes from 1863 to 1923. Use the search box at top RH corner of lexisnexis to find a name. The lexisnexis website archive of NZ Gazettes can be used only within public libraries on their computer terminals.

More staff appointments also appeared in the PO Official Circulars, which are not online. However hardcopies available at Archives NZ. These circulars recorded the appointments of all permanent staff from 1882 to 1911. Official Circulars were published 1882-1987. Later ones after 1911 also may contain names of staff. Other Post Office records held by Archives NZ include NZ Post Office Departmental Lists (at Wellington to 1985, at Christchurch to 1968, at Auckland to 1985).

Staff cards (the so-called dead classification cards, which record the appointments during the employment of a staff member) are only at the Wellington office of Archives NZ. Access is restricted (permission needed from NZ Post Privacy Officer).

Other records that may be of interest to you include Archives NZ official PO files indexed under name of the Post Office. These often list the staff and extend into the 1980. Often plans of office buildings are included (which can include a dwelling for the postmaster). Search on Archway to find these files.

Other very useful sources are Newspapers (via PapersPast or hardcopy). Look for adverts for carriers, etc who were contracted to take the mail from place to place. Also Directories, such as the Wisers Post Office Directory. Information listed under each place name gives details of the type of post office or telephone office and postmasters were usually listed with occupation stated as "P M". Local Histories, if about a district or school, often mention the Post Office and the names of staff (with dates).

Postal Histories include useful books covering various parts of NZ such as: *THE MAILS OF NORTH CANTERBURY* by John R Slattery (Post Offices between the Waimakariri and Hurunui Rivers); *SOUTH OF THE OLD COACH ROAD* by John R Slattery (Post Offices southeast of Invercargill and south of State Highway One); *PLAINS MAILING* by Viv T Hanson (Post Offices in Ashburton County). These and other similar books list the postmasters and/or telephonists and also give details of the location of the offices.

WORLD WAR TWO ANNIVERSARY: PART 12

by Alan Tunncliffe

Several of my mother's many male first cousins served in World War Two. One of them was Alan Benison LUMSDEN, who was born in Invercargill on 1 December 1912, the younger son and 3rd child of Lance Lumsden and Ethel Lumsden, née NORTON. He was brought up in Otautau where his father had a hardware business. After attending Waitaki Boys High School in Oamaru Alan returned to Invercargill and worked in various hardware businesses and in a grocery.

During this time he served with the Territorial Army for 8 years from 1931 until 1939 as a member of the 1st Battalion of the Southland Regiment. He then transferred to the Reserve until on 30 September 1940, aged 27, he volunteered for war service with the 2nd NZEF. He went to Forbury Park Camp in Dunedin and held the rank of Trooper, service no. 17824. While there he spent some time in Dunedin Hospital.

His military file reveals that he was not very tall (5ft 4ins) with brown eyes and dark hair. His religion was stated as Presbyterian. His medical examination record, dated 15 August 1940, lists his weight as 9st 14lb and that his left foot was flat but the arch was restorable. He had normal hearing

On 21 November 1940 he arrived at Burnham Army Camp and was soon promoted to Lance-Corporal. However, before leaving to go overseas he reverted to the rank of Private. After 5 months there he sailed in April 1941 to Egypt where the ship arrived on 14 May. He served with the 2nd Divisional Cavalry in the Desert Campaigns, at El Alamein and elsewhere for the next 4 years. In November 1942 he was once more promoted to the rank of Lance-Corporal but at his own request he reverted again to Private in February 1943.

Luckily he survived these years in Africa, being wounded only once and having to spend 4 days in hospital in April 1943. He also had bronchitis during this year. On 22 March 1945 he embarked on the ship *Tongariro* which arrived back in New Zealand on 19 April. This was 20 days before the war ended on 9 May 1945.

He spent a total of 4 years and 13 days overseas. This and his service in New Zealand qualified him for a total of 7 different awards: the 1939-45 Star, the NZ War Service Medal, the Defence Medal, the War Medal 1939-45, the Africa Star, the 8th Army Clasp and the Efficiency Medal. This latter medal was awarded for "long and efficient service in the New Zealand Military Forces". He had applied for it in October 1944 but did not actually receive it until February 1950. New Zealand war medals were made in England. However, he did get the ribbon for it in 1944.

On 26 July 1945 he was officially finally discharged from service. However his official discharge certificate was not issued until 16 September 1947. In March 1946 he was paid a war gratuity of £188 17s 8d.

