

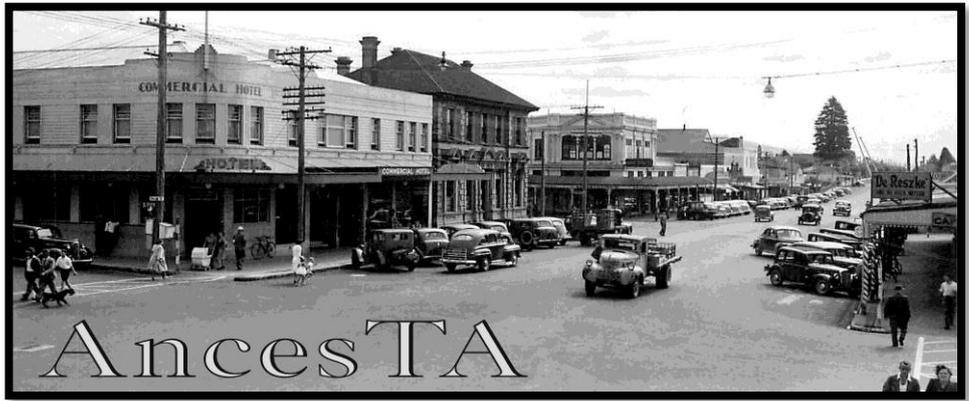
Newsletter



**Te Awamutu
Branch**

No. 284

July 2017



Te Awamutu Website: www.teawamutu.net/genealogy
New Zealand Society of Genealogists Inc:
www.genealogy.org.nz

Meetings are held at the **St John Ambulance Hall** on Palmer Street, Te Awamutu, at 7.30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month – February to December.

Visitors are most welcome. \$2 door charge for casual visitors.

Next Meeting: Tuesday 4th July. Mid-winter Pot luck dinner and quiz evening.

August Meeting: Tuesday 1st August. Members' geographical interests.

Convenor: Sandra Metclafe
Email: sandra@metcalfe.co.nz

Secretary: Christine Ball
Email: ash.chris@xtra.co.nz

Treasurer: Linda Howarth 871 7115
Email: blhowarth@xtra.co.nz

Newsletter: Robyn Taylor 871 7603
Email: roblyntaylor@wwweb.co.nz

Club News!

Welcome to the July 2017 newsletter.

Remember our new venue!

The July meeting is the club's mid winter event. Pot luck dinner will commence at 6.30pm followed by our club night at the usual time. Bev will be Quizmaster for the quiz to follow.

You are reminded that if you haven't paid your subscriptions they are now due. Thanks go to all those who have paid promptly.

Our August meeting will be based on club members' geographical interests. You will be asked to choose one area and work in groups with others who have a similar area of interest. Sources to be used will include: TANZSG library resources /Roots Web/Family Search wiki/Genuki



"If you cannot get rid of the family skeleton, you may as well make it dance"

George Bernard Shaw

Road Trip ~ Family Research Centre, Auckland – Saturday, June 24

Seven members enjoyed a trip to the Family Research Centre in Panmure. Visiting new repositories can be overwhelming to start with – so much to take in and not knowing where to start. You almost have to visit places like the FRC two – three times before you begin to get a feel for what is on offer.

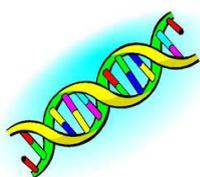
The reaction from those who had never been to the NZSG library before is a reminder of the importance of pre-planning to ensure you get the most out of your visit. While some came with Plan A, Plan B and Plan C, others came with very little in mind, other than wanting the experience.

But there are some techniques that will help you get the most out of your first visit to any repository.

1. Select 2-3 ancestors and focus on them
2. Think about what it is you want to achieve and where you are most likely to find it
3. Check the repository's online catalogue for the names and areas you are researching
4. Check back through your old notes. What may once have seemed insignificant may now provide a vital clue
5. Prepare a time line for the ancestor you are researching. Dates of when and where key events happened
6. Have key information on hand at the repository, either on a laptop or in hard copy
7. Come prepared with Plan A, Plan B, Plan C, Plan D and Plan E
8. Remember, a focused approach when visiting a repository will generally provide better results than a scatter-gun approach.

If other branch members are interested in visiting the NZSG library later in the year then let Christine or Linda know. Some of us do not need much of an excuse to visit Panmure on a Saturday and it is always more enjoyable in the company of others.

DNA Update



The next meeting of the DNA Support Group will be held in late August in Te Awamutu. If you are interested and have not yet been tested then send for your kit now. Several in the support group are beginning to explore the analytical tools that are available and having lots of success in grouping their matches and identifying which chromosomes match which ancestors.

Adoptees are also finding that DNA testing is proving key to breaking through their brick walls. Sandra was recently able to establish a third cousin link between a guy in New York, her mother and her maternal aunt. This guy had been adopted as a baby and knew little about his biological family apart from his mother's maiden name. From being an only child with an unknown heritage he has now discovered he has six third cousins in NZ, many more in the US and UK and has just made contact with a half sister on his paternal line.

Family History Microfilm Discontinuation



On September 1, 2017, FamilySearch will discontinue its microfilm distribution services with the last day for ordering being August 31, 2017.

What does this mean?

It is sad news for people who know they can go to their local "Family History Centre" and get microfilm on loan and use them there. But Family history centres will continue to provide access to relevant technology, premium subscription services, and digital records, including restricted content not available at home. And they can hang onto microfilm collections already on loan from FamilySearch after microfilm ordering ends with the approval of priesthood leaders.

However, the GOOD NEWS, as mentioned in the official announcement, is that "The change is the result of significant progress made in FamilySearch's microfilm digitisation efforts and the obsolescence of microfilm technology."

More and more records are being added to FamilySearch all the time.

"Over 1.5 million microfilms (abt 1.5 billion images) have been digitised by FamilySearch, including the most requested collections based on microfilm loan records worldwide. The remaining microfilms should be digitised by the end of 2020 and all new records from its ongoing global efforts are already using digital camera equipment."

There are THREE places on FamilySearch.org website where you can get access to the over 1.5 million microfilms records that have been digitised – and you can see them, online, for FREE! Digital images of historical records can be accessed today by going to FamilySearch.org and clicking on the Search tab.

When you click on it, there is a drop down menu with several options. Three of them being: RECORDS, BOOKS, and CATALOG.

* RECORDS include historical records indexed by name or organised with an image browse.

* BOOKS include digital copies of books from the Family History Library and other libraries.

* CATALOG includes a description of genealogical materials (including books, online materials, microfilm, microfiche, etc.) in the FamilySearch collection.

Imagine how many more records will be added to the existing 1.5 million in three short years. It is worth keeping an eye on and USING.

Sandra says:

The digitisation process was in the beta testing stages when she first visited Salt Lake City in 2004. At that time they estimated it would take 50 years to digitise all the films in the Ganite Vault. When she revisited Salt Lake City in 2013 over 1 million images a day were being digitised and it was estimated it would take a further 10 years to complete the process. It is exciting to see the end is in sight.

But even though the films have been digitised and you can scroll through them online just as you would if the microfilm was ordered into a local Family History Centre. The real benefit of this progress is the indexing projects that are going on in conjunction with the digitisation. FamilySearch is always calling out for indexers so if you'd like to be involved and help make these films more readily available go to <https://familysearch.org/> and click on the indexing tab.



"We inherit from our ancestors gifts so often taken for granted. Each of us contains within this inheritance of soul. We are links between the ages, containing past and present expectations, sacred memories and future promise."
Edward Sellner

Legacy Users' Group

Venue: 5 Toi Place, Rototuna, Hamilton
Contact: Bruce/Trish Cron. Email:
brucecron@gmail.com, ph. 021 407 478
Sunday, August 6th from 1.30 to 3.30

August Meeting

This meeting will focus on members' areas of geographic interest. Please see Bev to update your area this month.

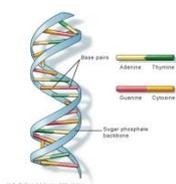
Genealogical DNA: to test or not to test?

By Tina White

[Ever so slightly adapted from an article published on Stuff, September 8, 2016]

It's the new question for anyone trying to trace their family tree: have you had a DNA test?

Back in 1953, Francis Crick and James Watson discovered the twisty double-helix structure of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) a molecule containing the genetic information of every organism, including humans.



Since then, DNA has been put to use in medical, forensic and paternity cases; but the biggest explosion in demand for DNA tests today is for personal genealogy – to match ancestors with descendants and find countries of origin.

TV programmes such as *Who Do You Think You Are*, where celebrities go on the ancestor trail, are wildly popular.

In the United States, genealogy doyenne Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak (she married a distant cousin with the same surname) coined the word "genetealogy" and has used DNA for multiple purposes, including locating soldiers missing in World Wars I and II, and tracing Barack and Michelle Obama's family trees.

So when Auckland-based genealogist Gail Riddell spoke at Palmerston North's city library late last year about using DNA for family history research, a capacity audience hung on her every word.

Riddell, an accountant by profession, is a seasoned speaker in New Zealand and other countries, administrator of many group genealogy projects, and passionate advocate of DNA testing. She is, so to speak, an unpaid genealogy freelancer, who says she took to Family Tree DNA "like a duck to water – it's the best of the bunch." FTDNA offers all three DNA tests, while Ancestry.com and 23andMe do only autosomal tests.

The three tests are: Autosomal for finding family ethnicities; Mitochondrial for the direct maternal female line; and Y-chromosomal for finding the direct paternal male line.

So far, FTDNA has a database of about 800,000 people. "Every week more and more Kiwis are joining up," Riddell adds, especially for the Y1-11 test, to unlock paternal lineage.

The geographical naming system for classifying seven original clan mothers was documented in the 1994 book *The Seven Daughters of Eve*, by human genetics professor Brian Sykes. As well as Helena, there's U for Ursula, X for Xenia, V for Velda, T for Tara, K for Katrine, and J for Jasmine.

DNA has moved a long way since that book, Riddell observes, but says: "when people dig up bones, as with Richard III recently, it's the mitochondrial DNA they look for first – it lasts longer."

One thing that often causes concern is the issue of privacy: "some people are anxious that police or insurance companies can force DNA information to be released." In the United States especially, people fear they could be denied health insurance if their DNA results show a chance of developing some medical condition.

"Here in New Zealand it's not so tough, but that's not the point.

"The owner of the DNA is just that, the owner. If they want (their DNA lab sample) removed, it will be."

Testees don't even have to use their real name if they'd rather not.

As it happens, this health issue is the reason FTDNA doesn't test for health-related DNA.

Some may argue that DNA tests are too costly. Riddell, however, would argue that "it may seem expensive, but not as much as getting on a plane and looking up records in some distant town.

"Family Tree DNA is cutting down the cost every year, plus it also has sales three or four times a year -- that's the time to rush out and test your rellies. We can't predict how chromosomes pass, so the more people in your family you can get to test, the better."

Riddell herself has paid for many of her own relatives to be tested.

Sometimes the Y1-11 test can produce shocks – like finding out the man you knew as your father actually wasn't. But even then, there may be logical explanations for some results, like a mutation passing through the father.

"With the Y1-11 test you get the full Monty for males – invest the money to do it; sooner or later the results will give you what you are seeking."

Many New Zealanders' settler roots go back to countries such as England, Scotland or Ireland, Riddell says. "In America, they want to know if they're related to Mayflower immigrants, or if they have Native American ancestry; in Australia, everyone hopes they are part of 'convict royalty'." If you have direct Maori maternal DNA, she adds, you'll likely have Hawaiian DNA matches.

People who do the mitochondrial test also get a haplogroup, which gives an ethnic background to their maternal line.

Riddell's haplogroup is H for Helena: "the most common type on the planet."

How?

"Added it to the mortgage," she laughed.

Riddell started her journey (nervously) into genetic genealogy before DNA testing was widely available in New Zealand. Today, she shares her considerable knowledge with enthusiasm and energy and went off on a speaking tour to the United States in November.

Meanwhile, what do genealogists who've always worked with paper records think? Bruce Ralston, editor of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists' monthly magazine, *The NZ Genealogist*, has taken all three DNA tests, found the Y-chromosome test helpful in linking a family line back to the 15th and 16th centuries, and provides some thoughts.

"It's an exciting area that people are interested in, but it's not a replacement for paper-based research," he said. "The whole area of DNA has its use in research, but has a wee way to go ...the take-up may not be for a few years yet. I would say it's an adjunct to traditional genealogical methods."

