

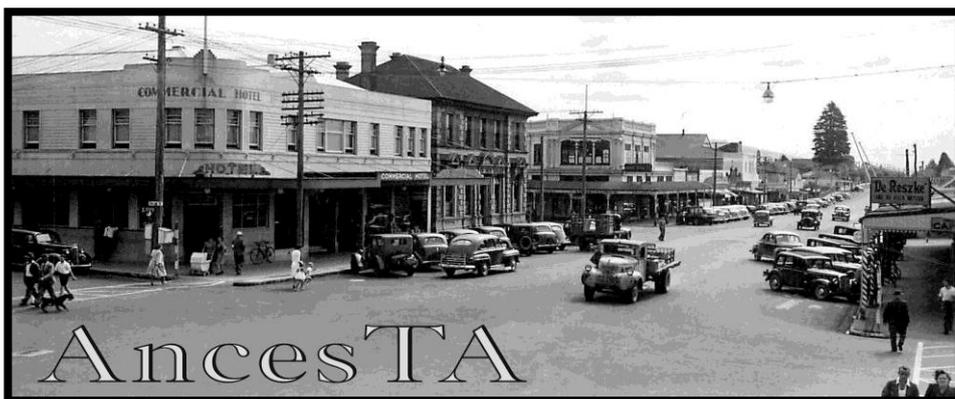
Newsletter



**Te Awamutu
Branch**

No. 291

March 2018



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 most welcome. There is a \$2 door charge for casual visitors.

Next Meeting: Tuesday 6th March. Rowan Miller from the museum will be speaking on 'Recording oral history'.

April Meeting: Tuesday 3rd April. Resources on YouTube – storage and filing systems

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Club News!

Welcome to the March 2018 newsletter.

March meeting.

Oral History

We all know the importance of speaking to elderly relatives before it is too late, or of even recording your own memories. At our March meeting Rowan Miller from the Museum will discuss techniques to help you when recording oral histories. The committee has an ulterior motive in having Rowan speak to us. There are several members of the public who want their memories recorded in relation to the CBD project we have been working on. If you are interested in helping with these recordings, please contact Sandra Metcalfe (021 206 9119)



April meeting.

Using some of the resources available to us on YouTube, we will be looking at storage and filing systems - both hard copy and digital.

If there are specific topics you would like covered in future meetings please let Christine know

Regional Meeting.

Thank you to those members who contributed morning tea and/or helped in the kitchen at the regional meeting held on 24 February.



A Genealogical Puzzle

I really hate leaving a person with no information and at the very least I like to have a birth and death year. So on a very wet morning recently I decided to devote some time to finding out about the husband of a relation in my cousin's wife's tree. [Yes, I did say that!] No one else seems to have nailed him either and I have to confess that at this time I still do not know where or when he died. If you would like a challenge then you may like to embark on this little journey.

Frederick Charles MURDOCK married Florence SOMERVELL in January 1917 at the bride's parents' home in Gisborne.

Florence was the daughter of John SOMERVELL and Charlotte SPEIGHT.

Your task is to confirm:

1. Frederick's birth record information – when and where he was born
2. The names of Frederick's parents including his mother's maiden name

Happy Hunting! 
Robyn

Family History Q&A

(adapted from January 2018 Family History magazine)

Over the coming months we will feature some family history questions and answers for beginners and the more experienced genealogists. These will cover aspects such as Getting started, Getting organised, Making the most of the census, Online trees, Brickwalls and Illegitimacy, Ethics and Protecting your legacy for the future. If you have specific questions you'd like answered, or additional tips you'd like to contribute, then please let the editor know so these can be added to the list for future reference.

Part 1: Getting Started

1. I've always wanted to do my family history but don't know where to begin?

- A. Always start with yourself and work backwards – you, your parents, both sets of grandparents etc. Write down what you know about names, date and places of birth. Ask relations for information, especially elderly relatives. Do they have family papers or photos that could be copied? Don't worry about gaps in your knowledge. What you are trying to do is identify what you know, where the gaps are and where to go to fill those gaps.
2. How do I draw up a family tree chart to show my ancestors?
- A. Free downloadable pedigree charts and family group sheets are available from many sources. Using these sheets to write down what is already known helps identify the knowledge gaps and makes it much easier when the time comes to enter data into a family tree software program. Do a google search or go to https://www.genealogy.org.nz/forms_and_charts_228
3. Why are birth, marriage and death certificates (BMDs) so important?
- A. Certificates contain the key details needed to construct your family tree – names, dates, places and - most importantly – details of how people are related to one another. Civil registration started in NZ in 1840. In the UK it started in 1837. It is compulsory for births, deaths and marriages to be registered so the majority of our ancestors will be in these records.
4. Do I really need to buy BMD certificates?
- A. While you can gather some basic information for free from BMD indexes, you won't get the full details. When working with limited information it is easy to make wrong assumptions, as well as missing out on all the extra information that certificates provide.
5. How do I order BMD certificates?
- A. Certificates are ordered from general register office websites, with access to the whole country's records. For UK records useful links can be found via www.ukbmd.org.uk or go to England and Wales www.gro.gov.uk/gro; Northern Ireland <https://geni.nidirect.gov.uk>; Irish Republic www.certificates.ie or <https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie>; Scotland www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk; New Zealand www.dia.govt.nz/historicalrecords; Australia by each state.
6. I've heard family history is very expensive. How can I save money?
- A. Instead of buying BMD certificates, see if relatives have certificates you can make copies of. Use your local library or family history centre to get free access to some subscription websites such as Ancestry and Findmypast. Find records on key free websites such as www.familysearch.org and www.freegen.org.uk. If you are a member of the NZ Society of Genealogists, check out their certificates collection. Use genealogy online forums such as Rootschat.
7. How can I find out whether the parish register I need has been digitised and made available online?
- A. There is no single place to look but FamilySearch www.familysearch.org has indexes and records for free. Many family history society records are available via www.findmypast.co.uk or on a society's own website.

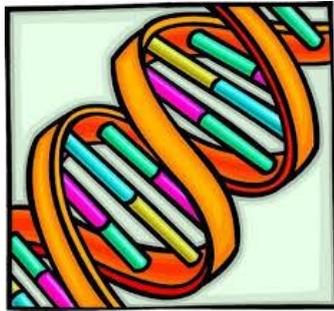
Online Parish Clerks can be invaluable if your parish of interest is covered www.genuki.org.uk/big/OPC

FreeReg: a sister site for FreeCen and Free BMD www.freereg.org.uk



Good news from Christine!

Apparently the **World Wide Ancestry** is up and running at the library. Christine has recently used it and had a very successful search. Don't forget that this wonderful community resource is available.



DNA

[Random bits and pieces sourced from **DNA Discovery**, published in the *New Zealand Listener* February 24, 2018]

The results of genetic testing can be life changing. DNA sleuths have tracked down half siblings and even full siblings that they never knew they had or found a father that wasn't their 'dad'.

As a result of a DNA test and with supporting anecdotal evidence it was confirmed that an Auckland woman was indeed the daughter of a now deceased high profile Catholic priest. "It wasn't a surprise, but knowing the reality was overwhelming," she said. "It's so much better to know the truth. I am much happier knowing who I am."

DNA tests have also solved the problem of mistaken identity. New York woman, Alice Collins Plebuch, discovered that her father had been sent home with the wrong family hours following birth after wondering about the strong evidence of European Jewish, Middle Eastern and Eastern European in her genetic heritage.

"Most DNA test-takers are simply curious, excited by the science and the technology that gives them the tools to unpick their family histories," says Brad Argent, ancestry spokesman from Ancestry.com. "But often they dive in without preparing themselves for what can be a very intimate and personal experience."

For those from a small family, those who are adopted and those from a sperm donor, taking a DNA test and getting matched with cousins can be quite transformative. For the first time in their lives they have a notion of family.

Not everyone wants the past colliding with the present. A birth father after a one night stand 20 years ago; the parties to a brief affair; and others who just don't want to know. It was claimed that former cabinet minister and Auckland Mayor, John Banks was the father of Antony Brett Shaw. Banks refused a DNA test and the High Court ruled in favour of Shaw.

The dead have no rights. DNA has proved that the skeleton buried under a car park in Leicester was that of King Richard III. It also proved that he was no match to his great-great grandfather Edward III – somewhere in the family history at least one man had been cuckolded. And DNA testing proved that Salvador Dali was not the father of Maria Pilar Abel Martinez after his body was exhumed and tested.

Most people do not get an OMG moment from their DNA test but for many, the process helps fill gaps in the family story. Paeroa woman Carol Shearer was able to unlock the story of her great-grandmother by being able to contact possible relatives in the USA.

Your mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) contains your maternal ancestry passed down unchanged in orderly fashion from mother to daughter through the centuries. Sons cannot pass on mitochondrial DNA. The Y chromosome or Y-DNA provides information about your paternal ancestry passed down from father to son.

Slight genetic changes or mutations can become traceable markers down through family lines and populations. These markers identify different haplogroups – genetically related populations that share a common ancestor.

Autosomal testing looks at genetic material inherited from both parents. It also provides information about and individual's ethnicity.

Argent uses a playing card analogy to explain DNA results.

“When you have two people who want to create a child, each has a deck of cards. They each shuffle the deck and deal out 26 cards. It is theoretically possible that each deck of cards can be entirely black or entirely red. You can have a mother who is 50% Maori, and when you are conceived, she doesn't give any of the genetic markers that relate to her Maoriness. But you could have siblings who get all of it. You have these echoes of your ancestors but it depends on the genetic lottery.”

Native Affairs presenter, Oriini Kaipara took part in a DNA test as part of a story on Maori identity. Her results claimed that she was 100% Maori even though she knew that she had at least one European ancestor on both her mother and father's sides. Argent explained that over time genetic material passed down had diluted away and in this case had led to her being 100% Maori.

So the message is – you don't want to do DNA testing in isolation: you want to do it in conjunction with all the other family history detective work that you do.



THE WEARING OF THE GREEN

The tradition of wearing Shamrock to celebrate Saint Patrick seems to date from the seventeenth or eighteenth century. This was a very turbulent time in Irish history. The suppression of the Gaelic way of life by the ruling British invaders resulted in many aspects of the Catholic religion in Ireland being forced underground. Strict laws were enforced which prevented the Catholic population from attending schools so 'hedge-schools' were operated in secret.

These were schools run outdoors in secluded places (sometimes literally 'under a hedge!'). The teaching of religion was also forbidden so it is only to be expected that teachers would use naturally available resources to inform their pupils. Thus the Shamrock plant was used to illustrate the message of the Christian Holy Trinity.



Saint Patrick was credited with using the Shamrock in such a manner so the wearing of the Shamrock by the oppressed Catholic population became a means of demonstrating their defiance to the ruling British class. It also imbued a sense of kinship among the native Gaelic people, differentiating them from their oppressors.

Wearing a clump of Shamrock is now a firmly established tradition throughout the world to celebrate not just Saint Patrick but Ireland itself. The Shamrock symbol is widely used by businesses seeking to associate with Ireland and, along with the Harp, is perhaps the single most recognisable symbol of Ireland. It is a shame though that the Shamrock is not a blue plant as the colour originally associated with Saint Patrick was blue!

The use of the colour green reached new heights (or plunged to new depths!) when in 1962 the city of Chicago decided to dye part of the Chicago River green. Since then the campaign to have just about every possible landmark turned green for the day has taken off in earnest and in recent years has included the Irish Parliament building, the Sydney Opera House, the Empire State Building, Niagara Falls and even the Pyramids of Giza in Egypt!