

# Branch Lines



## Special points of interest:

- Branch Lines is a bi-monthly magazine. (February to November each year)
- Issued for the members of the Southland Branch of the Society.
- The views expressed within are those of the contributors and not necessarily representing the views of the Branch or the Society.

Send copy for publication to: [web-back\\_line@hotmail.com](mailto:web-back_line@hotmail.com) or by handing to Geoff at the next meeting.

## New Year—New Style

In time for this issue 30, a change to the style of the magazine. I hope you like it.

A little less to copy too for a while—24 pages is just too taxing to continue long term.

It's hard to believe that we have hit Issue Number 30. I forget exactly where I came in as editor and when the issues began to be numbered but it does equate to about 5 or 6 years of magazines. Not too bad for our wee group I think.

So, what has everyone

been up to then? I've been away a fair bit lately so I have lost a little of the continuity of the Branch over the last wee while. I still get great insight into goings on via Pam and a few others via the net, but unfortunately miss the bon amie of Branch Meeting and Computer Interest Group nights when absent so often. However my spirit is still there. Can you feel it?

Geoff.



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## David McDonald

A shock awaited us in the last issue of the national NZSG magazine with news of the untimely death of David McDonald on 13 November 2000, our much admired Reference Librarian at the Hocken Library. There is a memorial display at the doorway to the Hocken and if you feel of a like mind you may enter a remembrance in the book set aside for the purpose. A very big loss to us all.

## Words That Don't Exist But Should

1. **AQUAEXTROUS** (ak wa deks'trus) adj. Possessing the ability to turn the bath tap on and off with your toes.

2. **CARPERPETUATION** (kar'pur pet u a shun) n. The act, when vacuuming, of running over a string or a piece of lint at least a dozen times, reaching over and picking it up, examining it, then putting it back down to give the vacuum one more chance.

3. **DISCONFECT** (dis kon fekt') v. To sterilise the piece of lolly you dropped on the floor by blowing on it, assuming this will somehow 'remove' all the germs.

4. **ELBONICS** (el bon'iks) n. The actions of two people maneuvering for one armrest in a movie theatre.

5. **FRUST** (frust) n. The small line of debris that refuses to be swept onto the dust pan and keeps backing a person across the room until he finally decides to give up and sweep it under the rug.

6. **LACTOMANGULATION** (lak' to man gyu lay' shun) n. Manhandling the "open here" spout on a milk carton so badly that one has to resort to the 'illegal' side.

7. **PEPPIER** (peph ee ay') n. The waiter at a fancy restaurant whose sole purpose seems to be walking around asking diners if they want fresh ground pepper.

8. **PHONESIA** (fo nee' zhuh) n. The affliction of dialing a phone number and forgetting whom you were calling just as they answer.

9. **PUPKUS** (pup'kus) n. The moist residue left on a window after a dog presses its nose to it.

10. **TELECRASTINATION** (tel e kras tin ay' shun) n. The act of always letting the phone ring at least twice before you pick it up, even when you're only six inches away.



## GENEALOGIST'S POX

**WARNING:**  
Very contagious to adults.

**SYMPTOMS:**  
Continual complaint as to need for names, dates, and places. Patient has a blank expression, sometimes deaf to spouse and children. Has no taste for work of any kind, except feverishly looking through records at libraries and courthouses. Has compulsion to write letters. Swears at mailman when he doesn't leave mail. Frequents places such as cemeteries; ruins; and remote, desolate country areas. Makes secret night calls, hides phone bills from spouse, and mumbles to self. Has a strange, faraway look in eyes.

**NO KNOWN CURE.**

**TREATMENT:**  
Medication is useless. Disease is not fatal, but gets progressively worse. Patient should attend genealogy workshops, subscribe to genealogical magazines, and be given a quiet corner in the house where he or she can be alone.

**REMARKS:**  
The unusual nature of this disease is -- the sicker the patient gets, the more he or she enjoys it!

--Author Unknown



THE JETTY, INVERGARRILL



## 2001 Programme



18 April

Research Night



28 April

Introduction to Family Trees  
10am to 4pm.

16 May

Archivist From Southland  
District Council

20 June

Rosemary Bigwood—  
Scottish Genealogist from  
Edinburgh

18 July

Old Handwriting



15 August

Local Historian



19 September

"County Cork to the Colo-  
nies" Toni Grafton and Carol  
Todd

17 October

AGM and Speaker



21 November

Pot Luck Supper and Talk on  
1901 Census.

This programme is subject to change if circumstances  
arise which will benefit members



# Seeking.....

Renee of Napier seeks John Smith Johnston, George Fleming Johnston. George married Christina Strachan in Dunedin 1868. His son John Fleming Johnston married Eliza Jones St Joseph's Cathedral Dunedin 1890. He was born at Clinton. Lynly of Upper Hutt looks for Florrie/Flora Sincott and Florence Stella Taylor.

Lunda of Kawakawa wants more on Ada Flint born Nov 1880 but not found in the NZ fiche index, and the children of John Wardlaw Stevens and Jane (nee Riddell) Stevens—from around West Plains. Also the children of Walter Riddell Pahia woodlands and Wallacetown

Margaret of Christchurch seeks Jeanie, Bella, Helen, Mary Anderson Otatara and Invercargill.

Paula of Otaki looks for Francis Hugh McLean died 1898 at Yarrow St Invercargill.

Mary of Geraldine looks for Griffin Limehills/Forest Hill/Grove Bush and Mabel Bush.

Leith of Taupo wants more on Euphemia Taylor 1882 at Winton School

## Research information

## LIFE IN THE 1500'S

**S**ome interesting things to ponder.

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whiskey. The combination would sometimes knock them out for several days. When found lying on the side of the road they would be taken for dead and prepared for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for an eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up. Hence the custom of holding a "wake."

England is old and small, and they started running out of places to bury people. So they would dig up coffins and reuse the graves. In reopening these coffins, about one in 25 were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realised they had been burying people alive.

So they tied a string on the "deceased's" wrist and lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tied it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night to listen for the bell. Hence on the "graveyard shift" they would know that someone was "saved by the bell" or he was a "dead ringer."

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May and were still smelling pretty good by June. However, they were starting to smell, so brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the BO Baths were a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying,

"Don't throw the baby out with the bath water."

Houses had thatched roofs, thick straw, piled high with no wood underneath.

It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the pets, dogs, cats and other small animals, mice, rats, bugs lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery & sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof. Hence the saying, "It's raining cats and dogs." There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs & other droppings could, mess up a clean bed. They found that if they made beds with big posts and hung a sheet over the top, it addressed that problem. Hence those beautiful big four poster beds with canopies.

Editorial comment: Beds consisted of a frames with ropes strung from side to side on which a "mattress" was supported. The ropes were twisted with a wooden key to tighten them to better support the big mattress. Hence the term "Sleep tight."

"Mattresses" were often made of leaves and small brush, which could hold bugs, fleas and ticks. Thus the term "Good night and don't let the bed bugs bite"...

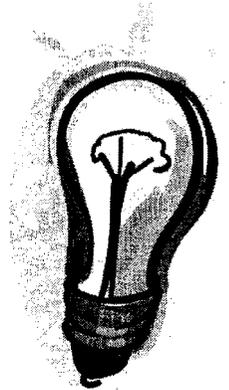
Floors were dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt, hence the saying "dirt poor." The wealthy had slate floors which would get slippery in the winter when wet. They spread thresh on the floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on they kept adding more thresh until, when they opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed at the entryway to keep the thresh in, hence the term "threshold."

They cooked in the kitchen in a big kettle that hung over the fire. Everyday they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They mostly ate vegetables and didn't get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight, and then start over the next day. Sometimes the stew had things in it that had been in there for a month. Hence the rhyme: "Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot nine days old."

Sometimes they could obtain pork and would feel really special when that happened. When company came over, they would bring out some bacon and hang it from the rafters to show it off. It was a sign of wealth that a man "could bring home the bacon." They would cut off a little to share with a guest and would all sit around and "chew the fat."

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with a high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food. This happened most often with tomatoes, so they stopped eating tomatoes ... for 400 years. Most people didn't have pewter plates, but had trenchers-a piece of wood with the middle scooped out like a bowl. Trenchers were never washed and a lot of times worms got into the wood. After eating off wormy trenchers, they would get "trench mouth."

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or the "upper crust."





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Southland Branch of the New Zealand Genealogy Society holds a meeting on the third Wednesday of each month except December and January at 7.30 pm. A wide range of research resources owned by the Branch are available from 1.30pm on the meeting day to Branch Members only.

Visitors are welcome at the meeting and also to some research material from 7.00pm on meeting day at no cost for one introductory meeting. Full membership would be necessary thereafter.

Venue: First floor Scottish Hall Esk Street Invercargill  
Supper and photocopier provided at the meeting (each for a small charge).