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⇌ BRANCH LINES ⇌ Newsletter of the Southland Branch New Zealand Society of Genealogists

Issue No. 42 - September 2007



A New Life

The Scottish Hall (see below) has been home to the Southland Branch for the best part of 22 years. In that time it has seen a hive of activity. I remember when I first attended in the early- to mid-1990's when the meeting room was packed with members and visitors, and the Branch was in good heart. Today this could not be said to be the norm. Times have changed, and the availability of genealogical information has kept pace with the development of the Internet and home computers - and the need for instruction and advice from 'old heads and hands' has seemingly diminished.



Attendance at Branch meetings and activities is falling, and an injection of new life is needed.

The Scottish Hall is coming to its end, and the City Council has publicly notified its intent to close the building from the end of 2007. This comes as no surprise : more than that, it will hasten the need for the Branch to find new premises. The members' questionnaire of 2003 confirmed what the Committee already knew - that access to the meeting rooms on the first floor of the building, and the level of service provided to members, were unsatisfactory and major detractors to most people.

The Committee has been proactive in an effort to find new premises, but the specifications are not easy to fill. Contact had been made with a number of local bodies and enquiries made of possibles, but without success. Late in 2005, we were to have local contact with the Invercargill City Library - specifically Mr Keith Harrington and Ms Marianne Foster - who outlined proposals to enlarge and develop the Library building, with an indication that space could be available for the Branch. Further meetings followed in 2006, and continue to the present time. It has now been confirmed that the Branch can be accommodated in the new Heritage/Archives wing in the Library, probably from early in 2008.

The Library is being extended into the adjacent building (where the \$2 Shop was until recently located). It is currently being renovated and re-fitted - see picture on page 2 - and will provide increased storage, better reference facilities, and a Southland Archive.

(Continued on page 2 ☞)



About Branch Lines

Branch Lines is a periodic magazine, issued for the members of the Southland Branch of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists.

The views expressed are those of the contributors, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Branch of the Society.

The position of Newsletter Editor is currently vacant. Aspirants need to be computer-literate, with some knowledge of MS Word : tuition will be given. Please contact the Convenor. Send copy for publication to the Branch Secretary or the Convenor.



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Branch Projects



The Southland Branch has several projects under way. These are as follow. The co-ordinators' names and Committee members responsible for the projects are given : enquiries should be directed to these people.

1. **Certificates collection** : (Lesley Instone). Copies of Births, Deaths, Marriages certificates are kept locally and sent on to the NZSG Certificates collection. [Not yet indexed.]
2. **Cemeteries** : (Yvonne Service) : updating local cemeteries records. Invercargill's Eastern Cemetery is being progressively updated. When completed, the information is passed to NZSG for addition to the national database.
3. **Schools Admissions** : (Mary Stuart and Helen Hall) : a look-up service is provided for research enquiries.
4. **The Southland Times Births and Deaths Indexes** : Barbara Lilley is recording the current entries and maintaining the paste-up book. Roger Washbourn has completed indexing of a Deaths Index [1971-2000] and a Births Index [1991-2000] : copies are available in the Scottish Hall repository.
5. **Southland Early Settlers Pre-1900 Register** : Lesley Instone collects the completed forms; Roger Washbourn is indexing these as they come to hand. Index to date is available at the Scottish Hall.
6. **Southland Branch Members' Interests** : a local database of Branch Members' surname interests is being built up. Input forms available from the Secretary, and a copy of the index to date is available at the Scottish Hall.

Early Members of the Southland Branch, NZ Society of Genealogists

(From a 1971 List of Members)

(*Editor's Note:* This list explains largely why it is the '**SOUTHLAND**' Branch of NZSG, not Invercargill.)

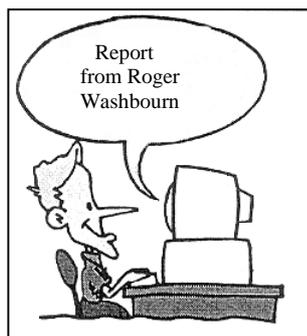
Mrs H Arthur	Invercargill	Mrs N Hart	Invercargill
Mrs M Austin	Riverton	Mrs J Hammond	Lower Hutt
Mrs DJ Beal	Invercargill	Mr & Mrs K Kennard	Longbush
Mrs D Brookland	RD5, Invercargill	Mrs R MacEwen	Invercargill
Mrs E Bryce	Invercargill	Mrs A MacGibbon	Eastern Bush
Mrs RC Cook	Invercargill	Mrs AA McLaren	Invercargill
Mr S Cormack	Papatotara	Mrs D Maere	Invercargill
Mrs V Courname	Rimu	Mrs Mary Miller	RD2, Invercargill
Mrs NA Daniel	Invercargill	Mrs RE Murray	Invercargill
Mrs & Mrs I Dawson	Hedgehope	Mrs Win Newton	Clifton
Mrs C Davis	Invercargill	Mrs AM Sandford	Invercargill
Mr J Denniston	Invercargill	Miss E Smith	Invercargill
Mrs B Dudfield	Colac Bay	Mrs Mary Stuart	Invercargill
Mrs Donoghy	Invercargill	Mrs F Stewart	Ocean Beach
Mr & Mrs O Dowling	Invercargill	Mrs M Sutherland	Invercargill
Mrs J Enright	Invercargill	Mr J Swaney	Invercargill
Mrs V Fordyce	Invercargill	Mrs & Mrs Lex Taylor	Invercargill
Miss V Fryer	Mossburn	Mr DA Tily	East Winton
Mrs VL George	Invercargill	Mr John Tourelle	Invercargill
Mrs C Jenkins	Invercargill	Mr A Tunnicliffe	Invercargill
		Mrs D West	Invercargill
		Mrs E Whitehead	Invercargill
		Mrs MF Woods	Roslyn Bush
		Mrs D Robins	Invercargill
		Mr K Wilkinson	Invercargill



(From a Letter to home from Brisbane) - **A New Order**

"A New Order has emerged this side of the Ditch. There's been a coup d'etat, an overthrow. We have a new leader. What she demands must be given. What she does must be cleaned up, and mercy on you if you feel her wrath.

What used to be a usual day, night, work, eat and sleep routine has been usurped by another altogether stronger and more powerful and primal paradigm - Lucia time. The traditional 24-hour clock no longer exists; day and night is immaterial. Time is now broken into odd 3~5 hour blocks of old time, depending on Her Majesty's whim. What's more, things that used to take 10 minutes in old time, can now take up to 3 of the new blocks to do - this email being one of them. So we are adapting to new sleep patterns (whenever we can, we do), adapting to doing things differently, unloading the dishwasher with cat-burglar like stealth and walking around the house avoiding the creaky-board minefield lest we disturb the New Order."



News from the Genealogical Computer Group

The Invercargill Genealogical computing Group is made up of around 15-20 members who have a particular fascination with computers and genealogy. They meet on the fourth Thursday nights, now at the new SeniorNet Rooms in the Southland Education Building, Esk Street (beside the Scottish Hall - see picture below, which shows the entry doorway from the carpark). Attendees pay a very modest \$2 per night to cover room hire and tea/biscuits afterwards.

If you have a home computer (or if you are thinking of obtaining one for recording your family history, but want some advice), then you should think about joining the friendly group. Speak to Roger Washbourn (the Convenor) or Maureen Townson (Secretary), or any other member, who can tell you more about the group. You do not have to be particularly computer-able to benefit from the group : there is a wide range of experience on hand, and the aim is to help genealogical computing and make it fun.



Peter Johnson (1941~2007)

Southland Branch lost a one-time member, and the Invercargill Genealogical Computing Group lost a staunch supporter with the early death of Peter Johnson in April 2007. Peter was born, educated, grew up, and worked his adult life in Invercargill with the former Post and Telegraph Department. Redundancy struck in the late 80's; Peter made a life-changing decision and taught himself all about computers. Computers and computing were spliced to his interest in genealogy, and became a major interest from that point on.

In the early 90's, Peter was on the Southland Branch's Committee. It was through his position at Cargill High School that the Branch was able to use the school's computer suite and made significant progress with computerizing the Southland schools' admission rolls. He played a major part when the Southland Branch hosted the Society's AGM and Conference in 1996 in computerizing the registrations and getting the papers and proceedings printed. A short time after this he was caught up in the politics of the Society over the school rolls which was not to his liking, and he drifted away from active membership of the Branch.

In the mid-1990's whilst the computing effort was under way at Cargill High School, he was instrumental in re-starting a sub-group of the Genealogical Computing Group after an earlier effort had gone into recess. He was the Invercargill Group's first Convenor and steered the Group through its first three years between 1994 and 1996. Meetings were held at Cargill High School in the computer suite whilst others were working on the school rolls. Although thereafter not holding office, he remained a staunch and vocal supporter up until the time of his death.

After Cargill High School closed in 2000, the Group moved its meetings to the Lindisfarne Church Centre for a couple of years, before again - thanks to Peter, who had by then become a tutor with SeniorNet - the Group was able to meet in the SeniorNet Rooms in the Menzies Building. This proved to be an ideal base, with many computers at hand, online access, and a data projector available for the Group's use. The Group still uses the SeniorNet facilities to this day.

Peter had a larger-than-life presence with the Group; he was one of its great supporters and took part in all aspects of the Group's activities, including presenting some sessions. He was a Brothers Keeper user, and ran tutorials at SeniorNet. He was particularly good at providing solutions to members' problems, and seldom let anyone cast a loose statement to the meeting - it's had to be dotted and t's crossed. He was always cheerful, and interested in new developments.

The Group will miss Peter - their sessions will lack that little burst of energy that Peter injected. The Group's sympathies go to wife Brenda and her family.

Reviews

Forty Years On ..

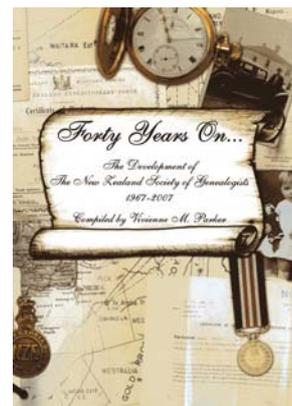
The Development of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists 1967~2007.
Compiled by Vivienne M Parker

The New Zealand Society of Genealogists is celebrating its 40th anniversary since inception this year. This history has been compiled by Vivienne Parker and traces the story of the people involved in the foundation and growth of NZSG since 1967. There are also the stories of the branches and interest groups.

Much of the book's contents have been contributed by NZSG members, especially those who have been associated with the Society for many years. There are a few introductory chapters (eg, How it all Began); the magazine and its editors; and a record of conferences and annual general meetings. About one-quarter of the book is allocated to groups, branches and interest group histories. (Southland Branch's illustrated entry was compiled by Mary Stuart and Margaret Sutherland, and appeared in the last issue of **Branch Lines**.).. Past-presidents - there are 9 of them - have each written a reminiscent account of their times. Another section has been contributed by named Life Members - another 9 chapters. There are a number of miscellaneous chapters covering premises, the Society's awards, NZSG projects and record collections. Finally there are several sections listing memberships, branch/Merit/Service Awards, patrons of the Society, officers of the Society, Committees and Councils 1968-2007.

'Forty Years On..' contains something of interest for those genealogists who have been associated with NZSG for some years, but will be a useful reference for many others. The Society has come a long way in that time. There are now nearly 10,000 members and the Society's annual financial turnover is approaching three-quarters of a million dollars. There are now four paid staff at the Family Research Centre where previously all the administration was carried out by volunteers. The Society is changing. It is appropriate that the last chapter is written by Executive Officer Peter Nash who looks into the future and sees a different structure developing - greater emphasis on the FRC and the Society's website, with corresponding lesser importance of branches. It remains to see whether his crystal ball gives a credible picture.

The book has a soft-cover binding; with 240 pages with many illustrations. It can be purchased from the NZSG Bookshop for \$35 (p+p incl.). All Branches should consider purchasing 'Forty Years On...' for their libraries.



Humour

A Black sheep, whitened



Lets say that your great-great uncle Remus Starr, a fellow lacking in character, was hanged for horse stealing and train robbery in Montana in 1889. A cousin has supplied you with the only known photograph of Remus, showing him standing on the gallows. On the back of the picture are the words: Remus Starr: Horse thief, sent to Montana Territorial Prison, 1885. Escaped 1887, robbed the Montana Flyer six times. Caught by Pinkerton Detectives, convicted and hanged, 1889.

Pretty grim situation, right? But let's revise things a bit. We simply crop the picture, scan in an enlargement and edit it with image processing software so that all that is seen is a head shot.

Next, we rewrite the text:

Remus Starr was a famous cowboy in the Montana Territory. His business empire grew to include acquisition of valuable equestrian assets and imitate dealings with the Montana railroad. Beginning in 1885, he devoted several years of his life to service at a government facility, finally taking leave to resume his dealings with the railroad. In 1887, he was a key player in a vital investigation run by the renown Pinkerton Detective Agency. In 1889, Uncle Remus passed away during an important civic function held in his honor when the platform upon which he was standing collapsed.



- Now we give Uncle Remus a distinguished place inside the family tree, not hanging from it.

Genealogy (WGF Millar (1970))

I notice genealogists
Have held a meeting here;
The seekers of the family trees
They make the past look clear ---
(Not all of us, alas, are of
the caste of Vere de Vere.)

For some of us have secrets of
The past we love to keep'
'Twere better far to let still lie
Ancestral dogs asleep ----
For many Scottish forebears stole
The neighbour farmers' sheep.

Australians have an edge on us
(Though some perhaps are bludgers)
For they have come of super-stock

With few, if any, smudges
They should be good, their ancestors
Were sent out by good judges.

Genealogy, I see
In Southland is the vogue;
They'll search for you your family tree
(Great-grandad was a rogue) ----
Another forbear stole the sheep,
One was an unfrocked minister,

And somewhere on the 'scutcheon is
What's known as the bar sinister ----
So when they talk of family trees,
My eagerness is dampened;
(My present coat-of-arms consists
Of two taxpayers rampant).

Directory

Southland Branch, NZ Society of Genealogists Inc.

Postal address
P.O. Box 1329
Invercargill 9840.

E-mail: Southland@genealogy.org.nz

Meetings
Third Wednesday of each month
Burns Room, Scottish Hall, Esk Street,
In the central city at 7.30 p.m.
[Research facilities from 6 p.m.]

Branch website ~
http://www.geocities.com/nzsg_southland/

NZSG website ~
<http://www.genealogy.org.nz/>

Genealogical Computing Group website ~
<http://www.gencom.org.nz/>



THE LAST WORD

'Branch Lines' is currently without a compiler, so it has fallen to the Convenor to assemble this newsletter. It is a summary of facilities available through the Southland Branch, especially when accompanied by the green (for 2007) Information Brochure. You do not have to be a member of NZSG or the Southland Branch to attend any of the programmed evenings - we take all comers, and welcome everyone. If you have any queries, phone one of the people listed on page 3. Details sometimes change however, but the website is kept up-to-date and can be checked for currency. The Committee believes it has an interesting series of speakers lined up for 2008. Comments and suggestions are welcomed.

Roger Washbourn.
Convenor.
17 September 2007.

