

# PORIRUA BRANCH



## NEWSLETTER - JUNE 2014



### Convenor's Comment

April and May have been busy, enjoyable months culminating with our branch AGM and the NZSG Conference and AGM – more on these later.

Guest speaker at our April monthly meeting was Glenn Reddix on 'Postcards from World War 1'. This was a very informative and interesting address on a subject that Glenn became interested in while living in England many years ago.

It was also interesting to hear that postcards are believed to be the third most popular hobby after collecting stamps, and coin/bank notes. Genealogy must be fourth ...

Four committee members attended the Lower North Island (LNI) Regional meeting in Levin on 12 April, where it was reported that a copy of the NZSG Strategic Plan 2014-16 can now be viewed on the NZSG website; that Council is working on the plan's focus areas including a move away from management towards governance; a rule review is underway; the theme for the 2014 Family History Month is 'We Shall Remember Them'; and the 2015 Family History Fair will be held at Mangere.

Over the last year the committee has been investigating the feasibility of establishing a Porirua Branch website. Having our own website is seen as necessary to support our current public awareness initiatives, and having our own site gives the branch total control over content, layout, changes and additions. We are fortunate to have the necessary expertise on our committee to support this exciting new initiative, so after thorough investigation the decision was made to apply for funding, and an application for funding of \$1,034 to cover establishment of the website was made to the Mana Community Grants Foundation in April. We were advised of our application's success in late May and the branch committee has therefore decided to proceed with the establishment of a branch website. The specifications and content for the website have been written by committee member Peter Gibson who will have responsibility for its ongoing management. Peter sees his responsibilities for the newsletter, publicity and website all dovetailing with one another – a grouping that he has successfully managed for other non-profit organisations. If any members would like to know more about the website they are welcome to contact either Peter or myself.



At our May meeting, and following our AGM, we were entertained by a panel of experts who answered pre-submitted questions from branch members about research and brick-walls. Thank you to our panel members, drawn from within our own ranks, with considerable experience in genealogical research – (shown seated L to R) Sharon Evans, Elwyn Goldsbury, Heather Mountjoy, Dianne Fraser and Ken Woodgate, with Peter Gibson at the lectern as MC.

At our AGM two committee members stood down and it is appropriate that we thank them for the valued contribution they have made during their time on the committee – Barbara Blanchard and Claire Edgar (pictured L to R with Convenor Helen). Barbara has had the lead role in compiling our excellent branch programme for three years and we have been entertained and informed by a vast range of speakers on an equally wide range of topics. Claire has produced our very informative and helpful newsletter every two months for close to three years, and these newsletters remain relevant and inspiring several 'reads' on.



A big thankyou, too, to Gill Knox who stood aside from the role of branch secretary after six years in the role, but who has remained on the committee. Thank you to those existing committee members who have put their hand up again – Mary Beckett (taking on the role of Secretary), Lesley and Peter Anderson (continuing as our Treasurers), Pat Brocklebank, Gill Knox and Peter Gibson – and welcome to our new committee members Nola Clark and Elwyn Goldsbury (Elwyn was co-opted on after the AGM). I am pleased to return for another year as Convenor. Committee members have been allocated areas of responsibility as shown on the last page of this newsletter.

Fourteen branch members attended the New Zealand Society of Genealogists 2014 Conference and Annual General Meeting held in Wellington over Queen's Birthday weekend, 31 May to 2 June. The sun shone brightly and enthusiasm, friendship and fun were in good supply. It was a thoroughly enjoyable weekend with excellent speakers on a wide range of subjects. Dr Colleen Fitzpatrick from the United States was the visiting keynote speaker on DNA and its relationship to genealogy and she was excellent. There was something for everyone – displays, stalls, representatives from various repositories, commercial exhibitors and Interest Groups. Warm congratulations to the host branch, Kilbirnie, for a well organised conference and a wonderful weekend.



As members were informed at our April branch meeting, Gill Knox, who stood down from the role of branch secretary at our AGM, had been approached some weeks earlier and asked to stand for election as a Councillor at the NZSG annual general meeting to be held in Wellington on 1 June. In addition to this, over the course of the weekend Peter Gibson was also approached to stand. As there were two vacancies both Gill and Peter were duly elected, unopposed.



Congratulations to both Gill and Peter, and to our branch for having good calibre people willing and able to take on this important role on our Society's governing body. We look forward to supporting you both in your new roles.

You will have noticed that our newsletter has had a change of format. Peter Gibson has taken over the role of editor from Claire, and while Peter says he is sometimes daunted by the amount of material that Claire has been able to include in past newsletters, and the precedent that she has set, he will endeavour to rise to the challenge. Please remember that the newsletter is for the benefit of members – it is your newsletter and Peter will be very happy to receive appropriate material for inclusion from any branch member at any time.

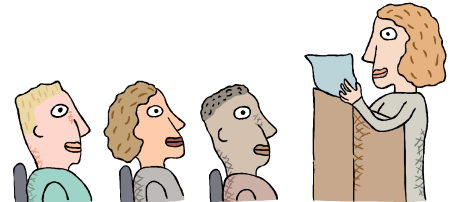
**Helen**

## Welcome, New Members

We welcome Barbara Cosgrove, Wendy & Richard Edwards, Jan Powell, and Gladys & Michael Wright as new members since the issue of our April newsletter.

## Branch Meeting Programme

- 11 June**            **guest speaker**  
**Michael Clements - Colonial Jews and the Establishment of Early Wellington**
- 5 minute talk  
Lesley Anderson - Births, Deaths and Marriages online
- 9 July**             **guest speaker**  
**Ruth Ward - My Ancestor has seven Surnames**
- 5 minute talk  
Alison Howell - Polish Breakthrough
- 13 August**        **research night in Porirua Library**
- 10 September**   **guest speaker**  
**Mary Skipworth - Using Maps in your Genealogy Research**
- 5 minute talk  
Pat Brocklebank - Looking for 1860s gold miners in Otago
- 8 October**        **guest speaker**  
**Anita West - Introduction to Irish Family Records**
- 5 minute talk  
to be announced



### From the Editor's Desk

In deciding to take over the role of newsletter editor from Claire I was mindful of the high standard that Claire has set during her three years as editor. I will endeavour to meet the challenge. I acknowledge the need for the inclusion of quality information for our members, as researchers of genealogy, and in that regard I will be very appreciative of any material that branch members may wish to provide to me at any time, please.

I intend to include photographs of branch meetings from time to time and in that regard should any member have an objection to their photograph appearing, please let me know when/if you believe your image has been captured. I envisage that photographs will be of groups rather than individuals.

The role of editor also provides me with the opportunity to align the presentation of the newsletter with that I had adopted earlier for the revised branch brochure. The aerial photograph of Porirua on the front of the newsletter (thanks go to Porirua City Council) is the same one now used on the brochure. Equally, that photograph will be used on the banner of the proposed branch website (where the text content will be consistent with the brochure), and on any other promotional material that may be issued in future - this achieves a 'family look' in promoting the branch to the wider community.

**Peter**

**Birthdays are good for you ... the more you have,  
the longer you live.**



## Research Matters

### Hunting the Emigrant – Edmund Tucker PRESS [ETP]

In only six months I could have the answer. What happened when my great great uncle Edmund died? I knew he'd 'emigrated to Salt Lake City and was killed on the job on the railway' from the family myth collection, but why was there no death record in Family Search or any other US death database? Papers Past here did not appear to have a death record for him, but later, when I was looking for items concerning his father in the "New Zealand Herald", I found this:

New Zealand Herald 15 December 1920, Page 1

'PRESS.—On October 16, at Inglewood, near Los Angeles, California, by accident, Edmund Tucker, youngest son of John Press, of Waitangi Falls, Bay of Islands; aged 47 years.'

Before that the first information I'd found that proved Edmund was in the States was in the 1910 and the 1920 US Census records on Family Search and that neither place he was living in then was in Utah, but in California. Searchlight in Clark County in the 1910 record didn't enlighten me further but it did tell me that he was single and head of the household and who his housemates were. As you might guess, Ryan in Inyo County where he was in 1920 was just as much of a mystery. So off to Google I went where I found a website run by a fellow interested in the railway history in areas which included Ryan, so I emailed him to ask if he'd found anything about rail accidents or fatalities in that area. He hadn't, but suggested I email the California State Railroad Museum and also passed to me the email address of a woman who'd sent him her Masters of Historic Preservation thesis on 'Life and Work in the Ryan District, Death Valley, California, 1914 to 1930'. She allowed Mr. Railroads to let me see her thesis, which told me a lot about 'the historic context of a borax mining community' which is Ryan, now a ghost town. She said ETP "would have been employed in Ryan by the Pacific Coast Borax Company [later U.S. Borax, now a subsidiary of Rio Tinto Minerals] with most of its borax mining activity having been between 1914 and 1928". 'Death Valley' was not a good luck clue. She said that there are only six graves visible in the Ryan cemetery, four are named – I assumed not ETP's - and two are unknown, but what a fascinating read that thesis was. It gave me insight into how Edmund and his mates would have lived there, and the importance in the US economy of borax then. The student suggested I try the Death Valley National Park which holds the Pacific Coast Borax Archives and the local newspaper [the issues on line were missing 1920].

Enthusiasm flagged a little but revived when I was successful in finding his US immigration record. Despite the style of the handwriting on that record it gave me three bits of new information: he'd gone from Auckland in 1901 to San Francisco, it looked as though the ship was the "Sonoma" [another county in California] and he was a prospector but then was employed as an oil worker by the Utah Oil Refinery Company. On line searches were dead ends. Then on the Porirua Library Ancestry.com [library edition] I found he had registered in 1918 for the army in World War I but I think he was a reserve and either lived in Salt Lake City or went there to register. That record told me more about him: he was a pipe worker in Utah, was of short/medium build and had grey eyes and dark [brown] hair.

There was no Inglewood newspaper that went back as far as the early 1900s. The California State Library was the next contact I made but the respondent said, "Unfortunately, I found no mention of this name in the California Death Index, the vital records of California, in Ancestry.com, nor in the on line Historic 'Los Angeles Times' newspaper database...."

The next inspiration was to contact the California Genealogical Society and Library, who said, "Regarding your request for Edmund Tucker, you should contact the Southern California Genealogical Society <http://www.scgsgenealogy.com/>. They have access to death records and obituaries in Southern California." That seemed a good idea and so it proved, because I was told that, "According to the California death index, E. Press, age 35, died in Kern County on 16 Oct 1920. We could not find any newspaper account in our

resources of the circumstances. You could write to the Kern County Clerk/Recorder to obtain a copy of the death certificate which could give you more information. One can ask for an "informational copy" [rather than a certified copy] as a rule without submitting an affidavit, especially with a death that occurred almost 100 years ago. Good luck."

Kern County! Inglewood, in Los Angeles County, is not far from the Kern County border. The 'county seat' is Bakersfield, the Bakersfield newspaper is on line and it covers 1920 but – no relevant death or accident was reported. Kern County is not near the Ryan he was living in [there are two settlements called Ryan in California] during 1920 and probably before then, although I suppose he could have been taken back there for burial, depending on his involvement in the community.

So, assuming the age recorded by the California death index for E. Press was incorrect but the other information was correct and that he was ETP – the surname is uncommon - I tried to fill in the form required by the Kern County Recorder to request a death certificate but because there was no category included to select my relationship to ETP I couldn't fill it in completely, so I wrote a letter asking for help. The automatic email reply said a response could take six months. It's not too far to June now – the six months will be up!

**Barbara Blanchard** (March 2014)

*The above article was written for the April newsletter but there was insufficient room. Perhaps Barbara can give us an update in August – Editor*

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### **Some Useful Sites**

Eastman's Genealogy newsletter	<a href="http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy">http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy</a>
GenealogyInTime magazine	<a href="http://www.genealogyintime.com">www.genealogyintime.com</a>
British Genes	<a href="http://britishgenes.blogspot.co.nz">http://britishgenes.blogspot.co.nz</a>
Lost Cousins newsletter	<a href="http://lostcousins.com/newsletters/latest.htm">http://lostcousins.com/newsletters/latest.htm</a>
Deciphering Handwriting	<a href="http://genealogy.about.com/od/paleography/a/old_handwriting.htm">http://genealogy.about.com/od/paleography/a/old_handwriting.htm</a>
GenUKI Wales page	<a href="http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/wal/CivilRegistration/htm1">http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/wal/CivilRegistration/htm1</a>

### **and Snippets of Information**

- a couple were both listed in Irish records as 'minors' at their marriage in 1850 - you were considered to be a minor if you were under the age of 21 years, although the age at which you could marry was 12 years for girls and 14 years for boys.
- what details are shown on English birth and death certificates? - the General Register Office has a useful FAQ page which is worth reading, it includes what information was collected for each certificate. [http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/most\\_customers\\_want\\_to\\_know.asp#FamilyHistory](http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/most_customers_want_to_know.asp#FamilyHistory) Death certificates have a lot less information than you might be used to, no children for instance. The address details and informant are of value to know, so still worth getting. Have you checked the NZSG Certificates Collection to see if someone has donated a copy previously? A long shot, but might save you the £9.25.
- an old map of Scotland from 1882 that show the historical location of the major Scottish clans <http://maps.nls.uk/view/74400480> could be a useful resource for people who are just starting to research their family tree and are curious about the geographical origins of the clan name.
- there are now 8 million newspaper pages online to be explored at The British Newspaper Archive [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk) The time period covered stretches from 1710 to 1954. Recent new additions include Sheffield Daily Telegraph, Cheshire Observer, The Yorkshire Post, and Leeds Intelligencer.

# Self Publishing - easier & cheaper than ever before (Part 1)

## - Suzanne Sutton Cummings

### How to go about it

- Subscribe to various self-publishing websites for ideas & offers. The junk email can get a bit annoying but I recommend you never pay full price for your books  
[www.snapfish.co.nz](http://www.snapfish.co.nz) – this is one of the cheapest & a good place to start  
[www.mybooks.com](http://www.mybooks.com) – local Wellington company  
[www.blurb.com](http://www.blurb.com) – this organisation also offers helpful advice & interesting examples of what people have published. This is for the serious writer  
[www.milkbook.co.nz](http://www.milkbook.co.nz) - milkbooks has template books which can also include a dvd with videos in it – software only available online
- Download the free software & have a play with it or if it is only available online start your book online & get familiar with the software
- Start with something easy like a family holiday & then progress to more challenging projects. Putting together family history books with photos, documents, maps & detail is a lot more work
- Get your photos scanned, computer files & documents organised
- Give yourself time limits/cut off dates - You will never be able to get all the info you want. New information, images, photos etc. will always appear when you have published your history. You have to reach the point where you say “That’s it!”
- Get feed-back, comments etc. either online before published or with a draft copy. Family are more than willing to provide info, stories, photos etc. & to help out. Sharing photos is likely to prompt stories that you would have never heard otherwise
- Proof-readers are a very good idea. Typos & errors always creep in
- Researchers & editors etc. can be quite expensive. Best to get someone in the same clan who is interested enough to spend the time on it especially if your computer skills aren’t that great
- Get your book – your family history – out there. It will get your family talking & sharing stories. A good motivation to push on with the research & get it finished
- This is what you can do with “all that STUFF”!!! Books that we publish are less likely to be discarded after we are gone, than years of accumulated piles of paper, CDs & computer images. All those photos/negatives/slides are useless sitting in shoe boxes if no one is ever going to see them
- Start working on it now. There is no time like the present to get it done.

### Content

- Tell engaging (but true) stories. We all have stories to tell. Real life stories are what get the readers’ attention. They are what connect us together
- Facts & figures are still important. Names & dates are still a necessary part of a family history book. They distinguish non-fiction from fiction.
- Good presentation makes a big difference such as plenty of white space on the pages
- Make your book as professional as possible
- Use the best possible images – damaged/blurred images can still look OK - that may be all you can get or are allowed to use
- Tailor to your expected audience. The bigger your target market, the more people will be interested in it. You can, of course, also tailor a book for a small audience or just one person!
- Do your research & record your sources as you go. Recording your sources means you are not revisiting old ground again & again trying to fill in the gaps. You can see where there are gaps when you try putting everything into books
- Check that someone else hasn’t already done the same research. Places to look: National Library, Googling names/images, Papers Past, cemetery databases, online BDMs, Local Council Archives - new information is becoming available all the time.

### **A few 'dos & don'ts**

- Be honest. You can lose your credibility as a family historian if you add fairy tales
- Make no assumptions
- Don't make excuses for your ancestors
- Be careful not to offend – just leave it out if it will offend
- Don't labour the point – 'if I had more time I would have written less'
- Don't give away private information on living people.

### **Layout & details**

- Decide how it is going to be organised – e.g. chronological, theme, branch of family. The contents page just can be a timeline if it is just about one person
- Put your name, the date of publication & contact details in each edition of your book
- Acknowledgments, sources & bibliography. Take time to document where images came from including any reference numbers. Don't just share your information, say where or who you got it from. Fully acknowledge those who have helped & provided information, especially if given for free.

*Thanks to Suzanne for allowing us to reproduce this article, that appeared in the May newsletter of Hutt Valley Branch and followed her earlier presentation to the branch. Part 2, that will include publishing, will follow – Editor*

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### **A few interesting sites, all freebies, from Michelle Patient on NZSG list:**

Changing borders in Europe. Fascinating to see the various changes, useful regarding genealogy so as to know what country they were in and hence where records might be.

<http://loiter.co/v/watch-as-1000years-of-european-boarders-change/>

Various historic maps from around the world, which can be viewed free, and can be used in Google Earth to overlay current images.

<http://www.davidrumsey.com/home>

An interactive map showing the location of bombings during the London Blitz, 1940-1941. Useful to see if your ancestor's homes were affected.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2243951/The-astonishing-interactive-map-EVERY-bomb-dropped-London-Blitz.html>

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### **Some WW1 websites and databases:**

Archives New Zealand – 160,000 Digitised WW Personnel Files

<http://achives.govt.nz/research/guides/war>

WW1 Research Guide

[ww100.govt.nz/discover-WW1](http://ww100.govt.nz/discover-WW1)

Auckland War Memorial

[muse.aucklandmuseum.com/databases/cenotaph/25843.detail](http://muse.aucklandmuseum.com/databases/cenotaph/25843.detail)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

[cwgc.org](http://cwgc.org)

# Branch Committee

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**Secretary**

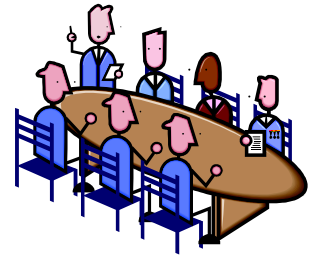
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# Branch Noticeboard

**Missing Branch Resources**

A stocktake has revealed the following branch resources have wandered during the past six months:

- CD - NZ WW1 Service Personnel and Reserve
- CD - Scotland Revealed
- Book - Family History Directory
- Book - NZ Battlefields and Memorials of the Western Front



If they are lurking amongst your genealogy papers we would appreciate their return for others to use.

# Branch Meeting Venue

Helen Smith Community Meeting Room, Pataka Museum of Arts and Cultures, cnr Norrie and Parumoana Streets, Porirua.  
 (after-hours entrance off Norrie Street)

7.25pm on the second Wednesday of the month, February to November inclusive.

Not sure where to find things at branch meetings? Perhaps this floor plan will assist? →

