



New Zealand FAMILY TREE



Published Three Times Yearly

Te Rakau Whakapapa o Aotearoa
P.O. Box 13-301, Armagh, Christchurch 8141



President's Report November 2025

As I write we are coming towards the end of the year and a much-anticipated Christmas break. It has been a busy year and a busy few weeks. Since the annual meeting in June, we have enjoyed the mid-winter Christmas dinner in July, the Family History Expo in August, a field trip to the Rangiora Museum in September, a talk on women cyclists in Christchurch and then our Heritage Festival in October. In November we have had a special general meeting, and we attended the Hororata Highland Games and had a stand there.

We have adopted a new constitution, added a new membership category for a 10-year membership and added a life membership clause. Life membership is our highest honour but has previously been overlooked in the constitution. In the process, we were able to re-confirm our eight life members, which includes two who are living.

A fourth motion to change our name from Family History Society of New Zealand Inc to New Zealand Family History Society Inc was narrowly lost.

We have had a successful recruitment drive, signing up new members at the Family History Expo and Heritage Festival, and then another five new members at the Hororata Highland Games. It shows the key thing is to get our name out there and engage with people.

Thanks to our secretary Kevin White for taking the lead on these recruitment events and to everyone who has given their time to help.

Enjoy your Christmas break and we will see you at our social barbecue in February 2026.

David Hill

The Bells of Painswick by Heather Crow

A while ago I watched a programme on TV about some of the people in the town of Sherborne, England. They were practicing their bell ringing skills in the town's church bell tower and were planning to do an hour-long peal at the time of the coronation of King Charles III. The programme piqued my interest as I knew my great-great-grandfather was a bell ringer.

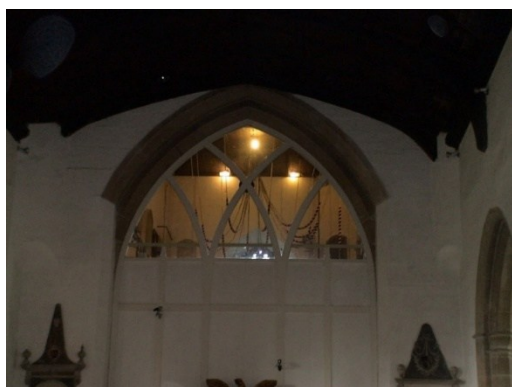
After the hour-long peal that the Sherborne townspeople did for the King's Coronation, they all looked pretty worn-out so I could only imagine how my great-great-grandfather Thomas Bethell and his fellow bell ringers felt after ringing their bells for nearly eight hours in a marathon peal. Were they able to stop to eat and drink? If the need arose, were they able to go to the toilet? I feel they must have had a substitute who would take their place if they had, for any reason, to leave their bell.

The Bethell family lived near the village of Painswick in Gloucestershire, England. I had driven through this village with my cousin from Bath on our way to Gloucester but at the time did not realize the significance of it to my family. Strange, because my mother had a photograph of the Painswick church in her box of photos and I always wondered why but never thought to ask her.

On my next visit to the UK, I went back to the village and visited the church. It was open and someone was playing the organ but, to my disappointment, I could not get up into the bell tower. A few years later I was back in England again, this time with my sister and daughter, so I took them to visit the Painswick church. It was a Sunday morning just before a church service so there were plenty of people around and a kind gentleman took us up into the bell tower. We were able to look at the plaques commemorating the two-marathon bell ringing sessions that Thomas Bethell had been involved with and to see where it all happened.



In a newspaper cutting it mentioned the Painswick bell ringing youths so I thought that Thomas may have been a teenager for the marathon bell ring. This was not so as it seems all bellringers are called youths and it doesn't matter what age they are.



(Cheltenham Chronicle, Thursday, 1 May 1817)

To the lovers of ringing – Monday next, the 5th of May, the Society of Painswick Ringers intend to ring, on their truly celebrated bells, a Peal of 12,312 Grandsire Caters; being the longest, and of the greatest duration, ever rung in this kingdom. – The peal will commence at 7.

(Cheltenham Chronicle, Thursday, 15 May 1817)

The arduous undertaking of the Painswick Youths to a Peal of 12,312 Grandsire Caters, was successfully completed in eight hours and forty minutes, on Monday last, to the admiration of a vast number of respectable characters who assembled on the occasion. – The 4th of June, another grand peal will be rung, and a magnificent dinner afterwards served up, at the Falcon, to the principal inhabitants. – They are about to ring for a silver cup at Wotton-under-Edge and will shortly give us two celebrated peals.

The Bethell family lived in the Painswick area for some time before they slowly moved away to other parts of England and the world. My great-great-grandfather was born in 1786 and died in 1844. He married Beata French in January 1819. She died in Greenwich in August 1855. They had 10 children, who in their turn produced 51 children, three of whom emigrated. Charlotte, my great-grandmother went to Australia and married Edward George Lane in 1857. In Melbourne in 1871 she was charged with manslaughter, and they quickly moved to New Zealand before the trial, but that's another story. She died in August 1912 in Oamaru, North Otago. Annie went to New Zealand and Edward, went to the USA.

I have not followed my great-great-grandfather's love of bells – it looks like too much hard work and really, I don't like to hear bells ringing.

Family History Society of NZ

Visit to Westport and Reefton 13-15 March 2026

Friday 13 March 2026

Attendees make their own way to Westport from Christchurch. Approximate driving times are:

Via Reefton – 4 hours 10 minutes	328 km
Via Arthurs Pass & Greymouth – 4 hours 45 minutes	344 km
Accommodation and Restaurant suggestions	TBA

Saturday 14 March Westport

- 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. Kawatiri Museum (incorporates former Coaltown Museum)
Rama Port, the manager of the museum, has kindly offered to guide us around the exhibits.
123 Palmerston Street, Westport. Ph 03 789 6658
Entry fee: \$15 pp. \$10 discount from the normal charge.
- 11:30 – 12:30 p.m. Lunch in Westport
- 12:30 p.m. Depart Westport for Denniston Plateau 26 km.
Takes about 30 minutes from Westport to get there.
- 1 p.m. Meet Gary James, who has agreed to show us around up on the plateau and tell us about some history. Gary is one of the mainstays of a group called 'Friends of the Hill'.
- 3 p.m. There is the potential to visit Millerton with Gary, down near Granity.
- 6:30 p.m. Dinner somewhere. Perhaps the Denniston Dog Restaurant & Bar – rustic looking place with historic photos, memorabilia and pub fare. 4.3* (4.3 stars).
18 Wakefield St. Tel. 03 789 5030

Sunday 15 March Reefton

8:45 a.m. Attendees drive through to Reefton via Inangahua to Blacks Point Museum just beyond Reefton, to meet John Taylor at 10 a.m. John Taylor will be our guide for the day. Allow at least 1 hour for the drive.

10 a.m. – 12 p.m. John Taylor will show us around the Blacks Point Museum.

12 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Lunch in Reefton. Listed cafes include:

- *The Broadway Tearooms and Bakery* Closes 3 p.m.
- *Reef Cottage Café*, Closes 3 pm.
- *Steptoos Coffee Emporium*, Retro décor. Close 3 p.m.

1:30 p.m. – 3 p.m. John Taylor has offered to accompany us to:
The Reefton School of Mines
Recently renovated Hydro Station and Water Race
Reefton was the first locality in NZ to have reticulated electric power. Wander around Reefton? There are self-guided walks.

3 p.m. onwards Drive back to Christchurch via SH 7 (Springs Junction and Lewis Pass). 250 km. Takes approx. 3 hours 15 minutes.
If people want to eat before driving home, cafes close at 3 p.m.
Nourish (4.6*, 32 Broadway) open for meals from
3 – 11:55 p.m.
Bassano Piz̃za Parlour (4.8*, 27 Broadway) from 12–7:30 p.m.
Hanmer Springs Pools are open until 7p.m. \$40 pp.
Reefton to Hanmer takes about 1 hour 50 minutes. 138 km.

Please note that making travel arrangements and accommodation bookings are the responsibility of those who want to go on the field trip.

Please advise Nigel Larsen via e-mail [nigellarsen1@gmail.com] if you intend to come along, so that he can gauge numbers and keep you updated on the trip.

Disastrous Explosion by Kevin White

With the Society's pending field trip to Westport in March 2026, I was reminded of a chapter from my book on the life of David Cossgrove, the man who led the formation of the Boy Scouts movement in New Zealand. The chapter is titled *The Dark Years*.

Explosion on the school reserve – 1 January 1895

David Cossgrove was the headmaster of the Westport Boys' School. He was a popular headmaster and was the Captain of the Westport Naval Cadets, a volunteer group. Although an innovative teacher he had his detractors, especially amongst the business community, as he had been bankrupt, twice, once in his former teaching appointment in Maheno and again in Westport.



The school grounds, known as the reserve, housed the school, the fire-station and a relic of an early shipwreck, a

mussel loading cannon from the **S. S. Suva**. On 10 July 1888, the 149-foot cargo and passenger ship departed from Westport and bumped on the bar. This caused steering issues. The ship drifted southward towards Carters Beach and finally grounded. Much of the decking had been washed away. It was abandoned on the low tide. The owners, the Union Steam Ship Company, put her up for sale. Somehow the 4 lb. cannon was recovered. On the last night of 1894, the school was holding a function. The fire brigade was demonstrating its hosing skills and residents had lined the fences watching the proceedings. However, David Cossgrove and his naval cadets colleague George Gothard had a rather more exciting end to the year in mind. As a Captain in the Westport Naval Artillery, David had access to munitions. He organised his men to assist in the loading and firing of the old cannon. The local paper reports the incident.

‘New Year's Day was ushered in here by a sad fatal accident. Mr. Cossgrove, Captain of the Westport Navals, also head teacher in the State school, fired off a big charge of powder from an old four-pounder gun, formerly belonging to the S. S. Suva, wrecked here six years

ago. Mr. Cossgrove and others placed the breach of the gun in the centre of the school reserve, the muzzle pointing upwards, loaded it, and connected the charge with a fuse through the muzzle. The school reserve is separated from the main street by a fence. The street was crowded with people witnessing the fire brigade's display from the station, which is situated at the corner of the reserve. Shortly after midnight the fuse was lit, and the gun burst into pieces, the metal flying about in all directions. One piece struck a youth named Charles Green, aged 15, in the neck and shoulder, mutilating him dreadfully and killing him instantly. Green was standing in Main Street. James Howard, aged 52, had his right arm shattered by a piece of metal. His arm was amputated in the hospital, between the shoulder and elbow, but it is doubtful if he will pull through. Mr. Patterson, formerly of Dunedin, master of the Harbour Board's dredge, had two broken ribs. Several shops and houses were also damaged. The blast was so strong that a hole was knocked through a brick chimney, in one of the school buildings. Shrapnel went through the chimney and out on the other side.

The inquest on the body of Charles Green accidentally killed by the bursting of the cannon, occupied all day. The jury, after two hours' retirement, found — "That deceased, Charles Green, met his death through being struck by a fragment of a cannon that burst on being fired in the school ground; and while the evidence does not point to recklessness or culpable negligence on the part of those firing the cannon, we are of opinion that gross ignorance was displayed." The following rider was added: "That the jury recommend the authorities that no cannon be fired within the borough of Westport unless by experts, nor then until after obtaining special permission from the proper authority."

Charles Green's death details are listed in the cemetery records:

Cemetery Record: 009279
CHARLES GREEN

< Previous Next > Search			
Family Name	GREEN	Age	15 years
Given Names	CHARLES	Date Deceased	Not available
Address		Interment Date	2/01/1895
Birth Place	NEW ZEALAND	Gender	Male
		Denomination	Protestant
Plot and Purchase Details			
Cemetery	Orowaiti Old	Clergyman	CAPTAIN KING
Plot	429		
Notes			
	KILLED BY A CANNON BURSTING		
	PURCHASED		
	1 84 594		



An article in the local paper had a follow-up story that was a little more heartening, but made no mention of the death of Charles

Green. Charles's death is registered with New Zealand's BDM and has his age as 16. This article also makes no mention of James Howard's arm being amputated.

"The two men injured by the cannon accident on New Year's Eve are both getting on favourably. Captain Patterson, who had two ribs fractured is going about again, but Mr Howard, who had his arm broken and the flesh much lacerated, is still in the hospital. A concert was held last evening in the Palace Rink on behalf of Mr Howard, which was one of the most successful and best attended entertainments ever held in Westport. The audience is said to have been the largest that ever assembled for such a purpose here, and the net proceeds amounted to nearly £50. After the concert a ball was held, in which over 100 couples took part. At a meeting of the Naval Volunteers, held a few evenings ago, Mr Cossgrove stated that he would resign his position as captain of the Corps, in consequence of the catastrophe on New Year's Eve. The men strongly objected to Mr Cossgrove's taking such a step and urged him to wait until word was received from headquarters. Lieutenant Gothard also notified that he would resign after the annual meeting. It is to be hoped both will remain in their positions,



A photo showing the S. S. Suva foundering on Carter's Beach, near Westport.

or the Naval Volunteer movement here, which has been progressing so rapidly since Captain Cossgrove took it in charge, will be sure to suffer. It has been discovered by inspection of the fragments found that the cannon which

burst, must have been in a cracked state for a long time, but this could not have been noticed beforehand, as it was getting dark before they thought of fetching it out on the fatal occasion."

A graphic eyewitness report of the cannon incident was published on 9 January 1895 in the *Nelson Star*:

DESCRIPTION BY AN EYEWITNESS. Concerning the Westport tragedy, a member of the Nelson Star staff who was about five yards away from the boy Green when he was killed, states that the cannon was fired off in the school grounds and was meant for a signal to start the Fire Brigade procession, a few minutes after midnight. It was the old signal gun used by the steamer Suva, and some time ago had been spiked and condemned. Before using it stones, gravel, etc., were scooped out, and a hole was dug in the playground so that the gun fixed in the earth had its muzzle pointed upwards. About seven pounds of powder formed the charge, and as the touch hole was closed it was fired from the muzzle with a fuse, fixed

through a layer of soft clay rammed on top of the powder. The scene of the accident was in the business thoroughfare of Palmerston-street, the shops, etc., being on the opposite side. The captain of the Fire Brigade had just blown his whistle to commence the procession when the explosion occurred, and the crowds standing opposite the school ground thought it was part of the performance. Suddenly there was a rush forward, and the mangled body of the boy Green was picked up in a shockingly mutilated state. The piece of cannon which struck him, glanced off on to a man named Howard, shattering one of his arms to pieces. Patterson, of the dredge, had his ribs broken.

There were crowds of people standing round who, being struck by minor fragments, were under the impression that some persons were throwing stones. A miraculous escape took place under Singer's verandah, where 20 persons were standing, when a piece of the gun passed through them and shattered the window to fragments. A lady wearing the old-fashioned dress improver was knocked flat on her face, but was otherwise uninjured, the steel springs turning the course of the missile. A piece of iron penetrated Munroe's store and embedded itself in a sack of chaff. Three pieces perforated the school building, one going right through the brick chimney and out on the other side. Some fragments were thrown for a distance of 500 yards, and one screamed past the head of a man standing close to Hughes' Hotel. Considering the crowded nature of the streets it is wonderful that there were not many more fatalities.

The Westport Naval Artillery

David had been an army volunteer in every town that he had taught in. In Maheno he switched from Army to Navy and continued on as a naval captain when arriving in Westport.

In the ***Jubilee History of Nelson: From 1842 to 1892***, David Cossgrove is mentioned as Captain of the Westport Naval Cadets Total strength 56. David's son Cyril is also listed as a Lieutenant, as well as Lieutenant George Gothard.

David was already under pressure from the proposed closure of the Boys' School, and it seemed unlikely that he would be employed at the District High School, as he had no degree. He would have no job and no prospect of one in Westport. Desperate for employment, David even applied for jobs out of teaching such as one for a corresponding secretary for "*The Decoration for Life Saving*", little did he know that he would be awarded a Bronze Humane Society medal in 1915, for a life-saving rescue. He was not successful in this application. The application is held by Archives New Zealand in Christchurch.

The cannon incident would certainly not have been forgotten by the Nelson Education Board when deciding on the continued employment of David.

At the time of the incident, the Westport locals were debating whether or not to go ahead with the formation of a District High School. The town had two schools: the Boys' School and the Girls' School. The proposal was that these two schools would be amalgamated into Westport Primary School.

Just before the Westport Boys' School closed, the school committee held a final meeting. At this meeting, David presented the committee with a bell and handed over to the committee, the flag staff which the teachers and pupils had used to commemorate the Queens long reign.

Mr Cossgrove, the late head teacher of the Westport Boys' School, was "farewelled" by his friends at a social last Thursday evening. He was presented with a purse of sovereigns as a parting gift. Mr Cossgrove and family are proceeding to Wellington by the s.s. Wainui to-day.

Nelson Evening Mail 20 February. 1899

Unfortunately, stubbornness had gotten in the way of common sense, as when Mr. Neve, the new headmaster for the High School arrived, he found that David was still living in the schoolhouse. David asked for an extension on his stay, until he left for Wellington on 20 February 1899.

David worked for short time in Wellington, as a clerk. This appointment was probably directly attributed to the Prime Minister Richard Seddon, who had been called upon by the parents of David's school, to secure him a position after his non-appointment to any position in Westport.

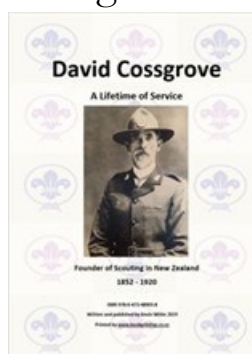


Some years later George Gothard (photo at left) was elected Mayor of Westport. He served for three years from 1905 to 1908. During Gothard's time on the council he must have felt guilty about James Howard's loss of an arm, and he led the compensation campaign which eventually in 1904 lead to a £250 compensation allowance.

This Wellington placement did not last long as a teaching position was found for him in a new Education Board, Canterbury at St. Stephens Native School in Tuahiwi.

One day in 1908 David was on his way to Kaiapoi, from his schoolhouse in Tuahiwi, when he had a chance encounter on the banks of the Cam River with Ted Mallasch, another Kaiapoi local. Ted was drilling a small patrol of boys using Robert Baden-Powell's handbook *Scouting for Boys* as his guide.

Scouting for Boys had been published in January 1908. Robert Baden-Powell had trialled his scouting ideas with the Mafeking Cadet Corps during the siege of Mafeking in South Africa. He also trialled it at an experimental camp for local boys from Poole on Brownsea Island, Dorset from 1–8 August 1907. David asked Ted if he could read Baden-Powell's book on scouting. David was so impressed by its contents and the ideals that it expounded, that he decided that the youth of New Zealand should know about this great scheme. The *Scouting for Boys* handbook was every boy's dream. It was full of ideas for building huts, camping, tracking, keeping fit, pioneering, cooking and fending for yourself. It was based on patriotism, civic duty, healthy living and self-reliance. David wrote to Baden-Powell asking permission to set up Boy Scouting in New Zealand. He was quickly granted permission to do this.



David Cossgrove was an extremely progressive person and for many years had been involved in community projects. He had already spent his adult life serving the public as a teacher and a military volunteer. He had been a Major and Captain in three volunteer units in Maheno, Westport and North Canterbury and had two stints with the New Zealand 6th and 10th Contingents in the South African War. This service gave him a unique set of skills and the determination to allow him to create a successful New Zealand wide scout movement. He was also skilled at envisaging the big picture and he would allow nothing to get in the way of achieving his goals. At the time of his death twelve years later in 1920, he had built Scouting in New Zealand from one registered patrol to a movement with over 30,000 Scouts and 5,000 leaders. A copy of Kevin White's book *David Cossgrove – A Lifetime of Service* can be obtained by contacting the author.

Kevin White e-mail: famwhitenz@gmail.com

Margaret Ann Weir by Jill Lord



Margaret was already a genealogist when we met in 1972. Possibly she was born one! It certainly was more than a hobby – possibly an obsession! As she was also a mathematician, she had a great memory for important dates. She began her interest in this hobby long before the advent of computer-assisted methodology. When it began to arrive, she adopted it with her own usual direct skills.

My first recollection of Margaret was hearing her speak on the 3ZB local radio station programme ‘Town Talk’ with presenter John Blumsky. She spoke about how a group had formed in Christchurch to help and advise others with how to locate and research family history. This was broadcast on 2 February 1972.

This group was named the **Armorial and Genealogical Institute of New Zealand** at the first AGM, held on 2 March 1970. ‘*Mrs M. Weir was appointed deputy chairman*’, so Margaret’s membership of what was to become the **Family History Society of New Zealand Inc.** was forty-seven years. We celebrated the 50th year of the group in 2019. Our first magazine issue of *NZ Family Tree* is numbered Volume one Number Two, and is dated June 1969, so we presume that the first AGM of the group was the following year in 1970.

The minute books of the committee and meeting details in them are quite comprehensive, and mention that genealogy is a science and requires proper research. In April 1970 ‘*Mrs M. Weir spoke and demonstrated her research method and the card system she used to record her research.*’

When we look at the resources available today, it all sounds quite primitive. But all those early enthusiasts need to be thanked for spending their time recording cemeteries and graveyards, visiting libraries and encouraging government departments to make their records available.

In August 1970, ‘*Mrs Weir has made a full list of the Waikari and Horsley Downs cemeteries.*’ So regular Sunday afternoon trips were organised by the group to

record the local cemeteries - Linwood, Lyttelton, Sydenham, Rangiora, Kaiapoi, Woodend, Papanui etc. They all combined to type these out and produce several copies for reference. Their intention was to build a safe archive for the people of Christchurch – clever thinking for the future.

By 1973 Margaret had become the Research officer and the Editor of the ***NZ Family Tree*** magazine. This continued to be her special office through until 1976, when she again became chairman. Also at this meeting, it was proposed that a patron for the society be found. In 1977, Chevalier Edward Roberts consented to be the new patron, which he remained until his death in 2013. During all this period, Margaret was a committee member; also she attended the first Australasian Genealogy Congress in Adelaide in 1977.

In 1980, the name of the society was changed from AGINZ to better reflect the image of the group and its resources.

The society constitution was officially changed at a Special General Meeting held on 9 April 1981, followed by the first AGM of the New Zealand Family History Society Inc., where Mrs M. Weir was elected as the first Chairman. She remained Chairman until 1983, when she was elected secretary-treasurer, and was reappointed to this position in 1985.

In 1988 Margaret Weir was made a joint patron of the society along with Chevalier Edward Roberts, a founding member.

In the 1980s the group had an excellent membership and William (Bill) Greenwood was an enthusiastic chairman. Good meetings and a good programme.

However, when we needed prompting over any issues, it was Margaret who provided the answers, taking a well-deserved rest from committee duties, but always available.

On a personal level, I travelled with Margaret to two Australasian conferences. She was highly respected and very involved in all aspects of these events. In 1983 she co-presented a conference paper along with me at the 3rd Australasian Genealogy Congress, *Under the Southern Cross*, held in Hamilton.

In 1980, Margaret and I, together with her husband Stephen Weir, travelled to the “*World Conference on Records*” held in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. We left NZ in August 1980 and on 11 August we heard author Alex Haley give his keynote talk to the conference on ***Roots***, his historical novel. You may recall it

was later made into a dramatized television series. However, it was eventually denounced as a fake, as he had plagiarised another novel published in 1976 titled *The African*. At the time, it was a story of an African man, Kunta Kinte, who was sold into slavery in America with his descendants. Alex Haley's talk and novel were a model of research as we heard it in 1980. It was also a warning that still stands today, as a "fake". Even more possible in our computerised world.

Margaret and I had a wonderful time in Salt Lake City. We had no idea how much material was available through the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints. We had never heard of their IGI (International Genealogical Index) and their own church records. We were able to use all these resources, and found it difficult to leave, becoming totally engrossed for days longer than we had planned to stay. Eventually we dragged ourselves away, and travelled south, visiting Bryce Canyon and the Grand Canyon, as well as many cities, including Las Vegas and Phoenix, down to Mexico – Tijuana, San Diego and Los Angeles. Stephen and Margaret Weir and I had purchased a 1972 Pontiac Catalina in Salt Lake City for US\$450. We eventually sold it in LA for US\$115 cash. It had no smog gear required in LA! But we thought we might have to leave it on the side of a road!!

We then flew standby on a PAN AM flight to London. More adventures awaited us – this time in a Volkswagen Kombi pulling a collapsible French-built caravan. We travelled mostly in the north of England as Margaret and I both have North Yorkshire ancestors. Also, we went up to Scotland - as far north as we could go really. We attended a genealogical conference in Lancaster – that was good value for us. We had visited the County record offices in most towns we passed through. They were then the repositories for most local records. We often spent full days in these archives – their staff were most helpful. We had already found various research offices in London – St Catherine's House, where indexes of births, deaths and marriages required much lifting of great heavy volumes, then trying to find a free desk to place them on. We went to the Public Record Office in Portugal Street and Chancery Lane, London, where they hold such things as Pipe Rolls – most have never been opened; they also hold the Magna Carta – a beautiful piece of manuscript.

It was truly moving to be able to visit towns, places and cemeteries where our ancestors had lived. Much of this we had already discovered through our own research, but to actually visit and see their houses and villages where often the family names still existed was special for Margaret and me. She was a special person in my life; we shared great times that will never be forgotten. Until we meet again...

Jill Lord

Editor's footnote: Margaret Weir (nee Caygill) was a mathematics teacher at Cashmere High School, Christchurch, for many years. She attended every Australasian Genealogical Congress from 1977 until 2009.

These congresses are organised under the auspices of the Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations (AFFHO) and Margaret attended them in 1977 (Melbourne), 1980 (Adelaide), 1983 (Hamilton), 1986 (Canberra), 1988 (Sydney), 1991 (Launceston), 1994 (Brisbane), 1997 (Christchurch), 2000 (Perth), 2003 (Melbourne), 2006 (Darwin) and 2009 (Auckland).

Of the 15 AFFHO congresses in Margaret's lifetime, she attended the first 12 of these, quite a record! Only 1 other person matched her attendance record.

Margaret was a life member and a patron of the Family History Society of N.Z., and she later joined the NZ Society of Genealogists and was active in that society, being on the organising committee assisting with planning of the 8th Australasian Congress held at Lincoln University near Christchurch in 1997.

Due to suffering a stroke, her health declined in her last few years, and she moved to a residential care facility, but she was still doing research and compiling her own and her husband's family history until her death on 14 January 2019.

Members of the society attended her funeral service, and Jill Lord gave a tribute to Margaret's dedication, hard work, quirky sense of humour and cheerfulness in the genealogy world.

Lowering the Colours – part two

Taking on Canterbury by David Hill

At our April meeting, FHSNZ president David Hill gave a talk on his research into an England women's hockey tour of New Zealand in 1914.

In the first part of the series, we followed the England team in Australia, and then in the North Island, before crossing over to the South Island.

In part two, we look at how the Canterbury team prepared for its showdown with England at Lancaster Park, Christchurch, on 12 September 1914, which the home side unexpectedly won 3-2. We also look at who were the Canterbury players.

Canterbury hockey fans were anticipating the visit of the England women's hockey team in the months leading up to the tour and the team's arrival in Christchurch.

But there were a few challenges along the way. First there was the small matter of finding a venue for the Christchurch matches on 12 September (Canterbury) and 3 October (the second test). Hockey was normally played at the Polo Ground in South Hagley Park, but this was considered unsuitable for the occasion and the expected large crowd.

The Canterbury Rugby Union (CRU) management committee met in July to discuss an application from the Canterbury Ladies' Hockey Association (CLHA) to Lancaster Park Ltd to use Lancaster Park for the two matches. As rugby had priority, the matter was referred to the CRU, which resolved to try and persuade the CLHA to change the date of the Canterbury-England game.¹

3 October was in the cricket season, but 12 September was the day of the men's representative rugby match against Otago and the last game of the season. The CRU considered that playing the ladies' hockey match as the curtain raiser to the rugby match would not be “*in keeping with the dignity of the*



Types of women athletes, no. 1: The Hockey Girl 1909, Record ID: Awns-19090812-16-05. Auckland Weekly News, Auckland Libraries.

¹ The Sun and The Press 8 July 1914.



Canterbury women's hockey team 1910, Tiaki IRN: 617634. Tiaki Reference Number: 1/1-021832-G, Collection: PA-Group-00370: Webb, Steffano, 1880-1967: Collection of negatives, Alexander Turnbull Library.

visiting team”, so it suggested the hockey match be diverted to another ground at Lancaster Park and offered to pay CLHA £15 as compensation.²

This was unsuitable for the CLHA, so the CRU suggested the rugby game could be played at the earlier time of 2 p.m. and then the hockey game at 4 p.m.³ The CRU offered the CLHA 25 percent of the gate takings. It met again on 5 August and expressed surprise the 25% offer was turned down.⁴

The Canterbury Rugby League (CRL) stepped in and offered the CLHA the use of the Showgrounds for the 12 September match, with the CRL to take 25% of the

gross takings. The CLHA accepted the offer of exclusive use of the grounds.⁵

But alas war had broken out and things changed. Lancaster Park Ltd forwarded another letter from the CLHA to the CRU.⁶ The Showgrounds were now being occupied by the Expeditionary Forces Camp, so the ground was no longer available on 12 September. The CLHA was agreeable to the previous terms offered, but it wanted 50% of the net gate takings.

Lancaster Park Ltd advised it was willing to accept 20% of the gate takings, instead of the usual 25%, if the CRU would accept 45% and to offer the CLHA 35%. The terms were accepted.

To prepare for the 12 September match, early morning practices for the Canterbury ladies' team were planned at the Polo Grounds in South Hagley Park starting at 6:30 a.m. - *“any girls failing to put in an appearance will run the risk of losing her probable position in the representative team”*.⁷

² The Sun and The Press 15 July 1914.

³ The Sun, 29 July 1914.

⁴ The Sun, 5 August 1914.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The Sun, 19 August 1914.

⁷ The Sun, 11 August 1914, and The Lyttelton Times 12 August 1914.

But preparations did not go to plan, and the Canterbury team had few scheduled matches, with no national ladies' tournament held in 1914. Canterbury travelled to Timaru for an unimpressive 5-3 win over South Canterbury⁸, drawing a return match in Christchurch five weeks later 3-all.⁹

Several trial matches were played and the Canterbury ladies team played matches against the Canterbury secondary school girls and Canterbury B teams, to get some game time.¹⁰

It must have come as relief when a letter arrived from the Wairarapa Ladies' Hockey Association challenging Canterbury to a game against the 1913 national champions. It was agreed to play the match on 29 August, two weeks before the England match, with the Wairarapa team travelling to Christchurch.¹¹

In a close game, Canterbury recorded a solid 5-4 win to give the team some confidence.¹² Wairarapa had led 2-0, before Myrtle Pearce scored for a score of 2-1 at half-time. Canterbury dominated the second half, with Myrtle Pearce scoring three goals in the match.

The following week Canterbury goalkeeper Miss Cade became ill. Hinemoa player Mabel Wells stepped into goalkeeper, a position she had not played before, for a match against Canterbury B.

The Canterbury team named to face England was: goalkeeper Miss M Wells (Hinemoa), full-backs D Pearce (Hinemoa) and H Harrison (Digby's), halves E Nightingale (Digby's), O Smith (Waimairi), M Sandman (Digby's), forwards I Taylor (Ngaio), S Kruse (Waimairi), P Pearce (Hinemoa), M Pearce (Hinemoa, captain) and I Burnip (Hinemoa).

Emergencies were Miss E Cade (Waimairi), D Horner (Waimairi), E Pepper (Waimairi) and H Martin (Waimairi).

Who were the Canterbury players? Starting with the Pearce sisters – Dorothy Mabel (Doll), Pansey and Myrtle. They were daughters of Alfred and Mary Elizabeth (nee Greenwood) Pearce. Alfred was born in Greenwich, England, in

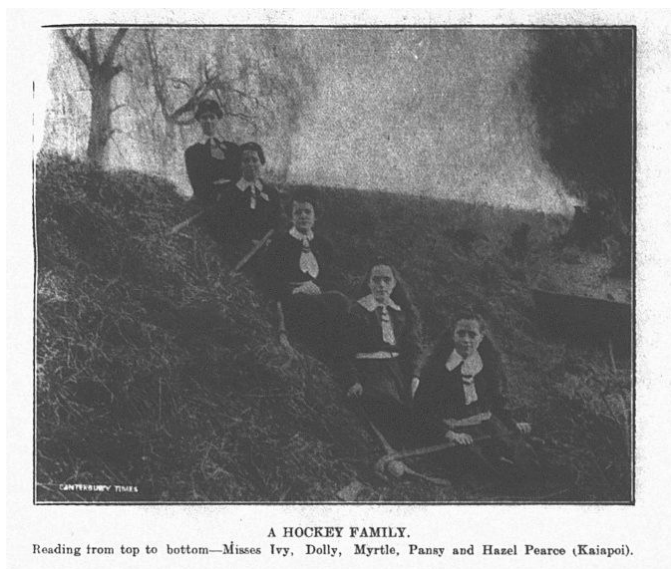
⁸ The Sun, 2 July 1914.

⁹ The Sun, 10 August 1914.

¹⁰ The Sun, 5 September 1914.

¹¹ The Press, 24 August 1914.

¹² The Sun, The Lyttelton Times and The Press Sunday, 31 August 1914.



Pearce sisters - Ivy (left), Dorothy (Doll), Myrtle, Pansy and Hazel, The Canterbury Times 27 October, 1909, Christchurch City Libraries

1848 and came to Lyttelton with his family in 1857.¹³ The Pearce family settled in Kaiapoi, where Alfred worked as a builder and contractor on his own account from 1878 and later owned an ironmongery business and a machine joinery shop in Kaiapoi.

Alfred became the mayor of Kaiapoi, while Mary was active in the local branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and was president of the Hinemoa Ladies Hockey Club from 1908 to 1941. The couple had six daughters and a son who all played hockey. Myrtle was born in 1891 and

later married Clarence Victor Leslie in 1921 and all four of their children played hockey. She died in 1979. Dorothy Mabel was born in 1888 and Pansey in 1894.

Using the New Zealand Ancestor Search Helper tool,¹⁴ Eva Mabel Eldridge (Mabel) Wells was born in 1890 in Kaiapoi and was the daughter of James and Annie Bone Wells. James Wells is listed in the 1911 electoral roll as a station master in Kaiapoi.

Eva Mabel Eldridge Wells was listed in the 1911 Electoral roll as a spinster living in High Street, Kaiapoi, and in the 1925 Electoral Roll as a spinster living in Madras Street, in the Christchurch North electorate. There was an Eva Mabel Eldridge Wells who married Ernest Burgess in 1927, and an Eva Mabel Eldridge Wells, aged 46, who was buried in 1937 in the Linwood Cemetery.¹⁵

The other Hinemoa player was Ida Josephine Burnip, a cousin of the Pearce sisters. She was born in 1893 and was the daughter of William Thomas and

¹³ Alfred Pearce's obituary, The Star 12 November 1929. Also, see: <https://my.christchurchcitylibraries.com/blogs/post/meet-the-locals-the-hockey-playing-pearce-sisters-of-kaiapoi/>

¹⁴ New Zealand Ancestor Search Helper tool: <https://ash.howison.co.nz/>

¹⁵ New Zealand Society of Genealogists Cemetery Fiche, found at <https://wilsoncollection.co.nz/>

Eleanor Elizabeth Burnip. An obituary for William Thomas Burnip's father, William Burnip,¹⁶ of Kaiapoi, lists his pall bearers as A Pearce, G Burnip, C Alexander and WT Burnip, and his occupation as a licensed victualler. In 1898, William Thomas Burnip successfully applied for the license of the Terminus Hotel at Oxford,¹⁷ and also seems to have farmed at Waiau. Ida married Albert Armstrong in 1915.

Miss H Harrison was hard to find in the records, but she seems to be Hilda Beatrice Harrison, who was born in 1892 to James and Sarah Ellen Bertha Harrison. There is an intention to marry in 1887 for James Harrison and Sarah Ellen Bertha Brown, of Temuka. In the 1893 and 1896 electoral rolls, James and Sarah were living in Temuka, with James' occupation listed as a grocer. In the 1911 electoral roll, James and Sarah were living in Colombo Street, Christchurch, with James' occupation listed as a manufacturer. Hilda married Henry William Gourlay in 1919 in the St Luke's Church in Christchurch.¹⁸ She died in 1980, aged 87 years.

Miss E Nightingale, Miss O Smith and Miss N Sandman are the most elusive. Birth records¹⁹ list an Olive Lilian Smith born at Oxford in 1893, an Olga Marie Smith born in Rangiora in 1896, and Olive Leishman Smith born in Christchurch in 1896, and an Olive Pansy Smith born in Ashburton in 1897. An Elsie May Nightingale was born in Christchurch in 1894. I was unable find a birth record for an N Sandman in Canterbury during this period, so she may have been born overseas.

Miss I Taylor was likely Ida Madeline Taylor who was born in 1888 and was the daughter of Thomas and Sarah Jane Taylor. The 1881 electoral roll lists a Thomas Taylor, grocer, living in the Christchurch South electorate. A Thomas Taylor, grocer, was listed in the Christchurch East electorate in the 1911 electoral roll. Ida Madeline Taylor is listed as a spinster in the 1911 electoral roll in the Christchurch East electorate, and in the 1925 electoral roll as a spinster

¹⁶ William Burnip obituary: The Lyttelton Times, 16 March 1911.

¹⁷ The Lyttelton Times, 7 June 1898.

¹⁸ The Sun, 24 December 1919.

¹⁹ Birth, Marriage and Death microfiche at the Family History Society of New Zealand library, Christchurch.

living in Percival Street, Riccarton. Cemetery records list the burial of an Ida Madeline Taylor in Tauranga in 1977.²⁰

Miss S Kruse was a mystery, until I found an article about the marriage of Miss Sybil Kruse, the daughter of Mrs Kruse of Frank Street, Papanui, to Mr Alex Davison, in 1919.²¹ The report said “*the bride entered the church on the arm of her brother Mr C Kruse*”. It also recorded that Miss Sybil Kruse helped the Canterbury team to defeat the All-England ladies hockey team in 1914. Through New Zealand Ancestor Search Helper, I was able to determine Sybil Kruse was born Marie Sabina Kruse. In the Birth, Deaths and Marriages historical records²², there is a Marie Tabina Kruse (no doubt a spelling error or incorrectly transcribed) born in 1896 to Harry and Sarah Susannah Spencer Kruse, who were married in Hokitika in 1887. A Harry Kruse was listed as a farmer in the 1893 and 1896 electoral rolls in the Riccarton and Avon electorates respectively. Cemetery records list the burial of Harry Kruse in 1897²³ in the St Paul's Anglican Church yard in Papanui, aged 32 years. Marie Sabina Davidson died in 1989, aged 92 years.

²⁰ New Zealand Society of Genealogists Cemetery Fiche, found at <https://wilsoncollection.co.nz/>

²¹ The Sun, 28 November 1919.

²² <https://www.bdmhistoricalrecords.dia.govt.nz/>

²³ New Zealand Society of Genealogists Cemetery Fiche, found at <https://wilsoncollection.co.nz/>

Programme January – May 2026

1 February 2026 4:30 p.m. Annual social gathering and barbeque 399 Papanui Road – bring a salad or dessert or any meat alternatives. Sausages and bread supplied by committee. Bring your own drinks, plates and cutlery.

1 March 2 p.m. Monthly meeting Elmwood Bowling Club “The trials and tribulations of Martin McNulty” -Pauline & Stuart Taylor

14-16 March Field trip to Westport, Buller and Reefton
See page 5 above for fuller details. Final prices for admissions etc TBA later.

12 April Field trip to Soldiers Block, Queen Mary Hospital, Hanmer Springs. Further details to be confirmed later.

3 May “Chinese ANZACS” Adrienne Shaw TBC

Meetings are held at the Elmwood Bowling Club rooms, off Heaton Street near Elmwood Park, unless advised otherwise. A door charge of \$3 per meeting please. Meetings followed by a raffle and afternoon tea.

Submitting Articles

Any members who may possess an interesting story pertaining to family or early historical matters and especially to the greater Canterbury area, or anywhere in New Zealand, are invited to write about it and submit it to the editor for inclusion in our future issues.

Any matter may be written down or typewritten and provided facts of the story, names etc., are clearly indicated, we can do the editing if you consider you are not that good at putting down a story. If you have a computer and e-mail facilities, this is the best way to submit material as it can be edited on receipt and inserted directly into our publishing program.

Regarding photographs: the best way is to submit electronic images in either a JPEG, TIFF or PDF format as reproduction proves better and sharper. However, a good photocopy will generally be adequate.

If e-mail is preferred the address to send articles, photos and stories to is: **philpcreed@xtra.co.nz** or address any correspondence to the editor at 28 Ensors Road, Opawa, Christchurch 8023.

Our next issue will be published in APRIL 2026

Disclaimer: *Whilst every effort has been made to accurately compile the information contained herein, The New Zealand Family Tree nor any of its contributors or advertisers accept no liability for any errors or omissions or any inadvertent disclosure of any information not meant for publication. New Zealand Family Tree neither endorses nor accepts responsibility for the products or services of any advertisers in this publication. Opinions expressed shall not necessarily be those of The Family History Society of New Zealand (Inc.).*

Family History Society of New Zealand Inc.

“Te Rakan Whakapapa o Aotearoa”

e-mail: familyhistory.nz@hotmail.com

Patron

Dame Jillian Lord, QSM, DLJ, FNZFHs

Committee 2025-2026

President – David Hill FNZFHs

Vice president – Philip Creed FNZFHs

Immediate past president* – Kevin White FNZFHs

Secretary* – Kevin White

Treasurer* – Pauline Taylor FNZFHs

Research officers* – Jill Lord, Kevin White

Committee – Jill Lord, Judith Munro FNZFHs, Barbara Miller FNZFHs, Margaret White FNZFHs, Heather Craw, FNZFHs Nigel Larsen, Rae McPherson

Editor* – Philip Creed

Librarian* – Jill Lord

** Denotes ex-officio committee members.*

Auditor – Vacant

Membership – Tony Gordon FFHSNZ

Society Contact – Kevin White Phone 021 0826 6331

New Zealand Family Tree:

This is the official journal of the Family History Society of New Zealand, which prints and publishes the magazine three times a year. The contents are copyright and all rights are reserved worldwide. The society's financial and membership year begins on April 1, and the subscription charges are listed below. All enquiries may be addressed to PO Box 13-301, Armagh, Christchurch, New Zealand. Persons interested in joining the society will be posted a prospectus on enquiry. Regardless of the time of joining, the full subscription for the year should be paid, and back copies of the magazine (if any) will be sent.

Meeting times – 2 p.m. on the 1st Sunday of the month at Elmwood Park Bowling Club, Heaton Street, Strowan., unless otherwise advertised in the newsletter.

Library hours – 401A Papanui Road. Every Monday 10 a.m. to 12 noon, every Saturday 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Closed on public holidays and public holiday weekends.

Classes of membership:

Full membership – Open to individuals and entitles them to receive a newsletter.

Fee – \$40 per year, Family \$50 per year.

10-year membership – Open to individuals who pay 10 years of annual subscriptions **\$400**

Associate membership – Open to historical associations, genealogical societies, public libraries, and similar organisations. This entitles them to receive the magazine and advertise free of charge in the magazine on behalf of their organisations. These privileges do not extend to individuals in these organisations. **Fee – \$50 per year.**

