

Horowhenua Family History Group Inc

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Location: Te Takere Heritage Room 10 Bath Street Levin

SUBSCRIPTIONS are now due. \$30.

HFHG bank account.38-9008-0466762-00.

Name as reference or cash to Treasurer.

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COMMITTEE

Kevin Miles	021 1364 075 President
Brian Bernon	027 286 4186 Secretary
Prue Theobald	021 2010 052 Treasurer
Sharon de Boer	021 739 247
Michael Holland	021 2010 052
Ian Meyer	06 368 0602
Cathy Holmes	021 338 227
Lynn Williams	Librarian

Special General Meeting

Members voted unanimously to accept the revised Constitution at the Special General Meeting held on 28 July, prior to the Group's monthly meeting.

The new Constitution is now registered.

July Report

How family members came to New Zealand was the theme of our July meeting. Members shared the shipboard tales and other experiences of their families en route to their new homeland. The following are some of their stories.

Michael Holland

Michael's father John came to New Zealand from Liverpool, England, on the SS Rotorua in 1936.

His mother, then Miss Bessie Hollis, followed him in 1940, sailing on the Ormonde to Sydney, Australia on 2 March, and onto Auckland New Zealand on the SS Niagara arriving on 15 April.

They were reunited in Auckland and travelled to Hamilton where they married. They continued to Manaia South Taranaki where Michael's father was the Church of England Minister.

Pictured: Michael's parents in Auckland shortly after Bessie's arrival.



Levin Post-office 1903

Thompson House

Monday

25th August 2025

1.30pm

Members: What are some of your solutions to brick walls? Share your ideas or problems you are trying to solve.

September 29th Meeting

Guest Speaker Luke Howison

Lower Hutt based website developer Luke Howison will talk about three websites that he has created to help researching family histories.

The New Zealand Ancestor Search Helper, ASH for short, is described as a free one-stop shop website for family research. As such it is finding favour with those who are beginning their family history research as well as the more experienced.



Lynn Williams

This is the ship my great, great grandmother Maria Magdalena Sophia Lange arrived on 1st September 1844.

Skjold pronounced Shol, a Danish 3 masted barque, built in Sonderberg, 1839 displacing 460 tons.

Owned by C Petersen, she sailed from Hamburg, 21 April 1844, via the Caribbean and Cape Horn to Nelson. Captain was C Clausen and there were six cabin and 105 steerage passengers. The trip was uneventful although two died, but two were born.

Maria was 10, travelling with her father (agricultural labourer) and stepmother, two elder brothers 18 and 16 – a smithy and agricultural labourer, and two younger brothers aged seven and four.



They settled in Ranzau, East Waimea, renamed Hope. She married Johann (John) Schroder, on 2nd June 1854 at the Lutheran church, which is still on the same site. They farmed in the area until 1866 when they travelled to Kaikoura (my hometown) on the SS Ruby with eight children.

Four more children were born in Kaikoura and all survived to adulthood. Maria died, 7 July 1917, aged 84 years. She was widowed 42 years, owning the farm Trefoil in her own right after Johann died.

Dawn McConkey

All my ancestors arrived in New Zealand through Auckland.

The first to arrive were my Gibson family from Lincolnshire in 1852 on the "Joseph Fletcher". They were my Gt. Gt. Grandparents who had been married about six months. They had a baby boy born on board but he only lived for two weeks. My Great Grandmother was born in January 1854 after their arrival in Auckland. Together with three other families who sailed on the same ship they bought land in Mangere near where Auckland International Airport now stands. After 20 years they moved down to the Waikato near Te Awamutu.

Next came the Buchanans from Glasgow in October 1861 on the "Gananoque". John Buchanan, my 2x Great Grandfather was a Wholesale Merchant in Glasgow and continued this trade in Auckland. They lived in various parts of Auckland and also had land around Thames. The eldest son, Andrew, my Gt. Grandfather, acted as his father's travelling salesman. He eventually settled in Palmerston North.

The next to arrive were the Harris's, originally from Dover in Kent. They arrived in September 1870 on the "Aboukin" with four small boys. My 2x Great Grandfather, George Harris, was in the Merchant Marine and when he arrived in Auckland, he joined the Circular Saw Line and sailed all around the Pacific.

The last to arrive was my Great Grandfather William McConkey from Northern Ireland. He arrived in 1874 on the "Oxford" as a 20yr old. He went directly to Te Awamutu to join an uncle. It was there he met his future wife, Mary Ann Gibson, the one who was born in Auckland in 1854.

Kevin Miles: How did Elisha (William) Miles get to New Zealand?

This problem has been nagging me for a number of years. Elisha Miles (my great grandfather) was born in Sevenoaks Kent, in 1852. He appears in the 1861 census. He was the fifth child of 13.

He then appears in New Zealand as a carter near Feilding in 1878. That year he is recorded as the father of Lillian Miles, the mother being Mary Ann. They then appear in Napier in 1879 where my grandfather was born, followed by Helen Eliza and Thomas Walter.

In 1884 Mrs Miles and four children board the clipper *Waikato* with Mrs Lindburg and two children (the only passengers on a boat full of wool and tallow). On the journey Violet Annie Waikato Miles is born and then on 3rd January 1886 Arthur is born in Sevenoaks.

On 4th June 1886 the whole family arrive in Freemantle on the *Otago*. By 1898 they had all returned to Wellington.

Following Maggie Gaffney's excellent talk I obtained the details of the *Waikato*'s ship number and contacted the Maritime Museum for the crew list for that journey. It recorded that some casual crew were added in Napier including W. Miles and C. Lindburg. It appears those two seamen came with their families.



Mary Ann with grandson Jack.

But then I struck gold.

W. Miles indicated the last boat he had crewed on was the *Waimea*.

It all came together. Mary Ann Billington born in 1853, in Birmingham, had married a fellow Brass Foundry worker Henry Austin and after the birth of a daughter Emma Maria Austin late in 1875 they boarded the ship *Waimea* in 1876. They were to go to Feilding as part of the Colonists Aid Corporation Scheme.

In 1876 Emma's death is recorded in Halcombe. What is unclear is when Henry and Mary Ann separated and at what point Elisha and Mary Ann became common-law man and wife but from that time on Henry made his own way as a carpenter in Wellington and Wanganui until he died in 1918.

Although I don't have the crew list yet for the *Waimea*, I have no doubt Elisha (William) was on the boat and he went to Feilding either with or soon after Mary Ann.

"Waimea"



Marj van Dyk

I arrived in New Zealand in 2017! I was born in, then, British North Borneo, of English parents. I was brought up in, also then, Rhodesia.

As a young adult I travelled to England where I lived for five years before returning to Africa, firstly to Rhodesia and then to South Africa where I stayed for some 40 odd years and where I married a South African (who had also been raised in Rhodesia).

My husband's daughter emigrated to New Zealand some years ago and this prompted us to move here as well.

We arrived here by plane and so sadly missed out on the romance of boat travel which characterized the immigration of most, if not all, of my fellow members!.

Family History Month August 2025

Finding your family history in The Heritage Room

Te Takeretanga o Kura-hau-pō Levin Library's Heritage Room provides a research service for people who are seeking information about family and local history.

The Heritage Room Committee is a library-run group that manages library inquiries and has an overview of the running of the Archive and Heritage Rooms. It also provides volunteers with updates on new resources and other information as required.

The Room is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10.00am to 12.30pm; and Thursday, 10.00am to 3.00pm.

The room is run by volunteers who are members of the Horowhenua Family History Group supported by Kiri Pepene, Te Takere's Library Information Research and Local History Team Lead.

Service is free for an hour's consultation but it is reasonable to suggest a donation to the HFHG of \$20 for each additional hour (the money to be used for Heritage Room and Archive expenditure).

Each experienced volunteer has unique researching skills and methods to offer. Some of them have specialist areas of interest which they can share with others.

These include New Zealand resources, England, France and Germany, Ancestry, Family Search, Find My Past and My Heritage; UK research, such as Parish Registers and newspapers; Cornwall, Scotland and Australia; DNA, and Ancestry

As well as online resources, the Heritage Room contains research books, electoral rolls, cemetery records, catalogues, directories, microfiche, genealogy magazines, newspapers and other resources that are useful in researching family histories.

The Archive Room contains donated material that is primarily related to the Horowhenua. The source of most of this is the Horowhenua Historical Society and members of the Horowhenua community. There are records of a number of community groups and copies of the Levin Chronicle, Weekly News, Shannon Newspapers, and newspaper supplements.

There are some historical artifacts. There is a database to locate a proportion of the collection and a description on the face of most aisles to indicate what is there.



FAMILY HISTORY DAY 30 August 2025

Sharing and Preserving Your Family History

Johnsonville Community Centre

28 Moorefield Road,
Johnsonville

10am to 4pm (Doors open at 9:30)

Free Entry

Various speakers will present on the various ways to share and preserve your family history, with some updates on what's new in the genealogical world.

Exhibitors include:

NZSG Interest Groups covering Māori, Australia, England, Ireland, Scotland and DNA National Library etc.

Great raffle with prizes from The New Zealand Society of Genealogists, Greater Wellington NZSG Branches, Ancestry and MyHeritage.

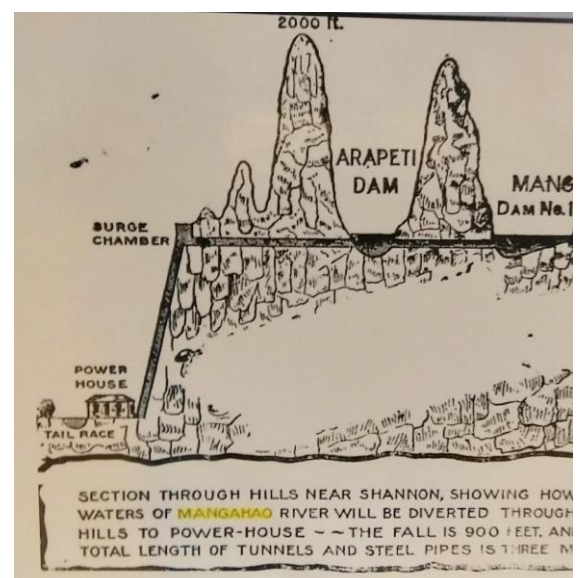
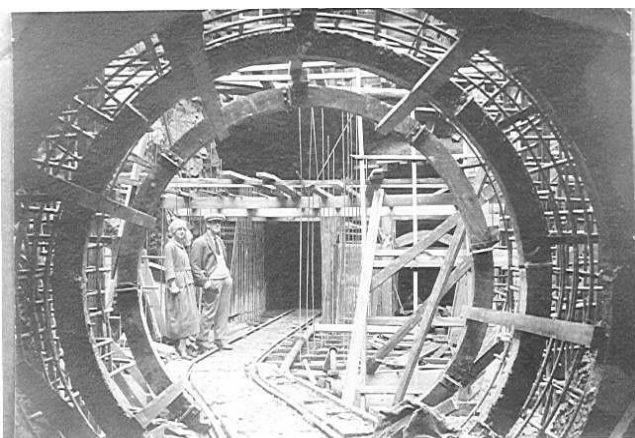
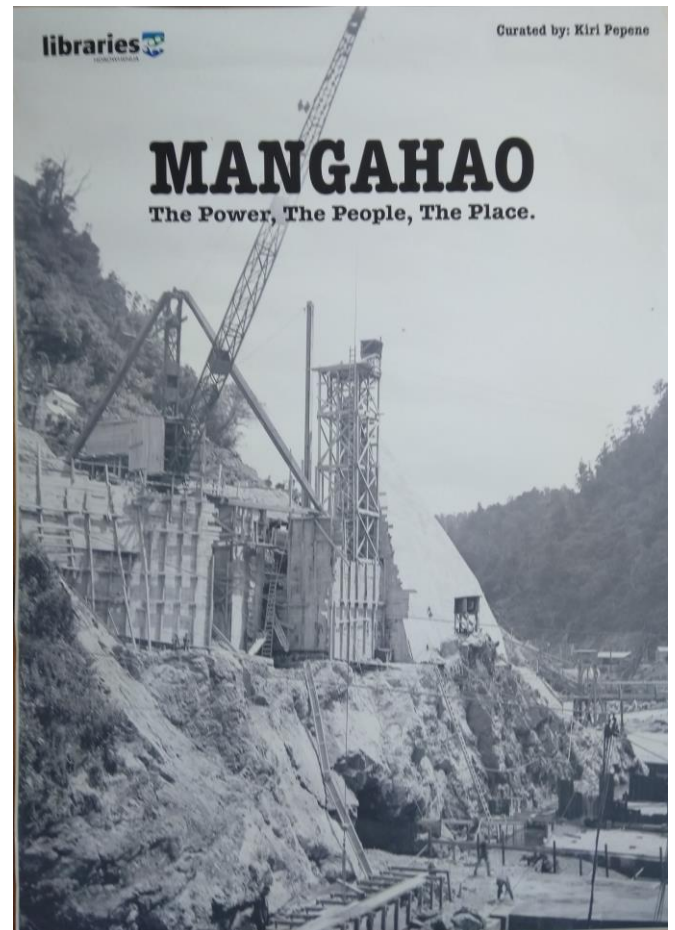
Library Exhibition

August 2025

The Story of the Mangahao Dams and their social history. The first Government-built power station built in New Zealand and the oldest still running.

High above the small town of Shannon, nestled deep within the Tararua Ranges, a remarkable engineering triumph was taking shape in the early 1920s, one that would transform the way New Zealand generated electricity and mark a new era of innovation and ambition.

This was the birth of the **Mangahao Hydroelectric Power Scheme**, the first major government built hydroelectric project in New Zealand. It was a massive undertaking, filled with challenges, danger and determination. It is a story of technical success, human spirit and the life of the workers who toiled in remote, rugged hills to bring light and power to the nation.



Speldhurst Family History Group July 2025

At the July meeting of the Speldhurst Country Estate Family History Group, Michael Holland gave a presentation on his own Family History Research using DNA.



Michael is a member of the Horowhenua Family History Group and Speldhurst resident. He began his talk by showing some of the 'brick walls' he had encountered during his genealogy family research, which led him to have his DNA tested. Michael punctuated his talk with several humorous stories from his Family

Michael first had his DNA tested by Ancestry.com and later uploaded his DNA data to My Heritage. He was able to compare his results with both his cousins Sue and Victor. His results were also able to show what ethnicities had come from his father's side and his mother's side.

Some of his 'brick walls' were quickly solved using both his DNA matches and the Thru-lines on Ancestry. Michael was able to contact some of his matches using the Message facility on Ancestry, obtaining valuable insights from this.

Michael did not get much help from the Chromosome Painter on Ancestry, but Ancestry has since upgraded their Chromosome Painter to Chromosome Painter Plus

My Heritage produced similar results to Ancestry and added another 15,000 matches to his results! The Theory of Family Relativity and the use of cmExplainer on My Heritage helped to identify the exact relationship between Michael and his matches. Auto Clusters were useful in helping decide which matches should be investigated further. While the Discoveries page on My Heritage brought to light additional information based on Family Trees.

Michael concluded that both Ancestry and My Heritage had contributed greatly to his DNA research with Thru-Lines on Ancestry being particularly useful, but cmExplainer and Auto Clusters on My Heritage being of more use than Chromosome Painter on Ancestry.

The Speldhurst Family History Group began in 2018, with Cathy Holmes and Dawn McConkey (residents and HFHG members) coordinating regular monthly meetings. They say many residents are interested in tracing their family histories. The Group is very fortunate to have had members of the Horowhenua Family History Group: Kevin, Merv and Prue (also a Speldhurst resident) as well as Kiri Pepene Te Takere Heritage Librarian, Tom Hayes and Linda Fletcher as guest speakers.

AGE ON THE GO
FRIDAY 10 OCTOBER 2025
From 10am to 2pm
Horowhenua Events Centre,
33 Victoria Street, Levin

Our major fundraiser is our Laundry Basket Grocery Raffle. To organise this for Age on the Go, please bring your donations to a Group meeting (August or September) or leave at the Heritage Room when a volunteer is on duty. We appreciate your help.

We will need volunteers to help at our table on the Day. Please contact Kevin if you can help.

We hope to run another sales day at New World.

Hutt Valley NZSG Newsletter

Over the Mountains of the Sea: Life on the Migrant Ships 1870-1885

BY DAVID HASTINGS

Over the Mountains of the Sea is a lively, well-illustrated and very readable book that draws on ship-board diaries and archival sources to give a vivid picture of the voyage out to New Zealand during the crucial Vogel period.

Using information on individual ships, voyages and passengers, author David Hastings follows the narrative of the voyage and the way in which the space on the ship was allotted according to gender, class and marital status.

He then explores the social dynamics on board dealing with the routines of daily life, crime, mutiny, health, religion and an interesting chapter on 'the virgins' cage' where the single women were confined.

He convincingly shows the ship as a microcosm of the society British migrants brought to these islands.

Over the Mountains of the Sea is generously illustrated with photographs, sketches and magazine illustrations. It will be warmly welcomed by genealogists, professional historians and the many New Zealanders who enjoy reading about our history.

REVIEW SOURCE: PUBLISHER'S WEBSITE

Some theses and dissertations on immigration that have been published online:

A history of New Zealand's Scandinavian and German migrants from the 1874 'Gutenberg' voyage by Joanna Church, 2020.

Myth and Misunderstanding: The Engima of the Scottish Highland Migrant to Otago/Southland, 1870-79 by Megan Wilson, 1999.

From Alba to Aotearoa: Profiling New Zealand's Scots Migrants, 1840-1920 by Rebecca Lenihan, 2010. How to register a personal account and get free access to papers on JSTOR scholarly papers: <https://support.jstor.org/hc/en-us/articles/115004760028-How-to-Register-Get-Free-Access-to-Content>

Kapiti Genealogy Newsletter

Online collections are updated regularly, and another look now may bring down some old brick walls. For example: • FamilySearch reports another 30 million new records in July, the bulk of them from Italy, Brazil, France, Ukraine, Belgium, Colombia, Ecuador and the USA. • Findmypast has added records of Irish Famine Immigrants 1846-1851 and updated many military records as well as adding more newspapers. • Ancestry has updated its Obituary index for US newspapers, among other records. • PapersPast has added images of the Marlborough Express (1921 – 1952), New Zealand Listener (1939-1959) and Radio Record (1927- 1939) • ScotlandsPeople now has Tax rolls from 1645 to 1831, with information about landowners and tenants.

Nelson Branch The Thursday Projects Team (Nelson) has inherited family research information from some deceased estates. Surnames include: GATWARD, GEARY, HART, KENNING, LINES, PALMER, RAMSDEN, and RENNELL. The information can range from a couple of pages to a whole box and has not been sorted. If these names mean something to you, contact Cynthia at cynth.s@live.com or Kevin at kevin@netz.co.nz to arrange collection.

Palmerston North branch The Feilding & Districts Community Archive has a collection of books and records about people who settled on the Manchester Block, a planned settlement near Feilding. The archive is run by volunteers and they welcome queries from descendants of Manchester Block families. <https://www.feildingarchive.nz/index.htm>

Scottish GENES newsletter Chris Paton will be speaking at Family History Expos in both Christchurch and Auckland in August. If you can't hear him in person, you can still sign up for his free online newsletter at <http://scottishgenes.blogspot.com>. It includes updates on new resources available online, which are not just records for Scotland.

Famnet.org.nz – FamNet and FamilySearch.

FamNet (The Family History Network) is a New Zealand platform for family history. In the July 1 newsletter, the developer, Robert Barnes has given an update on the agreement made with FamilySearch to take over the records stored on the FamNet database. Click on the link below to read the FamNet newsletter. https://famnet.org.nz/newsletters/FamNet/July_2025/Newsletter.htm

Porirua NZSG Newsletter

Archives New Zealand Wellington Reading Room to Reopen 1 September

The new Archives New Zealand building Te Rua was officially blessed on the morning of 8 July and Archives staff began working in it from 14 July. The Reading Room will reopen to the public in its new location through the Katherine Mansfield Reading Room (KMRR) on level 1 of the National Library.

Digital Pasifik collates digitised Pasifika cultural heritage items that are held in collections around the world. Other countries in the world don't seem to have a central website collating digital resources from lots of places so you need to go to the individual websites of libraries, museums, and other places to find items. This will hopefully change as digital technology continues to advance. Some places to try: Other Online Digital Resources **UK & Ireland:** Historic England; London Picture Archive; National Archives Image Library; Trove. Scot; National Library of Ireland; National Library of Wales; **Australia:** Trove (filter the search to Images, Maps & Artefacts); National Library of Australia Pictures Collection; National Museum of Australia Images; State Library of Victoria Picture Research; State Library of NSW Digital Collections.

UK Society of Genealogists YouTube Channel

The UK Society of Genealogists has a YouTube channel with lots of useful videos.

Their most recent playlist is one with the theme of 'Researching in ...' which focuses on a particular area of the UK. So far they have put up video talks relating to Durham, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear, Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire, Leicestershire and Rutland, Northamptonshire, Yorkshire, and Romany and Traveller ancestors.

Dutch Personal Record Cards and Lists

If you have Dutch ancestors you can request an extract from the Dutch National Register of the Deceased (NRO) which is generated from information collected in personal record cards and lists.

The NRO is an important source for family tree researchers, with basic genealogical data and interesting additional data. More information on the website of the Centre for Family History - Centrum voor familiegeschiedenis. (Thanks to the Palmerston North Branch).

Searching NZ Electoral Rolls By Address

Did you know that it's possible to search the NZ Electoral rolls on Ancestry by address? This is very useful in the following situations: • Where couples have different surnames and you only know the surname of one person • Where different members of the family are split between the Māori roll and General roll • Where people are living with non-family members. To search by address go to the NZ Electoral Rolls, 1853-2010 on Ancestry and enter the address in the keyword field, e.g. '42 High Street' or even just the street name with no number, although you will obviously get a lot more results without a number. You don't need to enter any other information, but if the street name is a common one that appears in every town in New Zealand then you may like to add a year or an electoral district to limit the number of results to look through. The results list will show you everyone living at that address, e.g. three people living at 42 High Street in the Timaru electorate in 1911 who all have different surnames.