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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.



Levin Post-office 1903

**Thompson House
4 Kent Street, Levin
Monday 27 April 2026
1.30pm**

**AGM followed by members
memories of their families from
WW1/WW2**

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COMMITTEE

Kevin Miles 021 1364 075 President

Brian Bernon 027 286 4186 Secretary

Prue Theobald 021 234 5621 Treasurer

Michael Holland 021 2010 052

Ian Meyer 06 368 0602

Cathy Holmes 021 338 227

Lynn Williams Librarian

Next meeting

Monday 25 May 2026

1.30pm

Anne Jackman:

**"Growing an archivist:
serendipity, mysteries, and
endless rabbit holes"**

President's message

Our AGM is on next Monday 27 April, at 1.30pm. This will be followed by our usual monthly meeting. I look forward to seeing you there.

We have had the resignation of Sharon from the committee and Michael has indicated that he will be unable to continue his role. We need volunteers to join the committee or at least be prepared to be involved in some of our activities. I have been involved as President for the past six years and although standing again this year I intend to stand down next year.

Please let me know if you are interested in joining the committee or helping with our activities.

On 22nd March I attended Gloy's 90th birthday at the Masonic which was well organised by the family. I passed on the card that was signed on behalf of the group and had a look at the lovely suite she has near the Ben Enid Room.

Gloy, along with Tom Hayes, were the earliest members of NZSG in our group and for many years.

She had a significant role in the organisation. Her service to that group, the Historical Society and our group has been immeasurable. On display at the party were her scrapbooks of her research on her life, schooling and work. The meticulous manner in which she has carried out any project that she has been involved in has been astounding.

Kevin Miles

A World Tour of Family Graves

Rodney King's presentation to HFHG Monday 30 March 2026

Over the years Rodney has had connections to, or visited, many cemeteries in New Zealand and overseas.

He gave practical tips for recording cemetery visits and a set of family-history case studies from New Zealand and overseas, showing how photos, maps, registers, and online records can confirm identities, dates, and burial locations.

- **Photograph the entrance sign** for future reference (signage and rules can change).
- **Get a cemetery plan or map** (often displayed at the entrance and increasingly available online).
- **Record plot locations** using the map and cemetery search records (row/plot details).
- **Link photos to locations** by annotating the map or noting directions so others can find the grave later.

Rodney's tour included family cemeteries in New Zealand as well as visits to England, Northern Ireland, Australia, and Canada. Along the way he traced several distant relatives who served in WWI, including a cousin who died of wounds and was buried in France (date of death recorded as 15 September 1917). Headstone pictured right.

Bridgwood family story: Rodney used family photos to bring the records to life, including William James Bridgwood's family (arrived from Stoke-on-Trent in 1927) and the twins, Derrick and Joan.

Derrick later lived in Sydney. After his death in September 2007, his wife and sons returned his ashes to Okaiawa, as he had always identified as "the Okaiawa boy".

A war memorial plaque (pictured above) was later relocated after the school closed (2009), eventually being moved to Okaiawa Cemetery where it is now displayed.

Sadly, the family were not to know that within about 18 months, because the school had closed, the plaque was relocated to the Okaiawa Cemetery.



King family line: Rodney outlined descendants of Elizabeth and John King, who migrated to New Plymouth from Grimsby in 1875, and noted a 150th family reunion held in September 2025.

On a 2005 visit to England, Rodney visited the parish church at Scothern (near Lincoln) and spoke with the church warden, who explained the history and confirmed family connections to the site.

As part of the visit he also walked the churchyard and located headstones for earlier family members.

He noted that older inscriptions can become fragile over time, so transcribing what is still readable can preserve details (such as dates of death) that may be hard to find elsewhere.

(continued on P 3)

McCurdy family (Port Chalmers): John Francis McCurdy followed his children to New Zealand on the *Waikato* but died “within sight of land” on arrival in 1881 after long respiratory issues.

Years later, the family learned he had been buried in a pauper’s grave despite money having been left for a burial and headstone—an example of why it pays to check registers and cemetery records rather than relying on assumptions.

Granny McCurdy: Rodney traced John’s wife Elizabeth Martha McCurdy (known as Granny McCurdy) and located her resting place at Rangiora Anglican Cemetery after spotting her maiden name (Lankey) on a family death certificate.

Back to Rangiora Anglican Cemetery and her resting place was found in a flash.

One of their sons, Archie moved to Queensland, Australia. He is buried in Ta-room Cemetery (pictured bottom right).

Vancouver connection: John and Elizabeth’s daughter Adela married Alf Pilkington, who later worked overseas, including a role in Vancouver from 1906.

Another sister, Amie, followed to Vancouver in 1910.

Vancouver’s large cemetery has strong online records, including row and plot numbers, which made it possible to locate family graves.

By coincidence, Rodney’s sister was in Vancouver and used the plot details to photograph the relevant headstones.

This combination of records plus on-the-ground photos confirmed the family graves and improved the accuracy of the family history record.

Ireland (Old Layd and nearby churchyards): Rodney researched into the older McCurdy line in County Antrim, including visits to historic burial grounds and searching for earlier headstones.



Above: The Old Layd Church and cemetery.



Elizabeth’s headstone, provided by family members in 2019.



Above: entrance to Vancouver Cemetery.



News from the Heritage Room

The following inquiries were successfully carried out by members of the Heritage committee over the last two months:

- Leong family grocers shop in Levin.
- An Allaway family inquiry about the State Farm, involvement with the start of the fire brigade and association with Coach building in Levin and family research about Kerrison Philip Morris.

The last two have resulted in donations.

Anthony Dreaver has brought in a lot of material including research material from his work on the book "Levin", images and valuable early history notes. Also an extensive collection of the dairies of William George Adkin and a large collection of slides connected to Nancy Adkin.



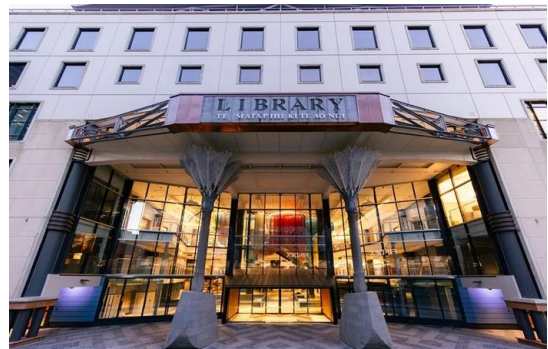
Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui Wellington Central Library

The reopening of Wellington Central Library on 14 March attracted thousands of people eager to get a glimpse of the new facilities.

The Wellington City Archives is now housed within Tō Tātou Pōneke along with Wellington City Libraries' Māori, and local heritage collections and services.

There is an exhibition space and reference section containing a wide range of documents and publications for research purposes.

The library has a new website <https://www.te-matapihi.govt.nz/> and will soon offer free digitisation service where you can convert your personal photographs, negatives and transparencies into digital files and even digitise your VHS home movies and audio cassette recordings.



Heritage Day Foxton Saturday 11 April

By Kevin Miles

Foxton's main Heritage Festival day on Saturday, April 11 promoted local history with guided walks, flax industry demonstrations, and various open heritage buildings.



Nye Cottage and Spiers Office adjacent (Foxton Historical Society photo)

The two buildings complement one another; both having been relocated to Wharf Street Foxton near the Flax Mill (which has also recently had a refresh).

The Spiers office was built around 1905 and is in remarkable condition. It is being refurbished as a single room accommodation/retreat.

Nye Cottage is an amazing restoration of a building built 150 years ago and is Manawatu's oldest. The detail is meticulous and gives a great feeling of life in the 1870's.



Nye Cottage interior.



Anglican All Saints Church Foxton built in 1876.

A tribute to RONALD THOMAS BURLING
18 February 1936 -11 March 2026
 by Merv Judge

I knew Ron for 50 years, mainly as a colleague at both Waiopahu College and the Council, and more recently at HFHG. I got to know him a lot better at his recent funeral.

Ron attended Woodville School, followed by two years at Palmerston North Tech, commuting via the Manawatu Gorge (having put a motor on his push bike!).

He served a 5-year carpentry apprenticeship in Woodville and then worked as a joiner in Taumarunui.

From there, he took off to Auckland Teachers Training College and taught in Rotorua and then Levin (at Horowhenua College, and he was a foundation teacher at Waiopahu). He taught woodwork and tech drawing, maths and English, and coached hockey!

These two careers reflect Ron's passion for learning, his joy in achieving things in wood, and his passion for sharing knowledge.

He returned to building, and during a downturn in the industry changed his career to that of Building Inspector with Levin Borough Council (another job requiring integrity and meticulous care), later retiring from Horowhenua District Council in 2001.

Ron enjoyed many diverse hobbies throughout his life. These included tenor horn in the church band in earlier days, choir, bike riding, hunting, tramping, camping, beekeeping, photography (Life Member of Levin Camera Club), reading, repairing, modifying, building things, gardening and genealogy.

His family was his greatest joy and achievement. Ron and Margaret had four children, 13 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.



At his funeral his loving grandkids used words like true gentleman, safe, cheeky, mischief, kind, patient, laughter, hardworking, "memory and knowledge better than Google"; a role model who showed them how to look on the bright side, find the positives, focus on solutions.

HOROWHENUA HISTORICAL SOCIETY AGM Sunday 12th April 2026

A small but interesting group attended this year's AGM. John Dixon was returned as President, Linda Fletcher as Secretary and Kevin Miles as Treasurer.

The presentation following the meeting were images of early Levin from the Cullinane collection, slides of Nancy Adkin's artwork and a short video of the creation of the Wellington to Manawatu Train line.

It was decided by the group that they would begin identifying early pioneer graves at Tiro Tiro Road cemetery that made need cleaning or tidying up.

The initial look at this is planned for 10.30am on Monday 20th April. Anyone interested in assisting would be welcome.

WELLINGTON NZSG NEWSLETTER

Announcing the NZSG Digital Archive: a new service to members – the NZSG Digital Archive! Are you worried about how to store your most precious digital documents and images in perpetuity?

The NZSG Digital Archive gives you 1GB of online storage to preserve, back up and share your most precious digital documents and images. This service is free to members.

To find out more, including the terms and conditions and how to access a Digital Archive for your precious records, see the Digital Archive webpage (you will need to be logged in).

<https://genealogy.org.nz/link-3506.htm>

18th AFFHO (Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations) Congress NZSG has launched a website for the 18th AFFHO

Congress on Family History (<https://affhocongress.org/>) which will be hosted by the NZSG and held in Wellington 11-14 February 2027.

Put the dates in your diary! NZSG members will be sent further information as it becomes available. If you're interested in speaking or exhibiting, please complete the form on the website, so they know to keep you in the loop!

NZSG HUTT VALLEY NEWSLETTER

How To Tips

Full Text Search:

This is a newish feature on Family Search that searches unindexed records. It can be accessed from the drop-down menu under Search or look for the Simple Search on Family Search Labs.

Enter a name in quote marks in either the keyword field (this search allows for one word between two names) or in the name field (this search flips the order of the names).

Use the filters on the LHS drop-down menu to narrow results by Collection, Year, Place, Record type.

Toggle the 'Fact View' in top RH corner ON to sort by persons, places and years.

When exploring materials in the Catalog, you can also find image groups processed through Full-Text Search. Click on the icon if available.

Please note also that using Full Text Search at a Family Search Affiliated Library will return more results because record restrictions mean that not all records are available from home.

You can search just by name of employer for the 1921 England & Wales census on FindMyPast to find the names of people that your ancestor worked with.

This is one of the useful tips that learnt from watching Janet Few's presentation at RootsTech: Victorians to Elizabethans: British research in the twentieth century.

The National Library has a printed catalogue called "Family History Collection List of Holdings" that sits on the shelf at the beginning of the NZ section. Pages 148 - 168 lists all the published family histories (by surname) that they have in vertical files on their shelves. These were published before 2008; some go back to the 1980s.

Random websites

The Kabristan Archives is an organisation dedicated to preserving memorial inscriptions from graveyards in Ireland, the Indian sub-continent, Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) and Jamaica, including many which no longer exist.

The Canadian Letters & Images Project is an online digital archive of Canadians' experience during wartime at home & in battle. It contains thousands of personal letters & photos that reveal people's experience through their own words & eyes.

The People of Western Australia's Ghost Towns Project:

This project, led by a dedicated volunteer team, aims to create a comprehensive index of the individuals who once resided in Western Australia's ghost towns, to locate all their records and tell their stories.

Genealogical and historical data for the province of Newfoundland and Labrador:

<https://ngb.chebucto.org/>

National Archives of India: <https://nationalarchives.nic.in/> Access to their digitised collection is through Abhilekh Patal - worth checking if you had ancestors in India.

Arolsen Archives: The largest archive on victims and survivors of Nazi persecution.
ArkivDigital for people seeking their Swedish roots. The service has: 106 million images from historical records More than a quarter of a billion searchable names Ability to build family trees More than 4.7 million aerial images

Smuggling in early modern Britain: A database of prosecutions for smuggling in England and Wales c. 1721-1732 with over 4,000 entries transcribed and compiled from reports ordered by the British House of Commons in 1733.

North Yorkshire Tithe Maps: View tithe maps and transcribed apportionments from the collections held by North Yorkshire Archives.

NZSG FEILDING BRANCH

Russell Carthew's book *Pioneering families: the story of the Carthew and Brent families that settled in Aotearoa New Zealand* is available in the Coach House Museum shop.

A new exhibition on swagger Russian Jack opened on Wednesday 18 March. Beside the display is a book where people can write in memories of Russian Jack.

New Zealand Rugby Museum in Palmerston North has an ongoing project to cap all 88 New Zealand Test referees.

So far, they have managed to track down all but 15 referees and are carrying out research to make contact with descendants of those 15. They range from W.G. Garrard (Canterbury) in 1899 who was the first international rugby referee to be appointed from NZ to R.A. Forsyth (Taranaki) in 1958. The list of names and more about this project is on the NZ Rugby Museum website. [Nelson Branch newsletter March 2026] <https://www.rugbymuseum.co.nz/stories/news-updates>