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COMMITTEE

Kevin Miles	021 1364 075 President
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Prue Theobald	021 234 5621 Treasurer
Ian Meyer	06 368 0602
Cathy Holmes	021 338 227
Lynn Williams	Librarian

President's Message

As we come to the end of another busy year I wish to thank everyone who has attended meetings and to those who have volunteered in the Heritage Room and helped with other activities this year.

The raffle was a great success and it was good to see that one of our members, Sheila McNabb, bought the winning ticket.

Our last meeting for the year is a chance to reminisce about a Christmas story from our past and to share a meal.

For those who are unable to attend I would like to wish you a safe and happy time over the Christmas and New Year.
Kevin Miles

Thompson House
4 Kent Street, Levin
Monday 30 November 2026
12 noon
End of year Christmas Shared Lunch
Secret Santa
Members' Christmas stories

Next meeting Monday
25 January 2027
1.30pm
Members: something new or interesting to share

Community Award



Congratulations to our President Kevin Miles who received a Horowhenua District Council Certificate of Recognition for his outstanding service to our heritage sector. The Awards were presented at a ceremony on Thursday 19 November.

Land search records help family history research

Following Sarah Hewitt's presentation on using land records to research family history at our August meeting, members shared their own research experiences, methods, and family stories related to land ownership and inheritance at our October meeting.

They demonstrated practical use of online property and title search tools, and noted challenges with incomplete records, changing street names, and inheritance complexities.

Merv Judge: the Judge Family Land in Southland.

Judge Road near Invercargill was named after Thomas Judge, the first family member to come to New Zealand.

Thomas acquired Section 4, Block 22 in Seaward Bush from Southland Wastelands Board in 1873.

The land was native bush, required clearing and development. Steam sawmill and tramway already established nearby.

By 1884, Thomas had a second block; advertised 20 and 40-acre blocks with houses, some land cleared.

The land was re-advertised in 1899 and finally sold in 1907. Judge Road now leads into a lifestyle block area in Seaward Bush.

Thomas's main contribution: land in Makarewa, six miles north of Invercargill.
He applied for land to establish a pottery between railway and main road and received a 21-year lease.

His brother William arrived with his wife and eight children. He worked in pottery and acquired five acres on Flora Road.

Deferred payment licenses were granted to William and William Jr.; James was granted five acres in 1898; John advertised five acres for sale in 1901. The family was established in Makarewa from 1873 to 1901.

John's 1901 land sale: 3.5 acres oats, 1 acre potatoes, 0.5 acre grass, four-room house, stable, byre (cow shed), fowl house.

Research sources: Papers Past, Southland Road Lands Board minutes, original maps (some illegible), CTs (Certificates of Title).

Merv wanted to access original, legible maps and records; some archives online, but not all. He was helped by Wendy MacArthur (council archivist, author on Invercargill street names); she added an appendix on Judge Road to her book.

Lynn Williams: **Kaikoura Property Research**
Lynn grew up in Kaikoura and investigated her family's property 334 Esplanade, Kaikoura (also listed as 234 in records). She used Canterbury Maps and Marlborough records for a property search.

The house was originally owned by William David Saviston. He sold to it to Lynn's grandfather Allen Howard in 1936. Her grandfather gifted the land to his daughter Edith Mary Williams (Lynn's mother) in 1940. There was a family myth that the grandfather, not parents, owned the property. The records clarified ownership.

A neighbour Bernie Saviston (editor/printer of Kaikoura Star) was related to the previous owner.

The property was subdivided in 1970s; original house was demolished, new house built at rear. DP number and title numbers (MB2B 865, MB2B 856) used to access ownership records.

Lynn's parents married in 1936, moved to Australia for a teaching job; her eldest brother was born in Melbourne. The family returned to New Zealand by 1939.



[Form B.

NEW ZEALAND.

Reference: Vol. 30, Folio 15. Transfer No. 11887. Application No. Order for N/C No.

Register-book, Vol. 37, folio 138

CERTIFICATE OF TITLE UNDER LAND TRANSFER ACT.

This Certificate, dated the seventh day of December, one thousand nine hundred and thirty-six under the hand and seal of the District Land Registrar of the Land Registration District of Marlborough Witnesseth that WILLIAM DAVID SABISTON of Kaikoura Law Clerk

The Title shows that Lynn's grandfather had the ownership of the land and when the mortgage of William Sabiston was discharged the land was transferred to Lynn's mother Edith Mary Williams

Land Record Search Tips and Limitations
Online property records accessible via council or regional map sites; need address or DP number.

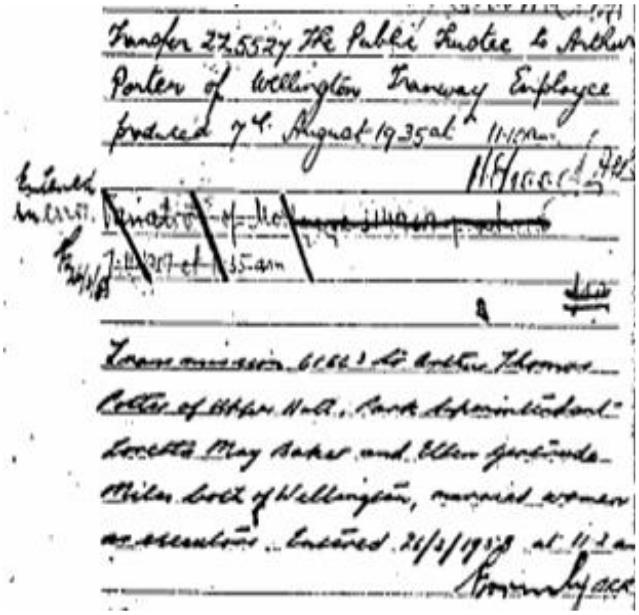
LINZ provides title records for a fee (approx. $8), available 24/7.
Some regions (e.g., Canterbury/Marlborough) have different systems; may require cross-referencing.

Historical ownership may involve complex transfers, inheritance, or intestacy; sometimes requires tracing through multiple records. Electoral rolls may list only street, not house number, making precise identification difficult. Some records (e.g., original maps, older deeds) may be illegible or not digitized; archivist assistance may be needed.

Kevin Miles: Wellington properties

Kevin researched two family properties in Wellington.

1 Princess Street, Newtown, Wellington, was built in 1906 by builder John Thompson. The land record shows Kevin's grandfather Arthur Porter paying off the property in 1935 and then his mother, uncle and aunt inheriting it in 1958 when Arthur died.



Transfer 27,552 The Public Trustee to Arthur Porter of Wellington Tramway Employee dated 7th August 1935 at 11 a.m.

Transfer of No. illegible

Commissioner of Crown Lands Arthur Thomas Cotter of Upper Hutt, Park Superintendent Lovett May Baker and Ellen Gertrude Miles both of Wellington, married women as executors. Entered 24/8/1938 at 11.2 a.m.



15 Mantell Street where Kevin grew up in Seatoun is numbered section 13 on the original survey map.





The military reserve behind became Fort Dorset. Originally named Pearce Street it became Burnham Street.

Onny Parun, one of New Zealand's top tennis players mother lived on the section numbered 15.

The house was built for an accountant, Albert Stanley Herbert who became one of the first accountants for the Seventh Day Adventists.

Kevin's father purchased the property in 1959. The family sold it in the 1990s.

Zoe Athersuch: The surprises revealed by land records

My paternal great grandmother, Elizabeth Johanna Maria Hamerslag, was born in Rotterdam in 1858 and moved to London as a child.

The 1871 census shows her father and older brother Adrianus as cigar makers, Elizabeth as a 12-year-old dress maker, and three younger siblings at school.

I traced her siblings' families through censuses and electoral rolls and found them all in and around London, except her niece, Adrianus' youngest daughter, Florence Justina Hamerslag.

Florence was born in 1898 and married Charles Edmond Prestidge in Islington in 1921.

The 1939 Register, one of my favourite sources, places Charles, Florence and their daughter Florence I in Southgate, north London, and shows the daughter later became Green by marriage. Then the family seemed to disappear. It was time to widen the net.

Charles's unusual name made him easy to target, so I searched worldwide death and burial records. I was stunned when Find a Grave showed a 1959 burial in Whanganui, New Zealand, with matching birth date and birthplace. The notes named his spouse as Florence Justina Hamerslag Ginn, so Florence had apparently remarried.

Passenger lists showed Charles and Florence sailed from Southampton to New Zealand on the S.S. 'Southern Cross' on 13th September 1956, yet electoral rolls only located Florence Justina Ginn, from 1981, at 1/13 Hill Road, Manurewa, Auckland.

An Ancestry tree indicated she married James Ginn in 1980, and his 1981 Find a Grave record lists her as spouse. Where was she between 1959 and 1981? Perhaps the land record for 1/13 Hill Road would offer clues.



Elizabeth Johanna Maria Hamerslag outside the Royal Dutch Homes in London about 1938.

Google Maps showed a two-storey block of eight flats, with number 1 on the ground floor at the left end.

I requested the historical search copy from LINZ and my inbox went 'ping' in less than a second – like magic. The title was issued in 1973, with eight leases, one per flat. Flat 1 was transferred in 1974, then to Florence Justina Stares of Papatoetoe, widow, on 15.3.1978. The name fits, but where did Stares come from, and was she a widow again?

The record lists a transmission to Florence Irene Green as executor in 1993, followed by transfer to her. She is Florence Justina's daughter and Find a Grave and NZ BDM records show Florence Justina Ginn died in 1993, so I'm confident it is the right person. Time to investigate Stares.

Continued on p.6

Land records surprises *(from p. 5)*

Electoral rolls from 1963 to 1978 show Florence Justina living with Frederick Walter Stares in Manurewa.

Their marriage was tricky to find until notes on his Find a Grave record pointed to Australia, where I confirmed it in the New South Wales marriage index in 1960.

Frederick's headstone photo, the cemetery record and the NZ BDM death record all show he died on 6th February 1979. So why was Florence Justina listed as a widow when she bought 1/13 Hill Road on 15.3.1978?

The land record revealed a previously unknown marriage and raised a question about her recorded status.

But what brought Florence Justina and Charles to New Zealand in 1956? Neither had known links here, and at nearly 60 they are unlikely to have been swayed by adverts portraying a paradise for young families.

I turned to their only daughter, Florence Irene, who married Arthur Stanley Green in Edmonton, England, in 1940 and appears on the 1993 land record.

Passenger lists show Arthur travelling to New Zealand in March 1955, followed six months later by Florence Irene and their two young daughters, with Arthur listed as a member of the NZ Armed Forces.

I think we've found the link: Florence Justina followed her daughter, who was married to a New Zealand soldier.

The Australia and New Zealand Obituary Index reports Arthur Stanley Green, 36282 Capt RNZEME, died in 2011 aged 91. I look forward to learning more about these relatives.

Wendy Bovey: On her mother's side, Wendy's great-great-grandfather bought land at Pauatahanui (Wellington region) in the 1850s. The area includes Jones Deviation Road. The road was realigned to avoid going through an ancestor's cow shed; original and subsequent maps from Lands and Deeds (some from 1877).

The land was divided between two sons; the family still has descendants in the area, though their recent status is unknown.

Her great-grandfather left a substantial inheritance to six children but this was not passed down further. Research involved physical visits to Lands and Deeds office in the 1990s, pre-internet era.

Wendy's father's family, the Conchie Family, lived in Whanganui. David Conchie arrived in New Zealand in1865 on the Ida Ziegler. His future wife Martha was on the same ship. They married in Whanganui. They owned a boarding house in Whanganui (Petre); Wendy obtained deeds and a photo from the Whanganui council and museum.

Martha died young and the family went bankrupt. They moved to Marton and ran a boarding house.

Seventeen years after Martha's death, the children inherited £16 19s 3d (about £3 each) from the winding up of the Whanganui Equitable Land, Building and Investment Society. The delay was due to the investment society closure and parliamentary approval for disbursement. The Loan agent received £100; the children received much less. No probate or will was found; government records were used for inheritance details.

Research Methods and Sources
Main sources: Papers Past, council records, museums, Lands and Deeds. Pre-internet research required physical visits and manual searches; much easier online.

Visits to Ohakea War Memorial Aviation Centre and Alexander Library Whanganui

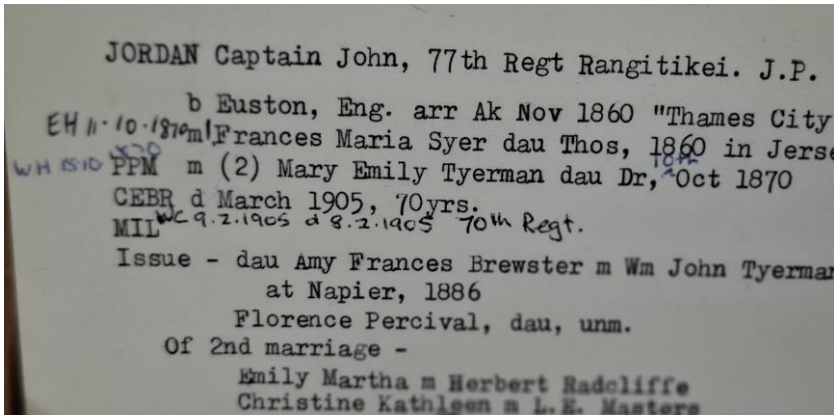
By Kevin Miles

Some of our members recently enjoyed a visit to the Ohakea War Memorial Aviation Centre (33 Speedy Road, Sanson), and Alexander Library Whanganui.



The Ohakea War Memorial Trust supports amazing displays of the history of Ohakea and the aviation history of the wars up to today. Uniforms, equipment, exploits of our airman are all covered and explained by the extremely knowledgeable volunteers. The Centre is open daily from 10am to 2.30pm. A visit is well worth the time. It is only a slight detour off State Highway 1, just before the Woolshed Café (also worth a stop to visit the period houses).

Whanganui's Alexander Heritage & Research Library has an extensive alphabetical card index. I found references to my Great Aunt's family Helen Eliza (Daisy) Miles and as an example the card (at right) refers to my late wife's Jordan family, her great grand uncle Captain John Jordan.


JORDAN Captain John, 77th Regt Rangitikei. J.P.
b Euston, Eng. arr Ak Nov 1860 "Thames City
EH 11.10.1870m Frances Maria Syer dau Thos, 1860 in Jers
WH 1910 PPM m (2) Mary Emily Tyerman dau Dr, Oct 1870
CEBR d March 1905, 70yrs.
MIL WC 9.2.1905 d 8.2.1905 70th Regt.
Issue - dau Amy Frances Brewster m Wm John Tyerma
at Napier, 1886
Florence Percival, dau, unm.
Of 2nd marriage -
Emily Martha m Herbert Radcliffe
Christine Kathleen m L.E. Masters

Unfortunately I could find no new school information about my father's older siblings when the family lived in Whanganui from 1914 to 1917.

Heritage Room

Heritage Room Volunteers. Our service will take a break from 18 December and can resume from 12 January 2027. However it is not a problem if activities in January mean you are not available.

Some of the scanned images of Peter Graham's paintings of early Levin buildings have been put on the rear wall of the Heritage Room. They are part of the collection of over 80 water colours he did which were gifted to the Horowhenua Historical Society.

GENEALOGY CONGRESS

The 18th AFHO Congress on Family History, hosted by NZSG 11-14 February 2027 (first time in Wellington since 2009).
• Keynote speaker: Johnny Pearl (DNA Painter website, from Wales).
• Panel discussion with Catherine Bishop ("Women Means Business"), Charlotte McDonald ("Garrison World"), and Julia
• Registration: $495; day registrations available.
https://affhocongress.eventsair.com/affhocongress/delegateregistration/Site/Register
• Congress coincides with NZSG's 60th anniversary, Congress's 50th, and Ancestry's 20th in Australia/NZ.
• Attendees encouraged to share learnings with the group; event is rare and significant for New Zealand genealogists.

OTAKI HERITAGE Newsletter October 2026

Launching the latest historical journal.

The latest historical journal features stories about the textile factory and the dairies we knew back in the day, along with research about people and events from the past.

The journal will be launched on Sunday 8 November at 2 pm at the Ōtaki Museum, Main Street, Otaki, as part of the Wellington Heritage Festival. Come and join us!

Journals cost $20 each. You can buy the journal in Ōtaki at: Books & Co, Post Shop, Downtown Bookshop, Ōtaki Museum. Or online at www.otakiheritage.org.nz

FEILDING NZSG NOVEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

Ancestry

• 719,000 WW2 British Army Service files have been newly released in partnership with The National Archives.

Covering 1939 to 1959, this massive collection gives direct, digitized access to original documents right from home.

• Ancestry have rolled out of one of their biggest DNA updates in a while – updated Origins, along with Regions by Grandparent.

(Look under Origins on the DNA menu). Fiona Brooker's video on this can be found via the Talking Family History website: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhUqiNziJ9A.

The Origins menu has several sub-sections: Regions show deeper ancestry, back around say 500 years ago based on Reference panels of people meeting certain criteria.

The Journeys sections show more current genealogical timeframes of recent migrations built from your match list.

• Australia and New Zealand, Obituary Index has been updated.

This collection is an index of information taken from online obituaries published in Australia and New Zealand between 2004 and the present.

Checklist for the newer members

Always work backwards from the known (yourself) to the unknown (ancestors).

If a document exists, read it!

Always photocopy certificates and important documents and leave the originals in a safe place.

Never believe everything on a Birth, Death, or Marriage certificate. o Never completely trust the spelling of surnames, place names etc.,

always check surname variants when researching.

Always have at least two separate sources of proof for every event, remember that everything is only speculation until verified.

Share your information and documentation (copies only) with other researchers.

And the last one on the list was join at least one Family History Group, Genealogical Society or Historical Society, so a tick can be put beside that one already.
[Palmerston Nth Branch Newsletter March 2008, from Australian Family Tree connections February 2008]

Capital Times digitised
Wellington City Libraries has launched a digitised archive of Capital Times. 1377 issues of the arts, culture, and social history free newspaper published between 1982 and 2013 have been scanned.

The project began in 2024. Optical character recognition means individual issues can be searched by exact phrase to find reviews, photographs of exhibition openings, arts events, and find familiar faces from Wellington's cultural life.

Browse the collection via Wellington City Recollect at wellington.recollect.co.nz If you use the search button, once you find something, use the Page hits preview link to see if it's of interest.

RootsTech Online Event 4-6 March 2027
A sneak peek at the sessions and topics included in the RootsTech online genealogy conference is available. Watch the events live in March next year if the time suits, or most are available on Youtube after the conference ends. https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/schedule. Register now https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/registration/

HUTT VALLEY NZSG NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2026

Queensland research
Two good finds from the Queensland State Archives Open Data Portal: https://www.data.qld.gov.au/organization/queensland-state-archives

There are 128 data sets of Queensland records that you can download as csv files to search by name. Or alternatively go to Search the Indexes and find the record set you want eg schools, hospitals and orphanages: https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/collection/schools and search by name. Many of the records are digitised - take a note of the page number and download the pdf.

Dunwich Benevolent Asylum has some quite detailed records on inmates.

What's New
Papers Past - Latest additions to Newspapers (September 2026):
Chatham Islander (Sep 1992-2010)
Devonport Gazette and Greater North Shore Advocate (Nov 1924-Nov 1924)
North Shore Gazette (misc. issues Nov 1924-May 1948)
Opotiki News (1951-1972, misc. issues 1981)
Taranaki Daily News (1946-1953)
Wanganui Herald (1928-1950)
New Zealand obituaries from the New Zealand Herald and Auckland Star,1949-1980
These clippings are searchable using full-text search on FamilySearch - worth a look as these two papers only go up to 1945 on Papers Past.

HAMILTON BRANCH NZSG

Auckland Family History Expo
Review of simply one of the many research options at the Expo By Kathleen Atkins New Zealand Catholic Archives

If you have a line of ancestors who were Irish Catholics going back forever, then the church is your genealogy friend!

One of the speakers at the recent Expo was Keith Stuart, the archivist for the Catholic Diocese of Auckland.

Keith provided a very informative presentation about what was available and how it can be accessed. If the records you are seeking are for a living person, say yourself, you may need to show evidence of your identity to comply with privacy law.

Keith was incredibly helpful and assured us he was more than happy to assist, wherever in the country your ancestors may have lived. As diocesan boundaries have changed overtime, he will direct you to the correct archivist for the time period you are researching.

The Auckland diocese was officially formed in 1848, and the Pompallier Heritage Centre and Archives holds records and artifacts from these earliest days, with some as far back as 1836, particularly those for early Māori converts to Catholicism.

By papal decree, each diocese is responsible for ensuring that all records generated by the bishop and his administration and those of his predecessors are preserved, boxed and listed in an archive.

That means that every time your ancestor received a sacrament: baptism, confirmation, marriage, funeral rights etc, a record was made and stored.

Details you might find in the records vary. For example, baptism records often included a child's name, parents' names and their residence.

Occasionally a date of birth is included. However, a confirmation record may only hold the person's name and maybe the sponsor's name(s).

As well as the various Bishops' records, the Archive holds records and information related to Catholic parishes, priests, religious orders, schools, orphanages, organisations and events of the Diocese.

As the initial boundaries of the Auckland Diocese stretched from Cape Reinga to Taupo including Gisborne, the number of parishes and congregations covered is immense.

Keith can arrange a visit to Pompallier Heritage Centre to view records and, if you're very fortunate, related artifacts, or he can send a photocopy or digitised copy of a record - the latter can be helpful as some early records are in Latin. Keith can be contacted on archives@cda.org.nz

