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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

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Cathy Holmes	021 338 227
Lynn Williams	Librarian

September Meeting Report

Our guest speaker Luke Howison gave a very informative hands-on demonstration of his three free websites designed to simplify researching New Zealand family history.

During the Covid 19 lockdown in 2020 Luke began researching his family history. He became frustrated with the amount of repetition in researching areas such as births, deaths and marriages.

He wondered if it was possible to create a website where you could type in a person's name and retrieve all the search results in one go.

He streamlined the repetitive searches using his web developing skills and built a prototype site which evolved into Ancestor Search Helper, ASH for short. <https://ash.howison.co.nz> (continued on page 2)



Levin Post-office 1903

Thompson House
Monday 27 October 2025 1.30pm



Guest Speakers Kevin Miles and
Lynn Williams: *UK and Ireland, a
pilgrimage in 30 days*

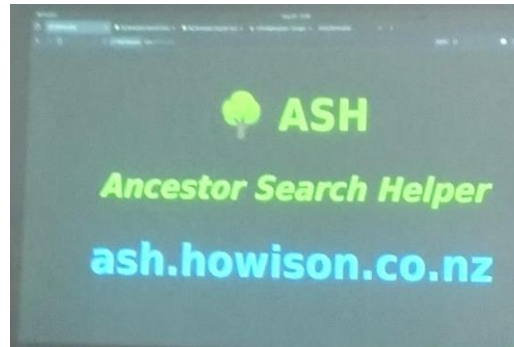
November Meeting
Monday 24 November 2025
12.00pm
**Shared lunch/secret Santa
and quiz**



*Pictured above: Luke Howison
(right) with HFHG members and
visitors.*

September Meeting Report

ASH is described as a free one-stop shop website for family research. It is designed to assist in researching New Zealand genealogy. As such it is finding favour with those who are beginning their family history research as well as speeding up research for the more experienced.



The three websites are:

New Zealand Ancestor Search Helper (ASH) site: <https://ash.howison.co.nz>
 an Archway-style Collections Research site: <https://archway.howison.co.nz>
 and the New Zealand Intentions to Marry Project: <https://itm.howison.co.nz>

Luke demonstrated searches on ASH for his great grandfather Cecil Clifford Wadsworth and great grandmother Alice Myrtle Syder. Through putting his great grandfather's name in once he came up with links to many sites including: New Zealand DIA's Births, Deaths and Marriages • Archives New Zealand • council cemetery websites • military records from the Auckland Museum Online Cenotaph project and many other online history resources.

ASH also provides direct links to results from Papers Past, the Wilson Collection, Find a Grave, Billion Graves, and many more. By entering the complete name, with or without a maiden name, it is possible to get matches from across the range of websites. There are some limitations - a very common name or surname-only search may produce an overwhelming number of results.

It is possible to retrieve exact dates for New Zealand BDM events automatically, using the bisecting date approach that can be done manually on the DIA BDM site. Another feature under the Image Search tab enables you to upload a photo containing some text, such as a headstone inscription. AI will decipher the text and ASH will search for related records.

The Archway-style site provides access to Archives New Zealand, was developed to overcome problems after the 2022 Collections Search replaced the old Archway search. An interesting feature is accessing Photos under the Explore tab and searching for a name or place.

The New Zealand Intentions to Marry Project provides access to thousands of transcribed, searchable Intentions to Marry records from 1855 to 1925, held by Archives New Zealand. Where possible, the Intention to Marry notice is cross-referenced with the registered marriage at DIA Births, Deaths and Marriages, with the exact date of marriage provided in the results.

Luke acknowledges the people who have created the records and have made it possible for him to provide his free, one-stop shop resource for genealogists researching NZ records.

Surprising family connections

Family connections can pop up in surprising ways! At our last meeting, Luke Howison began the demonstration of his website by entering the name of his Great Grandfather Cecil Wadsworth.

The name rang a small bell, suddenly louder when he came to 'Intention to marry' to see the name of his intended was Myrtle Syder, my great aunt! Myrtle was the sister of my grandpa George Syder. The couple were married at Foxhill, Nelson where GGF Syder grew hops, having moved there for his health from Kaitawa near Pahiatua.

Cecil was a sawmiller, working mostly around Kokatahi, Hokitika during his working life. We used to enjoy holidays through the alps on the train to their home. George named my mother Sadie Myrtle, carrying on the name.

Eileen Bolitho



My aunt Gladwys Syder (late of Levin) at left, next to Myrtle; Cecil Wadsworth at right, with Wadsworth children.



Cecil & Myrtle – from familysearch / google



HOROWHENUA FAMILY
HISTORY GROUP
GROCERY RAFFLE
Proceeds to work in library
Heritage Room
\$2/ticket or \$5 for three
Raffle Drawn
October 27th

Raffle fundraiser:

We will be selling raffle tickets at New World Levin on Thursday 23 October. Help is needed from 11am to 2pm if you can spare an hour, please contact Kevin.

Ideas for 2026 Programme

We are planning our programme for 2026 and welcome your ideas for topic, speakers and activities. Please email horofgh@gmail.com

Ancestors Migrating to New Zealand *by Carol Dyer*

My earliest ancestors to New Zealand were my great grandfather George Conrad Fownes and great grandmother Emma Susannah (Miller) who married in **1857** in Rotherhithe (London) and almost immediately, on 7 May, emigrated to New Zealand on the *Cornubia* a sailing barque.

Captained by William Ellison, it arrived in port (Auckland) on Saturday morning, 5 September 'after a tedious passage of 121 days from Gravesend. Her run to the equator was a very lengthened one, 50 days being spent in struggling with light and baffling winds. As we formerly stated she had no NE trades. In running down her easting her progress was good but from the South Cape of Tasmania to the North Head of Auckland she encountered the succession of strong easterly weather, followed by the light and baffling airs that, for some time back, have been so prevalent. The *Cornubia* adds 57 passengers of an apparently valuable class, to our population...' *The New Zealander* 9 September 1857

George was a tidewaiter (customs officer) initially and is on the Parnell Jury list for 1858. Next came my paternal grandfather Frederick Dyer a young 20 yr old butcher by trade and possibly attracted by the promises of the 1870s Vogel Scheme in NZ. He was an Assisted passenger, departing from England on 24th June **1876** on the *Waitangi* and arrived in Canterbury 16th Sept.

Waitangi	Gravesend	24/06/1876	Lyttelton	16/09/1876	84	Hodder
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He was the butcher on board so his diary of the trip records the sheep he slaughtered. The total cost to the government for his passage was £13.17.3d. Initially he lived in Rangiora but later moved to Wanganui. He had two marriages, the second, my grandmother Lillian Mary Fownes was born in New Zealand.

In the **1920s**, my maternal Denney grandparents came to New Zealand because their son (uncle) Harold wanted to farm (he never did). Grandad, Arthur James Denney, was a shipwright but also a very competent musician. He came out to NZ with Harold on the *Arawa* in 1924, in third class. He was the Music Director of the Martinborough Band and a carpenter.

A535	Arthur Denney	274 Barkings Road	-	-	Shipwright	39
-	Harold do	East Ham	-	-	Scholar	14

Nana, Edith Deborah (Shell), departed London on 3rd April 1925, with my mother aged 13, and travelled on the *Corinthic*, arriving in Wellington on the day of Prime Minister William Massey's funeral (15th May). A huge cortège created traffic problems!

. 272	Denney Mrs E	38			
	Miss E		13		

3rd class

Having been managing one of her father's shops in London, I cannot imagine how Nana coped with moving to 1920s Martinborough; mum certainly found life difficult at Martinborough District High School, ridiculed for her accent and upmarket London clothes. Nana pulled her out of school aged 15, in order to get a job. She 'did the books' for the local butcher.

Despite various challenges, all of these people made their homes in New Zealand and contributed to the society we have grown up in.

Refs: <https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~shipstonz/genealogy/Lyttelton%201835%20to%201869.html>

Google for individual ships - not always successful; Ancestry: UK and Ireland, Outward Passenger Lists, 1890-1960 various searches

There's news and much more in Papers Past

The Papers Past website is the National Library's online archive of New Zealand and Pacific newspapers, magazines, journals, diaries, letters, parliamentary papers and books.

On Papers Past you can search through an ever-growing collection, spanning more than a hundred years of New Zealand history.

Papers Past has five collections:

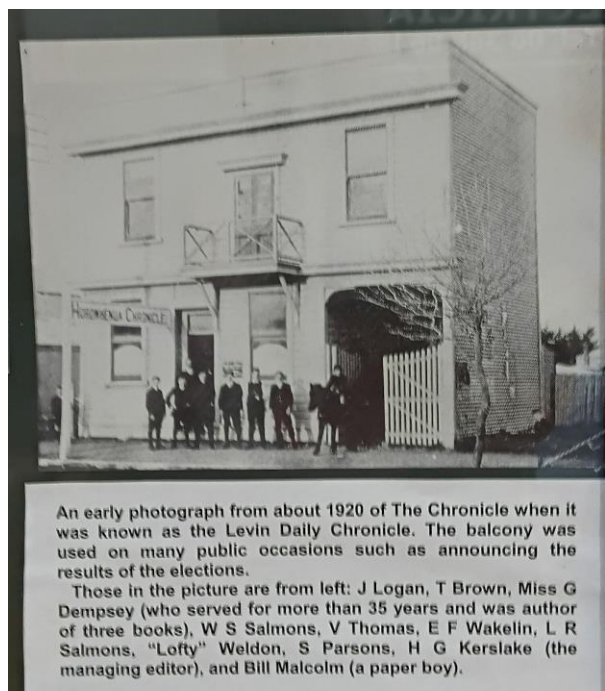
Newspapers

Magazines and journals

Letters and diaries

Parliamentary papers, and

Books



The *Newspapers* collection contains digitised New Zealand and Pacific newspapers from the 19th century onwards, including early te reo Māori newspapers. Each newspaper has its own page containing information about the publication and its availability online.

Horowhenua papers are listed in the Wanganui-Manawatu region and include Horowhenua Chronicle 1910-17; Chronicle 1946-49; Levin Daily Chronicle 1917-46; Shannon News 1921-29 Magazines and Journals

The *Magazines and Journals* collection includes digitised magazines and journals published in New Zealand, covering topics from building to sports to the arts to science and more. Each journal has its own page containing information about the publication and its availability online.

Letters and Diaries collection holds the digitised manuscripts from the Sir Donald McLean collection of personal and official letters written between 1839 and 1876.

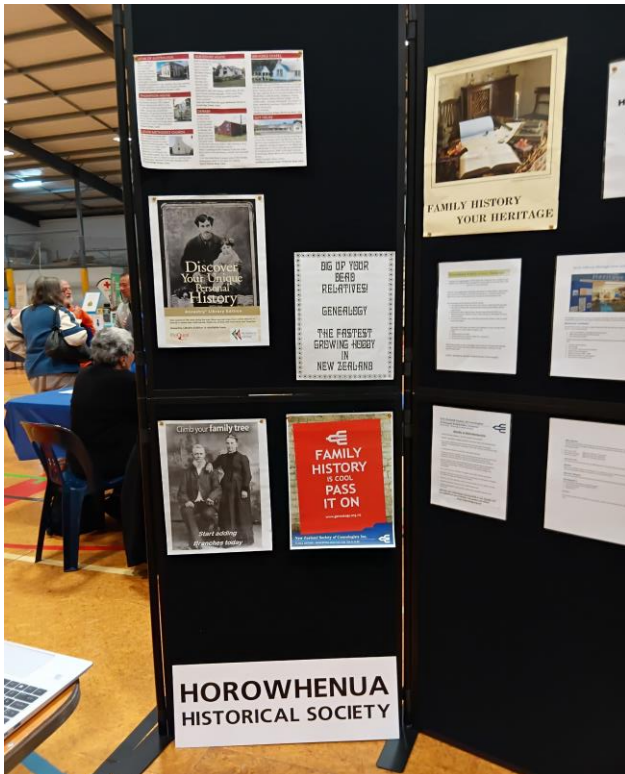
Parliamentary Papers collection contains digitised volumes of the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives (1854-1856) and the Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives (1858-1950).

The *Books* collection contains digitised New Zealand books, which include the 19th-century te reo Māori material listed in the bibliography *Books in Māori/Ngā Tānga Reo Māori*.

Currently, only a small collection of New Zealand books are available on Papers Past.

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/>

Age on the Go 2025



Horowhenua Family History Group and Horowhenua Historical Society display stands side by side at this year's Age on the Go.



Recent discoveries *by Cathy Holmes*

I was sorting out old family photos recently when I came across a photo of the NaeNae College Board of Governors 1955-57, with my grandfather James McDonald seated third from left in the front row. Seated to his right was Walter Verran Dyer who I discovered was Peter Dyer's grandfather. Peter's wife Carol told me that Peter mentioned he had played in the Hutt Valley High School Pipe Band. I later found a photo of the Pipe Band in the HVHS Magazine 1954 with Peter seated right in the front row. Amazing finds shared with Carol and Peter.



PIPE BAND
Rear Row (l to r.): N. K. Woodbury, J. V. Vaughan, C. J. E. Hardie, D. H. McGeachan, K. S. Anderson.
Middle Row: I. E. Hurrell, K. D. Mansell, J. C. Mercer, N. W. Turner, R. A. Sutton, D. I. McLachlan, B. G. Bond.
Front Row: G. D. Stewart, R. M. Gordon, Mr. M. G. Wilson, B. S. Robinson, P. F. Dyer.

WELLINGTON NZSG Branch

Irish Interest Group (Lower North Island)

10:00 AM Sat, 1 Nov 2025

Tawa Union Church Lounge 6 Elena Place,
Tawa

November Education Day "Everything you wanted to know about Irish research but were afraid to ask"

Scottish Interest Group (Wellington)

01:30 PM Sat, 8 Nov 2025

Tawa Union Church Lounge 6 Elena Place,
Tawa

End of Year meeting with a guest speaker

English Interest Group (Wellington)

The group meets from February to November on the 4th Saturday each month, from 2:00pm to 4:00pm in private homes. Contact:

annballnz@gmail.com

OTAKI FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Newsletter

What is Wellington Heritage Festival?

Wellington Heritage Festival is a volunteer-led, community-sourced heritage and culture festival celebrating the region's people, places, and stories. We act as a platform to promote events set up by individuals, organisations, and communities. All festival events are run by these groups, and our role is to highlight their efforts through our website, social media promotion, press coverage, and more. When does the festival run? In 2025, Wellington Heritage Festival will run for 22 days, from Saturday, October 18th until Sunday, November 9th. <https://wellingtonheritagefestival.co.nz/>

Research items of interest NEW ZEALAND — Biographical Files of NZ Doctors: If you have an ancestor who was a doctor then you may be interested in these two resources available from the Cotter Medical History Museum

website. <https://cottermuseum.co.nz/>

One of their collections is Pat Cotter's collection of biographical files of over 1,000 Canterbury doctors. There is a list of the doctors' names on the website. As the museum's collection is currently in storage you would need to contact them by email for further information - info@cottermuseum.co.nz

The other resource they have is a digitised version of Rex Earl Wright-St Clair's book, "Historia Nunc Vivat" Medical Practitioners In New Zealand 1840 to 1930. Thanks to Porirua newsletter

United Kingdom

Findmypast: Discover your ancestors who were buried in the Greater London area between 1399 and 1992. The records may reveal your relative's name, age, occupation, religious denomination and where they were buried. Included in these records are those of George Wombwell, the famous Victorian menagerie exhibitor, who was buried in Highgate Cemetery in 1850.

The Greater London Burial Index is a collection of the Middlesex Burials & Memorial Inscriptions, South London Burials Index 1545-1905, City of London Burials 1754-1855 and Middlesex Burials 1538-1992.

Also search Findmypast's vast collection of marriage records from the Greater London area. You will find marriages from as early as 1502 and up to 1871.

A full list of parishes is available in the Greater London marriage index parish list.

Learn more about your family history by searching the records by spouse name or parish and reveal your ancestor's marriage record. The collection includes Anglican, Non-conformists, and Quaker marriages.

Ancestry has added:

- Suffolk, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813-1924
- Suffolk, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754-1949
- Suffolk, England, Church of England Deaths and Burials, 1813-1999
- Suffolk, England, Church of England Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1538-1812
- Birmingham, England, Electoral Registers, 1833-1972

GENEALOGIX October 2025

The NZSG recently updated their Kiwi Collection. There are over half a million new records, taking the total to 16.5 million! These include over 51,000 'creep records' (those coming out of the 100-year privacy embargo) and five new record sets!

One of the big additions to the Kiwi Collection is the South Taranaki Database, compiled by our Hawera Branch. There are nearly 300,000 records from 1785-2015!

We also have New Zealand drownings, Anti Germanic Sentiment, Tangiwai Rail Disaster and Unmarked New Zealand Service Graves. There are updates to 18 other record sets and 3,000 new images.

If you're an NZSG member, but not a subscriber, you can access 4.7 million records on the Kiwi Collection. If you're not an NZSG member, there are still 1.7 million records to give you a taste of what you might find.

Websites: imirce.universityofgalway.ie/p/ms
A website of the collection of Kirby A Miller of Irish emigrant letters and life stories from North America hosted by the University of Galway. The collection covers from the 17th to the mid-20th centuries.

Victorian ancestors' occupations: www.family-tree.co.uk/how-to-guides/how-to-traceancestors-victorian-occupations/ Hall Genealogy Website old occupations: rmhh.co.uk/occup/

Glossary page for Scotland's People: www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/glossary If you find a word or abbreviation in a document this may help. It includes abbreviations, agricultural produce and livestock, legal terminology, medical terms, occupations, and weights measure and money.

Findmypast has 29,275 records in their New South Wales Gaol Photographic Descriptions Books.

Whilst most records span the period 1870 – 1930, some are as late as 1969. The records include details of the offence, the sentence and various biographical details such as date of birth, place of origin, occupation and whether they could read and write. The record also includes their 'mug shot' which might be the only photo you may ever find of your ancestor.

Some other interesting criminal records available on Findmypast are New South Wales Convict Arrivals. These are a transcript from the index of government indent records for men and women arriving on the convict ships from Britain and Ireland.

Information of the arrivals usually give the name of the convict, the date of arrival in Australia and the name of the ship on which they arrived.

Findmypast also has Convict Registers for Victoria and Queensland and a rather interesting collection entitled New South Wales Register of Convict Applications to Marry 1825 – 1851. There is a collection of 511,000 names in New South Wales and Tasmania Settlers and Convicts 1787 – 1859 which could also assist with your search. (**Sue Dinsdale**)