

# Horowhenua Family History Group Inc

Email: [horofhg@gmail.com](mailto:horofhg@gmail.com)

Postal: HFHG 44 Rimu Street Levin 5510

Website: <https://www.horowhenuafamilyhistory.org.nz>

FaceBook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/horowhenuafamilyhistory>

Location: Te Takere Heritage Room 10 Bath Street Levin



Levin Post-office 1903

## CONTENTS

- Page 1 President's Message**  
**2 Am I a Huguenot?/Wow a New Cousin**  
**3 US Marines in Kapiti 1941**  
**4 " " " " "**  
**5 US Marines in Levin**  
**6 Heritage Room news/ PN Heritage Festival**  
**7 Groups News**  
**8 Groups News**

## 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

**Thompson House**  
**4 Kent Street, Levin**  
**Monday 30 March 2026**

**1.30pm**  
**Rodney King: World Tour of**  
**Family Graves**

**Next meeting**  
**Monday 27 April 2026**  
**1.30pm**

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

## World tour of Family Graves



Over the years Rodney King has collected a lot of information from cemeteries around the world. Many have stories beyond the simple engraving on headstones. He will tell us stories of what he has found, where it was found, and show how cemeteries can be a great research repository.

Retired banker, Rodney, has been interested in genealogy since his teenage days. He is currently secretary of NZSG Kilbirnie branch, with nine years in that position. He also has roles on the Family Search helpdesk and in digitising documents at Archives New Zealand for those who cannot attend in person.

## President's message

Before the end of the month all members should receive notification of our AGM on 27 April which will also include committee nomination forms and proxy voting forms.

A copy of the annual financial and President's reports will be sent out prior to the meeting following the April committee meeting.

Assistance in the running of the group either on the committee or just as a volunteer in some of our activities would be appreciated.

We wish to update the group's contact details. A form will be available at the monthly meetings and a general email sent out to cover members who do not usually attend.

I wish to record the passing of Ron Burling and Peter Bovey the husband of Wendy Bovey. On behalf of the group I pass on our condolences to Ron and Wendy's families.

**Kevin Miles**

## “Am I a Huguenot and Wow a New Cousin – The Benefits of DNA”

Presentation by Brian Bernon (formally Brown)

Brian’s presentation explored the journey of tracing the Brown family's ancestry, focusing on the possibility of Huguenot roots and the discovery of new relatives through DNA testing.

The presentation began with an overview of the Brown surname's origins and the initial belief that the family might have Huguenot connections.



*Above: Fenhoulet family.  
Left: Brian’s father Bernard Bernon*

Brian delved into the history of the Huguenots, including a portrait of the Fenhoulet family in England and the potential family resemblance.

Brian then discussed the use of Ancestry DNA to verify physical records of births and ancestral locations, highlighting the challenges and findings of paper-based research dating back to 1690.

A table was presented to evaluate typical signs of Huguenot roots, such as surname, religious affiliation, migration patterns, and family stories. The conclusion is that the Browns were Catholic, were long term inhabitants of a rural part of England in a village called Thatcham and likely not Huguenots.

The focus of the presentation shifted to the maternal side of the Brown family, particularly the Pannifer surname, to uncover potential Huguenot connections.

The second part of Brian’s presentation highlighted the discovery of a new Brown cousin through DNA testing and the journey of “K” an adopted child first finding her birth mother and then with some clues using DNA finding her birth father, linking her to the Brown family.

Brian concluded with the ongoing journey of tracing the Pannifer line and the excitement of discovering new family connections through DNA.

A question was received from the floor as to why the presenter’s surname was changed from Brown to Bernon which was duly answered by the presenter.

## US Marines in Kapiti

presented by Anthony Dreaver to  
Horowhenua Historical Society

*by Kevin Miles with added material from Graeme McVerry Kapiti NZSG*

On 14 June 1942 the first of 15,000 Marines arrived in Paekākāriki, which then had a population of 500. The Marines were the largest group of non-British visitors to ever come to New Zealand, and their different ideas and manners made a major impact on New Zealanders of the time, who generally went through life meeting few foreigners.

The first influx was from the 1st Marines Division, whose stay was brief as most of them were despatched to Guadalcanal and Tulagi in the Solomon Islands by 22 July.

The next group was from 2nd Marines Division, who arrived in November the same year. Their initial stay was also short, as on Boxing Day 1942 most were sent as reinforcements to the Solomon Islands. Many of the survivors returned in February 1943, to recuperate from wounds and sickness and resume training.

Anthony Dreaver of the Kapiti US Marines Trust discussed relationships between the visiting Marines and local women and families. Some were brief encounters, others became close friendships, love, and long-lasting marriages.



*Anthony Dreaver*



*Photo of a beach landing mission in Paekākāriki, where war scenes were simulated. The Norm Hatch collection, courtesy of Ngā Taonga Sound and Vision and KUSMT.*

He spoke of the attitude of both New Zealand men and women to the Americans and of the Marines to New Zealand and New Zealanders. He told of family hospitality for the Marines, many of whom were only 18 or 19 years old, following church attendance or from signing up at the US Red Cross opposite Wellington Railway Station.

Not all was rosy. There were unmarried mothers. Māori often followed the tradition of whangai, with relatives raising the children.

Many New Zealand women became war brides. Over 1100 travelled to the United States in organised voyages immediately after the war, in vessels still configured as troop ships. There were about 1000 marriages, of which about three-quarters were based in the US. Many were life-long partnerships but about a quarter ended in divorce.

The second half of the presentation consisted of a wonderful collection of still and moving images that was put together as a short film by **Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision**

A collection of wartime footage capturing military life in New Zealand during World War II has been made available to the public for the first time.

It was shot between 1942 and 1943 by Academy Award-winning US Marines cinematographer Norman T Hatch, but much of it has never been seen since.

Film maker and Kapiti United States Marines Trust member Steve La Hood learnt about the film at a function in USA where he met Norman Hatch.

Now it has been retrieved and archived by Ngā Taonga following a joint effort by Steve and the Kapiti United States Marines Trust.



*A dance in the recreation hall at Camp Mackay. Photo from Norm Hatch Collection, Kapiti US Marines Trust.*

The film includes the visit to New Zealand by US first lady Eleanor Roosevelt – with original sound.

Find more information about Kapiti US Marines Trust at: <https://www.marinesnz.com/>

#### **Bibliography** (supplied by Antony Dreaver)

- Joan Ellis, *String of Pearls: Stories from US Marines and New Zealand Women remembering WWII*, 2006
- Joan Ellis, *Follow me Back in Time: Memories of WWII in New Zealand 1942-43*, 2009
- Leon Uris, *Battle Cry*, 1953
- 'The Soldier and the Schoolgirl' in Alwyn Owen (ed.), *Snapshots of the Century: 'Spectrum' covers 100 years of New Zealand history*, 1998
- Harry Bioletti, *The Yanks are Coming: The American invasion of New Zealand 1942-1944*, 1989
- Ena Ryan, 'On the Home Front', in Anna Rogers (ed.) *The War years: New Zealanders remember 1939-1945* (Spectrum), 1989
- Margaret Macnab, 'Girls of the Silver Dollar', in Anna Rogers (ed.)
- Angela Wanhalla, *Of Love and War: Pacific Brides of World War II*, 2023
- General Merrill B. Twining, *No Bended Knee: the Battle for Guadalcanal*, 1996
- Judith Fyfe (ed.), *War Stories our mothers never told us*, 1995 (especially 'Jean Andrews')

## Making them welcome in Levin

In 1942 20-year-old John M O'Connor was one of many US Marines, stationed at Camp Mackay, Paekakariki who often visited Levin on rest and recreation leave.

Noeline Lyons family hosted some of these young men during these war years. Noeline shared the following story from the Horowhenua Chronicle 18 March 1981 when Mr O'Connor visited Levin to renew friendships.

### "Leatherneck notices some changes around the town"



On his visit to Levin he met up again with John and Myrtle Lyons who he regarded as his "second parents" when they opened up their home to him and his Marine friends during the 1940s. Mrs Myrtle Lyons used to write to the young man's "folks" to keep them in touch with how he was.

He said he spoke for all the Marines stationed at McKay's who regarded the New Zealand people with tremendous respect and admiration.

He recalled "The trips to and from Levin on freight trains with so many stops, often took as long as four hours."

On his return visit, Mr O'Connor noted the changes to Levin township and recalled some of the popular places from his previous visits: the blacksmith's shop where the Marines took their belt buckles to be braised so they could take the caps off; the Oxford Hotel and the old Levin Hotel which were also favourite meeting places for the Marines; and rolling pennies down Oxford Street for the children to scramble for. He also recalled there were very few cars in the town.

Mr O'Connor was wounded during the US Marines assault at Tarawa. He met his wife Laura, a nurse, while recuperating.

Pictured above: At the Oxford Hotel, John O'Connor seated far right, with Mr and Mrs JJ Lyons, Queenwood Road. Seated at left is Mr E Lyons and Mrs O'Connor. (*Horowhenua Chronicle 18 March 1981*)

## What's new in the Heritage Room

Anthony Dreaver has added to our Archival collection with some of his books and research material. As well he has entrusted us with Leslie Adkin's father's collection of diaries and an extensive collection of slides recording the work of Nancy Adkin.

The Heritage Room provides a research service for people who are seeking information about family and local history. 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 & Local History Team Lead.

The Heritage Room is open

**Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday** 10.00am to 12.30pm; and **Thursday**, 10.00am to 3.00pm.



## Heritage Festival 2026

Organised by Palmerston North City Library, runs from **March 8 to April 12**.

There is a range of activities to expand your understanding and celebrate all things heritage. The programme includes talks, walks, guided tours and more.

Here's a selection of upcoming events that are perhaps of a more genealogical bent. (*an \* next to the date, means that this event is repeated on other dates as well- check the calendar for them.*)

**Sat 28 Mar 2pm Genealogy Workshop: Memories of School Days** Branch Member- Linley Robinson 2nd floor Central

**Sun 29 Mar 2pm Terrace End Cemetery Tour *Registration Required*** Leanne Croon Hickman and Geraldine Reynolds Terrace End Cemetery

**Tue 31 Mar 7am-6.30pm Wellington- NZ Micrographic Services, National Lib, Archives NZ, Parliamentary Library. *Guided Visit Registration Required*** Bus Tour \$15

**Wed 1 April 6pm Book Launch- Legacy: a Nelson family history** Wendy Shailer-Knight (author) Mezzanine floor, Central

**Fri 10 Apr 6pm-7.30pm Past, present and possible futures** Max Rashbrooke and Richard Shaw Ground fl. (George St)

**Sat 11 Apr All day Foxton- various tours and open days**

Check programme for details Foxton

**Sat 11 Apr 10.30am Connecting the Genealogy Dots** Branch Members 2nd floor Central.

Download a brochure of the full programme.

[https://citylibrary.pncc.govt.nz/assets/Heritage-Festival/Heritage-Month\\_Digital\\_Booklet.pdf](https://citylibrary.pncc.govt.nz/assets/Heritage-Festival/Heritage-Month_Digital_Booklet.pdf)

And you can also download a printable calendar of all the activities in the festival.

[https://citylibrary.pncc.govt.nz/assets/Heritage-Festival/Heritage-Month-A3-Calendar26\\_Print.pdf](https://citylibrary.pncc.govt.nz/assets/Heritage-Festival/Heritage-Month-A3-Calendar26_Print.pdf)

Watch out for upcoming events in the Festival on the library website:

<https://citylibrary.pncc.govt.nz/whats-on/programme/heritage-festival>

**Woodville's Historic Gorge  
Cemetery  
Conducted Tour  
Sunday 29 March 2026  
2pm**

Visit some of the graves and memorials of World War One soldiers in remembrance of ANZAC DAY 25 April 2026.

Meet at the Upper Gate to the Cemetery. Everyone welcome. Have a cuppa when we finish at Rinitawa Gallery (if it's too wet, there will be a virtual tour at the Rinitawa Gallery)

For further information contact Rinitawa Gallery or Joan 06 376 5690

**PALMERSTON NORTH NZSG**  
Saturday 28 March, 10am. **Irish Education Day**- Tawa Union Church, 6 Elena Place, Tawa, Wellington.

Professor Charlotte MacDonald and Jacqui Bridges- looking at Irish Soldiers in Colonial NZ. \$10 members, \$18 non-members. See: <https://www.facebook.com/IrishInterestGroup>

#### ŌTAKI HERITAGE

Welsh ancestry: How to find your Welsh ancestors

National Library of Wales: The main homepage of the National Library of Wales <https://www.library.wales/signposts> all kinds of information aimed at beginner Welsh ancestry researchers, plus descriptions of the library's vast holdings.

It holds the Church in Wales Archive, the Welsh wills probate database, which provides

digital images of wills proved in Welsh ecclesiastical courts before the civil probate system was introduced in 1858. Other online collections include free access to Welsh newspapers and Welsh Journals, crime and punishment records and tithe records.

**Ancestry:** The Welsh family history research page is a good place to start as it details the resources Ancestry holds relevant to Welsh research.

**Find My Past,** <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/partners/the-wales-collection>

The National Library of Wales and the Welsh County Archivists Group have partnered with Findmypast making the Wales Collection.

**Family Search:** [https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Wales\\_Genealogy](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Wales_Genealogy)  
**Archive Wales:** <https://archives.wales/>

This is the single-search hub to more than 7,000 Welsh ancestry collections across twenty-one archives in Wales.

The 'Find your archive' tab leads to a list of contributing archives with descriptions of key collections, contact details and links.

**Welsh Mariners:** <https://welshmariners.org.uk/>  
The core of the site is a database of over 23,000 Welsh Merchant Mariners - masters, mates and engineers, 1800 - 1945.

**The People's Collection Wales (PCW):** <https://www.peoplescollection.wales/about-us>  
A national digital archive that preserves and shares the diverse histories of Wales, a platform for organisations, community projects and individuals to publish heritage material and tell their stories in their own words. (Thanks to Papakura newsletter)

HUTT VALLEY NZSG February Newsletter

### Industrial Schools

Children were sent to Industrial Schools for various reasons, including destitution, perceived parental neglect, or for unruly or criminal behaviour. At the schools, the children might be trained in a trade, or to go into service. The records are at Archives New Zealand and many have been digitised.

**Industrial Schools Court Registers:** This series is comprised of Wellington Magistrate's Court registers that recorded the details of children committed to Industrial Schools 1893 – 1935 (not digitised). <https://archway.howison.co.nz/series/16359>

**Industrial Schools Miscellaneous Registers:** These include registers of inmates, lists of children boarded out and a correspondence register of the Industrial Schools Branch of the Department of Education 1883 – 1918. There is also a photo album from the Burnham Industrial School (R19684782).

Most of the records have been digitised. <https://archway.howison.co.nz/series/8306>

**Industrial Schools Nominal rolls:** This series consists of lists of children enrolled in industrial schools 1882 - 1910. About half have been digitised. <https://archway.howison.co.nz/series/8305>

**Warrants issued** permitting inmates of industrial schools to board with foster parents for a specified period (not digitised). <https://archway.howison.co.nz/series/8304>

**Auckland Education Board Class Lists:** includes Kohimarama Industrial School 1886, 1887, 1890

(digitised). <https://archway.howison.co.nz/series/4135>

**Industrial School Committal Books:** details of children committed to Industrial Schools by the Police in Dunedin 1886 - 1897 (digitised). <https://archway.howison.co.nz/series/21437>  
**Registers of Admissions to Industrial Schools:** summary information about individual children at Industrial Schools in Auckland (not digitised). <https://archway.howison.co.nz/series/1955>

### WELLINGTON NZSG

165 Scandinavians, Poles, Germans, Italians, Swiss and one Austrian arrived in Wellington on 23 Mar 1876 on the 'Gutenberg' after 96 days at sea. Terry Alve is organising a Sesqui reunion.

See the website [Gutenberg 1876 Sea Voyage Passenger Descendants and Associates Wellington Reunion - ALVE DESCENDANTS](https://www.alve.nz/gutenberg-reunion.html) for the latest info and registration.

<https://www.alve.nz/gutenberg-reunion.html>

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/) (<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!