

Annual Report and Financial Statement 2003 - 2004

I have pleasure in presenting the 2004 Annual Report.

MEMBERSHIP

We continue to see an increase in membership and the Convenor & Secretary field many calls from those interested in genealogy and the Branch. Our location at the Paraparaumu Public Library has many benefits, one being enthusiasm by the Library staff to promote an interest in family history. Information leaflets are on hand at the Information Desk. Displays were held at the Library during Heritage Week in July and the NZSG Family History Month in September. Our membership statistics are as follows: (2002/03 figures in brackets):

Branch Only 53 (51)

NZSG 75 (67)

Total 128 (118)

Since the beginning of last month (September), 17 New Members have joined (includes several earlier members who have re-joined). This follows a promotion for new members joining between 2004/2005 given immediate access to all branch resources for the balance of the current year.

Attendance at meetings is steady and on several occasions has exceeded 50 persons, stretching the present facilities. Attending monthly meetings however is not necessarily a priority for some, who benefit from access to our resources at the Library, the monthly newsletter, website and other activities. Indeed some of our members do not like night meetings and the incoming Committee may wish to explore alternative activities for this group.

The Coastlands Meeting Room has outgrown our requirements. Seating for anything over 50 persons is cramped, space for research activity, sales and help desks inadequate and supper facilities rather inhospitable, despite the best efforts of our Supper Hostess Meryl OPIE. For this reason, after gauging member preferences, meetings from November 2004 will be held at the Kapiti Community Centre where we were able to negotiate a much larger room and better facilities at no extra cost. Wednesdays and Thursdays already having been booked out at the Centre, a change to the 4th Tuesday of each month (Jan to Nov 2005) was necessitated.

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY AND ACTIVITIES

One of the first activities of your Committee was to circulate a Membership Survey in November 2003. This sought the views of members on their activity preferences for the Branch, and invited submission of family interests and expertise available for sharing with other members. Over 50% responded giving valuable guides to the structure of the year's programme. We also have a database on member interests and expertise as a research tool available to the Branch. This is updated as new members join.

In response to the activity preferences signalled, we have concentrated on hands-on research experiences from guest speakers and have encouraged member input to discussion and debate. We have been encouraged by the healthy discussions at our monthly meetings. Our collective interests and research are a huge resource. We opened the New Year with a Garden Party (although the weather was a bit unkind) and welcomed several visitors and partners of members. A successful day visit to the National Library was held in July and a group attended a research day in Palmerston

North in August. I hope the incoming Committee will look at more 'out of town' visits to centres of genealogical research importance.

ELECTRONIC AIDS

With a very large percentage of Branch members increasingly computer savvy, we have upgraded our electronic communication capability. This has been part of an orchestrated campaign to become more visible and importantly, improve contact outside of monthly meetings with our members. This has included establishing a website, registering a generic e-mail address through the NZSG server as a one-stop shop for all inquiries to the Branch and sending the Newsletter and fliers on special events out electronically to those with an e-mail address (over 100 at present). This is a particularly cost effective system.

Rootsweb hosts the website. We appointed Barry THOMSON to the Committee as Webmaster and we are grateful for the time he has devoted to establishing the site and keeping it updated. The rationale for its development was based on pooling information from the region so we share resources with Otaki & Porirua branches.

NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter has been the traditional major communication link with members and with this in mind several improvements have been made. We increased the size to 4 pages with a two-column format and new logo. More information can now be included. We also decided to continue to send copies by e-mail to those with this facility and for those without, either by snail mail or hand delivery. In the past some in this latter group would collect a copy at a monthly meeting and as many members do not attend on a regular basis we felt this was poor public relations. Our thanks to Secretary Derek GRIFFIS who has undertaken to hand deliver many of these copies and is responsible for the electronic mail out - all very cost effective. The feedback has been tremendous. Clearly there is a sizable group of members who do not/cannot attend monthly meetings and have welcomed being brought back into the fold. Thanks too to our Editor Alison PROCTER who has been an integral part of these new arrangements.

SOME COSTINGS

Newsletter Despatch (September): Emails 102 (83%) + Snailmails 21 = 123. Only 5 posted (4%).

[NB there were also 28 "Complimentaries", but are all email, so no paper or postage, and cost nothing]

The cost for September was 30x40c printed = \$12.00 + \$2.25 postage = \$14.25 (x 11 = \$156.75 pa)

\$156.75 is 8% of Total Subscription Income \$1988 (104 Single @ \$16 + 12 Double @ \$27).

Hall Hire: 9 @ \$30 = \$270 + 2 @ \$35 = \$340, which is 17% of above Total Subscription Income.

Thus, annualised Newsletter (September) + Hall Hire only took 25% of Total Subscription Income.

RESEARCH ASSISTANCE

Two ventures have been introduced to assist members with their research. Kapiti Gen-Forum allows members a structured format to seek help in finding ancestors and family, with a research request form that is available at meetings or downloaded from the web. Derek GRIFFIS & Valerie FREEMAN (our Help Desk Officer) have ably handled these requests. We also took out a subscription to Ancestry.com, one of the largest genealogical databases in the world and members may request a search of the data.

BRANCH RESOURCES

Priority for additional resources has been updating the microfiche collection. We have also added two PCs to the hardware (donated by members to whom we are very grateful), so that members can use the CD-ROM collection on site. Acquisitions of new Branch resources have been at a total cost of some \$1700:

Enid Seton-Kellaway Death Notices 1957-1984 fiche
1998 8th Supplement NZ Monumental Inscriptions fiche
NZ Marriages & Deaths 1961-1990 fiche
NZ Maori Births, Marriages & Deaths 1911-1961 fiche
Victoria-NZ Passenger Lists 1871-1880 fiche
NZ Electoral Roll fiche: 1853/64, 1865/66, 1887
2004 GRD (CD and Book)
British Vital Records CD
England & Wales National Burial Index #2 CD
"Ancestral Trails" by Mark Herber- book on British genealogy

Having our resources located in a central source at the Paraparaumu Public Library has proved most effective. Members make steady daily use of these resources during library hours and the Wednesday morning sessions with a rostered volunteer have proved popular with both members and the public. We are grateful to those members who have so volunteered. I suggest the incoming Committee looks at the possibility of an additional rostered research session perhaps on a Saturday morning.

Encouraging non-members to join the Branch has been a feature of both this weekly session and Library staff who have a handout for genealogical inquirers. Indeed our thanks go to the staff for the positive approach to our sharing of space and facilities. Assistance with labelling and security tagging our collection has been given freely. The only disappointment has been major holdups during a computer upgrade in having our book collection catalogued, so members cannot borrow and return on the same basis as a public library book. We hope this can commence in the very near future.

20th ANNIVERSARY

On May 27 2004 the Branch celebrated its 20th Anniversary at the Masonic Lodge rooms in Tararua St., Paraparaumu, our 'home' for many years before moving to the public library. 65 members and guests enjoyed a café evening complete with birthday cake. Several members brought along special mementos of their families and explained the significance of these in their history. Foundation Convenor June PRITCHETT (1984-85) was special guest joined by five former Convenors. A

photographic record of this occasion is on our website.

COMPUTER GROUP

Some 10 years ago a separate Kapiti Genealogy Computer Group was established at a time when owning a computer was more of a rarity. Since then the situation has changed dramatically with over 80% of current members with a computer facility. An increasing number of Branch activities have a computer-oriented emphasis and as mentioned above there is new emphasis on electronic communication. Combining the Computer Group with the Branch has been mooted from time to time and we are delighted that discussions over the past few months have resulted in a merger. Some Committee members of the Group were seconded to the Branch Committee so that a smooth transition was accomplished. From October 2004 the Branch has a Computer Special Interest Group, all assets of the former group including computers, CD-ROM's and other resources transferred and the windup balance of \$700 earmarked in the Branch account for computer related purposes. In 2005 COMPSIG will offer a specialist programme in alternate months and contribute to other Branch activities during the rest of the year. A Sub-Committee will be established to run this activity. There will be no additional fees for Branch members who wish to participate in the specialist sessions. Thanks to Convenor Sue GREENE and her Committee for the positive approach to the amalgamation.

The Branch has also been successful in an application to the Unison Trust for a \$1795 grant to purchase a Data Projector, which will enhance our computer generated research activities and demonstration capabilities.

SCHOOLS PROJECT

A year of consolidation for this activity, with continuing transcriptions and checking of records, mainly from local primary schools. Paekakariki, Paraparaumu, Raumati South and St. Patrick's Schools have been completed in recent years. Records for Raumati Beach have been completed and yet to be verified. Kapiti School, Kenakena, Kapiti Rd Primary and Presentation College are in various stages of action or inquiry. Our thanks to members who are transcribing records.

THE IMMEDIATE & THE FUTURE

We lose several Committee members this year, many long standing and worthy of a well-earned break. Debbie BENTON joined the Committee in 1997, and has been Librarian throughout; Marydell HADDOCK joined 2000, and has been Projects Officer throughout; and Angela MILSTED 1999, was Librarian for one year (jointly with Debbie BENTON - sometimes there have been two Librarians, much needed in the days before we joined up with the public library and when books had to be brought along to each monthly meeting), then in 2000 became Programmes/Grants Officer until now. Doreen HERON has been our Treasurer for the 2003/2004 year and is standing down for personal reasons. Jack BURTON & Gerald TWISS elected to the Committee at the last AGM resigned during the year. Two other long serving members are retiring - Appointed Officers John GLOVER, Convenor (2001-2003) and during the past year assisting with the Schools Record Project and George WATSON (Meeting Registrar and Name-tags). Special thanks to these members for their services to the Branch over many years. Thanks too to the other Committee members for their interest and support in a busy year.

In my view we have only scratched the surface of tapping local growing interest in genealogy and family history. Your Committee set the agenda noted in the above paragraphs to give a better platform to providing services. Our monthly meetings are only part of the total package and not a priority to many members. It is clear that we need to offer a wider range of services. As a voluntary organisation we are entirely dependent on member support, interest and physical help. As my predecessor noted we desperately need help outside of the Committee in a range of activities. These include Library rosters and working bees, desktop editing, publicity, sponsorship and fundraising, meeting registrar, project & activities management, transcription, research help among others. Given the growing interest in preserving family history and understanding our place in a vibrant multi-cultural society, a membership of 150+ is quite feasible and will bring greater demands on the Branch. We must draw on the skills of members to meet these.

Clive Palmer Convenor