

CANTERBURY/WESTLAND BRANCH

of the



**NEW ZEALAND
FOUNDERS
SOCIETY INC.**



President Pam writes:



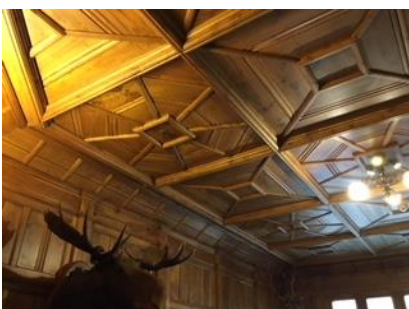
We are not bound by the Canterbury/ Westland borders. We are open to all people, we are not parochial, and it matters not where their forebears arrived. It just so happens that we are living in the Canterbury/ Westland area and that in no way precludes us from recording where our forebears moved around the country or settled e.g. some followed the gold fields, some the coal mines, some the forestry, some farming.

Many of us are researching our forebears, countries they came from, how and when they arrived, what employment they took up. Some members are also doing their DNA. Some of us are making new connections with relatives who too, are enquiringly about forebears.

We need to celebrate our forefathers who, with great determination and through many difficulties, after a long journey by sea, arrived in New Zealand and made the best of their lot. Not forgetting, that without them, we would not be here.

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April Tour of the Dean's family's Riccarton House (and Bush):



Period attired tour guide addressing our group in the grand entrance hall.



1, 2, 3, Dining room table, fireplace and larder



- Jane Dean's (nee McIlraith) betrothal gloves (she waited 3 years for John to return to Enland to make her his bride. *In Victorian times, the ardent suitor would send a pair of lace gloves to his beloved as a proposal of marriage. The young lady would then demurely signal her acceptance by wearing the gloves to a social engagement or church. Had she been undecided she wore but one, signaling to her gentleman that the wooing should be continued. To each pair of our gloves, we attach a little card that says.... 'If from this glove
You take the letter "G"
Then Glove is Love,
And that I send to thee.'*
- The family christening gown, dating from the 1870s worn by all of Jane Dean's 12 grandchildren and successive generations; and a Victorian evening gown that belonged to Jane Dean's grand-daughter Marian,
- NB. Disposable napkins are not a modern phenomenon: reads 'Soluble. Very easily disposed of in water'.



Sue Airay, Liz Wilkins, Nancy & David Gibb ,Mel Opie, Ray Absolum, Ian Wilkins, Alan Airay // Merlese and John Mcsweeney



Pam and Ray Absolum

Afternoon tea, folks. Fourteen toured – John and Mary-Jean McLauhlin missing here, needing to get home to their farm.

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Programme:

President Pam and Treasurer Ray are presently in Hastings, doing maintenance on Ray's Hastings home. It is a hugely enterprising effort, required from several years of letting, so taking a good 2 to 3 of months, as they tidy the garden and upgrade the house both inside and out and getting the property ready for sale. They are also taking the opportunity to do a bit of touring viz. "Up early for the trip to New Plymouth [to attend the NZ Founders Conference and AGM], Napier to Auckland then to New Plymouth. Flying [back to Hastings] via Wellington".

To that end and with the Airays' overseas and winter biting, it seems appropriate to set the next Branch get-together for a time soon after Pam and Ray are back in Christchurch sometime in August. It will take the form of a luncheon set for the warmer part of the day:

The Tanneries - 'Penny Black' Victorian Cafe, luncheon, sometime early September, when the depth of winter is receding and prayers for warmer, drier days might hopefully be granted. We will look to some form of entertainment. Flier nearer the time.

"Step back to the year 1897, the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, with all its accompanying etiquette and style".



Membership. Is there another way?

In our last newsletter, (#3, April, 2018), President Pam wrote: *“My other concerns: how do we go on? Many years have passed since the inception of the NZ Founders. Today I find people are interested in genealogy and DNA. There are historical and genealogy bodies throughout the country.*

“Over the past year, we have advertised by way of contacting past members; pamphlets in libraries; on Facebook; Neighborly; word of mouth and starting our own Facebook page. I did find some resistance in “is this group elitist?”

That last sentence is food for thought, as obviously there is concern at an image out there.

John McSweeney, our president at the time of the Christchurch earthquakes, recalls our branch membership falling away significantly over time prior to the Christchurch

earthquakes. It is that time factor that is disconcerting, as we grow generationally more distant from our founding families. Couple that with the plethora of “historical and genealogy bodies throughout the country” and there might be cause to look at how we address availability of NZ Founders membership.

Editorial

The restriction of membership to family arriving before 1866 has merit as a demarcation era, but it is just that, a restriction to membership. Yes, there is opportunity for ‘Founders Friends’ post that era, but, out of 30 odd current Canterbury-Westland contacts, only one person is in that category.

Surely within a generally *open* Founders movement, there would be significant ways – certificate; lapel pin; mounted gong - of recognising members as eg ‘Founders Fellows’ whose ancestors arrived before 1866?

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President Pam’s Report to NZ Founders AGM. 16 June 2018.



CANTERBURY/WESTLAND BRANCH

As you are aware, our branch is gradually surfacing after the earthquakes. The branch went into recess and all archives are still being tracked down as to where they have been stored.

Our meetings are held at The Old Vicarage. At these gatherings over coffee or wine, we exchange stories of our forebears and ideas for more meetings.

We have had a few history excursions.

1. A guided tour of Christs College and lunch at The Bunsen next to Lord Ernest Rutherford’s laboratory.
2. Christmas pot luck evening meal at John and Mary Jean McLauhlan’s farm near Oxford.
3. Dean’s Homestead and the Dean’s Bush. The very rotten weather, meant some members didn’t come. However, 14 members and friends turned up. Our host was a very knowledgeable 80 yr old gentleman who took us through the restored homestead. The homestead was so damaged after the 22 February earthquake, that the homestead had virtually totally to be restored inside.

4. Changing the branches cheque book and investments was no mean feat. Four of us armed with identification went through the process. One and a half hours later we finished and took ourselves off to The Prison coffee house at Addington

We went public with our Facebook and by doing so, the information has reached a much wider group of people and gives them the opportunity to join and post comments, information and photos. I myself watch the various history and genealogy sites on Facebook and make contact with people who I think would be interested in our site. Often I pick up on their search for names and ships.

Membership. We contacted all the people on a list that was amongst the branches papers. Some said they were too old, others never responded to mailed out or emailed details off our meeting.

Ray and I have joined the Canterbury Genealogy Society, have given to their library a few copies of the Bulletin. It is hoped that we may generate interest when we are at their meetings.

Canterbury is very parochial and First Four Ships, so, it is breaking into that thought pattern that will take some doing.

A mid-winter dinner [*now early Spring*] is planned. Mel Opie is arranging this.

I must thank Melville Opie, Secretary, Ray Absolum, treasurer and committee for their input and assistance in getting this branch back up and running,

Pam Absolum
President.

The genealogists dream: According to Einstein's theory, if we move the computer real fast, we can go back in time and recover the files you accidentally lost.

Our Branch is on Facebook. You will find us at –

[CANTERBURY/WESTLAND BRANCH of the NEW ZEALAND FOUNDERS SOCIETY INC.Z](#) (Ctrl+click)

NZ Founders Soc., website.

Have you visited our parent body's website? Ctrl+click: www.nzfounders.org.nz/

