

Hutt Valley Branch of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists



News & Views

October 2014

Issue 327



Evening Meeting: 7.30pm 2nd Thursday, February to December
Day Meeting: 10.00am 3rd Thursday, February to November
Venue: Petone Community Centre, 7-11 Britannia Street
Postal Address: PO Box 31-024, Lower Hutt 5040
Website: www.huttvalleygenealogy.org.nz
Convenor: Alistair Hardy
Secretary: Terry Stock HuttValley@genealogy.org.nz
Editor: Helene Philpott bhdk.philpott@gmail.com

Evening Meeting: Doors open 7pm. Notices begin 7.30pm. Speakers begin about 8pm (approx. 1 hour)

Day Meeting: Doors open 9.30am. Notices begin 10am. Speaker begins about 10.30am (approx. 1 hour). Please note the library does not open until 10am.

MEETING PROGRAMME OCTOBER to DECEMBER 2014

October 9 Evening Meeting:

Mike Harper of Flying Jandal design – Playing with Pixels

Mike will present a beginner's guide to restoring old or damaged photos.

October 16 Morning Meeting:

Show and Tell - Family History Ephemera

Members are invited to bring along and talk about a piece of family history ephemera. This could be an item of no great monetary value, but rich in family associations. For example, Graeme McVerry's family has the small tin container that his grandfather received in the trenches on the Western Front with a piece of his sister's wedding cake.

November 13 Evening Meeting:

Discovery – the UK National Archives site on the NZSG member’s page

Graeme McVerry will talk about some of the on-line treasures of the UK National Archives that can be downloaded for free from the member’s area on the NZSG website (or available for \$ direct from the Discovery site for non-NZSG members). These include wills, WWI medal rolls for British servicemen, WW2 RAF combat reports including RNZAF men serving in the UK (the New Zealand squadron 75 is included, as well as individuals across all RAF squadrons), the Royal Marines, merchant and Royal Navy records, historical maps, and much more.

November 20 Morning Meeting:

Early Inns and Innkeepers – Hilda McDonnell

Lower Hutt historian Hilda McDonnell will talk about inns and innkeepers of the Wellington region in the era 1840 to 1850.

December 11 Evening Meeting:

Christmas function- your first arrivals in New Zealand

As part of our December meeting this year, let’s see if we can fill in a large map of New Zealand with the places where our families’ first arrivals to New Zealand landed and lived.

Tell us briefly about when they arrived, where they were from, why they came, where they settled, where they moved to, what they did in their country of origin and in New Zealand. This is an event in which everyone can participate – we all had a first family member in New Zealand, whether it was in the great migration from Polynesia centuries ago, your 4xgreat-grandparents in the 19th century, or yourself by Jumbo in the 21st century.

GENEALOGY/FAMILY HISTORY HELPERS AVAILABLE AT PETONE LIBRARY 10am -12pm

On duty for October, November & December

- Wednesday 15 October – Diane Stinson & Leanna Menchi
- Saturday 1 November – Dawn Chambers & Lynly Yates
- Wednesday 5 November- Ian Fyfe & ?
- Wednesday 19 November – Cheryl Dreaver & Avril Roberts
- December – No Duties

[For those new to genealogy and/or who want help knocking down those brick walls, this is an excellent time and place to have our experts help you. Our helpers can show you what is available in the library and how to go about finding what you are looking for.](#)

Speakers Review:

At our August 14 evening meeting and again at the September 18 morning meeting we had Reid Perkins - The 1914 Benge and Pratt's fire.

Upper Hutt archivist Reid talked about the fatal fire at Benge & Pratt's General store 100 years ago. This was the biggest disaster in Upper Hutt's history in terms of lives lost, and led to the formation of the Upper Hutt Volunteer Fire Brigade.

This presentation was a real treat, interweaving stories of families and events in Upper Hutt in the early 20th century with the events of the night of the fire. Many of the families featured are still resident in Upper Hutt.

Benge & Pratt Store Upper Hutt - Fire & Explosion

Saturday 28th March 1914 - Fire discovered about 11.40 p.m.

Sunday 29 March 1914 - Explosion occurs about 12.08 a.m.



Business partners

A- Herbert Victor BENGÉ

B- Herbert Leopold PRATT

Staff

1. Leonard CLOUGH - chief baker

2. Albert Francis COOPER - grocery boy

3. Francis Ernest FIELD- Carter
4. Miss HUDDEN - Ledger keeper
5. Miss MITCHELL - Drapery department
6. John Robert PATON - Carter
7. John Wesley VIVIAN - Grocery department (died from the explosion)
8. Henry Maltwood WILLIAMS - second Baker

Men Killed by the Explosion

1. James COMESKY cause of death was concussion and shock age 57 years Post-master Upper Hutt left widow
2. William Daniel FLYNN cause of death by explosion and not by fire age 35 years Railway guard left widow
3. Denis MAHONEY cause of death by explosion age 38 years Constable Upper Hutt Police Station left widow
4. Virgil Francis MCGOVERN cause of death by explosion or by the fire or both age 26 years member of the Upper Hutt Town Board
5. Evard Edward Henry PELLING cause of death unknown but died from cerebral injuries age 18 years Blacksmith's assistant
6. George William TAYLOR cause of death injuries received by the explosion age 19 years Railway porter Upper Hutt
7. Michael John TOOHEY cause of death due being thrown violently on the ground and the actual cause of death was internal haemorrhage of the brain age 29 years Bridge Contractor
8. John Wesley VIVIAN cause of death was from fracture of the base of the skull shown by haemorrhage from the ears age 32 years Store man at Benge and Pratt's store

More Information: www.hbig.gen.nz and <http://uhcl.recollect.co.nz/>

Private Arthur Charles DUNCOMBE



CHARLIE as his parents and two sisters called him enlisted in the 8th Service Battalion of the East Surrey Regiment which was formed in September 1914 at Kinston-upon-Thames a few miles from where Charlie was born and lived at Upper Tooting, South London.

Private ARTHUR CHARLES DUNCOMBE #2019 landed in Boulogne on the 28th July 1915 as part of 55 Brigade of the 18th Division.

Passchendaele was the soldiers name for the third battle of Ypres, which commenced on 31 July 1917, by this time Arthur had now become a battle hardened "Tommy". Rather different from his occupation when joining up, a florist.

The 8th East Surrey's were moved up to the front line near the village of Poelcapelle on the night of 10th October leaving at 9.30 PM. The distance in a straight line was about 2½ miles. Movement during day light was suicidal due to sniping and artillery fire. The first platoons arriving at 4 o'clock in the morning covered in mud and absolutely exhausted as their guide had lost his way. Any trenches there were flooded. There were no living trees left standing, the ground surface was covered with mud and debris.



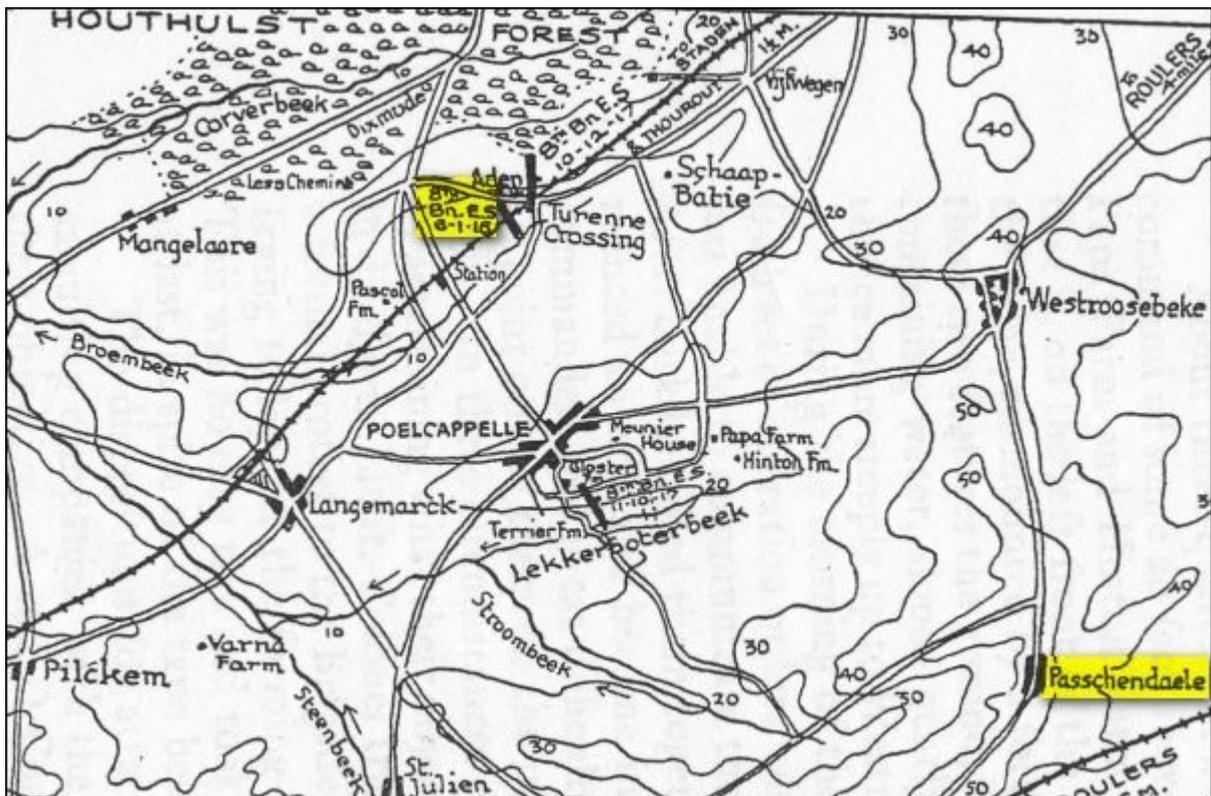
The Lekkerboterbeek stream usually about 6 feet wide had disappeared, water filled shell holes & mud had taken its place.

The Surrey's formed up at a right angle to the stream on their right facing north east with the "Buffs" on their left flank who were about 500 yards south of Poelcapelle village. Together their front covered a ¼ mile.

The night of the 11th was particularly dark and the rain came down in sheets added to their misery.

Their objective was to take Hinton & Papa farms on the higher ground.

Charlie's company went into action at 5.35 AM. on the morning of 12th October 1917. Following an erratic barrage that was laid down too far behind the enemy lines leaving the German machine gunners and infantry untouched. The German army was in well prepared trenches behind barbed wire on the higher ground with less mud to clog their weapons and good vision over the battlefield. From the farm houses heavy rifle and machine gun fire opened up immediately the Surrey's went forward. The farthest penetration was 500 yards, and no man came back to tell the tale.



*Passchendaele village is to the bottom right.
The East Surrey's position was in the center (see 8th Bn ES).
They went forward to the east, left to right.*

Arthur's cause of death is recorded as "Death Presumed".

Given the battle conditions of Passchendaele it is understandable that many bodies were not recovered. Obviously Charlie was eventually found and he was buried.

He now rests in Poelcapelle cemetery many miles from his home in Tooting.

Arthur "Charlie" Duncombe was 22.

SAW 017956

CERTIFIED COPY OF  **ENTRY OF DEATH**
Registration of Births, Deaths and **Marriages (Special Provisions) Act 1957**

Application Number PSR 2600636

Return of Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Men of *the East Surrey Regiment*
 Killed in Action or who have died whilst on Service Abroad *in the War of 1914 to 1921*

Rgtl. or Army number	Rank	Name in Full (Surname First)	Age	Country of Birth	Date of Death	Place of Death	Cause of Death
G/2019	Pte 8	DUNCOMBE Arthur Charles	22	England	12-10-1917	France	Death Presumed

An Entry relating to the death of *Arthur Charles Duncombe*

Research notes:

From the family I knew Charlie had been killed at Passchendaele and he was in the East Surrey Regiment.

Initial research took place after a talk at this Branch about the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) and that they could supply information about service personnel who had died.

This was before they had a website and a visit to their office in Lampton Quay gave me Charlie's service number, which unit he was in, date of death and proof that this was indeed my great Uncle as it recorded his parents and their address. It also provided his grave number and location as well as a map of the cemetery and map of the area that the cemetery is located.

I had read several accounts of the East Surrey's during WWI now I could focus on the 8th Battalion.

The Alexander Turnbull Library provided the History of the East Surrey Regiment (Ref P 356 0542 PEA) which gave very detailed accounts and maps.

I could have stopped my research at this point as we had Charlie's story fairly well complete. However, like all good genealogist, I decided to get his death certificate. Upon receipt it revealed the gruesome side of Charlie's death, that is, "Death presumed".

CWGC have two ways of recognizing death.

A grave where the remains are buried or a name inscribed on a monument.

At this time I knew Charlie was resting in a grave in Belgium, therefore, there was a "body".

Up to this point I had always understood that a death certificate issued by the General Register Office in England would only be issued if there was a body. Yet here we have “Death presumed” therefore no body!

Hence, Charlie was killed and disappeared into the mud or water filled shell holes of this battlefield in Flanders.

Post script

In 2003 I visited my Uncle Alf Stamp in a retirement home in Surrey. To my surprise he produced Charlie’s service medals.

With the medals was the bronze plaque which was presented to the parents or spouses of those that lost their lives during WWI, commonly known as “The dead men’s penny”.



I now have those medals mounted & displayed on my wall at home.

Next year during a trip to England I am also planning to go and pay my respects to Great Uncle Charlie at Poelcapelle.

Mike Guest
Akatarawa
Sept 2014

A new Centre for the Huguenots:

Due to open in Kent in summer 2015, the Huguenot Heritage Centre will tell the story of the flight of the Huguenots to Britain in the 16th and 17th Centuries. The centre will explore issues around refugees, immigration and integration that relate to the Huguenots experiences. Between 60,000 to 80,000 Huguenots settled in England in the South east (Canterbury, Greenwich, Rye, Sandwich), in the West (Bristol, Southampton, Plymouth), in East Anglia (Ipswich, Norwich), and in London (the City, Soho, Spitalfields, Wandsworth, Westminster).

The inspiration for the centre came from the directors of the French Hospital which was founded in London in 1718 as a charity, offering sanctuary to poor Huguenots.

For more information about the centre see -

www.frenchhospital.org.uk/huguenot-heritage-centre
Porirua Branch October Newsletter.

Can You Help?

Paraparaumu School needs your records...

Recently Paraparaumu School lost four classrooms and their library along with historical material.

They would really appreciate any old reunion books or photos etc from ex-pupils or any old photos of the school. Some photos have begun trickling in but the more the better as the school is still planning to go ahead with their reunion later this year.

Please send photos etc to Paraparaumu School:
paraparaumuschool.125years@gmail.com

What's on at Your Local Branches?

Kilbirnie

Wednesday 5 November - TBA

Time/Venue: 9am The Park Bowling Club, Kilbirnie

Kapiti:

Tuesday 29 October – Ted Turton – *A Black Box, Two Edwards and Three Centuries*

Time/Venue: 7pm Kapiti Community Centre, 15 Ngahina St, Paraparaumu.

Wellington:

Wednesday 22 October – Allison Diem - *NZ's Sub Antarctic Islands*

Time/Venue: 7.30pm Connolly Hall, Guilford Tce, Thorndon.

Porirua:

Wednesday 12 November - Jenny Robyn Jones - *'No Simple Passage' The Journey of the Immigrant Ship London to New Zealand 1842 - a ship of hope*

Time/Venue: 7.30pm Helen Smith Community Meeting Room, Pataka Cnr Norrie & Parumoana Sts, Porirua