

Ansrd. 26-4-83

16 Enfield Road  
Wainui-O-Mata

Thursday 24 February 1983

Dear Chis

There - only a month since you wrote to me - I'm cutting down the turn-around time! Seriously though, I have been doing some copying from Lands & Deeds in Wellington, and thought I would transcribe it all before replying.

Your PS first: According to my reckoning, the Sinclair Plot is in the bottom corner of Section 26 - H Sinclair, or else the left-hand corner below the 'H', although I think that more likely to be about where "Moness" was situated.

*Ref over top of Page 2*  
You will be pleased to know that we are currently looking for a mannequin for permanent display of the so-called Polly Prouse's dress. No luck so far, however, and they are rather expensive to buy. Also, unfortunately, the dress seams have already suffered with the effort of being forced over a rigid form - they were really slim things in those days and our mannequins are nothing like as flattering! I have only actually seen the dress on display the once, and then it bore a request "not to touch". I will certainly be putting my oar in for its future preservation, now that I know of its existence.

Unfortunately I haven't been down to old Mrs Burdan's for a couple of months now, and have not been able to chase up the "Polly Prouse" photo - but I won't be letting the matter lie. Unfortunately, also, as you say, these things get handed around and Mrs Burdan does her best but she did, after all, only marry into the family, not get herself born into it!!

Pity you're giving your grandmother's frock etc to the Wgtn Museum. I realise they are in the best position to care for it, although we are in the process of obtaining finance for our own Museum buildings in which we intend to portray our pioneers and Christina (McIlvride that was) has strong links with the Valley.

Having been through Lands and Deeds I found constant reference to Hugh Sinclair's "copy will". The request is always dated 27 August 1879, and the Will itself 8 February 1864. From this I am fairly certain that the man died in August 1879, though I have yet to search Wills - you can be sure I will keep you in touch with that angle - if only live-in babysitters came with every baby!

I quite agree with you re location of the grave sites in the Sinclair Plot. Unfortunately the man behind the matter, Mr Slingsby, is, to put it plainly, full of his own importance, and quite positive that his way is the only method. He just glosses over suggestions or ideas which are not his, but I am hoping that Forestry, if and when the day of reckoning actually dawns, will have their own ideas of how to go about the identification. I also have a request from John Mowlem Sinclair, grandson of Duncan, that a man renowned for "sensing" graves (must be very like yourself) be brought over from Nelson, or at least a sexton or the like, who knows from the feel of the ground beneath the pike of stable dirt or that which has been repacked. Fortunately John Sinclair has met Harry Sinclair and appreciates the problems we are faced with, not least of which, at the moment, is the "discussion" between Waterboard and Forestry as to whose jurisdiction the plot actually comes under. I await with baited breath, as do a number of other Valley residents and Sinclair descendants!

Continued ...

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Following further perusal of my Lands & Deeds notes I came across a reference concerning Section 34 which leads me to wonder whether the Sinclair Plot might ~~not~~ be on the Portion of this Section which butts up against 26. I'm sorry I can't be more specific at this date - the Lot 34 was part of H Sinclair's at one time (Waterworks Valley now, previously known as Sinclair Valley) and one of the later owners was an "M Wood" (Mrs Mary Wood) who called it "Riverlea" and sold it to her son-in-law (a real odd boddy, but that's only hearsay) by the name of L H J Jenkins. I have a fairly firm idea where the Jenkins house was - further south (to the bottom left of the map in the book) than the Plot, so Section 34 it would seem to be, or else on the very boundary of both that and 26. I hope this doesn't confuse you too much - at least it narrows the vicinity down to a mere two Sections (about 200 acres, give or take a dozen!!)

Mr Slingsby's plan for the plot is to clear the young growth and leave the older trees - Macrocarpas, etc, and grass the plot itself around these, with perhaps stone cairns for each gravesite. We are fairly certain of two corners of the Plot - one still has hollies growing at a definite right angle, and the other has stumps of same. The only locating we now have to do is the other end of the plot - the hollies there have either long gone or else set up so many seedlings it is impossible to determine a straight line (can't tell the forest from the trees like!). The large trees referred to have sprung up in the middle of the plot from the bush which it backs onto and hence the need for "landscaping". Wish you could come down and have a scramble amongst the undergrowth - there's no telling what sort of sensations and vibrations you might pick up and they are bound to be of use to us.

I do remember the de Candoles. I used to ride with Jocelyn, and her brother bought the top for his Land-Rover from my father - I always thought him rather nice but shy admiration was as far as it got! Thanks to Vicar de Candole (as he was then) I managed to pass confirmation without disgracing anyone and he really was a rather nice man, though he worked too hard for his health. Thanks also to Mrs de Candole - I do know Mr and Mrs Ken Allen, and Mrs Anna Lovegrove, who is especially keen to see the history of WOM documented accurately. Unfortunately Mr Lovegrove is now something of a geriatric, senile and hospital bound, and visiting him takes most of Mrs Lovegrove's time. However, that's not to say that she herself will be around forever, which is more reason for pinning down her memories now. Here's hoping that Mrs de Candole does remember to pass on my address to her Rotorua friend, and said friend follows up accordingly. Little things lead to bigger things ...

I did a quick visit to the photographic division of Turnbull at Castrol House. Next time I shall be better prepared! As you say, photos can be very hard to find unless you know what name to look under - if you say Wainui-O-Mata you get mostly pictures of the waterworks and dam erection, but if you drop a few key words like Burdan, Prouse, <sup>Farms</sup> and numerous others unknown to me, whole realms open up. I suppose they have a filing system (of sorts) but it seems a bit hazy to me, especially if you are starting from scratch, want to know everything about the Valley, and haven't the foggiest where to start. As I say, next time I shall be better clued up!

Well, I can see I too shall have to arrange another visit. My Mum-in-law is due for an operation on her wrists, which shall leave her a little house bound and none-too-capable of babysitting, but we shall have to see what we can do. By the time I get to you I am going to have such a lot to pour out, we will need to make a good working day of it.

All the Best Chris, and I will be in touch again, you can be sure of it.

*Vicky*  
Vicky Alexander

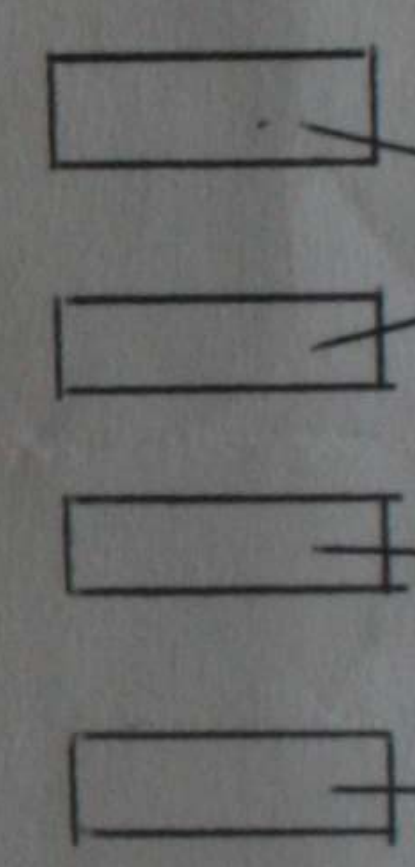
*PS Regards to John & Jemmy*

Sinclair Cemetery, Waunui-O-Mata

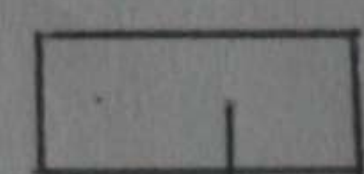
Holly Hedge

Richard & Christina Praeger  
infant child  
McLoride infant

entrance



Hugh & Agnes Sinclair  
Isabel Sinclair 30 yrs  
(daughter-in-law) d 1-1-1875  
John Hugh Sinclair  
(grandson) d 19-10-1881  
aged 20 months



Isabelle Sinclair  
(spinster sister of Hugh)

2nd child of John Sinclair's 2nd marriage (to Louise C. Hill)