

Ans. 27-12-83.

36 Enfield Road
WAINUI-O-MATA

Thursday 22 December 1983

Dear Chris

I know - don't keel over, a letter from ME! My conscience has been giving me a hard time, and after all the work you've put in I thought I had better sit down and fill you in (with the latest that is!)

Firstly, in case I haven't already told you - lucky you in picking up that old doll. I saw the Auction advertised, but never thought to go up for the weekend. My father-in-law did, and even he did alright in his secondhand-bound-to-be-a-use-for-that-someday way.

I have placed an order for the plaque, quoted at \$300, with the patternmakers. They go back to work on 23 Jan and would like the McIlvride detail before 30 Jan, to ensure finished product by end Feb. We are working towards 3/4 3³⁰ as the official opening - that's when the big opening of the "Hugh Sinclair" Park is planned by the local authorities and we thought it most appropriate to tie in with same. It is the Saturday of that weekend, and I'm giving you plenty of warning so do see if someone would like to spend the day in your glorious garden as company for John. It's only right that you be there - you have contributed in such a big way.

I wrote straight away to Levin - it may surprise you but many moons ago I wrote to that man seeking info on the Prouse and McIlvride families and he actually ~~wrote~~ ^{contacted} me and suggested that I contact you, because you were the source of all knowledge in that respect. That's fine - but he hasn't replied to my begging letter yet. It's early days yet. Give me the other addresses you think it might be worth my approaching - nothing ventured nothing gained (or lost!)

Are you quite sure and absolutely positive that you have a photo, old or otherwise (and it would have to be at least 100 years old) of MONESS? If so then you are sitting on a little gemstone and I'll be hotfoot up to beg borrow or steal for copying purposes. The Post Office (sorry, McIlvride home) photo is also very interesting and we would love to have that copied for the Society's photographic files, but anything of MONESS would stand on its own. According to a written description given by Kate Sinclair (later Chambers) who lived there for 6 years in her youth, the home must have looked much like 'Northbrook' - 2 storied with verandahs around much of the sides, orchards, hills behind (that would go for most houses in WOM!) and gravel backyard with hand pump. You think you're thrilled to find these - would you be prepared to lend them for copying purposes? We have a very reliable man who gives excellent service (for a price) but who also provides good negatives which can be used later for any subsequent copying, so the quality doesn't deteriorate each time anybody requests a copy. Would you be prepared to lend? If so I will personally collect and return (gives me a good excuse to drop in and have a natter - as if I needed an excuse!)

Remember that old house photo with the group in front which I lent you for copying - I said I didn't know the house, but Turnbull had labelled the group Prouses in front of home, WOM. Well, I was having

Chris

a matter with old Nanny Burdan (thats not meant to be derogatory, thats how most people refer to her now, even to her face) and she brought out a pile of photos, including the very original of that one which she had lent to Turnbull for copying. I flipped it over and on the back it said Prouse House, Levin! That doesn't necessarily mean that Prouses are all those people in the photo - but it does explain to me why I couldn't place the house in the Valley. And I would have expected more accuracy from Turnbull Photographic Division. The information on the photo wasn't in her handwriting (Nanny Burdan's) and as her Mother-in-Law was a Prouse the information would seem fairly old - and fairly certain. Does that ring any bells with you? I know your old Aunt disclaimed the women in the picture being Prouses, but how about the house - I don't suppose there is anyone left now who would know, especially if your Aunt didn't. Although, one house is much the same as another isn't it?

Do you suppose your Grandmother Chris, being only 11 when Hugh Sinclair died, saw him only as a dour Scots man and formed her opinions early and thus? You mentioned some time ago that she thought him a hard man, and to a young girl he could well have seemed so. However, we've already disproved that once in the form of his giving a portion of Section 2 to your Great Grandmother etc. Well, delving in Lands and Deeds the other day and I came across this -

Maria and John Wood bought some blocks of land at the Northern end of the Sinclair holdings in Moores Valley. Unfortunately John died early in the piece, leaving Maria with some huge mortgages and a large family. Mortgagors were closing in for the kill when Hugh came onto the scene at the time of the resale and bought 100 or so acres at the going rate, then resold to Maria at a very good (for her) rate. That family and its descendants stayed in the Valley for well over 100 years, thanks to Hugh's action. I Don't think he can have been too bad a man, even if he didn't show it. A great-granddaughter can remember being told by her grandfather how Hugh, whenever he came home 'a little the worse for wear' (and you wouldn't have to have been drunk to come home worse for wear after travelling over the WOM Hill in those days!) he would grab his wife Agnes and tickle her. Evidently she didn't approve in the least and would try to manouvre him to his room 'for a rest, a lie-down' until he felt better' but he wouldn't have it. He could have been a lot of fun to have around eh?

Thanks for the cheque for book and postage. Family ~~are~~ all responding well - nobody has turned us down yet, (they just haven't answered our letter) and things are really exciting. My husband has been conned into helping with the pouring of the Cairn on 4/5 and 7/8 Jan and I think he's looking forward to it - if only to have Sunday mornings back to normal and lunch at a respectable hour! We will be popping up to his Mum and Dad sometime between now and 15 Jan for a few days so I would love to avail myself of the offer of lunch. I will of course ring before I try descending upon you - a day's notice at the very least, and shall bring as much paperwork as I can quite safely hold. Have additional info on Louise (Hill) Sinclair - she was actually of Swiss descent. People who told me that didn't know something else which you had told me so it was good to swap facts and help each other out. Really rewarding when you can do that isn't it?

Lots of Love and have a good Christmas ^{both of you} - hope this makes up for a couple of those unreplyed-to-letters of yours, though I'm bound to remember something else once I sign and seal!

all the best

Vicky