

Ans. 14-7-85

16 Enfield Road  
WAINUIOMATA

Monday 8 July 1985

Dear Chris and John

Well, at long last, here it is - a letter from me! Actually, don't scold because I dropped in to see you last Tuesday morning about 10.30am but the garage was shut and you were obviously out and about - I couldn't even raise the dead with my knocking! We were on our way to stay with my Mum-in-law and didn't come back until latish Thursday evening, so didn't stop in.

By the way, your garden is looking lovely, even from the short glimpse I had as I came around the corner from Winera Ave. Sorry to miss the repairs to the flood damage though.

I visited Nanny Burdan in Hutt Hospital recently, where she was shut up in a room full of half senile old ladies - very degrading for a woman who has all her faculties but hospital facilities are limited, and Nanny didn't have a bad word to say about the nurses. Anyway, what with the constant interruptions from the other women in the ward, I didn't get a chance to discuss half the stuff I intended to mention to Nanny so didn't get to mention Mrs Addicott's reply. Will do though. Nanny is now living at 'Fairview' with her daughter Mrs Cobb, on the Coast Road, for a time and I shall no doubt be visiting there in due course.

What a coincidence Mrs Addicott living right on the doorstep of the hotel you were staying in. I can quite sympathise with your wanting to cry about missed opportunities, I know exactly how you feel. I've had the same with people dying just before I get to interview them. I suspect that Nanny came to be writing to Mrs Addicott through Nanny's mother-in-law, Annie Burdan nee Prouse, but I will check in due course. Its very difficult to explain to these elderly people just how their family trees work, isn't it? They have believed for years that so and so is the case, and even though you have ample proof of something completely different, they find it hard to absorb - a case of 'we were always told' being superior evidence to the Births, Deaths & Marriages Register, etc.

Of course you had those Sinclair Pages filed away neatly just where you could lay your hands on them when next they were needed! The NZ Federation of Historical Societies publishes a Journal with written contributions from historical societies all around New Zealand, each year. Last month I submitted an article I have just written about the Wainuiomata Historical Society and the Restoration of the Sinclair Cemetery, or 'Project Sin'. If it is accepted (which it is pretty likely to be as they were crying out for material by a deadline) then you might be interested in buying a copy of the Journal for your Archives - cost about \$4 or \$5 and due later this year. My article has a few more facts and figures than the Sinclair Cemetery Booklet did, and it could be an asset for your file?

Give John my sympathy re his bronchitis. I had my first dose during that storm we had in May, and it was nasty, though probably

relatively light. I feel for John absolutely and hope you are keeping that fire stoked well.

Talking about fires, though you had better not mention this to John or I may upset things again. My Dad has just installed a free-burning woodburner in place of the old Visor they had. Visors were useless though at the time they were all the rage and there wasn't much else around. However, if the potbelly is out perhaps you might consider a woodburner for the sittingroom - it would certainly warm your dinning room up well in the evenings after the late afternoon sun had gone off it. Dad said to be sure to get a woodburner with a castiron firebox which doesn't include the Kent Woodburners as they have just a steel box which rusts and burns out eventually. Stoves to consider include the Shacklock range and the Cavalier range. Just a thought but it would ensure much more mileage out of your wood supply, and that was John's biggest worry wasn't it? Mum and Dad are thrilled with their woodburner - the house has never been so warm since the price of oil escalated and they turned the central heating off. The fire is still burning in the morning and Mum only has to add some wood for it to be roaring away again. Of course they got the freestanding model, and I don't know how efficient the equivalent in an in-built job would be. There I go again, stirring it all up just when things were nice and tranquil at your place. However, after that bout of bronchitis I have been very conscious of Keeping warm and snug. You do have a milder climate though, which must help a bit.

I have been going up to National Archives each week, looking through the old school records etc. Unfortunately they only go back to 1885, but I thought you might find the following snippet interesting:

Education Board EB 8/9 Class Schedules

1890 August 25  
Whitemans Valley  
-----

GORRIE, William	12y 6m	deficient in intellect, F
PROUSE, Percy	9y 11m	P
GORRIE, Fred	8y 9m	P
PROUSE, Norman	8y 10m	P
GORRIE, Mary	9y 6m	P
PROUSE, Grace	9y 6m	P

1891 May 15  
Whitemans Valley  
-----

PROUSE, Jessie	Std I	P
----------------	-------	---

Infants Prep for Std 1

Infants Prep for Std I

PROUSE, Bertie 6y 3m

Second Division

GORRIE, George 6y 9m

PROUSE, Gertrude 6y 10m

PROUSE, Mabel 5y 8m

1892 June 1  
Whitemans Valley

No Prouses, one Gorrie, some Devings & Johnstons

How's that for a little snippet of the past? The Grace Prouse caught my eye of course, but she left the scene fairly quickly - would 1891 have been about the time Richard took his family to Levin? If you could pinpoint that date it would be appreciated because it possibly ties in with some other families I am researching, the Cheethams who also went from Moores Valley in WOM to Whitemans Valley. In WOM they were working for the Wood family and when Tom Wood went bankrupt I feel certain that the family saw the Cheethams right in Whitemans Valley. It's the usual story of course, the Cheetham descendant who is also in the process of researching knows less than I do about that particular era. Still, I've found out a lot about them just from the school records, and I'm wiser now than before so I must be winning.

Here it is, time to be off to collect Brett from Kindy. Don't know when next I will be up your way but look forward to hearing from you in the interim anyway.

Love to you Both

Vicky Alexander (Mrs)