
NO(R)STER NEWS

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For those of you who have access to the Internet and e-mail, you can contact me
on:
norster@one-name.org

Or, please visit our (your) website at:

www.norster.org.uk

which has recently been updated. This newsletter will be on the website by the time you read it. It gives you the opportunity to see your ancestors in a normal tree format. Please e-mail me, or write, or phone, or leave a message on the guestbook and let me know what you think of it.

There is also a Blog on the website, though you can access it by RSS from :-
<http://norster.wordpress.com> - just type this into an RSS link.

If you have a computer, but are not on the Internet, I can send you a copy of the website on a CD. Please let me know if you would like a copy.

As for me, my details have not changed: -

6 White Broom +44(0)7941344858 (Mobile)
Lymm
Cheshire
WA13 9JA

If you have an e-mail address I could send this to you through, please e-mail me to let me know.

The New Zealand Gold Rush

During the period 1848 - 1871, gold miners roamed the world to seek their fortune, fetching up on distant shores when they heard the call of a recent gold rush. Between 1861 - 1871, miners went to the New Zealand gold fields.

When a gold miner arrived at the Thames goldfield near Coromandel in 1868, his priority would have been to find some form of shelter for himself and his family if he had them with him. This would be especially important in the winter months. After that, he would have listened to the gossip amongst the old-timers, perhaps in one of the many bars, to discover where the best finds were being made. He would have walked the hills to discover for himself a likely spot, especially if he was an experienced miner and knew the 'look of the land' that would make good gold-bearing dirt.

After he had finally made up his mind about where to stake his claim, he would present himself at the Warden's office in the Courthouse in Shortland to apply for his Miner's Right. And he would need £1 sterling in his pocket, a considerable sum. £1 sterling in 1868 would be worth about £600 today, or NZ\$1200 or US\$900.

On most days in 1868, he would have had to wait in a queue to get in the door at the Warden's Office. During that time he would hear other miners talking about recent finds and rushes, and by the time his turn came to put his money on the table in front of the Warden, he may have changed his mind several times about where to stake his claim. The Warden wrote the miner's name in his huge leather-bound ledger. The miner would then state the area where he intended to stake his claim. The Warden wrote this together with the date in the ledger beside the miner's name, then wrote the details in the Miner's Right certificate book he had beside his ledger. He ripped the Miner's Right out, leaving behind a butt duly filled out with the miner's name and Miner's Right number. He handed the pre-printed certificate to the miner who then needed to keep this valuable piece of paper safe, clean and dry under all conditions. He would need it to establish his claim whenever he was asked for it. With his Miner's Right in his pocket, the miner then went directly to the likely spot he had picked out, and placed wooden stakes in the ground to mark out his 50 x 300 feet claim. This would be his land for the period of one year. After that, his Miner's Right was renewable on payment of a further £1 fee.

The miners had to work their claim every day except Sundays, or risk losing it to a claim jumper. If the Miner's Right holder needed to be away from the claim for a legitimate reason, he had to register his absence at the Warden's office. This was known as Registration and cost 5 shillings for an absence of a few weeks or months. In times of sickness, the Warden also had to be notified, and this was known as 'Claim Protection'. There was no charge for Claim Protection but the miner had to provide a Doctor's certificate.

There is an excellent database created by Kae Lewis which holds details of all the Miners Rights that still exist.

When I heard about this database, I went to the website and searched for NOSTER, being the variant of the name in New Zealand, but to no avail. Then I tried NORSTER, as I so often do, without really thinking it would be successful.

It was - there were 2 entries, both for Francis NORSTER, 2 Oct 1868 and 14 Dec 1869, both at Karaka, Thames. Now Francis NORSTER (25th Jan 1829 - ?) is on the 1841 census in Portland, Dorset, England, but I have been unable to trace him after that. **This could be him...**

I still need to try and trace him for the 27 years in between, and where he went afterwards.

Example of a Miners Right certificate - with many thanks to Kae Lewis.



A MINER'S RIGHT.
This is the earliest copy of a Miner's Right that is procurable. It will be noticed that it was only issued a year after the field opened, yet its number is 10328.