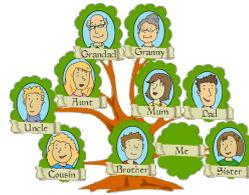


MINUTES OF PITMAN COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 1ST JULY 2018



This committee meeting was held on Sunday 1st July 2018 at Marlene's house.

Present: Marlene, Sandra, Alison, Neil, Kirsty, Gavin, Henk and Helen.

Apologies: there were no apologies.

Business arising from previous minutes:

- The Pitman Ancestral Shield has now been given to Marlene.
- Marlene has deferred contacting the two Grant Pitmans re their family research and will contact them after this meeting.
- In reference to an item in last meeting's *Correspondence section* (page 2), Helen emailed Anne Pitman regarding her updates. Anne has not yet responded.
- Helen passed on information about the Geni family tree program to Marlene (refer to *Status of Family Tree* section in last meeting minutes).
- Marlene put a summary of data into the RootsFinder programme. Refer further on for details and follow-up – page 3.
- Helen emailed Anne Pitman and Lucy to ask if they have any original source material from producing the *Pitman Families in Australia* book and if they could let us know where they are up to with their updates, however neither Anne nor Lucy have responded yet.
- Helen contacted Gavin (see previous minutes - *Further action needed*).

Finances:

- Since our last meeting Marlene has received \$25.00 for a DVD order which included postage and a donation.
- The previous bank balance of \$872.10 has increased by \$25.00 and now stands at \$897.10.

Email and Facebook Update:

- Three updates have been received.
- The Pitman Facebook site now has 153 followers.

Correspondence: Since our last meeting no correspondence has been received.

Other items:

- Helen showed the committee information from the National Library of Australia online book catalogue which displayed some out of date information regarding our *Pitman Families in Australia* book. Helen will contact the National Library to provide them with correct information so that they can update their records.
- In regard to the above-mentioned book, *Pitman Families in Australia*, Helen brought to the committee's notice that there is currently a second-hand copy of this book advertised for sale on the internet for \$129.99. The seller is *charliejodesigns* - a company based in Australia that has been selling on eBay since 2005. They are recognized as one of the Top Rated sellers globally and in the US. The committee agreed that the asking price for this book was greatly inflated.

Website update: www.pitmanreunion.org/

- Marlene was contacted by the people who maintain our website and asked if she wanted the setting for the privacy options changed. Marlene asked that the privacy settings be kept at the minimum possible setting.
- Marlene has updated the website information with the minutes of the previous meeting adding that the next Reunion will be held in 2020, most likely in October or November.

Custodian list matters: To be further discussed at a future committee meeting.

Status of Family Tree updated:

- Marlene had extensively researched online Family Tree programmes following our last committee meeting and had gathered much valuable information which she organised into a multi-page discussion paper that was circulated to committee members including ex-officio members, Anne Pitman and Lucy, before the current committee meeting.
- Marlene's paper raised many issues and generated much thought and discussion about the future recording of Pitman data. Please refer to Marlene's paper - *Taking Our Family Trees Online – Yes or No – If So, How and When?*
- Some of the main points and comments made by committee members during a lengthy discussion about how to proceed further with storing Pitman data included:

- Which programme would best suit our needs
 - Privacy issues
 - Costs associated with subscribing to programmes
 - Maintenance of data which would be entered into a suitable programme
 - Time and organisational issues
 - Updating data
 - Conflicting data – some programmes already contain Pitman records, some of which appear to differ from the data collected by our committee
 - Some programmes allow other people to enter and/or change data
- The meeting had agreed that we adopt the practice of obtaining regular Gedcom exports of all the trees and keeping them in two safe places, one copy on Marlene's computer and the other on Alison's. This would help deal with any gaps in our backup arrangements. Could people managing their Pitman family records please supply a current export of their data in Gedcom format and email it to Marlene prior to the next committee meeting. Marlene has asked that this information become a standing item on the agenda of all future committee meetings. Marlene's email is marlenepitman@gmail.com
 - The committee meeting finished with a very interesting presentation on the internet by Marlene demonstrating some actual data that she had entered into the FamilySearch programme.

Further discussion of the issues raised at this meeting will be the focus of our next committee meeting.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING:

Date: Sunday 19th August 2018
Time: 2pm
Place: Marlene's
Address: 2 Willowbank Rise, Houghton SA 5131
Phone: Mobile: 0414 190 048
Email: marlenepitman@gmail.com
Chairperson: Alison

Helen Dorrestyn

Secretary

Phone: (08) 8264 1616, or 0411 121 616

Email: hhdorres@gmail.com

Note – yellow highlighted sections in the minutes are the main points that need following up.



**TAKING OUR FAMILY TREES ONLINE
YES OR NO?
IF SO, HOW AND WHEN?**

A discussion paper for the Pitman Reunion Committee meeting
1 July 2018

1. CURRENT SITUATION

The Pitman Families in Australia family trees are maintained by several members/ex officio members of the Committee. These are maintained on personal home computers, backed up as needed by the person responsible, as per the following list:

Ref	Descendants of	Contact Person
A/J	Arthur Webster and Ellen Page Jacob Pitman and Emma Hooper	Lucy Adeney
B	Benjamin Pitman and Harriet Lucas	Gavin Pitman
W1	John Pitman and Charlotte Barnett	Marlene Pitman
W	William Pitman and Emma Angel	Marlene Pitman
*A	Albert Pitman and Sarah Clark	Marlene Pitman
*H	Henry Pitman and Elizabeth Knight	Anne Pitman
*W	William Pitman and Sarah Gooding	Elaine Campbell Gavin Pitman
p339	Further Research	Gavin Pitman
?	Unknown	Marlene Pitman

While this arrangement has kept us going for many years, there are a number of inefficiencies and risks involved, in particular:

- Backup arrangements vary, and failure of one or more home computers may result in a loss of many years work transferring and updating the information.
- Gavin and Anne both continue to use Sierra Generations (the PC equivalent of Reunion used by Lucy and Marlene). This software has not been supported for some time and computer upgrades have and will result in glitches or possibly failure.
- There are risks in individuals having sole responsibility for the trees as any change in their circumstances (whether work, health or other) could result in loss of information

or a future challenge to consider what to do with the various components they have.

- It is difficult for wider family members to know what information we already have and therefore whether to send in more information. Providing updates generally isn't high on people's priorities, but if they could see more of what we have this may improve.
- It is difficult to incorporate other useful information (eg photos, stories from the book, additional information from Ray Pitman's collection etc) into the current records in a way that is accessible to others.
- We have not been able to draw on the interests and skills of some of our wider family to assist with updating the information due to being very centralised.
- With an 'older' committee we need to be thinking about the future of the family trees. To handover responsibility for a tree to someone else is currently an 'all or nothing' situation as there is no easy way to share the updates or transition progressively.

2. WHAT NEXT?

a. Another printed book?

It seems very unlikely that we would try to update the book again in print format. It is a huge job to collect enough consistent information to be worthy of going to print, and the size of the book would be double (and the price quadruple) that of the 1990 effort. If there is a place for another book it may be in 'another lifetime'. Perhaps it is time to confirm that this is not our goal.

b. Maintain status quo?

This may still be the best option for a while. Is there sufficient need/energy/commitment to put effort into doing more than what we are doing at the moment? It continues to be a reasonable holding position, and there is no immediate urgency to change. That said, we should still ensure we revisit the arrangements before too much longer (eg within 5 years). After all, none of us are getting younger!

c. Switch from Committee responsibility to personal responsibility?

The question has to be asked whether the Committee should continue to take a long term role in maintaining this information, or whether it is better delegated to individuals to 'own' and manage on their own terms. Technically this already applies for the 'other' Pitman lines as Anne continues to own and manager her own line, although in the other two cases there is currently ambiguity as we have been maintaining updates in the absence of ongoing action by their owners. The future of the management would then be unknown, but would no longer be something the Committee takes responsibility for.

d. Move to a more collaborative online management of the family trees?

Given the concerns about the current arrangements, this seems to be an attractive idea. However, we need to be aware that it isn't a small job and the transition would need to be handled with care to minimise any loss or corruption of information. A number of things need to be considered in deciding if/how to proceed with this.

3. ONLINE FAMILY TREES – THINGS TO CONSIDER

a. Privacy

Publishing information about living people online is a very sensitive area and needs to be managed carefully.

Online genealogy software suppliers take this matter seriously and have a number of controls in place to minimise exposure of private data. These include suppressing personal details of living individuals, even when the tree is made 'publicly' available.

In some cases the living person is represented by a placeholder with no personal details shown (ie you can see there is a person there, but can't read the details). In other cases they disappear completely from the records, which can have some strange consequences.

Depending on the software used there may be options that allow other people to share the maintenance of the tree and/or to view the tree, with or without access to living people. These are assigned on an individual person basis.

If we used software with these access controls, we would need to have a well defined policy in regard to who should be allowed such access, for what purpose, and for how long.

b. Types of online trees

There seem to be two quite different types of online family trees, one where everyone manages their own tree with variable amounts of sharing of information with other people, the other where the goal is one common world-wide tree to which everyone contributes.

Examples of each type are identified over the next couple of pages. There are more options available than these few examples but for various reasons (eg top 10 reviews, popularity etc) I have limited my considerations to the examples listed.

One World Trees

Product	Details
FamilySearch	FamilySearch is a genealogy organisation operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was previously known as the Genealogical Society of Utah (or "GSU") and is the largest genealogy organisation in the world. Access to FamilySearch is free (via login). Mormons trace their family trees to find the names of ancestors who died without learning about the restored Mormon Gospel so that these relatives from past generations can be baptized by proxy in the temple. For Latter-day Saints, genealogy is a way to save more souls and strengthen the eternal family unit.
Geni	Geni is a commercial genealogy and social networking website, now owned by an Israeli private company MyHeritage (see comments re MyHeritage below). Launched on January 16, 2007, the company stated that it aimed to create a family tree of the world. While family profiles are private, Geni's mission is to create a shared family tree of common ancestors. Geni Basic is free and allows up to 1 GB of media to be attached (photos etc). Geni Pro requires an annual subscription currently approx \$US120.
WikiTree	WikiTree is a free, shared social networking genealogy website that allows users individually to research and contribute to their own personal family trees, while building and collaborating on a singular worldwide family tree within the same system. The site was created in 2008 by Chris Whitten, developer of the WikiAnswers website, and is owned and hosted by Interesting.com, Inc. Access to WikiTree is free.

In my limited testing of these options, I found FamilySearch to be the easiest to relate to, but others say WikiTree or Geni is the easiest to use!

A useful comparison of the three options can be read at <http://blog.kittycooper.com/2014/06/the-advantages-of-working-with-a-one-world-tree/>. The following advantages/disadvantages list is taken from this review:

The advantages of using a one world tree are:

1. You are not constantly duplicating research that has already been done.
2. It is online and searchable so distant cousins will find you.
3. Other descendants of your ancestors may have pictures and documents to share that are already posted.
4. You will find distant cousins to collaborate with on some of your family lines who may be able to read records you are having trouble with or otherwise work with you to solve questions you have.

5. When you connect your line into the tree you may find new ancestors that you did not know about before.
6. You can often figure out immediately how you are related to a new “DNA” cousin.
7. It is easy to send family members and distant cousins links to the family tree.
8. After you are dead and gone your research will live on.

The disadvantages of a one world tree can be that:

1. Other people will change facts and information that you knew were correct.
2. How can you be sure that another person’s research is reliable?
3. You need to be sure that living people have their privacy protected.

All of the ‘one world tree’ options have pros and cons (spelled out in detail in the article) but one thing we might particularly want to consider is that these sites don’t support bulk upload of existing data as this has the potential to corrupt the master tree. To work with them requires entering and/or matching information.

Despite the potential benefits, being part of a ‘one-world’ tree is likely to be more challenging for us as a next step. There might be a future in which we take this step and/or we may choose to contribute to one or more of the ‘one world’ trees in parallel, but it seems to me to be a step too far at this time.

Independent trees with options to share

Product	Details
Ancestry	<p>In 2012 Ancestry.com was acquired by Permira, a European private equity firm, for a whopping \$1.6 billion — a testament to the popularity of the field (and to the company itself). Ancestry sets the bar pretty high with 16 billion historical records in 60+ countries, excellent beginner and advanced search options, and an abundance of features. Ancestry is well known and extensively used. It has plenty of options for privacy as well as various levels of shared management and information sharing, but does get a bad name at times for the quality of data (due to people copying without verifying).</p> <p>The free account allows maintenance of trees of any size, with subscription required to utilise the hints it provides. The subscription can be for as little as a month at a time when needed (currently \$23 per month with discount for longer periods).</p> <p>Can be used in conjunction with Family Tree Maker (available for PC and Mac).</p>
My Heritage	<p>Based in Israel with U.S. offices in Utah and California, MyHeritage is one of the largest international genealogy sites with more than 88 million registered users. It has an intuitive platform, endless features including downloadable tree builder software. Their robust database of over 7 billion records is impressive but does not match that of Ancestry's 16 billion records.</p> <p>An annual subscription of at least \$160 per year is needed for trees with more than 250 people (payable annually). Can be used in conjunction with Family Tree Builder, a desktop app that has been PC only until recently (and the Mac version needs a lot of work!)</p>
RootsFinder	<p>Founded and developed by Dallan Quass (formerly CTO of FamilySearch.org), RootsFinder.com is a website for bringing genealogy hints to you in one centralised location. RootsFinder.com officially launched at RootsTech 2017 and was a semi-finalist in the Innovator Showdown.</p> <p>The website works by having integrations with other websites which allows for them to pull hints from websites such as FamilySearch.org, Billiongraves.com and others.</p> <p>It has a relatively modern design and is an interesting new option aiming to support serious research as well as ease of use for novices. Online trees can be maintained for free, but a relatively inexpensive subscription (approx \$US35 ~ \$A47 per year) is needed to remove annoying ads and make the tree private.</p> <p>One important difference between RootsFinder and the others is that there is an option to manually sync records with FamilySearch (the one world tree mentioned above). This means RootsFinder supports a privately managed tree that can selectively add records to the FamilySearch database – a good feature to consider.</p>

All of these options allow for data to be loaded initially from a GEDCOM file, ie we can export a standard formatted file of our data from our current programs and import it into any one of these three programs. There is some risk of data being changed/lost in this process, but we could do some cross-checking to minimise that risk (eg check the number of people who came over, check some known complex families etc). Importantly we would not have to retype everything, with all the risks of error that this would entail.

I have done some very preliminary testing of each of these sites, using an import of the William/John trees. This initial testing showed that all three had good features worth exploring. However, the annual subscription requirements for My Heritage may rule it out of consideration on a medium term basis unless we can find a way to fund the annual costs. It does seem to be a very useful system though and perhaps still worth considering further. The other two options could be used on a free or minimal cost basis.

I was initially attracted to RootsFinder as a new take on the online tree options, but there are a number of issues with it that may mean Ancestry proves to be the more suitable candidate for us at this stage (and I am leaning that way now, but not far enough to be sure).

I have only dabbled so far and have not completed enough testing to be in a position to be confident to demonstrate the options or to make a firm recommendation.

If the committee wants to seriously consider proceeding in this direction I could prepare further advice for the next meeting after more extensive testing.

c. Types of information that could (and couldn't) be included in an online tree

In the event that we decide to proceed with an online tree, consideration needs to be given to the extent of information that could/should be included as per the list below. All of the options listed above support recording of this information. Note that the range of information could be limited in the first instance and expanded gradually over time.

- (i) Upload all existing trees and maintain there, preferably in sync with at least one local desktop copy so we are not reliant on an online site only.
- (ii) Consider combining the trees for the related families into one tree (Jacob, John, William, Benjamin) rather than keeping separate. We have enough information to do this. Note that I have already combined the William and John trees in my Reunion copy as John was the first child of William. The only reason for keeping them apart in the book was because they migrated at different times.
- (iii) Consider the suitability of going online for the 'other Pitman families' in consultation with the families that 'own' those lines. It may help with collaboration (eg with Charles and Netta's son), or they may prefer to go it alone.

- (iv) Upload all photos from the book and attach to the relevant person (I have already done this for all the William and John branches in Reunion). Note that the upload can be done easily for Ancestry for the photos already linked in Reunion, but had to be linked again manually for RootsFinder.
- (v) Upload related historical material that the Committee has access to (eg Haidee's material, Ray's material), subject to establishing some criteria as to what we consider suitable/appropriate to upload for this purpose.
- (vi) Copy over the stories from the book that provide context and detail for the various early generations. This will take some careful proofing/editing as the text is only available by extracting it from the scanned copy (or retyping) but is feasible.
- (vii) Identify anything else that might contribute to a more complete representation of these family lines.

BUT the following information would not be able to be included in an online tree

- (viii) Contact details would need to be removed from the trees and relocated. When we moved the trees into genealogy programs we colocated the contact details there are well. This has been handy in one respect (the details are directly connected to the person in the tree) but has been a bit of a hassle for things like mailouts.

In all preliminary tests the address details have been messed up and put into free format notes, which makes it useless on two fronts. It wouldn't be possible to extract them easily and it would compromise privacy considerations when living people are visible. An alternative way to manage contact details would be needed.

- (ix) We can't include all our family sheet supporting documentation. It would be tempting to upload these and locate with the relevant family member for quick reference. Whatever the general pros and cons of doing this, most sheets contain some kind of contact information (email, phone, address) so should not be included, however strong the privacy controls.

AND the following would no longer be readily available

- (x) Descendant charts of the type we have used to publish trees. These have been very easily produced from Reunion but I have not found equivalent options in any of the online software, or their desktop counterparts. Many other styles are available, and this chart could be created if needed on a case by case basis, but would be missed. It has been used to send details to families to check as well as publish.

d. Access considerations for an online tree

(i) Public and private trees

All three of the independent tree options mentioned above (Ancestry, MyHeritage and RootsFinder) provide good access controls to the information. In particular, all options distinguish between public and private trees but in a slightly different way.

In Ancestry public trees are available to anyone with an Ancestry paid subscription, ie they can search for the person and find them on that public tree. Details of living people are suppressed but placeholders are visible (eg they can see there are 3 living children). People who have a free (basic) Ancestry account cannot see the public trees by default, but they can see them if individually invited to view the trees.

RootsFinder's public trees are available to anyone, even without their own free login. They can be accessed using a URL (although I am yet to fully understand how to do this properly). Living people disappear completely from the tree which makes the display rather odd in some cases. There is some indication that this might be changed, but if not, it is a negative for this software.

In both cases private trees are only available to people specifically invited to view or edit the tree. Ancestry provides options as to whether the invited person should be able to see living people or not on a person by person basis. With RootsFinder individual access always includes living people. I haven't looked closely enough at MyHeritage to know how it hands public and private trees but is similar.

The Committee should have a view as to whether we would want to make the trees available as widely as possible or restricted on a person by person basis.

(ii) Who owns/controls the master copy?

In order to effectively share management of the family trees, the master copy would have to be the online copy, possibly 'owned' by the committee rather than an individual (using a committee email address).

We would need to avoid relying on an online copy only and to ensure there are adequate backups/controls in the event of corruption of one or more aspects of the trees.

In the case of RootsFinder it is easy to export a GEDCOM file (standard genealogical family tree format) as a backup but this doesn't hold all the information, especially any photos. It is also a manual process and would have to be performed as a manual backup after any changes.

Ancestry supports synchronising between a desktop copy (held in Family Tree Maker) and the online copy and this includes photo/document management. The sync is manually instigated and a log of potential changes can be reviewed

before the sync is done. That said, further testing is needed to see how best to store photos and documents in this scenario.

(iii) **Who has access to view or update the master copy?**

It should be possible for several people to maintain the trees if/as needed. Depending on how well the software tracks the changes, we may need to have some standard procedures in place to avoid unintended changes or confusion.

In addition we would need clear guidelines regarding who should be allowed to view the trees online (with or without living people visible) and/or contribute information (photos? stories?). The nature of these guidelines will largely depend on the option selected so it would be premature to try to work this out too early.

e. Cost considerations for an online tree

Given the size of our trees, MyHeritage would require a commitment of at least \$160 per year, which may be more than we would be prepared to consider.

Both Ancestry and RootsFinder have free options that can be considered. In the case of Ancestry the free option is probably sufficient for our immediate needs, as the paid subscription is more about access to published resources and other people's trees than maintaining our own. There is also the option of paying for just a month at a time and cancelling again without losing any access to our work. We can never be sure, though, that these conditions will stay the same forever, and we may face costs in the future.

RootsFinder is very new, and its free option does quite a bit. The paid option is very inexpensive at this time and is based on removing ads rather than access to resources. If cost is a major consideration (and I think it is), we are probably going to be narrowing down to Ancestry and RootsFinder as our main options to consider more seriously.

4. NEXT STEPS

To make further progress, it would be helpful if the Committee could discuss and advise whether or not it is timely to proceed with further investigation of online family trees. If so:

- whether to investigate independent trees (with sharing) rather than one world trees;
- any views on the types of information to be included in the trees (3c above);
- any views on who should be able to access the online trees (to update or view);
- any views on who should be able to see living people in the trees.