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Confession & Motives
in the Crewe Murders
Cold Case

John Ingley

I Fed the Baby

Confession & Motives
in the
Crewe Murders Cold Case



Confession & Motives
in the
Crewe Murders Cold Case

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**I Fed the Baby - Confession & Motives in the
Crewe Murder Cold Case/John Ingley.**

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from the National Library of New Zealand**

DEDICATION

To John Hilton INGLEY

(25 July 1943 - 3 July 2017)

Author, Investigator ...

... a fearless truth seeker



The Demler family on the occasion of Jeannette's 'Coming Out' party from St Cuthbert's in 1958 at the age of 18. From left: Lenard William, daughters Jeannette Lenore and Dianne Heather, with their mother, May (Maisie) Constance (nee Chennells).



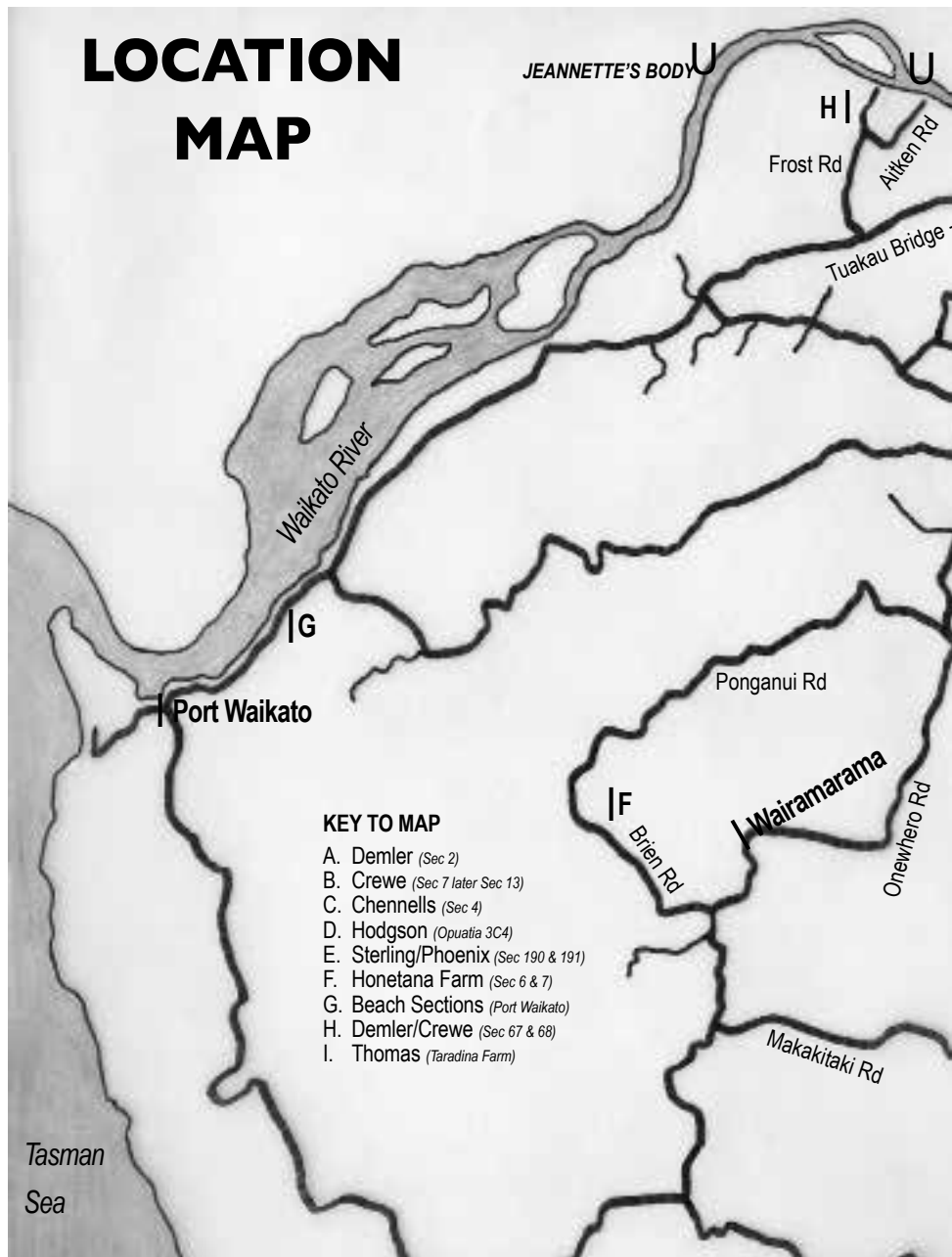
Posing with the bridal couple, Harvey and Jeannette on 18 June 1966 are his mother Marie Crewe (left) with Len and Maisie Demler on the right.

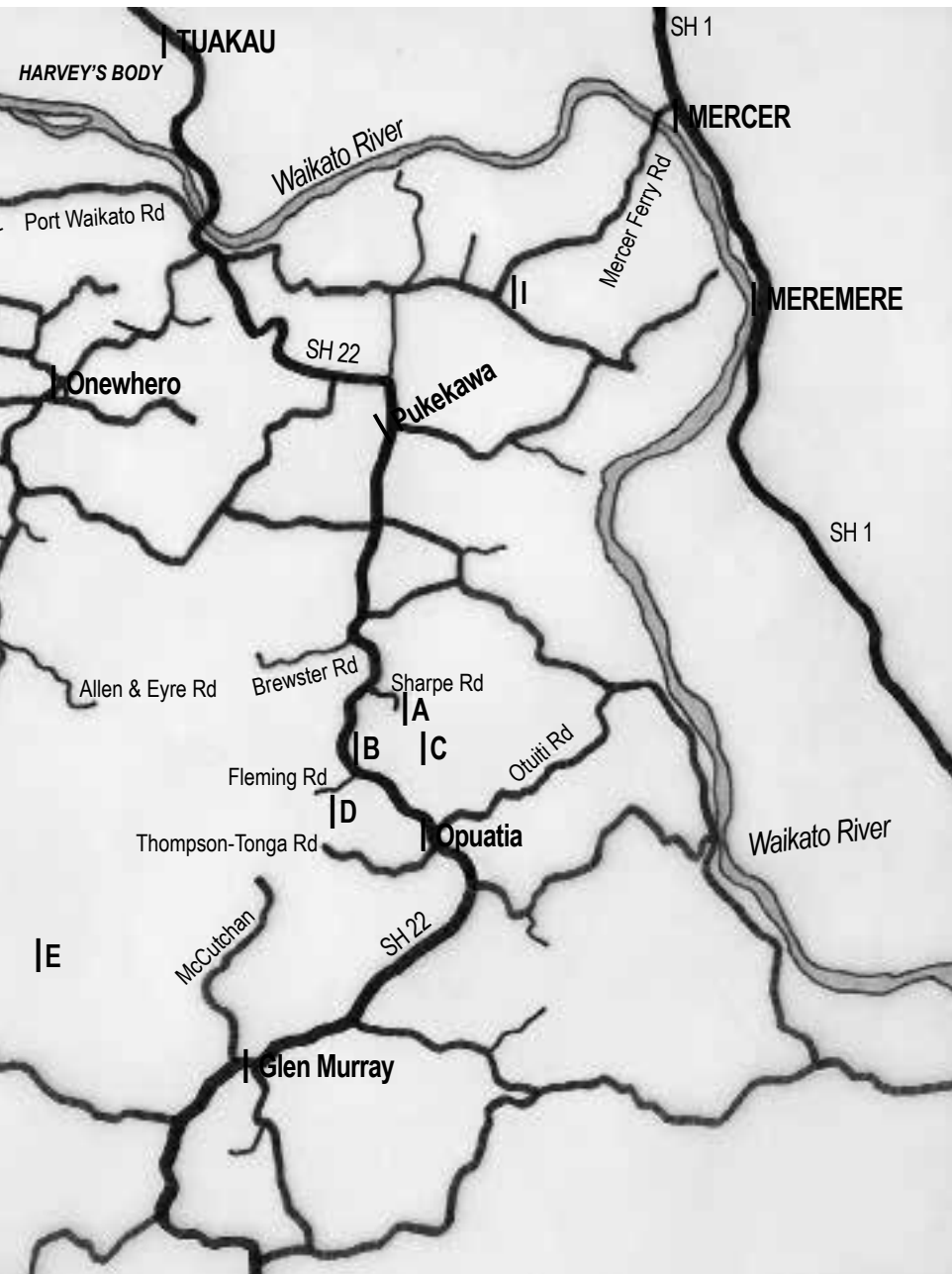


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LOCATION MAP







JOHN INGLEY

Editor's Respects

John Hilton Ingley passed away on 3 May 2017 after 40 years of patient and relentless research into finding the killers of Harvey and Jeannette Crewe.

This however does not mean that his findings will be shelved. This saga is not over yet! There is more than enough information in this book to point the authorities to the people responsible for this heinous crime and there are too many loose ends and unanswered questions to earn a definitive 'case closed' sticker.

At this stage I do not know where the finishing line is but I do know it will take official resources and deeper pockets than ours to bring this saga to closure, that is, if the will is there to achieve justice.

I had made a promise to John on his death bed to get his work published and in doing so I need to give readers some background to my involvement and why John needed someone to professionally present the facts he had sought to discover.

He was on the verge of despair when he first approached me in 2010 to ask if I was willing to help him put together a book on what turned out to be New Zealand's most controversial "cold case". This fact, during the initial course of sounding me out, did not fully surface until he had the confidence that I was able to help.

I soon learned that John was in the habit of playing his cards close to his chest and it did take quite a while to build up a relationship of mutual trust and respect. Sadly John had been bitten too many times by others as you will find at times noted throughout his text.

What John was prepared to tell me, without initially letting out too much information, was enough for me to respond with some positive answers. I did though have the expectation that he had already unearthed documented evidence that could not be disputed. As time went on I was suitably impressed with his depth of research along with the seemingly never ending side issues.

John read and studied every book written and collected a range

Hospitals get tough on foreign freeloaders • The private passions of Owen Glenn

NORTH & SOUTH

**DAMNING NEW
REVELATIONS**

WHO FED ROCHELLE CREWE?

• the mystery women
• how the police sidelined
two key witnesses in the
framing of Arthur
Allan Thomas



Chris Birt's cover story in the June 2011 issue of North & South was almost screaming with agony with their headline "Who Fed Rochelle Crewe?" John Ingley answers that question plus others that have baffled the nation for almost 50 years. The reader will discover facts that the police either failed to unearth or suppressed and despite being led down many depressing dead ends, John did not give up. In 2006 he tried to sum up his feelings with this plea: "Is there anybody out there who is not mixed up or related to this case? Who knows more about the rotten affair than I have written? Then, please stand up and be counted. I am not perfect, I am human, I make mistakes like most of us." He too did get mixed up, but he did stand up!

of news items plus more importantly searching land and other official records.

THE PHANTOM WOMAN OF PUKEKAWA

During the early stages of his investigations John was also sharing snippets of information with others particularly *North & South* feature writer Chris Birt. His cover story in the magazine's June 2011 issue attempted to answer the questions everyone was asking but like many others, Chris failed to get close enough to John's "truth".

Of interest with Birt's article was a quote from Social Credit leader Bruce Beetham, (NZ Herald, 17 November 1978) that basically asked all the relevant questions that needed answers and until now, still remain unanswered.

Beetham wrote: "One critical question which keeps coming up is, 'Who is the phantom who keeps recurring in this story?' Who was the phantom who fed the child; the phantom who was seen in the garden of the [Crewes'] property on Friday 19 June; the phantom who dressed Rochelle Crewe or the child similarly dressed seen in the garden and who then put her back in her cot on Saturday 20 June; the phantom who shifted the Crewes' car; the phantom who fed the Crewes' dogs and now the phantom who lit the fire [sparks and smoke were seen coming from the Crewe chimney on the Friday night]. If these and other questions are not adequately answered, the Thomas case may remain the single biggest blot on the history of criminal law in New Zealand."

The last sentence proved to be prophetic.

CONNECTING DOTS

John did talk a lot about the difficulties he had in connecting the dots and of the ongoing frustration he had in dealing with the lies-especially when he was getting too close to the bone. On several occasions his life was threatened, a fact that he preferred to downplay.

He knew there was something terribly wrong going on but didn't have a clue as to what the whole picture was at that point in time. Nor did he know why certain people had turned on him and made his life unpleasant. He wrote this about his early investigations by saying, "Little did I know it would stick with me for many years ahead."

Initially John was struggling to understand why people were getting

I Fed The Baby – John Ingley

hostile and when he realised there was a code of silence among family members he also knew threads of truth were being distorted. Much important evidence had been and was being systematically destroyed.

John's investigations had gone down a completely different path than others before him and quite simply he was becoming a threat because people thought he knew too much. The reality was that John was, in actual fact, hundreds of steps behind the play and when he started to catch up (ever so slowly) the dots he was trying to connect up started to speak.

STARTED TO MAKE MORE SENSE

It's like watching a murder mystery unfold on TV or reading a gripping novel—all the facts had not yet been revealed but as the plot thickened and as the unknowns came together it all started to make a lot more sense as possible motives were uncovered.

John's 40 year journey of discovery was exactly like this but it would not answer all the questions. His book though will provide answers if the reader reads between the lines. Readers will be surprised at what pops out of the woodwork as John's detective work untangles itself. It should be said, sooner rather than later, that this book needs to be read in proper context . . .

While John has tried to be honest and upfront with his opinion, speculation, suspicions and gut feelings, he has held back with making public much of his research involving the family members who were not on the front line. He believed they all knew much more than they let on. He has done this in good faith but hopes some will come forward to plug some of the gaps he found difficult to verify.

John's biggest frustration was in dealing with "the system" and the attitude that is bred into it. It became obvious to me that John had acquired extreme patience from his experiences. He also gained certain "dog with a bone" skills to never take an absolute no for an answer that he invariably knew, but needed confirmation. This is why he had the tenacity to stick to it by pushing aside the hurdles he was forced to jump!

He said many times that it was his undying devotion to finding the answers to this tragic crime that kept him committed but his perseverance was not without heavy cost particularly to his health.

At one stage he wrote: "What really keeps me going as a solitary private investigator is the understanding that the truth will eventually

come out regardless of whether I supply all the answers or whether failing health will beat me”.

WILL JUSTICE EVER BE SERVED?

And it was failing health that did beat him in the end. It had certainly caused delays over the past five years particularly in finding answers to those elusive facts. It is within this area that today's authorities can make a difference. His dying wish was for the “win at all costs” politics to be put aside and hopefully people who had the right attitude would commit themselves to finding the truth and seeing the real meaning of justice being served. He wasn't enamoured with 2014 Police Review, for example, but agreed with some of their conclusions

In giving an example of dealing with elusive facts, John found that material he had accessed 20 or 30 years ago was officially no longer available. He was in a situation where the dots were starting to join up and tended to make more sense as new information surfaced. He was ending up with varying interpretations so needed to go back to earlier archival files to verify, or decode, further documents. This was when the bureaucratic system (or person) came back and told him the files no longer existed.

It will come as no surprise, after knowing of the devious tactics that went on with the Arthur Allan Thomas saga, of official brick walls. John knew the files he was after were important enough not to be destroyed. He also believed that the information they contained had now become super-sensitive and just like with the critical missing police files the authorities were now covering their butts.

In these situations he had the feeling he was finally getting close to the truth, so readers can imagine his reaction. That's why, throughout this book, he often tells it like it is.

UPSETTING PEOPLE IN HIGH PLACES

Bear in mind also that he was not the only one who had ran foul of “the system” and upset those in high places, people he believed would never let him publish his book. He was specifically talking about those who were not spending, or risking, their own money and apart from protecting their source of income were not acting in the best interests of researchers digging for the truth.

John had repeatedly exclaimed, “This is not an effing game! Innocent people have had their lives disrupted. Just ask Arthur Allan

I Fed The Baby – John Ingley

Thomas (and many others) who have served time for something they didn't do." Not only that, "the system" has shamefully and without guilt gobbled up more undeserving victims.

The system has a lot to answer for and in the words of others who have constantly raised the issue, "New Zealand may have a world class legal system but not necessarily a justice system". Many are caught up with a perception that what we have is non-discriminatory and only unfair to those who know they are innocent.

FAILURE TO WORK AS A TEAM

Arthur Thomas knew he was innocent of the charges laid against him and so did his supporters. The reason why he was convicted twice for murder was in part due to the failure of the system to work as a team. The prosecution and defence were not operating on level playing fields. It was lop-sided as the Crown had unlimited resources and coupled with the win-at-all-cost attitude, deliberately withheld evidence, distorted facts and planted evidence to protect their hare-brained theory of the actual shooting.

It is quite easy now in hindsight to see how far-fetched their theories actually were and when they tried to stitch-up Arthur Thomas with a planted bullet shell, it finally became the straw that broke the camel's back. The public outcry and anger that followed was justified but it didn't change the way the justice system operates.

Can you imagine if the defence had been able to access all the interviews and evidence available to the Crown? The jury could have proudly claimed to have heard all the evidence and as a result could have saved the taxpayer from forking out the million dollar payout.

In closing I am again reminded of some of the last words John Ingley said to me before he passed. "Don't forget, there are a number of people who know what happened" but they choose to remain silent, particularly the lady who fed the baby.

- RON COOKE (Editor)

Preface

The Preface of New Zealand Police CREWE Homicide Review of 2014, written by Detective Superintendent Andrew J Lovelock, gives a succinct and accurate summary of the Crewe murders. This Preface quotes Pages 11-14 verbatim (includes surnames in capital letters).

On 18 June 1966, David Harvey CREWE (known as Harvey) married Jeannette Lenore DEMLER at St George Church, Ranfurly Road, Epsom, Auckland. Jeannette thereafter was known as Jeannette CREWE.

The couple took up residence at the farmhouse of a 340 acre property on State Highway 22 at Pukekawa.

The property had been bequeathed to Jeannette and her sister,



Harvey and Jeannette Crewe on their wedding day, 18 June 1966.

I Fed The Baby

Dianne Heather DEMLER (known as Heather), by her uncle Howard CHENNELLS, who died following an accident in 1950.

Prior to his marriage to Jeannette, Harvey CREWE arranged to purchase a half share of the property from Heather, who was resident in the United States of America. The sale was completed in August 1966.

Jeannette's parents, Lenard and May DEMLER, owned and occupied the adjoining 465 acre farm. The CREWES worked hard on the property and were viewed as successful farmers, running both sheep and beef stock.

In 1967, the CREWE farmhouse was burgled and jewellery items and other personal property belonging to Jeannette were stolen.

In December 1968, Jeannette gave birth to their daughter, Rochelle.

A week later, on 7 December 1968, whilst the CREWES were absent from the property, a fire occurred in a spare bedroom at the property. There was a suspicion that the fire may have been caused by a cigarette or an electrical fault, however, the CREWES believed that it was the result of arson.

Six months later on 28 May 1969, a hay barn located on the property near the CREWE farmhouse caught fire and was a total loss. Again, the cause was not definitively established (it was ruled as spontaneous combustion) and may have been the result of arson.

On 17 June 1970, the CREWES were murdered in their farmhouse.

On 22 June 1970, the scene and the CREWES' disappearance was discovered.

Eighteen-month-old Rochelle was found unharmed in her cot by Lenard DEMLER. Evidence of violent activity was observed in the lounge of the CREWE farmhouse. Both Harvey and Jeannette were missing. A Police investigation commenced into their disappearance, which was viewed as a potential homicide at an early stage.

Extensive searches over large areas of farmland proved unsuccessful.

On 16 August 1970, Jeannette's body was located in the Waikato

River. She had been shot with a single .22 bullet to the head.

On 16 September 1970, the [sic] Harvey's body was also located in the Waikato River. He, too, had been shot with a single .22 bullet to the head.

From the outset, the Police investigation focussed on Lenard DEMLER as being the likely culprit.

From mid-October 1970, as a result of evidence located on the THOMAS family farm, Arthur Allan THOMAS emerged as a significant person of interest and suspect. On 11 November 1970, Arthur THOMAS was arrested and charged with the double murder.

In February 1971, following a Supreme Court trial in Auckland, Arthur THOMAS was convicted of the double murder and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Initial appeals that followed were unsuccessful.

As a result of the Court of Appeal considering that the conviction of Arthur THOMAS was unsafe, he was granted a re-trial that was held in April 1973.

Again Arthur THOMAS was convicted of the double murder and his life sentence re-imposed.

Public opinion supported by media and journalistic interest, coupled with lobbying to Government, led to a review of the CREWE murders by an independent Queens Counsel. This review resulted in a report to the Prime Minister which concluded that the case against Arthur THOMAS may not have been established beyond reasonable doubt.

In December 1979, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, the Governor-General granted Arthur THOMAS a free pardon.

In 1980, the Government appointed a Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCOI) to examine the circumstances that led to the conviction of Arthur THOMAS for the murder of the CREWES.

The findings of the RCOI identified the Officer-in-Charge of the homicide investigation, Detective Inspector Bruce HUTTON, and one of his investigators, Detective Lenrick JOHNSTON, as being guilty of corruption. The RCOI found that they had fabricated evidence by planting a .22 cartridge case (Police Exhibit 350) that had been fired by a rifle owned by Arthur THOMAS in the CREWE

I Fed The Baby

garden, for the purposes of incriminating him.

Further, the RCOI found that during the second trial Detective Inspector HUTTON was responsible for fabricating evidence in that he exchanged Police Exhibit 343, a .22 brass cartridge case found on the THOMAS farm, with another brass cartridge case that matched Police Exhibit 350.

The Review Team [2014 Report] record that former Detective Lenrick JOHNSTON died in 1978 and that former Detective Inspector Bruce HUTTON died in 2013.

Detective JOHNSTON obviously could not have given evidence at the RCOI to defend himself. Former Detective Inspector HUTTON did give evidence and was disbelieved on a number of issues by the Commissioners.

The RCOI recommended that Arthur THOMAS receive over one million dollars in compensation, which was agreed to by Government and paid.

Publisher's Introduction

The double murder of Harvey & Jeanette Crewe in June of 1970 mesmerised the New Zealand public as the related events were literally front-page news at the time—usually daily—and for years.

Theories and accusations flowed freely along with claims of bias, corruption, self-interest and greed to the highest levels within New Zealand's, judiciary, policing and political leadership at the time.

Media and personalities too copped flak from a public who lost faith in those they had previously respected. Could the Police 'really' plant evidence then use that to convict an innocent man?

The events spawned serious and long-term media activity with a raft of books, magazine articles, TV documentaries, radio reports and newspaper articles enough to fill a library.

While many questions remained from those heady days of fever-pitch inquiry, trials, and town gossip, the pardon of Allan Arthur Thomas (the man falsely charged with and imprisoned for the crime) really left the key question naked and unanswered . . . "If Thomas didn't do it, then who did?"

Many consider the identity of a mystery woman (or women) seen at the scene in the days following the murders as a key to unlocking the [now] cold case. If somebody had fed the baby, she must have at least known the identity of the killers, surely? Or a more tantalising thought was, could she even be the killer?

At Whangarei in 1976, John Ingle, a bushman looking for love, stumbled innocently into the centre of this drama by answering a 'seeking company' advert around six years after the tragedy. It took him a few years to understand the significance of multiple weird events and chance comments relating to the Crewe murders in his relationship with the woman he had hitched up with, but get there he did, eventually.

This book contains his story, his experiences and his findings in 40 years of unraveling fact from fabrication. Like all successful

I Fed The Baby – John Ingley

investigators, he learned to ‘follow the money’ and this brought him into the centre of ‘the murders that refuse to be solved’.

The three key factors in his contribution are the identity of the woman who fed the baby; his identification of the murder weapon and a detailed explanation of the financial motive—all three factors that have supposedly eluded the Police for decades.

TWIST OF FATE

A semi-literate bushman turned private investigator by a twist of fate that one could never have scripted better for incredulity, he received a direct confession from the key individual that would, for him, break open this cold case.

This man possessed the simple free-thinking but logical mind that just asked questions. John also had the will to find ways to eventually get the answers. His training and experience as a bushman and hunter gave him the skills to see the big picture and to find ways to work around and through challenges deliberately designed to distract and confuse others.

If a difficult tree was to fall a certain way it would then be nigh on impossible to drag it to the mill. Therefore he **MUST** fell it another way. Simple and logical to a bushman; so he’d find a way to fell it where others had passed it by.

If the Crewes had intended to sell and move to another district, they would be likely to build their assets that they would be keeping and not invest into the ones they were leaving—surely? Thus their investment into their stock and not their house.

If a certain family line benefited from a murder and another didn’t then wouldn’t this be a motive? To a bushman this was all logical and explained many of the things others struggled with.

For example, if their family had acted as bankers to many in the community, would they not want to call in their loans in order to buy elsewhere? Would this planned event by the Crewes not add to widespread concerns within the extended family clans and the Pukekawa community who were indebted to them? And if this was a widespread concern among those who had a lot to lose . . . is this not a strong motive—one of the constantly missing components of the puzzle?

John’s simple mind and ingrained training from upbringing to

Publisher's Introduction

do the honourable thing—to know, respect and understand natural justice—gave him the dogged determination (spoken of previously) needed to push on and on for decades to find the facts.

As he said himself in recalling his investigative years, “I could have stopped at any time, admitting that I was wrong . . . but the evidence kept on showing me that I wasn’t!”

Yes there were times, indeed many times, that in frustration and despair he gave in and left “his book” for relative peace and quiet of operating his noisy sawmill. That ‘peace’ never lasted though and return to the government agencies he would, seeking a copy of yet another Will, Probate or Property Transfer.

At times he would see ‘her’ (or her sister) across the street—in Hamilton, in Auckland, in Te Kuiti or in Whangarei. “Did you see that lady cross the street?” he would ask his youngest daughter who in his latter years was invited (some may say ‘dragged’) in on the hunt with him. “That was her! That was the woman who fed the baby!”

RELENTLESS SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH

Through decades of barriers thrown up to deny him the proof he sought, he undertook a relentless search for the truth.

He pushed aside the pain and struggled against his personal health challenges that eventually got to him. He wrote and wrote and rewrote, despite the dyslexia that had plagued him from childhood and did everything it could to cripple his literary productivity.

He ignored the taunts and mocking of professionals, officialdom and other authors and investigators who had been there years before him and John pushed onwards until he had no more.

John departed us in 2017 and as someone close to him said, “He was a tough old rooster. I’ll never know how he did what he did and stuck to it for so long!”

I found John’s investigation intriguing in that he has established similar facts to others but he achieved this through different channels. He has also brought a unique skill set to the equation—he is neither a policeman, lawyer, newsman, writer nor any professional investigator, yet his investigation has the ring of truth and most likely a comprehensive and highly valuable analysis of the Crewe murders.

PROMISE ON DEATHBED

My name is Dennis. I am a licensed Private Investigative Blogger. In March 2019, I purchased the business of Ron Cooke, a King Country celebrity and well-known local historian. Following more than half a dozen years of “work” on it, Ron had promised John Ingley on his deathbed that he would ensure that “his book” would be published. I inherited that commitment, but I view this responsibility, as more of an honour.

Ron has completed the donkey work—taking John’s copious but disjointed notes and putting them into a coherent, logical order. Ron is a worthy, accurate and professional historian in that sense. John was lucky to find Ron and wise to entrust his life’s work to him.

As John has left us and Ron prepares to retire, we bring this story to you with the deepest respect for the men upon whose shoulders we stand.

STRENGTH IN JOHN’S ANALYSIS

I have brought legal minds into the equation, tweaked a few little odds and ends and I concur with the thrust of John’s conclusions. In particular, I see strength in his analysis of the systemic adversity that he fought in his research [I put this down to human nature] . . . as well as a deliberate conspiracy of silence within the fluid inter-generational family dynamics of those involved.

I think in that sense, that John had an excellent understanding looking back on the events of the last 40 years.

It speaks volumes that evidence was planted in order to secure a conviction and that an innocent man was incarcerated for so long despite two trials and many futile approaches for reason. This is evidence of a blinkered mindset of those with agendas in more than one sector of the New Zealand community.

Understand that in almost five decades the Police haven’t even a motive, nor a realistic suspect, nor a confirmed murder weapon. Even the 2014 Police Review Team approached the case with the same flawed manner as the initial investigation, essentially ‘covering butts’ and validating existing conduct, although confessing briefly to failures.

His mistrust of other investigators too, gels with me, for in

my game I see how money blinds most if ego doesn't, and the guesswork, self-interest and perhaps to some extent corruption are all understandable to one like me, with skin in the game.

The claims of Ian Wishart (that 'bad cop' Ian Johnston did it) are lambasted in the 2014 Review e.g. "... what can only be described as an outlandish claim" yet while speculation unsupported by evidence, Wishart most definitely connected some dots correctly, whereas the Police didn't!

As a relative newbie to researching this cold case (I was a teenager while the main events were unfolding), I must respect his conclusions that there was a team of people working the murders for the gain of more than one. John's belief of who the key players are surely the most logical of all presented to the public thus far.

John has, after all, done the research that most of us haven't. John also had, a five-year intimate relationship with the woman who fed the baby and then tracked her for decades thereafter—I certainly didn't although if she had Police Protection, some knew perfectly well who she was!

In regards to the Crewe murders, all signs point to a female led operation from the background with a long-term campaign of intimidation for years prior, generally trending towards the murders activated with relatively short notice but actually the setup was well planned. It is too dramatic to talk of a "war" but this idea of inter-family rivalry and tensions (particularly in relation to land and wills) is critical to understanding the full situation.

NAMES TO REMEMBER

In the final chapters, John fingers Alf Hodgson's twin stepsons (Geoffrey and Donald Gurney) as the muscle but the substantial end beneficiaries included Alf's wife Rose Amy, Len Demler's new wife (Norma), Len's preferred daughter, Heather Souter (nee Demler) and Len's solicitor (Colin Sturrock).

He also explains clearly how Len Demler was intimately involved in the planning, assistance, body disposal and misinformation campaign that followed but John believed that he was not present at the time of the murders.

The woman who confessed to feeding the baby, is [Pamela-Anne] Leslee Sinton (nee Howard) now with another surname. She

I Fed The Baby – John Ingley

was born on 6 October 1947 at Whangarei. Her younger sister was born in 1949 then another half a dozen siblings at regular intervals thereafter. Her mother is Bernice and her father is Allan. She is therefore one of the clan—one of the families of English extraction that have resided in the Pukekawa region for generations. She is an insider.

There have also been incidents where look-alikes have been identified—sisters and wigs and other deception techniques have been used thus correct identification is not a simple lineal process such as expected in the typical movie-style Police identity lineups. These women deceived John many times.

On 30 March 1980 in a moment of emotional confusion, Leslee confessed to John that she not only fed the baby but that she helped clean up after the murders. If she was perhaps drunk at the time she confessed or there was no further supporting clues one could write this confession off as lunacy. John, and I (having worked through his research) believe her on this though, and for many good reasons.

Emotional confusion can be a psychiatric issue or symptom of PTSD or Mind Control, particularly strong in cases of childhood trauma. John's repeated noting of unusual events along the lines of those conducting a secret double-life, also indicate Police Protection activities surrounding Leslee and the others associated with her.

Deception is rarely a simple binary matter, especially when this is widespread, long-term and inter-generational.

John's analysis concludes that Harvey Crewe was shot in the head outside, in or near the East gate, with a .22 pistol [a Ladies Companion with a pearl or ivory inlay that he had personally sighted on 25 September 1976], then dragged in through the front door of the Crewe House.

Jeanette struggled and paid for this with severe injuries prior to death, eventually killed with the same .22 pistol. There were at least two males involved at the time and at least two women involved probably at the time but most certainly shortly thereafter.

Let the story begin. John, over to you . . .

DENNIS A. SMITH
Managing Director, Abundant Past Ltd

About the Author

This chapter gives a little of my background, where I grew up and went to school, my hunting skills and what that taught me about patience and failure. Then, as a bushman and about how I eventually ended up in Whangarei and met the woman who later fell on the floor . . .

I am the eldest of two boys and three sisters—in age order: Janet, John, Ann, Charles and Laurel. My parents were Albert and Jean Ingley. Albert arrived in New Zealand from England at the age of three months to live with his grandparents at Waitara until the age of 10 or 11.

At three months of age I was not expected to live. I was found to have polio/meningitis but I survived with the aid of modern drugs and medicine—one of many near misses throughout my life.

I was born in the middle of 1943 at Taumarunui. The heavy snow bound roads in the National Park/Erua area where my father worked were a problem. His chain-equipped Model A Ford was the car of the day and was our most reliable means of transport.

As a four year old we lived at Ruamata where the heather and tussock grows on barren plains and the desolate pumice roads led nowhere. I remember the brumbies on the plains, all colours; the big black river Kura; the snow and isolation; candles and kerosene lamps were all part of country life.

By the age of nine I was at Ongarue learning about the safe use of .22 and 303 rifles in the period of no bullets, no meat—we were only allowed a limit of two shells per day! These limitations were just a part of the skills learned when hunting.

Soon after, my grandfather offered me further ‘education’ after hearing I had shot a nice 160 lb boar with a .22. He muttered, “Bloody fool” then out loud, “Good boy!” What I had interpreted was to stand my ground on matters of determination and patience—

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the word failure was never mentioned.

Later on, around the age of 14, I was introduced to a stand of totara some of which were five foot through, to cut for posts. I also saw the other end of a six-foot bar of an IEL chainsaw owned by my uncle Don Wilson, a bushman of high esteem and skills. His knowledge and my father's values on what is right and wrong, remains with me today.

The patience and skills needed to research this book in my undying devotion to finding the answers to this tragic crime, are not without heavy cost. What really keeps me going as a solitary private investigator is the understanding that the truth will eventually come out regardless of whether I supply all the answers or whether my failing health causes more hold-ups.

JOINING THE WORKFORCE

By the time I left school I had already been introduced to the timber industry and over the years worked for Ellis & Burnand (E&B) at Ongarue as an apprentice sawdoctor/machinist under Basil Maud. I was working, by the age of 19, for Fletchers at Tokoroa, various other companies included Borum Bros at Western Bays, Speirs & Jackson at Waipa, Reg Hansen at Orini and became an all-rounder in the industry.

Taking a break during the early 1970s saw a new direction in hunting professionally for Berg's Game while based at my parents' farm at Waione near Ongarue.

Much later on I worked overseas for Foxwood Timbers in Solomon Islands and Novac Timbers Vanuatu. I came back home to Te Kuiti in 1986 and have worked for myself ever since.

ARRIVAL AT WHANGAREI

Now back to the 1970s. Eventually, at 7:30am on 2 June 1976 I said goodbye to my parents, jumped into my Mk II Zephyr and headed on my way to a new job to work for a sawmiller by the name of Ivan McMillan, known affectionally as "Mad Mac".

Upon arriving Whangarei I found the working conditions terrible. The portable mill Ivan owned was cutting kauri, some four foot through. All the good logs were gone and there was mud up to your guts and the whole thing about it was, it kept raining.

Before the end of the month the mill I was shifted to Ruakaka

and set up in a quarry where nearby stood the biggest and ugliest line of macrocarpa trees I had ever seen—three deep, 400 yards long. There was a problem though. Nobody wanted them and it still kept raining.

LADY COMPANION WANTED

On arriving home during this period, Mac with a grin and being a man of wit and humour, told me of an advertisement in the local paper that was the answer to all my problems. It said: “Companion Wanted”—and yes he had also made arrangements for me to meet this person who lived not far away on Kamo Road.

The mill had not cut much because of the weather and as I had time on my hands, I decided to visit the promising “lady companion”. Upon arriving at the address I noticed the house was an old villa, made of kauri, maybe 60 years old and in poor repair. It needed re-blocking, repainting—in fact, the works.

A knock on the door was answered by a petite woman with a pleasant voice called Leslee. After introducing ourselves she asked me in for a cup of tea. This was the start of a shaky relationship.

TEARS ON THE CARPET

One day, while watching some contractors putting in a concrete lawn strip, Leslee commented on the price and I noticed the job was not up to standard. A few words in an ear or two found the job back on track at less cost. After that most of the costing for repairs to the house were partly mine.

One day there were tears on the carpet and foot stamping. The price for the re-blocking of the house was on the table and way too high. I decided to get another quote or two. Some contractors I found re-piled houses costed by the block. As a result two contractors applied for the job.

I found out that the house was off the ground which meant plenty of room with no digging for access and I stated this. The job was done within the week with a saving of \$600 from the old price.

Suddenly I was becoming a knight in shining armour and it didn’t need Einstein to work out that I couldn’t put a foot wrong.

My next step towards earning more Brownie points was when the stainless sink arrived. The workmen had said it was cut to perfection but it was actually 20 millimetres out on two angles and

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had no show of fitting properly. I sent it back. There were tears on the carpet again. A note I put on the sink stated no money would be paid until the job was complete. The next time round the sink fitted nicely, thank you very much!

I was on a roll and met the mother, Bernice Howard. She had a craft shop in central Whangarei and the father Allan worked for the hardware firm, Carters.

Although not knowing it at the time, the Howard family became a crucial link in getting to the bottom of this tangled web of deceit and greed. Allan and Bernice lived in a nice old villa on Mill Rd with the grandmother living on the other side of Mill Rd not far way.

NOT TAKING MUCH NOTICE

More about this family later but one day after work I saw a photo in a newspaper on the table of a woman holding a baby. I believe there was a reward but I did not take much notice of it.

Recollections came back at odd times as I tried to remember seemingly insignificant things like noticing Leslee had a top plate for the two centre teeth—she used to roll it around when she got a bit irate, otherwise her teeth are perfect. I asked her about the teeth. The answer was abrupt: “It was an accident!” And that was the last time it was ever mentioned.

Another time I saw a photo of an uniformed nurse on the mantelpiece. Yes, she had done some training as a nurse and did not like it. Funny, I never saw the photo again. There was also another photo of a car, a blue coloured 1970 Corona, that was dismissed with only a brief mention that it was brand new and wonderful to drive.

It is impossible to remember all that was said in this period, when only hearing part of the truth, and it frustrates me now that I didn't ask more questions or follow up as other related information came to hand later.

Sometimes the days with this woman were very moody. I put it down to her being a widow who had lost her husband in 1974. Never mind, the house was taking shape, the mill was cutting again and I had no idea what the future was going to throw at me.

I also continue to think about mail I saw way back then on the table addressed to another person—Pamela-Ann Howard . . .

1

Evils of this World

One of the most sensational and documented murder mysteries in New Zealand remains unsolved regardless of an innocent man being sent to prison for murders he did not commit . . .

Anyone who was alive during the 1970s would have known most of the details or followed with keen interest the events as they unfolded during and after the brutal murders of Harvey and Jeannette Crewe at Pukekawa on 17 June 1970.

The public either accepted the Crown's case that Arthur Allan Thomas was guilty as charged or were convinced he was innocent. When the result of the 1980 Royal Commission was released the latter group felt justified that a serious miscarriage of justice had occurred.

If it was the latter group then the most common question has been and still is, "If Arthur Allan Thomas didn't kill the Crewes then who did?"

The whole truth may never ever be fully known. Too much water has passed under the bridges on the Waikato River to be absolutely sure, beyond reasonable doubt, of who actually committed the crime.

I absolutely believe there was more than one person involved and I would stick my neck out and say at least three or four others had been at the scene before the Police arrived four days later.

At this stage I do not want to rehash the events that followed except to put forward my own theories on how this awful situation had reached the point of murder, what went wrong on that fateful day, why it was necessary for a lot of people to cover their butts, why nobody has been charged and finally, most importantly, what has happened to the family legacy and who ultimately benefited?

To my mind the guts of this sorry saga is intertwined with the unfamiliar words found in wills along with the complicated and often confusing structures of many family (or farming) trusts

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(especially in England) set up basically to protect one's assets from the evils of this world.

Experts who deal with family trusts say a large percentage of family trusts in New Zealand are not worth the paper they are written on. The main fault seems to be in not understanding or not wanting to know how the trust works or not applying the many tools it has to effectively manage its administration for its beneficiaries.

In trying to understand the concept of trusts I have learnt that the minute book is unquestionably essential as it would contain a complete and accurate record of all transactions and decisions made by the trustees along with all the paperwork necessary to show that everything had been done by the book. Yeah right!

In an ideal world the minute book would also include all legal papers, deeds, wills, agreements, mortgages, correspondence, annual accounts, bank statements, investments, debts, payments, gifting records and most importantly its assets.

There's much more but without the minute book nobody would have a clue what decisions had been made, whether the left hand knew what the right hand had been doing, who owed money, who hasn't paid and whether anyone had 'pulled a swifty'.

Without a paper trail nobody would be able to prove a thing and that's where everyone has hit the proverbial brick wall with the Crewe's case. Personally I ended up in a very dark place and instead of being in heaven getting to the bottom of things I was facing an uphill battle to find enough factual information about the trusts possibly carrying the names of Chennells or Demler or Crewe.

This double murder mystery would have been solved, again beyond reasonable doubt, many decades ago if certain trust deeds had been accessible. Maybe that would have made the task too easy but I will say that their records were definitely kept in Maisie Demler's head as she knew all the details down to the last penny!

I still have a lot to learn about trusts and because all trusts are not created equal I will still have to take some educated guesses to fill the gaps before getting close to the real truth. However, I may not need all the detail I thought was necessary as I believe I have enough to bring the hot-headed villains to justice.

At the very least I have discovered the chain of events after the murders so be prepared for some surprises . . .

2

I Fed the Baby!

Before my eyes I saw her go into hysterics, then she fell to the floor not unlike a person who is having a fit . . .

I was absolutely gutted; I did not know what to do but I called to her and tried to pick her up. I then said I'm sorry.

Her dazed reply was, "My name is Pam—I fed the baby!"

Obviously she was not herself. Then I asked her what was she doing there. Her answer: "I was cleaning up."

My next question, "Where were the others?" I think she said "at the wool shed" but now I'm not absolutely sure. I picked her up off the floor and told her to go and tidy herself up.

She went into the bathroom for a while and when she returned her look of determination had returned with her. I was told in no uncertain terms to leave the property. I was shown the door and left with an utterly confused and bewildered mind.

This falling-out, during April 1980, was the result of a "domestic" that had been building up for quite a while and when I noticed a couple of bottles of Lion Red in the fridge, all hell had broken loose. I don't drink 'Red' and neither did she!

My mind kept going back to past events and in trying to join those pesky dots was left wondering where I should start in telling this story. Like most New Zealanders I had been following the Crewe murders through the newspapers, TV, numerous books and the usual bloke talk when socialising.

I had a pretty good idea on how the murder inquiry was panning out but foremost in my mind was where this rather sweet woman, that I was previously sleeping with, fitted into New Zealand's most controversial cold case. How was she involved?

All I can say at this early stage is that I first met her in Whangarei during the winter of 1976, a mere six years after Harvey and

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CHILD		PARENTS				DEPARTMENT	REMARKS
1. Name of Child (If child is female, give name in full)		2. Name of Father (If father is deceased, give name in full)		3. Name of Mother (If mother is deceased, give name in full)		4. Date of Birth of Child	5. Date of Birth of Parents
1. Leslee Sinton	2. Allan Howard	3. Bernice Howard	4. 6 October 1947	5. 1947	6. 1947	7. 1947	8. 1947
9. 1947	10. 1947	11. 1947	12. 1947	13. 1947	14. 1947	15. 1947	16. 1947
17. 1947	18. 1947	19. 1947	20. 1947	21. 1947	22. 1947	23. 1947	24. 1947
25. 1947	26. 1947	27. 1947	28. 1947	29. 1947	30. 1947	31. 1947	32. 1947
33. 1947	34. 1947	35. 1947	36. 1947	37. 1947	38. 1947	39. 1947	40. 1947
41. 1947	42. 1947	43. 1947	44. 1947	45. 1947	46. 1947	47. 1947	48. 1947
49. 1947	50. 1947	51. 1947	52. 1947	53. 1947	54. 1947	55. 1947	56. 1947
57. 1947	58. 1947	59. 1947	60. 1947	61. 1947	62. 1947	63. 1947	64. 1947
65. 1947	66. 1947	67. 1947	68. 1947	69. 1947	70. 1947	71. 1947	72. 1947
73. 1947	74. 1947	75. 1947	76. 1947	77. 1947	78. 1947	79. 1947	80. 1947
81. 1947	82. 1947	83. 1947	84. 1947	85. 1947	86. 1947	87. 1947	88. 1947
89. 1947	90. 1947	91. 1947	92. 1947	93. 1947	94. 1947	95. 1947	96. 1947
97. 1947	98. 1947	99. 1947	100. 1947	101. 1947	102. 1947	103. 1947	104. 1947
105. 1947	106. 1947	107. 1947	108. 1947	109. 1947	110. 1947	111. 1947	112. 1947
113. 1947	114. 1947	115. 1947	116. 1947	117. 1947	118. 1947	119. 1947	120. 1947
121. 1947	122. 1947	123. 1947	124. 1947	125. 1947	126. 1947	127. 1947	128. 1947
129. 1947	130. 1947	131. 1947	132. 1947	133. 1947	134. 1947	135. 1947	136. 1947
137. 1947	138. 1947	139. 1947	140. 1947	141. 1947	142. 1947	143. 1947	144. 1947
145. 1947	146. 1947	147. 1947	148. 1947	149. 1947	150. 1947	151. 1947	152. 1947
153. 1947	154. 1947	155. 1947	156. 1947	157. 1947	158. 1947	159. 1947	160. 1947
161. 1947	162. 1947	163. 1947	164. 1947	165. 1947	166. 1947	167. 1947	168. 1947
169. 1947	170. 1947	171. 1947	172. 1947	173. 1947	174. 1947	175. 1947	176. 1947
177. 1947	178. 1947	179. 1947	180. 1947	181. 1947	182. 1947	183. 1947	184. 1947
185. 1947	186. 1947	187. 1947	188. 1947	189. 1947	190. 1947	191. 1947	192. 1947
193. 1947	194. 1947	195. 1947	196. 1947	197. 1947	198. 1947	199. 1947	200. 1947

The birth certificate of Leslee shows she was born in Whangarei on 6 October 1947 to Allan and Bernice Howard. Her name when I met her in 1976 was Leslee Sinton but by mid 1994 I had just about lost the plot on who this woman really was.

Jeannette first hit the headlines. Her identity to me since the mid 2000s has become a mystery and is most likely disguised through another marriage. As a result I have not been able to locate her.

I did keep track of her for many years after the parting our ways in 1980 mainly through genealogy searches of her family in my endeavours to discover where she fitted in and what her relationship was to Jeannette Crewe.

To give a brief background, I found she was born in 1947 in Whangarei. Her father's name can be traced back to Yorkshire to 1566 where his forebears had inherited one of England's most treasured homes. Surprisingly it is still a private residence for those currently carrying his family name.

In addition, the name Jones pops up on her great grandmother's side and as can be imagined has led me on many wild goose chases over the years. It had its moments as everywhere I looked there was another Jones and as I discovered, a number were linked with other members of Leslee's family and with land around Pukekawa.

The name Smith also appears in documents but finding the correct links has been almost impossible so those with that surname can relax. However, there are numerous names on my "loose ends" list that still need checking out.

Rest assured, there are strong family ties throughout that date back a long way to where the English links reek of wealth that possibly would give many descendants reason for motive.

Ultimately readers will find a lot of fingers in lots of pies and I remain surprised that nobody has 'potted' somebody or let the cat out of the bag and amongst the pigeons.

3

Searching for the Truth

It was enough to drive any sane person crazy!

Attempting to solve New Zealand's ultimate cold case of who killed Harvey and Jeannette Crewe can be likened to New Zealand documentary maker, Bryan Bruce reinvestigating the death of the most famous person in history!

His 2010 book *Jesus: The Cold Case* was admittedly on a different scale to his 2012 TV1 documentary on the fate of the Crewes and while both carried the “who dunnit?” theme, the burning question has always been, why did those in authority try and invent facts to suit the crime instead of searching for the truth and nothing but the truth?

I'm not going to answer that just yet but the public at large now know that finding the truth and getting justice was not as important as convicting somebody. It didn't matter whether the “somebody” was innocent, it only mattered that somebody (anybody, dammit!) was nailed, come hell or high water.

I thought Bryan Bruce's approach in his documentary differed slightly from the norm as he gave a few hints on topics surrounding this case other than already mentioned by others. He did make it known to me in February 2013 that he did not publish everything he found out “because that might impede the course of justice.”

It sounds like he touched a few nerve ends as not long afterwards I believe Bryan's computer was hacked into and information on his research was stolen. When I contacted him to offer further information connected to this case I was clearly told, “I don't do crime related work anymore. I am focusing on social documentary.”

He went on to say that one of the problems with the case was that “the Police made mistakes and even after all this time are loath to

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admit it.” I think most of us have now come to the same conclusion. The 2014 Review is evidence of this too.

Quite frankly, I’ve been a little reluctant in passing on some of the information that I had uncovered through 40 years of rooting around in old records, searching archival records and dealing with bureaucracy. There were many periods when I’ve wanted to help but the way some witnesses were treated and the reactions I have personally received from a few made me change my mind.

I’ve been deeply suspicious of the motives of some ‘journos’ as they’ve already said I “could be a nutter” but alternatively I “could be genuine” and I am “somewhat eccentric” and I “don’t trust anybody very much”.

Needless to say the vision that came to my mind on the matter was that of the grim reaper in pantomime, rehearsing the standover tactics of a filthy system that was in effect used from day one (in 1970) not only on Bryan but the gullible public as well.

This sort of outcome is not new to me and it made me more determined to find the truth. At one time or another the thought of pulling the pin on this book was very real to me. Not any more. I became determined to go where angels feared to tread.

NOW PAST HISTORY

Although numerous books have already been published on this controversy, all claims of who really did it and who fed the baby have been speculative too. They have become past history. The fact is, nobody gives a damn any more. It’s been put in the too hard basket by officialdom and over the years, by hiding the truth the inevitable outcome is that most of the real criminals are now deceased and therefore cannot be charged.

If this book does lead to some convictions for this horrendous crime, I realise only those still living and who eventually gained could be charged. Is that real justice?

Think about it. There has not been one arrest made since Arthur Allan Thomas was pardoned, nor is there likely to be, for the simple reason that the whole bl**dy affair was really being run by ‘the system’ and in turn by the media.

From my own experience the proverbial brick wall has appeared before me many times. The worst part was meeting every obstacle

imaginable from the bureaucratic system. It did test my patience and despite periods of utter frustration, it has really been a hard slog on one's own.

On the bright side, being a loner was an advantage at times. Secrets were kept.

NOTHING DROPS OUT OF THE SKY

The hardest thing I found was getting the proof or facts needed to finalise the outcome—that ever so elusive deed or document to prove what I wanted to claim has simply not dropped out of the sky. To some it would seem easy. I would say, “Yeah right!” but one has to know what to look for in the first place.

The legal system, not unlike the proverbial turtle, I've found works on the rank and file of correctness that more than implies what is written must be the truth.

It has been said more than once that people being interviewed on oath put their hand on the bible and tell lies every day. Some experts in the field speak their minds at times but in today's world, what is the truth anyway? Is it as quoted for real, or are we all telling porkies, or he's 'talking sh*t' or he's full of it?

TURNED INTO A NIGHTMARE

I seriously took a look at what others have written. I got upset by some things I read in *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* by David Yallop (1978) and it was then that I knew something was definitely wrong. But to prove it would be another matter. I did not want to go off half-cocked, only to be told later on that I was wrong. I started asking questions in the neighbourhood then I tried to write a book on what I suspected.

It turned into a nightmare, I felt rotten. I realised I did not have enough information on the subject. Besides, at this early stage, I could see no motive.

How can you claim to understand a case like this if can't even see a motive? But the matter wouldn't rest.

In all that I've read so far, I have seen a pattern of conduct which tended to steer away from the real problem in finding the truth. The Police were very reluctant on the subject. No third Commission has been put in place to find the killers and bring justice to the fore.

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From 1982 onward nothing has been done to right the wrong. What this means to me is things still didn't add up. The lack of interest by the powers that be was basically saying, we don't give a damn. Maybe though, it's something else. Was there something they were trying to hide?

I'm still sure the Police had enough information to nail the right people and from what I have discovered through many decades of research it is obvious they deliberately ignored exploring other lines because, in my opinion, it did not meet the agenda of having to convict somebody, anybody, as long as it kept the media and public off their backs.

Again the 2014 Police Review basically admits this.

REAL TRUTH NEVER REVEALED

When I think back, the few informants who did come forward had the belief they could tell the truth to an interviewer as they saw it or heard it and that they would be taken seriously. In their own minds by speaking it would correct an injustice laid upon another person by way of incorrect statement. This is proven to have been naive.

Within the Crewe case the real truth was never allowed to be revealed nor mentioned by the Police nor the media. The informants, who I believe came forward in good faith, had a trust of those within the system or those interviewing them.

Instead, the informant in return was set upon by those interviewers in such a way or method as to intimidate, ill-treat or traumatise. Their objective seemed to be to humiliate some of the informants to such an extent that in time and stress he or she may not be able to defend themselves from subsequent blatant lies, untrue statements, threats, diversion of truth or information withheld.

The interviewer, although under the oath of silence and conduct of behaviour, is never the less free of all ties. Unless taken to task at a later date on the matter, the credibility of the informant at most times will change forever, with them being treated not unlike a common criminal.

This was simply because, in this case, the Crown and the media way of interviewing an informant could not or would not for whatever reason accept part of or any written statement of truth

without redress. It was considered by them to be either an untrue statement by the informant or unsuitable for the occasion.

One may think many things of their conduct or behaviour or about any person or persons connected to this book. What I have written is a mixture of fact and opinion, nothing more. Should one check here and there, one would find many written statements of fact connected or in part associated to the crime. Sometimes a trail of evidence will lead nowhere or seem to meet a dead end.

On the other hand, as the legal system stands today, nothing has ever been done or ever mentioned about the other side of the story and that is what I am trying to put into print.

An opinion fuelled by facts, hard work, in research, combined with the knowledge I know something is wrong and that I will do my best to find the truth.

My early research indicated a blood tie and it could be there was a code of silence put in place by all involved because they happened to be related. Like David Yallop I'm going to leave it up to you to read between the lines and make up your own minds.

PRETTY SCARY STUFF DUG UP

This book of mine may not provide all the answers either but I've dug up a whole lot of pretty scary stuff while searching for some frustratingly elusive facts. As a result these facts will not be presented in the chronological order of which they were found. Unfortunately this information never comes together as a timeline so with the benefit of hindsight I hope I am able to produce a manuscript that will not confuse the reader.

This may explain why my first attempt to write this book, back in 1986, turned into a nightmare—a complete shambles. My heart rebelled. One could not foresee the disappointment or hurt I would find.

The research for this book was not to prove I was right over past events of my personal life—no, quite the opposite! The right to be wrong was always an option but the fine threads of truth, or more accurately half truths were all but destroyed by now.

At the mere mention of the word Crewe or Thomas, one was met with silent aggression. Through the smoke one could see the barricades in place. Past experience had taught the public the right

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to deceive and defend one's livelihood on this issue was not a game. A subtle approach was in order.

Many books have been written on the Crewe murders in the following decades. Difference of opinion ruled. Not all were fuelled by the taxpayer dollar. There were many who gained recognition for the parts they played. A small number did not, they wrote the truth as they heard or saw it. Most of these were against the grain, however their work is noted.

The Royal Commission made its findings known in 1980. Sixty four days of debate, since then not one person has been held to account for this crime. Incredible!

WORDS FAIL ME

There is also another matter of Rochelle Crewe's inheritance to be put before the Court. There, words fail me. In my disgust on the matter I believe time is long overdue for the Police and the legal system of New Zealand 'here then–here now', to make amends.

The odds of this story having a happy ending are slim, and furthermore I can see nothing but absolute turmoil and suffering for the families involved. Yet through it all when all is calm, out of all that happened, surely in faith there will be good and peace of mind for all those who would seek a conclusion to this horrendous crime of greed.

For me, looking on the surface for the answers proved to be a waste of time and effort. It was not until I started to dig a little deeper that I realised why the authorities got it so wrong. The information I have found should be incentive enough for them to follow up from where I have had to reluctantly call it a day.

In adding another thought, I don't know if it's true in New Zealand but experts worldwide claim that crime comes down to–99 times out of a hundred–love, hate, or money. In the case of the Crewe murders I feel it is money and lots of it!

Finding out requires a journey into the past . . .

4

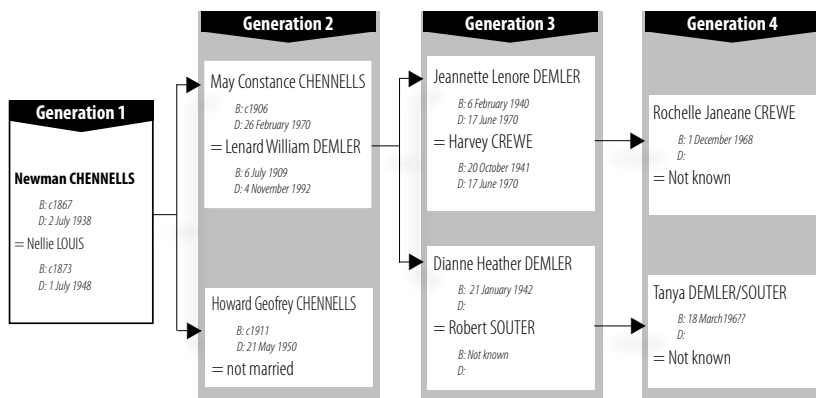
Chennells Family

Finding an appropriate position in the sand on where to draw the line to find a starting point has been one of the most difficult areas to establish in this frustratingly complex jigsaw puzzle . . .

Unearthing the locations of the estates originally held by the Chennells in England (and presumably still owned by their descendants) has been fraught with solid brick walls put up mainly by unhelpful bureaucrats.

There seemed to be very little written information from which to gather the necessary facts.

Almost all these so-called facts are hidden deeply in wills and secret or half secret trusts, most certainly in legal jargon and cleverly worded sentences so as to avoid the full disclosure of any land held in England particularly under their antiquated system of concealed



NOTE: Throughout this publication I have chosen to refer to May Constance by her common name of Maisie. Alternative spellings used by others include Maisey and Maizie. Jeannette is also consistently misspelt as Jeanette (including on her headstone).

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land registry. A sceptic would believe it was a deliberate ploy but who are we to question the advice given by lawyers or to the law of the land?

And, yes I believe it was deliberate as only one document has been discovered to date that specifically mentions properties in England. The references were found in clauses 3 & 9 of the Last Will and Testament of Newman Chennells dated 24 June 1938 where it specifically says "... of the said English property ..." (the full context is panelled below).

This complete section needed further scrutiny as some comment on other phrases mentioned by Newman is warranted. For example "pecuniary legacies" could be interpreted as termed investments in land, shares or insurance policies and it is quite important to note this as they strongly figure in decisions that will be made over the next four decades.

Another connecting phrase that opened a can of worms as a possible motive for murder is also mentioned in this statement of settlement: "... that in the event of the above mentioned pecuniary legatees or any one or more of them dying in my life time his her or their share or shares shall be deemed to lapse and shall be treated as residue."

AND I DECLARE that the above mentioned pecuniary legacies... shall be a first charge upon any property whether real or p. personal situated in England and owned by me at the time of. my death AND that in the event of the said English property being insufficient for payment of such pecuniary legacies... the amount of the insufficiency shall be made up out of the. residue of my New Zealand estate AND that in the event of... the above mentioned pecuniary legatees or any one or more of them dying in my life time his her or their share or shares shall be deemed to lapse and shall be treated as residue.

This extract from the last will and testament of Newman Chennells clearly mentions property in England that I believe directly led to two lives being lost due to unmitigated greed and "bending of the truth". However, proving this through producing the necessary documentation has been a frustrating and time consuming exercise ...

What Newman is actually saying is if any of his beneficiaries should die before him, they are immediately crossed off the list for any gains to his estate. In other words they cease to be a beneficiary of his estate which means their descendants do not inherit. As a result this “residue” is divided accordingly amongst the surviving beneficiaries. This could potentially add up to quite a large amount some time in the future.

HOW WILLS FIT IN WITH FAMILY TRUSTS

On top of all this I have found it quite confusing at times to separate my thoughts when dealing with how a family trust fits in with a will. My understanding is that the will does not deal with the assets held in the trust as a person’s will basically says what will happen to their personal assets and it has no control over family trust assets.

Readers should hold the understanding that assets in a family trust are owned and controlled by the trustees and a will cannot dictate to the trustees what will happen to those assets.

It is very important to appoint trustworthy people and this is normally done through your will and while they have the discretion to act wisely, they will most likely abide by your wishes. The Chennells did this well by keeping it within close family circles with, I believe, the exception of family lawyer Colin Sturrock and special trustee Alf Hodgson. These two names will become familiar as the plot unfolds.

MILLION DOLLAR QUESTION

With foresight one could easily raise the million dollar question right now: How many people would have gained from Maisie Demler’s estate if Jeannette Crewe had NOT been murdered?

The obvious answer is that Jeannette, as basically the sole beneficiary, had everything to gain had she legally inherited her mother’s estate with the interest of a multitude of others, who are not named at this stage, becoming losers in one way or another. Therein lies the real possibility of a motive, identified but underestimated by most.

It is going to take the best part of this book to explain who could be included on my list—some will deserve to be named while others may not have been aware of the consequences of the 1970 double murder.

Earlier I thought getting proof was vital for getting to the bottom of this murder mystery and while I do not have all the facts I really

wanted, I intend to carry on with what I know and let the reader decide whether my research will carry enough facts to make sense.

ABOUT NEWMAN AND NELLIE

First some background on Newman and Nellie Chennells. Newman's name was found on the 1901 Census for England where he was listed as an auctioneer. His age was entered as 34 with estimated birth being 1867.

His spouse was given as Nellie Chennells and both were living in the County of Sussex but finding information about their early life in New Zealand has been equally frustrating.

More detail will come later but their settling place was in the Auckland area. Newman's name appears on the Auckland West electoral roll of 1911 and his address was listed as 11 Tole St which is off Ponsonby Road and his occupation was land agent.

COURT ACTION AGAINST NEWMAN

My research shows that Newman was involved with court action for damages and specific performance of a contract in 1912. More appearances also in 1917 and 1920 with claims for commission not being paid.

The first case mentioned was in December 1912 while Newman Chennells was carrying out his role as a Land Agent in a sale of a property at Swanson, north-west of Auckland.

In giving his judgment, His Honour remarked that the facts concerning this case were "peculiar" and gave the following details as reported in the *Auckland Star*: "Early in the year defendant had placed his property in an agent's hands (Newman Chennells) for sale with a reserve in the event of an increase in value through increased railway service.

"The judge commented on the unsatisfactory manner in which the agent had given his evidence, and stated that in his opinion the agent was aware of the intention of the Minister of Railways to increase the suburban railway service, and knew that defendant's property would, therefore, be considerably increased in value.

"He referred also to the manner in which the agent had hurried through the deal, and in which he had concealed the fact that his client was not a resident in New Zealand. Had the facts been known

the suspicions of the defendant would assuredly have been aroused. The contract therefore would not be enforced.”

CLAIMS FOR COMMISSION

A second case, in a claim for commission in 1917 by Newman Chennells (reported as trading as Chennells & Co, Land Agent, Queen St, Auckland) could not be proved through a failure of not having his “appointment to act” in writing as required by section 13 of the Land Agents Act, 1912. A similar situation involving Chennells also occurred in 1920.

The authority required by the Act must be signed by the owner of the land with the signature of the agent not being sufficient. Chennells lost both cases because of his failure to dot the i’s and cross the t’s.

These dealings are being mentioned now because I believe the extent of this man’s talents in wheeling and dealing of property over two or three decades will come to the fore as a family trait as this story unfolds.

The thought sticks in my mind that Newman Chennells had a wonderfully useful mix of professions as a real estate agent, auctioneer and farmer. If he had the gift of the gab, which I believe he did, then he could easily match up a deal using his auctioneering skills and salesmanship.

These actions could possibly be classed as a form of insider trading so hold onto this thought until more is revealed in later years as he applied these skills when times got tough throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

Think about this. The auctioneer/land agent on any sale would probably know just how much money it would take to defer a bank mortgage then settle by deed of arrangement, a document that would have conditions for settlement at a later date.

UNDERSTANDING HOW IT WORKS

On reading and trying to understand the legalese wording used in the various wills encountered during this research has given me many sleepless nights. There are many clauses as to the management and control over rents and leases of farms that tests the mind. The way I have come to see it, as a layman (when an estate is divided up so that it can be handed down through the families) is often skipped over without fully realising its intent

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This was how I learnt about secret trusts (fully secret and half secret) and it was not until I read Nicky Richardson's book *Nevill's Law of Trusts, Wills and Administration* that I found enough clues to understand what may have caused a double murder.

At this stage I cannot say categorically that it did but I am offering the distinct possibility that it was in the mix of variations and I mention it now as part of the big picture so that the reader can consider all possibilities when assessing where the truth really lies.

Secret trusts occasionally happen when a will-maker desires to make certain provisions take effect after death which he (or she) is reluctant to disclose to a solicitor or to the public records of the probate registry.

Nicky writes that the will-maker may wish to effect some unlawful purpose, such as an act of private vengeance of a criminal nature. Of course the will-maker may just wish to be benevolent.

"With fully secret trusts, no trust appears on the face of the will but it will have been communicated to the secret trustee so that he or she is bound by it. In the latter case, the secret trustee takes the property as trustee on the face of the will although the trusts on which he or she holds the property are secret."

There is a lot more detail outlining variations to the concept of secret trusts as is with half secret trusts.

"If a gift is stated to be on trust but the trusts are not expressed in the will, a half-secret trust is said to exist. In such a case, certain different considerations operate from those discussed in connection with fully secret trusts.

"The person taking the gift does not take beneficially, but must hold it on the 'secret' trusts if lawful, or on trust for the residuary beneficiary or the next of kin."

What all this means, in its simplest terms, is that Newman Chennells was able to name a "special trustee" in his will so that if wanted he could include a fully secret trust for his English estate.

Secret and half secret trusts were used in Britain historically and to some extent in New Zealand although they are rare today. This method was to be used by many succeeding family members over the following decades which in turn kept all family legacies intact until that fateful day in 1970.

5

Properties Purchased

Newman Chennells arrived in New Zealand from England in 1911 where he had previously been earning a living as a land agent and auctioneer . . .

According to the Auckland West electoral roll of 1911 Newman's occupation in New Zealand was land agent which was again repeated on the 1914 roll.

On the electoral roll of 1914 their address was 32 Cromwell Street off Dominion Rd, Auckland while the 1919 roll has Newman at Opuatia as a farmer which in itself is quite interesting as he did not purchase what is now known as the Crewe farm until January 1921.

It was actually on 25 January 1921 that Newman Chennells signed a transfer of lease of 364 acres on Section 7 Block XVI located at Opuatia in the Survey District of Onewhero. The details on the Certificate of Title also shows him taking out a mortgage with the previous owner four minutes later on the same day.

*Transfer No. 139120 of Lease No. 4530 Charles
Biscent to Newman Chennells of Opuatia
Farmer. produced the 25th January 1921
at 10.8 a.m.*

CHT Black R
Asst. Ld. Regr.

*Mortgage No. 106690 of Lease No. 4530
to Charles Biscent - ~~CHT Black R~~ Chennells
1921 at 10.12 a.m. ~~CHT Black R~~
(Lease No. 4530)*

The Certificate of Title of Section 7 in Block XVI Onewhero SD shows the transactions made by Newman Chennells (registered in the Land Transfer office) on 25 January 1921 where he signed a transfer of lease and a mortgage with the previous owner.

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Chenery Wm. Chas., labr., 13 Laurie av,
Parnell
**Chennells & Co., land and estate agents,
Tyrone Bldgs., Custom St. East Ak.
and at Tuakau**
Cheong Lee & Co., laundry, 91 Symonds
st, Ak.
Chepmail Wm. P., Beale st, Ham. East

Information has been found of Newman Chennells trading as a Land Agent in Auckland as early as 1911 but this entry from the 1920/21 Cleaves Directory shows that he also had an office in Tuakau where he had recently purchased some land.

This particular piece of land was later called the Crewe Farm and in my opinion could reveal what really went on when other properties were added to the mix.

Not having access to many official records has been a handicap but a lucky discovery in *Cleaves Auckland Provincial Directory* of April 1920 to March 1921 not only confirmed the existence of Chennells & Co in Auckland but surprisingly also in Tuakau where it confirms he was a farmer of Opuatia.

A few years later Newman purchased another property that was to play a critical part leading up to the cause of the unsolved homicides.

According to the Certificate of Title, Newman Chennells, a farmer of Opuatia, took out a mortgage with Bank NSW to purchase Section 4 Block XIII Maramarua SD (and being part of Opuatia No 2 Block) of 354 acres in September 1924.

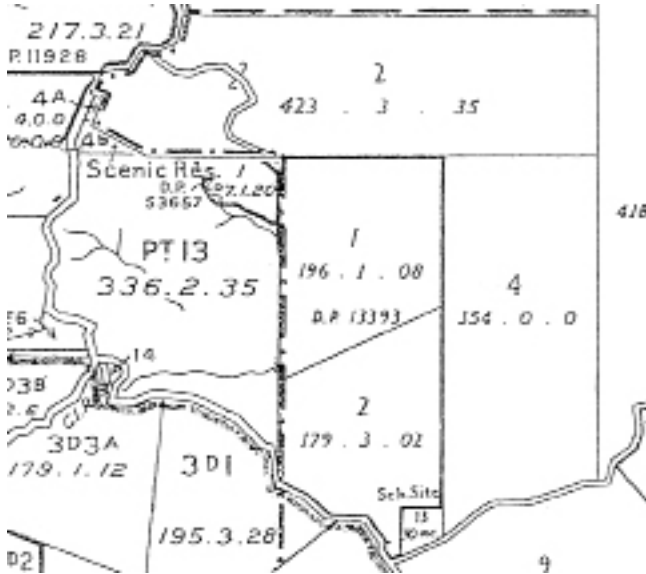
This property was a neighbouring one to Section 7 that he had purchased in January 1921 (see also location map on pages 8 & 9).

Newman's son-in-law Len Demler later purchased a lease to the farm (Section 2) bordering the Chennells Estate in 1937 and it is the ongoing history of these three properties that I have been endeavouring to untangle.

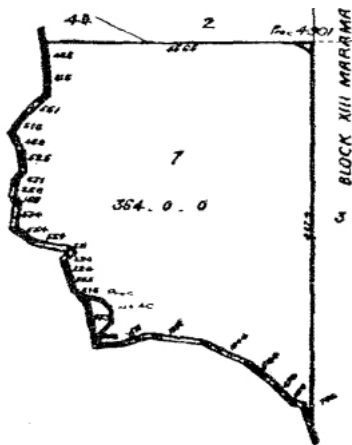
SECTIONS 4 & 7

But first back to the activities of Newman Chennells and his dealings with Sections 4 and 7 both of which were valuable pieces of land that were eventually to end up, after a lot of wheeling and dealing, in the hands of Jeannette Demler (later Crewe) and her

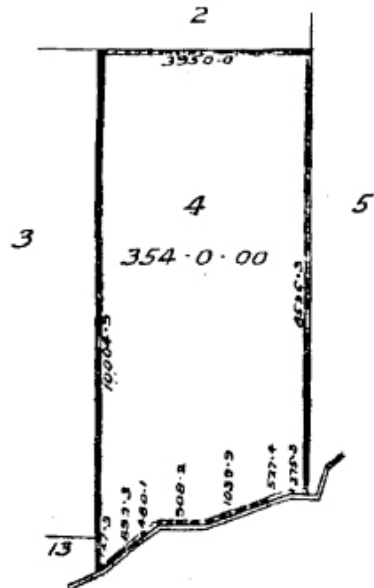
5: Properties Purchased



These are the three blocks of land that feature strongly in the saga of the Crewe murders. The area across the top (Section 2) was the land developed and farmed by Len Demler with his neighbours being the Chennells (see below).



Newman Chennells became the owner of the lease to Section 7 in 1921 (this was the piece of land where the Crewes were murdered in 1970) while the neighbouring Section 4 was purchased in 1924.



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5. WHEREAS in One thousand nine hundred and thirty six I sold my farm at Opuatia together with all livestock thereon to one. August Bartz for the sum of Five thousand four hundred pounds. (£5400) NOW I BEQUEATH to my said son and to ALFRED ROBERT....

This extract is from the first probate of the estate of Newman Chennells that was accepted by the Hamilton Supreme Court dated 22 August 1938. A second probate, issued in April 1939, was made to clarify the ownership of Section 4 where the sale to August Bartz had, in reality, fallen through. It is very unusual to have two probates.

younger sister Heather.

At first glance, the will of Newman looked straight forward and above board, however a second probate was sought in 1939 that changed his daughter's entitlement.

AN UNREGISTERED SALE TO BARTZ

To explain one has to first follow the movements of Section 4. It will be found that Newman Chennells sold the land on 16 May 1936 as an unregistered sale to a local resident August Bartz for the sum of £5400 including all livestock (see extract on following page).

August was a local farmer who spent 15 years on Hallamore's Block by the Tuakau Bridge until he shifted into Mercer Ferry Road around 1937. At the time of this unregistered sale, it was a deal he was not prepared to accept until a Certificate of Title was produced.

Newman Chennells took his time to do as he was asked and when he produced a Certificate of Title it was dated 25 September 1936 but backdated to the date of the original agreement. The sale of the farm to August Bartz proved to be a non event as Bartz failed to take up a "registered sale" as agreed.

The true facts never came to light until the second probate of Newman Chennells was produced in April 1939, less than a year later. To understand Newman's intentions of bequeathing one has to carefully examine the contents of his will (dated 22 August 1938). The exact text being questioned is reproduced on the following page and in the section that says that "all moneys which at the time of my death be owing to me in respect of such as sale" would indicate he was still the legal owner of Section 4.

The sale to August Bartz was crucial to any future investment for

5. WHEREAS in One thousand nine hundred and thirty six I sold my farm at Opuatia together with all livestock thereon to one August Bartz for the sum of Five thousand four hundred pounds (£5400) NOW I BEQUEATH to my said son and to ALFRED ROBERT RODGSON of Opuatia Farmer (hereinafter called "my special.... trustees ") all moneys which may at the time of my death be... owing to me in respect of such sale UPON TRUST to invest such moneys in any of the investments for the time being allowed by law for the investment of trust funds in New Zealand and to... pay the income to arise from such investment to my daughter... MAY CONSTANCE DEMLER with power nevertheless to my special....

Both extracts refer to Section 4 and are from the first and second probates of Newman Chennells. The first three lines from the first probate (above) record the detail of the agreement while starting on the sixth line is the opportunity for Bartz to either front up with the £5400 so that the beneficiary of Section 4 can invest the proceeds as Chennells intended or it be returned to estate of Newman Chennells who was the registered proprietor.

4. THE said estate in fee simple first above described.. is subject also to an unregistered agreement for sale and purchase dated the 16th. day of May 1936 and made between the said deceased of the one part and AUGUST BARTZ of Tukea Farmer of the other part. _____

5. EXCEPT as above set forth no person holds or is entitled to any estate or interest at law or in equity affecting the said lands or lease respectively of which the said deceased was so registered as proprietor. _____

The extract from the second probate of April 1939 (above) confirms that August Bartz had actually entered into an unregistered agreement for sale and had not paid any money towards completing the deal. The first probate (August 1938) only recorded that Chennells believed he had sold his farm in 1936 but it was not realised until after his death on 2 July 1938 that it was actually an unregistered sale. This is the only difference between the two probates and was the reason for the second probate.

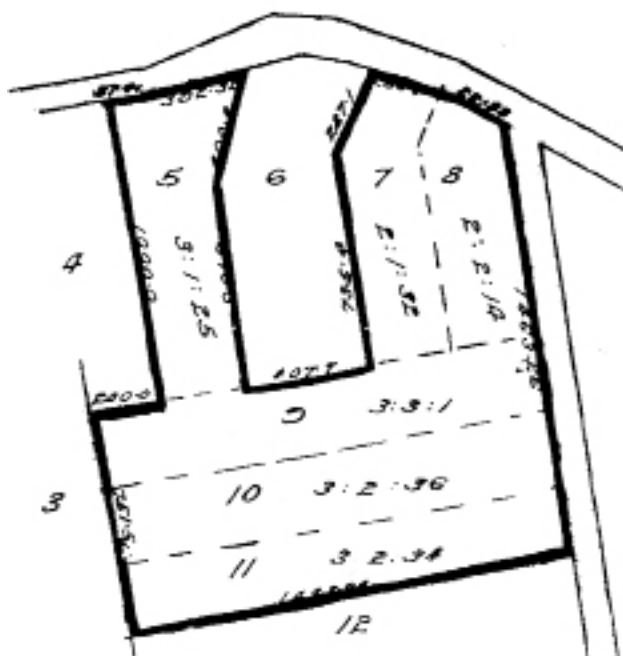
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his daughter Maisie Demler. However a second probate had to be filed (on 28 April 1939) to show who was the legal owner of Section 4 (and other allotments yet to be mentioned) at the time of Newman's death.

On regaining Section 4 the probate also stated details of other allotments to be shared between his son Howard Geoffrey Chennells and daughter May Constance Demler (affectionately known to everyone as "Maisie"—a name we will also be using, instead of May).

PARISH OF WAIPAREIRA

The third piece of land mentioned in the will was at Waipareira, Massey. Once discovering where the land in question was located one has to wind the clock back to 1930 when Newman purchased Lots 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11 being portion of allotments 160 & 161 in the



The certificate of title shows the parcels of land situated in the Parish of Waipareira that Newman Chennells had listed in his last will and testament. The text explains how this land was divided up and eventually sold, in the mid 1940s, to boost the funds held in the family investment trust that had many complex dealings.

5: Properties Purchased

*Transfer of 2/3 of 27 Newman Chennells to
May Constance Chennells of Auckland
consister of an undivided 1/3 share to
suced 3/6/1936 at 2.50*

*L 48717 Evidence of marriage of
May Constance Chennells above named
to Leonard William Denyer of Auckland
Married 13th May 1936
at 12.2 pm*

These entries on the Waipareira Certificate of Title show the transfer that Newman Chennells made when he gifted his daughter Maisie "an undivided one third share" as a wedding present in 1936 two years before his death. The lower entry records the surname change.



This modern day map in an industrial area roughly shows where the Waipareira sections were located (darkened portion) between the Swanson and Ranui railway stations (not shown). Airdrie Road, shown on the right, is one of the boundaries while the Auckland Swanson suburban railway appears across the bottom.

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Parish of Waipareira, an old Maori place name that has disappeared from the current Auckland suburb of Massey North.

This area of land was contained in the five lots totalling almost 20 acres and was located between the Swanson and Ranui railway stations. As can be imagined, as prime real estate, this land was not going to lose value.

On 3 June 1936 (two years before his death) Newman Chennells made a very generous gift that was to get the ball rolling towards the temptations of greed and jealousy and that transfer was registered then.

He transferred “an undivided one third share” of his Waipareira holdings to his daughter Maisie as a wedding present for her forthcoming marriage to Len Demler on 7 October. However, the action commenced its legal path on 19 May 1937 largely on producing evidence of her marriage with the transfer of her share to Waipareira finally being legalised on 22 July 1937.

The foundations for a troublesome future were in the process of being laid. Len had married ‘the girl next door’ and without realising the real significance of what he was letting himself in for, Len now had his foot in one of the doors.

TRUSTEES APPOINTED

In returning to the details of Newman’s will it will be found that his first instructions were to appoint his son Howard and daughter Maisie as executors by “paying his debts and legacies” as far as the property will extend and the law binds and also as his “general trustees”.

After making a large number of bequests to be shared by his sister, eight nieces, a niece-at-law and a nephew (all residing in England), he made a significant and far reaching decision by appointing Alfred Robert Hodgson, an Opuatia Tuakau farmer, as one of his “special trustees”.

Newman’s choice was to give Hodgson “some return for his services” in acting as a special trustee by giving him, and all his other beneficiaries, £100 each “free of all legacy estate or succession duties whether such duties be payable in England or in New Zealand”.

This last statement is revealing as it again confirms the existence of land in England and while I originally thought this was certainly to be a pathway to a legacy of greed, I now feel it was switching to

Turner and to ALFRED ROBERT HODGSON of Opuatia Tuakau Farmer as some return for his services in acting as one of my "special Trustees" the sum of ONE HUNDRED POUNDS each to be paid to them free of all legacy estate or succession duties. whether such duties be payable in England or in New Zealand.

In making his appointment of Alf Hodgson as a special trustee in Clause 3 Newman mentions England for the first and second times while Clause 9 (below) has some repercussions and implications that will be outlined as this research continues.

9. I HEREBY EMPOWER my executors and general trustees to appoint an attorney or attorneys in England for the purposes of obtaining Probate or Letters of Administration with will annexed in the.... Probate Division of the High Court of Justice in England.

an unhealthy legacy of lies.

INSTRUCTIONS ARE REVEALING

The extremely important section of Newman's will is Clause 9 which instructs the appointment of attorneys in England to obtain "Probate or Letters of Administration" to be annexed in the Probate Division of the High Court of Justice in England."

What does this all mean? Newman is actually asking that all his English estate (presumably from various locations) along with all other legacies are to be legally combined under a single English probate.

To ensure this happened Newman made two of his relatives' beneficiaries, one a niece-at-law and the second was a nephew, a qualified surveyor, for which he gifted £300 for his services.

Uncovering this vital information should have been straight forward but all efforts to find a copy of this probate ended in absolute frustration and disappointment.

The locations and details of any land that Newman owned in England at the time of his death remains unanswered mainly because of unhelpful bureaucrats who claimed the information did not exist. I have a receipt issued from Somerset House in 1950 that proves the opposite.

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It seems strange that Newman's two children (Howard and Maisie) were the only New Zealand beneficiaries of his will. Newman's wife, Nellie Chennells, is not mentioned in any of the probates and her entitlement as his legal wife to his estate was obviously a separate issue.

It was not until Nellie's will was read in 1948 that Newman's intentions are beginning to be understood.

TRUST FUND INVESTMENTS

The second most important clause in Newman's will was "10e" (see below) covering investments held by the Trust Fund: "To invest any moneys liable to be invested under this my will in any of the investments for the time being allowed by law for the investment of trust funds and at their discretion to invest any of such moneys on registered mortgage in conjunction with any other person or persons by way of contributory mortgage to be taken in the joint names of the contributories to the loan."

What does all this mean? The phrase to be noted are the words "for the time being allowed by law" as it consistently refers to a legacy of family land.

The use of these key words is standard, but they consistently crop up in successive family wills and in our interpretation specifically relate to the termination of a trust and certain other conditions. Examples of these transactions will be apparent as this story progresses.

The same situation will also occur later with joint names dealing with the registered and contributory mortgages mentioned in Clause 10e.

to be invested

(e) TO INVEST any moneys liable/under this my will and in any of the investments for the time being allowed by law for the... investment of trust funds and at their discretion to invest any. of such moneys on registered mortgage in conjunction with any... other person or persons by way of contributory mortgage to be... taken in the joint names of the contributories to the loan.

Without trying to fully explain the importance of Clause 10e from Newman's will, readers will have to bear in mind that those who eventually benefited from the trust fund would become involved in a double murder but not necessarily the one who pulled the trigger.

SECOND PROBATE EXPLAINS

Because of a second probate being issued in April 1939 to deal with August Bartz, it is appropriate now to summarize the end results regarding his New Zealand property.

It was established under Newman's second probate that he was the registered proprietor of Section 4, Section 7 and Waipareira therefore his trustees for the will were Howard, Maisie and Alf Hodgson. His daughter Maisie was to get any revenue off Section 4 under governorship of the trustees, Howard Chennells and Alfred Hodgson while Section 7 went to his son Howard.

The implications would indicate that any other part of his estate and legacies not already put through Newman's second probate would be able to be claimed solely by his wife Nellie particularly the separate estate (or estates) in England.

ALFRED HODGSON

The name Alfred Robert Hodgson, who first appeared in Newman's will of 1938 as a "special trustee", requires further explanation. He was described simply as an "Opuatia Tuakau farmer" with no further detail as to his relationship with Newman or just a family friend who came from England on the same boat.

His death certificate says he was a retired dairy farmer while his death and marriage certificates record his place of birth as Berwick-on-Tweed, England. He was married in 1936 as a 46 year old bachelor to a divorcee, Rose Amy Brocas. This couple were to play major roles in the running of the estates over a very long period of time. It is usual for farmers to appoint other farmers as executors and trustees.

CAVEAT ISSUED

On 16 May 1939 Section 4 transferred to Newman's son Howard and daughter Maisie and on 9 June 1939 Howard and Maisie took out a mortgage on Section 4 to Marie Louise Smith including a caveat entered by Nellie Chennells. This would have been registered by Nellie if she was left nothing by Newman and she was making a claim against the land. The mortgage was probably to raise money to pay her out. The identity of Marie Smith is unclear at this point although there is some evidence that she is a family member.

In layman's terms, a caveat is a stipulation that the property can't

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be dealt with unless the owners first get the caveat lifted, in this case by paying Nellie out. In this case Nellie obviously had an interest in the land as she entered the caveat on 18 August 1939 and later withdrew it in 1942 (probably when she was paid), the same year she wrote her will. Nellie's action is not unfamiliar to her in the same area, as this was not the only caveat held by Nellie. One would have expected Nellie to register caveats on all titles owned by Newman.

ABIDING BY TERMS OF WILL

Once the second probate was legally clarified Howard and Maisie could now abide by their father's wishes as stated in his original will.

On 22 July 1939 Maisie undertook a transmission of Waipareira to her brother Howard to hold equal shares of their father's holdings.

On 12 September 1944, Howard and Maisie sold Section 4 to Frederick George Hoskings for £5,600, the proceeds to be held in

*Transmission No 42508 to Howard
Geoffrey Chennells of Rukuhawa
farmer and Maisie
Constance Demler of Rukuhawa
market woman Entered 16/8/1939
at 2 25b*

*Mortgage No 257594 Howard Geoffrey
Chennells and Maisie Constance Demler
to Marie Louise Smith produced
9-6-39 at 2 180a*

DISCHARGE

*X15061 caveat for Nellie Chennells
Entered 18/8/39 at 2 25b
Withdrawn 12/1/42*

The caveats mentioned in the text were part of the transfer of Section 4 to the beneficiaries, Howard Chennells and Maisie Demler in 1939 (top entry above). On 9 June 1939, Howard and Maisie took out a mortgage to Marie Louise Smith ("with consent of caveator . . ." appears in the scribble under the rubber stamp: DISCHARGE). A second caveat (lower lines) was entered by Nellie Chennells on 18 August 1939 but later withdrawn.



Form attached to the District Land Registrar, Auckland.

No. 2226.



Memorandum of Transfer

WE, HOWARD GEORGE CHAMBERLAIN of Pukekohe, Farmer and MAY EDITHA CHAMBERLAIN of Pukekohe, Married Women (jointly as to an undivided one-third share and MAY EDITHA CHAMBERLAIN wife of Leonard William Denley being registered as the proprietor of Pukekohe Farm (as to an undivided two-thirds share) being registered as of an estate the proprietors of an estate in fee simple

subject, however to such encumbrances, liens, and interests as are notified by memoranda underwritten and endorsed hereon, in that piece of land situated in the Provincial District of Auckland containing by admeasurement SIXTEEN ACRES TWO RODS AND TWENTY TWO PARSIMS (1360. 000) more or less being LOTS NUMBERS FIVE (5) SEVEN (7) EIGHT (8) NINE (9) TEN (10) and ELEVEN (11) contained on a plan deposited in the Land Registry Office at Auckland under No. 6575 being portions of Allotments Numbers 160 and 161 of the Parish of Waipareira and being the whole of the land comprised and described in Certificate of Title Volume 606 Folio 75 of the Register books in the Land Registry Office aforesaid IN CONSIDERATION of the sum of FOUR THOUSAND POUNDS (£4000) this day paid to us by ALLAN GUY of Dunedin (the receipt ... whereof is hereby acknowledged) do and each of us both hereby transfer unto the said Allan Guy all our respective estates and interests in the said ... pieces of land.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF We have hereunto subscribed our names this 20th day of June One thousand nine hundred and forty six.

SIGNED by the said HOWARD GEORGE CHAMBERLAIN
in the presence of :-

H. G. Chamberlain.

SIGNED by the said MAY EDITHA CHAMBERLAIN in
the presence of :-

M. L. Denley.

The relevance of this document, with the sale of the Waipareira Blocks to Allan Guy, may get lost in the overview of "family trust" dealings and investments but in the chain of events, the sale did provide a source of income for further investments or family expenses such as mortgages and other legal outgoings.

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trust by Alf Hodgson and Howard Chennells and invested.

Several years later, on 27 June 1946, another loose end was tidied up when Howard and Maisie sold Waipareira for £400 to Allan Guy, a farmer of Swanson (see document on previous page).

TRANSFER OF SECTION 7

A “transmission of lease” to Section 7 was actioned on 12 June 1939 by Howard and Maisie as trustees to pave the way for Maisie to transfer her share of Section 7 through probate, 28 July 1939, to Howard.

The significance of Section 7 is that this is where the Crewes were murdered. Remember this was the section where Newman and Nellie had been living since 1921 and where their two children were raised.

*Transmission H. 3708 of lease 11001
to Howard Geoffrey Chennells and May
Constance Denton Entered 12/6/1939
at 12.22.46*

*Transfer etc 311592 of lease to
11001 Howard Geoffrey Chennells
and May Constance Denton
to Howard Geoffrey Chennells
of Lakehauri, Taranaki, a freehold
28. 7. 1939 at 11.35.46*

*Re Gage of 25/100 AS CHARGE
Geoffrey Chennells and May Chennells
issued 1/8/39 at 2.20.46*

Handwritten entries are, by their very nature, sometimes impossible to read. These entries for the transactions relating to Section 7 are a perfect example but facts used in the text make my interpretations reasonably straight forward. The top two entries relate to the death of Newman Chennells and the transfer from the executors to Howard. The bottom entry is significant in the sense that it is evidence of a mortgage between Howard and his mother Nellie Chennells, “a certain Deed of Family Arrangement and Mortgage”. Howard probably borrowed money from Nellie in order to buy out Maisie’s half share, because Section 7 was left to both Howard and Maisie.

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Howard Takes Over

Newman followed his real estate interests in Auckland (and Tuakau) which left an opening for his son Howard to take over the running of the Section 7 farm . . .

Howard Chennells had been on the farm for many years and when his father died in 1938 he had reached the age of 27 years. He was quite capable of continuing on his own with perhaps the assistance of seasonal workers.

It seems to be well before this period that Howard's mother Nellie shifted from the family farm at Pukekawa. Nellie's name only appears once on an electoral roll that I could find. In 1928 her name is recorded on the Roskill roll as residing at 581 Manukau Road but her son Howard only appears on the 1946 Raglan electoral roll living at Opuatia.

The Post Office Directories of 1920, 1925, 1927 & 1929 consistently list Newman's details as a farmer at Pukekawa or Opuatia with their son Howard appearing once on the Pukekawa School Roll with an admission date of 22 May 1922 which would make him aged around 11 years old when he started school in New Zealand.

It is presumed that Newman's wife Nellie and their children, Maisie and Howard, were also living at the same address until at least the mid 1920s when Nellie shifted into Manukau Road, Auckland (although separation is a possibility).

To add more mystery to the movements of family members, the same 1928 electoral roll shows Newman and his daughter May Constance (Maisie) living at Pukekawa as does the 1935 roll but where is Newman's son Howard Geoffrey residing?

As an 18 year old, he may have been still living with his mother at Manukau Road while his older sister Maisie, now 22 years old,

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2. I APPOINT ALFRED ROBERT HODGSON of Pukekawa Farmer and COLIN.. RANKIN STURROCK of Takanu Solicitor (hereinafter called "my Trustees" which expression shall include the survivor of them or other the ... trustee or trustees of this my will howsoever appointed) to be executors and trustees of this my will.

A pattern is starting to emerge with the appointments of trustees within the Chennells family. Howard Chennells, in updating his will, follows a family tradition by appointing the same trustees as his parents, Newman and Nellie Chennells. The names of Alfred Robert Hodgson and Colin Rankin Sturrock appear on most legal documents from now on and throughout the following decades. Sturrock's professional input, legal advice and clever use of legalese, gave the trustees an enormous amount of power and control. This will become much clearer as the "monkey puzzle" unravels.

was living with her father. What does this mean? The answer may be quite obvious or alternately have no significance nor importance.

One obvious answer may be that Howard was looking after his crippled mother which, according to her death certificate, was a condition she had been suffering from since the time of her arrival in New Zealand (around 1913).

On the other hand, it would seem more logical for daughter Maisie to take on this role but it might make more sense for each gender to swap roles, something like becoming de facto parents. Quite simply, I do not know the answers.

MAISIE SPENDS TIME OVERSEAS

To add more confusion, Maisie spent a lot of time overseas between 1928 and 1934. Gossip passed down through family members is that Maisie's mother, Nellie spending time in the homeland during this period so it is reasonable to think the pair travelled together.

These thoughts may only show how easy it is to get sidetracked and not knowing where the path leads. I must admit that this is the very nature of research and while it is quite exciting and rewarding to turn over the next page and find an elusive fact, it can also lead to frustration and despair.

At present it is not really that relevant as all my research has been revolving around the facts contained in the various family wills and, more importantly, endeavouring to translate legalese into

layman's terms. So far, it's been more about what is not mentioned and in trying to read between the lines. Back to Howard Geoffrey Chennells and jumping forward a good decade or more . . .

HOWARD UPDATES HIS WILL

During the 2nd World War period Howard did employ a manager, Wilfred Dance, after taking over the farm, particularly during his absence while serving in the transport division with the Australian Forces.

Prior to his service, he took the opportunity to update his will (on 24 April 1940), a wise move in case he was killed in action, but there was also another reason that prompted him to tidy up his affairs.

His sister Maisie and her husband Len Demler had just produced their first child, a daughter named Jeannette Lenore who was born several months beforehand on 6 February 1940. As a single man, Howard was to make a special provision that was to lead, in a chain of unforeseen events, to the brutal murder of this particular niece.

Not his fault of course although having generous intentions, his last will and testament had other conditions that complicated the inheritance process for his executors, Colin Sturrock and Alf Hodgson.

DEED OF FAMILY ARRANGEMENT

Howard declared that all his property, namely Section 7 of 364 acres, be held in trust until the death of his mother Nellie Chennells subject to the terms and provisions of "a certain Deed of Family Arrangement and Mortgage" made between himself and his mother.

For the life of me I could not discover any details of this arrangement but an educated guess could tie it in with the

3. I GIVE DEVISE AND BEQUEATH unto my trustees all my property...
both real and personal of whatsoever nature and wheresoever situate.
UPON TRUST to hold the same until the death of my mother NELLIE CHEN-
:NELLS and subject to the terms and provisions of a certain Deed of.
Family Arrangement and mortgage of even date therewith made between.
myself and the said NELLIE CHENNELLS.

Whilst not giving away any detail Clause 3 of Howard's will is admitting to "a certain Deed of Family Arrangement and Mortgage" and this is the only reference found. Howard is basically saying that until this loan from his mother is paid off, all his property is to be put on hold.

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transaction dated 7 August 1939 when the ownership of Section 7 passed to Howard Chennells. The name of Howard's mother Nellie is shown with the mortgage details so it could be assumed that the finance came from the family trust.

A Deed of Family Arrangement is a way that a family can rearrange the proceeds of a Last Will after the person has died. I believe the Chennells family were already transferring their assets into a trust which could lend money (most likely interest free) to a family member but still making it payable on demand.

I have mentioned earlier about the existence of secret and half secret trusts and I have this uneasy feeling that these types of trusts were being worked to their full advantage here. As previously explained I do not have enough evidence that the family were involved but it is a distinct possibility. The reader needs to take this into consideration while analysing the case I am putting forward.

EXECUTORS NAMED

The executors of Howard's will were named as Alfred Robert Hodgson and Colin Rankin Sturrock, a Tuakau solicitor. Howard went on to direct his trustees to convert his estate into money after the death of his mother and to deal with the usual formalities of paying his debts and other expenses.

He also wanted to pay £500 to Mr W W Dance of Matamata who managed his farm properties and to pay £100 to each of his English relations, an amount they all received under the will of his late father Newman Chennells.

Alf Hodgson also received £100 along with £50 each to W B Chennells of Christchurch and Miss A Hawkins of Auckland but it was his next provision that eventually sealed the fate of one niece and perhaps benefited the other.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

His desire was to use the balance of his trust funds "for the children" of his sister Maisie Demler, in equal shares when they attained the age of 25 years. For Jeannette that would occur in 1965 and for her sister Heather, two years later.

Those were basically Howard's instructions and they were written in such a way that regardless of the number of children Maisie and Len produced, his will did not need updating each time

(e) TO stand possessed of the balance of the trust funds UPON TRUST for the children of my sister MAY CONSTANCE DEMLER in equal ... shares as they shall attain the age of twenty-five years PROVIDED HOWEVER that if only one of such children shall attain that age THEN that one shall take half of the said balance of the .. trust funds and the remaining half shall be divided equally between the children of Benjamin George Turner of Welmer Kent and Cyril Chennells of Carterton as they shall attain the age of.. twenty-five years.

The trigger point that caused Howard Chennells to make his generous bequest for the children of his sister was the birth of Jeannette Lenore Demler which had occurred several months beforehand. Howard had no idea when he wrote Clause 4e in his 1940 will that he would unintentionally seal the fate of one of his nieces.

another child was born (which is normal practice). As an alternative, if only one child should attain the age then the remaining half would be divided according to the last section of Clause 4e (see above) where other relatives would benefit.

History will show that Howard never updated his 1940 will and when he was accidentally killed ten years later in 1950, it fortunately did not cause any disagreements amongst his family (except that probate was not confirmed until 1952 two years after his death).

Importantly a new title was issued for his land on 26 November 1952 changing it from Section 7 to Sections 13 & 14 plus other small allotments.

TRACTOR ACCIDENT

Howard's tractor accident on a steep rough part of his Pukekawa farm caught everyone by surprise as he was a very experienced tractor driver although the Police Report considered it was impossible for the Ferguson wheel tractor to climb the hill safely.

The policeman making the report said on arrival that the tractor was upside down with its front pointing downhill. "Immediately behind the tractor was a step about three feet straight up and at the top of the step it could be seen where the rear wheels of the tractor had slipped apparently prior to rearing up and tipping backwards on to the driver."

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A visiting schoolboy helped the neighbour lever the tractor off Chennells with a fence stay and together pulled him out. A doctor arrived and with the assistance of neighbours was carried out to his house to wait for the ambulance then taken to Middlemore Hospital.

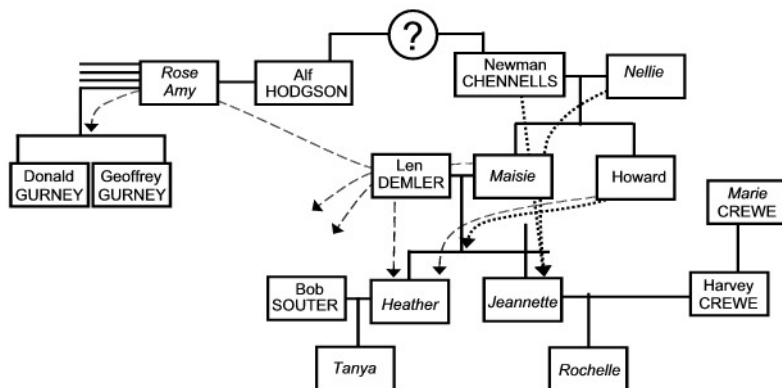
The schoolboy said the injured man remained fully conscious throughout the ordeal although in shock. His injuries were serious and he gradually deteriorated over night and died around 5:00am the following morning. Howard Chennells was aged 39.

CATCHING UP WITH NELLIE AGAIN

When Howard was killed in 1950, his mother Nellie, had already passed away at the age of 75 years. For many years until her death she had been living in various rest homes around Auckland.

She was not in good health according to her death certificate but she did have a will although it had not been updated between the time it was made out in January 1942 and her death on 1 July 1948. Nellie named her son-in-law Lenard Demler and her daughter Maisie as trustees.

Surprisingly Nellie's will revealed very little as her real intentions were, I believe, cleverly hidden by her solicitor's choice of words. Skulduggery was lurking on the horizon.



This flow chart shows the major players mentioned in this book and the intended wealth distribution prior to Jeannette and Harvey Crewe's murder (dotted lines) compared to the actual wealth distribution following their murders (dashed lines). Notable is transfer of control of Maisie's wealth from Jeannette to Len (centre horizontal dashed line). The questioned relationship between Alf Hodgson & Newman Chennells may be through blood or friendship, both men likely to have come from England on the same boat. The use of trusts disguised the identity many other entities. Len Demler's distributions are not fully detailed but were many.

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Land in England?

On the face of it the last will and testament of Nellie Chennells seemed straight forward, but only if one was not aware of land in England. According to her husband's will there was land in England so what happened to it?

It will be remembered that Nellie was not named as a beneficiary in her husband's will nor in any of the probates. We said earlier that her entitlement as his legal wife to his estate was obviously a separate issue.

That separate issue is likely to have been English land she had title to in her own right. Her parents, John Lewis and his wife, came from the same class as the Chennells and it could be assumed that she had also inherited or was receiving income from her homeland through her own parents.

The thought of unspecified land in England keeps niggling away at my mind and whether it still exists today or has been sold, is debatable. My suspicious mind has to presume that it is still cleverly hidden as a secret trust or amongst the gobbledegook of the English system. Lay people try hard to understand it but I am convinced that the answers can be found by reading between the lines.

For several decades I have been chasing shadows, jumping hurdles and being led up the garden path. I've taken the high road, been down the low road and everywhere I found road blocks that were impassible. If only I could find the right pathway that this mysterious land takes! I feel this holds an important piece of evidence needed to solve the riddle of who murdered the Crewes.

I now understand a lot better how land registry works in England and while its history is long and complex, it is still extremely difficult to find factual information that points to who is gaining. For obvious reasons I want to know where the money goes from this mysterious

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land and whether some of it ended up in the hands of the Chennells family.

My thoughts were confirmed when I read a 2011 UK news report that claimed “land registries were designed to conceal ownership, not reveal it” and I did smile at another comment that said: “We need to simplify both land law and the appalling and wholly unnecessary language in which it is dressed up by fee-farming lawyers.” I commiserate as to a lesser extent this also happens in New Zealand.

People in England have been saying for decades that they urgently need clear, simple and logical land registry where all land ownership is recorded with the names of the owners indexed and acreage stated.

TRACING PROPERTY IN ENGLAND

New Zealand’s system of land ownership is reasonably simple to research and to understand so I mistakenly thought it would be just as easy to trace property in England.

Having the addresses of properties where the Chennells family had once lived would surely give me a title that could be searched? Yeah right! Dream on, John!

I eventually found land was almost totally impossible to trace particularly if the property is not registered. In England there was no compulsion for your property to be registered until the last decade when a registration campaign was launched targeting huge landowners who had previously avoided disclosing their assets.

The result of this change was staggering as it discovered that more than a third of Britain’s land is actually owned by a wealthy core of just 1200 aristocrats and their relatives.

And that’s not all. Over the centuries the land-owning class has created vast wealth for itself from its holdings. This wealth has been derived from agriculture, forestry, rents, mining, hunting and sport and since the early part of the 20th century, tourism. It seems they have always pursued their profitable goals against the common interest and at the expense of ordinary people.

I also found that farmers in England, for instance, receive subsidies with most of their assets being held in trust thus avoiding crippling inheritance tax.

This sounds very familiar and I strongly suspect that the

1898 Marriage solemnized at <i>Trinity Church</i> in the Parish of <i>St. Marylebone</i> in the County of <i>London</i>									
Groom	When Married	Name and Surname	Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Residence at the time of Marriage	Father's Name and Residence	Rank or Profession of Father	
1898	8th	Newman Chennells	32	Bachelor	Richmond Palace Agent	Parish of Holy Trinity, Hastings	Joseph Chennells (deceased)	Gentleman	
1898		Nellie Lewis	25	Spinster		69 Charlotte St	John Lewis (deceased)	Gentleman	

Special in the *Trinity Church* of *London* according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Established Church* by *Arthur Lickens Buckingham* after *Ed. 1862* by me.

This Marriage was solemnized between us, *Newman Chennells* and *Nellie Lewis* in the presence of us, *William Brooke Barnett* and *W. S. Muntz*

The marriage certificate of Newman Chennells and Nellie Lewis reveals their places of residence in 1898 and from this the idea was to discover whether they came from wealthy areas. Both their parents were listed as gentlemen which suggests wealth.

Chennells family was right amongst it and were benefiting from an age old system that allowed the wealthy to either secretly hide the land they owned and/or avoid those crippling death duties.

JOINING UP THE DOTS

I am led to believe that Nellie did not benefit from Newman's will and that has always been a worry. Because things were not adding up, I decided to explore whether I could join up the dots somehow from the addresses where Newman and Nellie had resided over the years and to see if these properties were in wealthy areas.

Newman was born at Melbourn Dale, Cambridgeshire, England in June 1866 but by the age of five the family were living at Bretford, a small hamlet in Warwickshire. Ten years later their address was Woking, a large town on the south-western edge of the Greater London Urban Area.

The earliest address I have found for Nellie Lewis was on her 1898 marriage certificate. Nellie was a spinster aged 25 and lived at 69 Charlotte St while her newly-wedded husband Newman was entered as Parish of Holy Trinity, Hastings.

These areas do suggest wealth with the added information on their marriage certificate confirming both parents, Joseph Chennells and John Lewis, as deceased "gentlemen" meaning they were middle class men above rank and file. The dictionary meaning of "gentleman" is "a man of good social position, especially one of wealth and leisure."

It was pleasing from my perspective to validate that the parents of both bride and groom were honourable men and while

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their profession is not stated, the rank or profession of Newman Chennells was entered as “Auctioneer & Estate Agent”. This is a very significant fact considering the family’s later involvement with land in New Zealand. Again, I solemnly believe that issues with land and wealth led eventually to the murders of the Crewes.

But first, more background to the days in their lives while living in England and the connections being made through marriages and involvement of other families.

Just how wealthy the Chennells and Lewis families were cannot be established with surety but the gut feeling cannot be discounted or ignored. “Where there’s smoke, there’s fire” is the theory I am presently following.

LINKS SUGGESTING WEALTH

The Chennells/Lewis marriage certificate also reveals other links suggesting wealth. Their marriage was solemnised at Trinity Church in the Parish of Marylebone in the County of London. This Anglican Church was built in 1828 from money provided to celebrate the defeat of Napoleon. Sadly it fell into disuse by the 1930s and in 1936 was used by the newly founded Penguin Books company to store books.

On the other hand, Newman’s address was given as the Parish of Holy Trinity, Hastings, a “beautiful church of Holy Trinity in the town centre of Hastings, in the South East corner of England, has welcomed worshippers for 150 years.”

The history of Hastings itself stretches back to the 10th century and as every schoolboy knows was associated with the Battle of Hastings in 1066. At that time it was “a little market town” but by 1901 the population had risen to 65,528 making it by New Zealand standards a large city.

In moving to the 1901 census of England I found the Chennells were recorded as living in the County of Sussex but no street address was given. However, a bankruptcy notice of 1906 gave Nellie’s address as The Bungalow, Gallery Hill, Bexhill, Sussex.

Bexhill was a favourable area for the well to do or more refined. Lodgings there cost money and being a close neighbouring town to Hastings, the wealth of Bexhill is not questioned.

We found the bankruptcy notice to be of more than a passing

**In the High Court of Justice.—In Bankruptcy.
In the Matter of a Bankruptcy Notice, dated the 24th
day of January, 1906.**

**To RICHARD COMPTON BURNETT, of Number 8,
Mecklenburgh-street, in the county of London, Gentle-
man.**

TAKE notice, that a Bankruptcy Notice has been
issued against you in this Court at the instance
of Nellie Chennells, the wife of Newman Chennells, of
The Bungalow, Galley Hill, Bexhill, in the county of
Sussex, and the Court has ordered that the publication
of this notice in the London Gazette and in the Daily
Telegraph newspaper, shall be deemed to be service of
the Bankruptcy Notice upon you. The Bankruptcy Notice
can be inspected by you on application at this Court.—
Dated 13th day of March, 1906.

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H. S. GIFFARD, Registrar.

*The name of Nellie Chennells pops up in strange places. This entry
was found in The London Gazette dated 16 March 1906. Just why
Richard Burnett owed money remains a mystery. I suspect that it
could be related to her medical misadventure.*

interest. Why was Nellie issuing a bankruptcy notice against Richard Compton Burnett? I'm given to understand that Burnett left England soon after the bankruptcy charges. There will be some truth in that rumour. My efforts to find more about the type of businesses in the Mecklenburgh St (close to the King's Cross area of Central London) drew a blank.

HEALTH OF NELLIE CHENNELLS

There may be a connection with Nellie's health as those who knew her have said she was crippled from the waist down and while family legend has an answer for her condition, my suspicious mind is pondering on a couple of coincidences.

The bankruptcy notice (above) was dated 24 January 1906 and could be inspected from 13 March 1906. One coincidence is that all this is happening as Nellie was giving birth to her first child. Her daughter, Constance May (Maisie) was born on 1 March 1906 at St Leonards-on-Sea (part of Hastings) and not far from Central London as the crow flies.

Like other assumptions in this very involved saga, I could get

egg on my face if I'm totally off beam here, but I have a theory. There may be nothing to it but nobody can blame me for trying to unravel the next minefield and once again the facts are rather thin on the ground.

This time I'm trying to work out when Newman and Nellie actually arrived in New Zealand and why they came out at different times. To complete this short period of time I'm also keen to establish when Howard was born and where and how Nellie ended up being crippled.

This is a big ask so I'll start with the birth of their son Howard Geoffrey. There appears to be no birth certificate anywhere. He was born "about 1911". Nellie's death certificate of July 1948 said she had a male issue aged 38 which means he was born in 1910. Howard's gravestone is inscribed with his death date as 21 May 1950, aged 39 which computes to a birth year of 1911.

Death certificates are renowned for their inaccuracy so I feel quite safe in saying Howard was born either near the end of 1910 or early 1911.

The next interesting fact is revealed when the name of Newman Chennells was found on the 1911 Auckland West electoral roll. The general election was held in December so allowing for time to register, Newman would have had to arrive no later than mid 1911 to get on the roll. To achieve this he would have needed to leave England around March or April as the voyage by sea took around

This portion of Nellie's death certificate (dated 1 July 1948) discloses enough important information to work out, within a bull's roar, the dates arrived at in the text above.

100 days depending on the weather.

This rather tight timetable meant he left shortly after the birth of his son Howard unless, of course, his birth date was in 1910 rather than early 1911 which would give him extra time.

WAS NELLIE FIT TO TRAVEL?

Obviously Nellie was not fit to travel with such a young family so her departure must have happened much later but how much later?

According to her death certificate Nellie died on 1 July 1948 aged 75 with the duration of her last illness entered as 35 years. She had also resided in New Zealand for 35 years. These dates and years indicates she arrived during 1913 and if true would mean she was already a cripple when she arrived in New Zealand.

Family folklore says Nellie was around 36 years of age when she was partly crushed in the pelvic area in a road accident and was



Readers should take a mental note of the names of the solicitors who acted for Nellie Chennells as they came on the scene again several decades after the tragedies of 1970. More about that later but meanwhile consider why Nellie was not using the family solicitors from Tuakau. Her husband Newman had been using Colin Rankin Sturrock for his legal work since the 1920s then his daughter Maisie and son Howard saw no reason to change and neither did Jeannette Crewe from the third generation. A pattern emerges when we also add Alfred Robert Hodgson and his wife Rose Amy to the mix.

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paralysed from the waist down losing the use of her legs.

From her age the accident could have definitely occurred in England within the short period after her youngest child was born and when the family arrived in New Zealand (1910 to 1913, give or take a bit).

This raises another question for my sceptical mind that her ‘accident’ may have been caused by medical misadventure such as an epidural which is known to cause a loss of sensation below the waist especially during childbirth.

I really don’t know the answer but whatever happened, these events were not the best time for her husband to be on the other side of the world.

The other factor to bear in mind is the young age of her children at this time—Howard was probably aged around one or two years and around five or six for Maisie.

I strongly feel that continuing with Nellie’s profile will reveal more about her character, her advisors and her financial background particularly giving her lack of money worries.

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Was Nellie in Charge?

Using her birth year of 1873 Nellie Chennells would have been aged around 40 when she arrived in New Zealand and as a cross reference, her husband was listed on the 1911 electoral roll which makes the dates close enough to add up and work with . . .

The big question that has to be asked is why Newman and Nellie Chennells would want to move to the other side of the world. An even larger question could be why Newman arrived a year or so earlier than his wife Nellie and children.

After around 12 years of marriage and faced with raising a family after a crippling accident to his wife, either through medical misadventure or vehicle accident, the prospects of starting afresh must have looked more appealing.

New Zealand was promising to be a land of opportunity and it was, particularly in real estate. We know Newman brought his skills in the trade from England and he became quite adept in the art of wheeling and dealing.

My gut feeling has always been that land and money, whether it is in England or New Zealand, is the overwhelming factor behind the awful tragedies that occurred in 1970.

Everyone's thoughts were diverted away from finding out what really happened. So who was controlling or driving the events that led up to the tangled mess of deceit and shady dealings?

The justice system did fail in its duty and the so-called law of the land was used, without conscience, to falsely convict one of many suspects. My only hope is that the information revealed in this book will bring the real culprits to justice.

Without letting the cat completely out of the bag, I must follow

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my instincts by providing enough ammunition to point fingers towards the ones that may be deeply involved and to a certain extent to those on the fringes.

CONTROL OF FINANCES AND TRUSTS

Now, back to my question of who was really controlling the finances and trusts.

Was it Nellie Chennells from her wheelchair after the death of her husband Newman in 1938 or her daughter Maisie who inherited her mother's estate after her death in 1948?

At this stage I do not believe a single person controlled the wealth but it was more about the way 'the system' was allowed to be manipulated by the trustees of the various estates.

The first clues I had towards things not quite sounding right were found in the last Will and Testament of Newman Chennells. The part where his wife Nellie was not eligible to any entitlements from his estate got my attention. This is not normal and led me to believe her legacies were a separate issue especially when dealing with land mentioned by him in England.

The point I made earlier in this text was of the implications indicating that any other part of his estate and legacies not already put through the probate of Newman Chennells would be able to be claimed solely by Nellie particularly the separate estate in England.

I also stated that it is not until Nellie's 1948 will is read that Newman's intentions would be understood.

I made a bold statement that "skulduggery was lurking on the horizon". Nellie's will revealed very little as her real intentions and these may have been hidden by her solicitor's choice of words. While being politically correct, it would become obvious later on that indeed "skulduggery was lurking on the horizon".

Nellie's affairs were handled by an Auckland firm of solicitors Glaister, Ennor & Kiff. Others "in the know" would have included her late husband's trustees, Alf Hodgson, including solicitor Colin Sturrock and at the top of the list were Len and Maisie Demler and quite possibly other family members.

Nellie's last Will and Testament is reproduced opposite with particular reference being made to Clause 4 for the possibly hidden meanings. She talks of other property "wherever situated" which

This is the last Will and Testament

of me NELLIE CHAMBERLAIN of Auckland in the Provincial District of Auckland in the Dominion of New Zealand Widow.

1. I REVOKE all wills and testamentary dispositions heretofore made by me and declare this to be my last and only Will and Testament.

2. I APPOINT my son-in-law LEONARD DEMLER of Pakakawa in New Zealand Farmer and my daughter MAY CONSTANCE DEMLER his wife of the same place (hereinafter called "my Trustees") Executors and Trustees of this my Will.

3. I GIVE to the said LEONARD DEMLER the sum of TEN POUNDS (£10. 0. 0.).

4. I GIVE DEVISE AND BEQUEATH all my other property of whatsoever kind and wheresoever situate unto my Trustees: UPON TRUST at their discretion both as to time and manner of conversion to sell call in and convert into money such part thereof as shall not consist of money and after payment thereof and out of my ready moneys of my funeral and testamentary expenses and just debts UPON FURTHER TRUST to divide the residue equally between my said daughter and my son HOWARD GREGORY if they shall both survive me or if only one shall survive me to pay the whole to that one.

5. I DECLARE that if either child of mine shall predecease me leaving a child or children who shall survive me such child or children shall take and if more than one as tenants in common in equal shares the share which his her or their parent would have taken if such parent had survived me.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have herunto subscribed my name this 23rd day of January One thousand nine hundred and forty-two...

Nellie Chamberlain

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would include, if people knew about it, in England or elsewhere around New Zealand. She next mentions converting into money parts that “shall not consist of money”. While this is common terminology, in translation this could mean in addition to property previously mentioned, shares, bonds, or other assets intended to be converted to “residue” (which it technically is).

Finally she is instructing that the “residue” (anything that is left over after expenses) is divided equally between her daughter Maisie and son Howard “if they shall both survive me or if only one shall survive me to pay the whole to that one.”

In plain language each would inherit half each of her estate but she adds another (standard) clause that says if either of her children predecease her then, in this case, her estate would go to her grand daughters, Jeannette and Heather as tenants in common.

While her intentions were clear, fate was about to step in—or was it skulduggery? Whether intentional or not, greed raised its ugly head.

FOLLOWING THE LEGAL PROCESS

First, before the complications creep in, I want to follow the legal process as I believe it is important to mention here that there were actually two probates, one for her New Zealand estate and the other for “effects” in England registered in Nellie’s name.

Both probates are dealt with differently in each country, but broadly speaking a receipt of probate is required as the first step in administering the estate of a deceased person and ends with the probate registry issuing a legal document called a Grant of Probate. This means the will has been proved to be valid and the probate can now be used to resolve all claims and to distribute the deceased person’s property under the intentions of the will.

The New Zealand probate was quite simple being granted on 21 October 1948 but it took some time, around eight months after the death of Nellie, for her solicitors, Glaister Ennor & Kiff, to file an Exemplification of Probate for England in the Auckland Supreme Court.

Due process was carried out in England to find the original document listing Nellie’s effects then checking for proof of their existence. To be honest, I have no idea what the document actually contained but I found an entry on the England & Wales National

8: Was Nellie in Charge?

CHENNELLS Nellie of Auckland New Zealand widow died 1 July 1948 Probate Auckland to Leonard Demler farmer and May Constance Demler (wife of the said Leonard Demler). Effects (664 4s. 5d. in England. Sealed London 24 March.

This computer generated copy from Ancestry.com may not be 100% sharp but Nellie's effects definitely reads £664 4s 5d. My belief is that this figure was only the tip of the iceberg.

(Notice of Resealing of Grant)

1351/48

THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE,
PRINCIPAL PROBATE REGISTRY,
SOMERSET HOUSE,
STRAND, W.C.2.

Sir,

24 MAR 1950

I beg to give you notice that the undermentioned Grant, which issued under the Seal of your Court was, on the date stated, Resealed in the Principal Probate Registry of the High Court of Justice in England.

Name of Decedent	Nature and Date of Grant	Date of Resealing
CHENNELLS Nellie	PROBATE 21 st Oct 1948.	24 th March 1950.



I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant

The Registrar of Probates,

Supreme Court,

AUCKLAND.

N. Z.

DS 31980/1/50 1,500 6/47 GL

J.W. Beasley.

to Chief Clerk,

Notation Department.

The existence of this receipt from Somerset House in England proves that transactions had taken place on the dates shown and regardless of not knowing the exact detail, one only has to realise that the plot was starting to thicken again ...

I Fed The Baby – John Ingley

Probate Calendar for 1950 stating: Effects £664/1/5. Sealed London 24 March.

The £664 figure was a lot of money in 1952 but probably not enough to literally kill for. So what else was on Nellie's list, for I'm certain there was more?

Not being privy to this information has been one of the biggest thorns in my side and not knowing the answers has nearly sent me to an early grave. I've been right on the edge of uncovering this mystery many times but I hate to admit that I have been beaten on every occasion by the bureaucratic system, especially in the UK.

RESEALING OF GRANT OF PROBATE

Right now I want to go back to the date of 24 March 1950 that is shown on the official documents filed in England.

The other document with the same date was received from Somerset House. It confirms the Notice of Resealing of Grant was dated 24 March 1950 and was issued from the Principal Probate Registry of the High Court of Justice in England. The same document was shipped on a slow boat back to New Zealand and according to the rubber stamp was lodged in the Auckland Supreme Court on 4 May 1950.

It had taken one month short of two years after Nellie's death for the UK probate to be returned into the hands of the trustees, Len Demler and his wife Maisie.

Meanwhile, a very scary event occurred 17 days after it was lodged. It has already been mentioned on previous pages that Maisie's brother Howard Chennells was accidentally killed in a tractor accident on his farm on 21 May 1950.

Those with a suspicious mind would wonder if this unfortunate accident was really an accident. Maisie now found herself as the sole survivor and inherited her mother's UK and New Zealand estates. Was this merely a trick of fate due to delays beyond her control or were the UK documents deliberately delayed long enough for the trustees to ponder their options?

Regardless that a will "speaks from the date of death" and not the date of probate, my mind was starting to work overtime. Apart from a solicitor, only two people would know that the documents had arrived and one of these people could have easily "doctored" the tractor.

It is at this point that I remembered being told by a local that a set of counterweights were seen lying in the grass by a fence on the day the accident happened along with Howard's lunch box.

In joining up some dots with this seemingly unimportant comment and what I knew about the possibility of Maisie being the sole survivor of the family fortune, it would have been as simple as removing the counter weights from the front wheels then hoping Howard would take his tractor up one of the steep slopes, manoeuvres he had safely done many times before.

It had been a surprise to everyone that this very experienced tractor driver had been caught out so was Howard really simply over confident?

If local folklore is correct then it makes my hair stand on end to think that this set of coincidences could have actually happened with a bit of outside help.

CHECKING OUT THE FACTS

To set my mind at rest, I borrowed a pre 1950 Ferguson tractor instruction book from a Hamilton dealer in old tractor parts to check whether these tractors actually had counterweights on the front wheels.

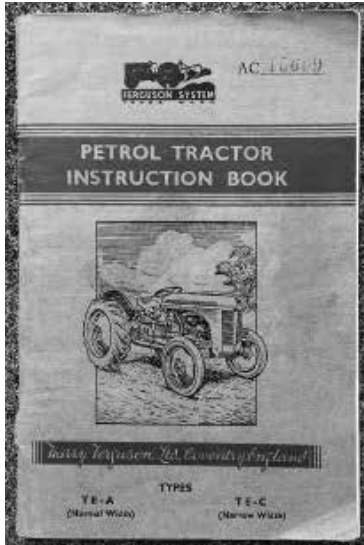
In spoiling a good story with the facts, the dealer told me that 'Fergie' counterweights did not appear until the mid 1950s.

The dealer went on to explain how easy it was to tip a Fergie tractor over backwards. Without getting too technical he said as more power was applied to drive up a steep bank and if the back wheels didn't spin, the pinion would climb up the crown wheel and in an instant would flip over backwards.

He added that tractors of this design were known as "widow-makers" while other makes that ran in the opposite direction resulted in the pinion driving down the crown wheel and thereby overcoming the problem.

It was interesting to note on page 9 of the instruction manual that if a drawbar was fitted, it could be raised and lowered from its normal setting of 18 inches from the ground. It would then affect the traction. Traction would be increased with trailed machinery by raising the drawbar or if lowered "the drawbar would tend to keep the front end of the tractor down at the expense of some loss of traction."

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The original Ferguson tractor instruction book and knowledgeable advice from a Waikato dealer has eliminated doubt from Howard's accident. Folklore often becomes fact and while I could have easily believed that there was more to this than met the eye, I was pleased that I decided to investigate further although I could speculate that "Heath Robinson" weights could have been used.

It is not known if Howard's Fergie had a drawbar so one can only draw a conclusion that it was indeed an accident. In saying that, his accident was only one of a number of other questionable fatalities in the area around this time.

WHO BENEFITS?

If this was a genuine accident it would mean that Maisie really won by default due to surprisingly good luck rather than good management.

There are still a lot of 'ifs and buts' surrounding this saga and I have constantly toiled with the 'what ifs' and whether anything would have dramatically changed if Howard's share of his mother's assets in England had actually gone into his estate instead of being controlled by Maisie or, dare I say it, eventually by Len Demler!

His nieces, Jeannette and Heather Demler, would have benefited in the long run whichever track it went down as they would have eventually inherited after the death of their mother, Maisie.

That is, providing both were still alive at the time and that Maisie didn't change her will!

9

Demler Family

The Police initially had Len Demler as their prime suspect. English author David Yallop agreed and wrote that “the man in the target sights of Hutton’s gun was Len Demler” and Taupo author Chris Birt was equally confident in 2001 that Len was the killer . . .

The 2014 Police Review explained at length the early belief of investigators that Demler was the murderer. If Len was the brutal murderer of two people, one being his own daughter, then one must ask why the Police were reluctant to take any action even after Arthur Thomas was pardoned.

Perhaps Len wasn’t the culprit. Maybe he wasn’t the one to pull the trigger but in most people’s minds, including mine, he was most definitely involved at some stage during the five days before the Crewes were reported missing.

I believe Len Demler most certainly had motive. To me, like others, his manner and behaviour when under pressure of being interviewed by Bruce Hutton (the officer in charge of the Crewe inquiry) to me shows the man’s line of intelligence and cunning. When interviewed, Len danced all around the subject, a ploy that let the other person do all the talking.

His most common response was to answer a question with a question, such as, “You think I used the wheelbarrow to shift the bodies” which led the interviewer to give an opinion to which Len may give another neat and short answer, “that is right” or “I can’t remember”.

Studying these things over time I have come to the conclusion that if Len Demler made any comment on any subject in this case you could be sure he knew he was on solid ground and could not be proved wrong. Simply because to his way of thinking if he had

no part in that particular part of crime there was nothing to worry about even if it didn't work with Arthur Allan Thomas! In Len's mind all he had to do was keep quiet and say nothing although his "don't care" attitude didn't help.

DEMLER RELATIONSHIPS

Chris Birt gave a very interesting background summary of the "intricacies of the relationships within the Demler family" in his 2001 book *The Final Chapter*. I quote the following paragraphs:

"May Constance Chennells was born at St Leonard's on Sea, England, in 1906, three years before her future husband was born at Taihape, in the hill country immediately south of the mountains of the central North Island of New Zealand. Her parents brought her to New Zealand soon after, moving into the Pukekawa area in the early 1920s.

"Subsequently they sent their only daughter to St Cuthbert's, the exclusive Auckland school reputed to turn out young ladies of strong moral fibre. In later years, this was to be the school selected for attendance by Jeannette and Heather Demler as they also passed into adolescence, and much later, by Rochelle, then firmly in the care of her aunt.

"Maisey [sic] Chennells was a woman of the old school, a morally upstanding member of the Pukekawa district and a devout supporter of the local Anglican Church, as indeed her parents had been in an era still dominated by the British Queen, Victoria. On the face of it, Maisey's marriage to Len Demler could be considered an unusual match.

"On one hand, the daughter of a wealthy farming family, remnants of the well-to-do English aristocracy, who had travelled halfway round the world for a new life in a far-flung outpost of the Empire. On the other was the forever-smiling, somewhat oddball son of a businessman turned farmer who went to the Pukekawa district to eke out a living from the scrub-covered hill country.

"But the answer to that seemingly unusual union may be found in the certificate which records the marriage of the two at St Andrew's Church, Pukekohe, on 7 October 1936. At that time, Maisey Chennells was 30. Her status on that certificate is recorded as spinster, perhaps a worrying position for a well-to-do old English

family such as the Chennells.

“In any event, May Chennells became May Demler and the newly married couple moved on to the block next door to her parents—a farm that was ultimately to provide the final split for the Demlers, in every sense of the word. If there was discord in the marriage, it could only have been exacerbated by the actions of Demler himself in defrauding the Inland Revenue Department, and by his general uncouthness and surly behaviour which was well known to family friends—as recorded in statements given to the Police later.”

I will talk more about the tax department later but at this stage Len was settling down with his new wife Maisie on land that he had procured from Charles Edward Wheeler during April 1936, about six months before his marriage to Maisie.

85

*Transfer No 249406 of the residue,
Charles Edward Wheeler to Lenard
William Demler of Pukekawa farm,
produced 26. 8. 1956 at 2.50c.*

This entry on the Certificate of Title for Section 2 shows that Len Demler did not own the property until the transfer of the residue was made in August 1956. Many questions could be asked about the timing as it was leading up to the period when Len was in trouble with Inland Revenue, a subject that will be later discussed in more detail.

title shows Wheeler having discharged his own mortgage on 14 April 1936 so it seems apparent that Len entered into some form of agreement with Wheeler, such as taking up a lease with the right to buy.

How Len Demler ended up finding his own property to farm came about through what appeared to be a major disagreement with his father William, during a period where the young Lenard was put to hard labour for many years helping his father break in a farm at Opuatia.

ABOUT WILLIAM DEMLER

The first clue Birt gave me in finding more about William Demler was on page 29 of *The Final Chapter* where he said the Demler family already had their own home in Auckland city before buying the Opuatia property.

A search through some early directories uncovered some interesting facts. *Cleaves Auckland Provincial Directory* of 1920/21 lists William Demler as a farmer of Mt St John Ave, an address that turned out to be close to Market Road, Epsom.

The 1925 and 1929 *NZ Post Office* directories show a change of address and occupation. He is listed here as a taxi driver of 76 Market Road only a short distance from his previous address.

It is interesting to look at the history of this developing area. Initially large country houses and farms dotted the landscape but from the 1890s onwards suburban development spread southwards from Newmarket across the fields of Epsom. From this statement it can be established that owners farming this area were 'on to a

winner'. It can be imagined that the price of land rapidly skyrocketed with William Demler being in the box seat. His change of occupation and address indicates that he ceased being a farmer and took up taxi driving.

History also shows that most of the housing in the area dates from 1900 to 1930, often large houses built solidly of wood, many in the Californian Bungalow or "Stockbroker Tudor" styles. The house situated at 76 Market Road confirms this statement and suggests William Demler was not short of "readies".

The entry in the 1938 *NZ Post Office* directory says William Demler was a farmer of 76 Market Rd and also farmer of Opuatia. From this information it can be reasoned that William and his wife Annie were based in Auckland while developing the farm at Opuatia. The missing directories between 1929 and 1938 (that I don't have access to) would indicate when the farm was purchased.

TAMING THE LAND

Chris Birt writes that William Demler took over 400 hectares of desolate, broken country in 1931 that he simply described as being "on the western boundary of the Thomas farm" in the Pukekawa district. For the benefit of the reader, Birt is referring to information he gathered from Allan Thomas, father of pardoned murderer Arthur Alan Thomas and other members of the Thomas family.

As far as I could discover, the Thomas family had two farms in the area at separate times, the second being the one farmed at the time of the murders on Mercer Ferry Road and the other, on a much earlier location south of Opuatia.

Despite prolonged searches through land records I was unable to discover exactly where the first Thomas farm was located and I thought once that was identified would lead on to finding where William Demler had his farm.

After several meetings with Birt and once with the Thomases (namely Des, Ray and Richard) all were reluctant to enlighten me, in fact they clammed up and changed the subject many times.

They were deliberately not answering the question and to my mind they were probably wanting to hide the fact that their father was only leasing land otherwise the Thomas name would have appeared somewhere on a certificate of title. Most likely the same

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applied to William Demler as well.

Perhaps finding this information is not of real importance so in the interests of continuing, Birt simply says William Demler “built his first cottage there assisted by his decidedly unenthusiastic son, Lenard.”

He continues: “Then followed the back-breaking task of taming the scrub-covered land” and “armed with the Aryan psyche which led a nation to take on the world not once but twice in the space of 30 years, and the first crawler tractor the Thomases had ever seen, Demler and his son attacked the easy country first, leaving the more difficult terrain till last. Demler senior toiled tirelessly—he was a real worker and required the same of his son, the only male amid four girls.”

Apparently the work pace set by the Demlers was known throughout the district. “The older Demler would walk through the bush for two hours and be ready to start work in the middle of nowhere at dawn. He’d slash and burn all day and would get home well after dark. It was seven-day-a-week work, with little respite for either father or son.”

CHIP ON SHOULDER

William Demler was obviously a hard taskmaster but it was to later affect his son’s attitude towards his father and to life in general. Some people could be excused for thinking that Len was starting to build a chip on his shoulder which over the years was to grow larger.

Birt continues and says that when Len Demler moved to his own farm in 1936, it being pretty much a re-run of his earlier days. “Almost 190 hectares of scrub-covered land stood before him, the second major land-clearing job he had been required to undertake in his short life.”

The Thomases also recalled the bitterness with which Len had completed his first stint of hard labour for his father. “Still close to him at that time, they were aware that the young man believed he was in line for his father’s property and was more than a little disillusioned when that didn’t happen. As a consequence, Demler junior was quite open about his intention to hit his ‘old man’ up for £1000 for all he had done over those years.”

Birt writes that the Thomases believe he got the money, “but that this was all the return he received for what had seemed like a lifetime of toil, blood, sweat and tears.”

When Len Demler moved to his own farm, just over the boundary fence from his future parents-in-law, Birt says he developed an open determination to hold on to what he had acquired.

“As development there continued, and the years passed by, that 190-hectare holding became Demler’s kingdom. He worked hard improving it. Like his father before him, he was a tireless worker and as a consequence few, even in his immediate neighbourhood, saw much of him during that time.”

PASSING OF WILLIAM DEMLER

Len Demler’s father, William, passed away on 2 December 1975, a good five years after the double murder and on reading his last Will and Testament, it became clear that Len did eventually benefit from his father’s estate.

The dollar amount is not known but William Demler’s estate was split five ways with all children receiving equal shares (see extract below). Some of the detail is in Clause 7 (overleaf) where it lists investments that “may be of terminable or wasting nature or may consist of freehold tenanted property or shares in a limited liability company.” He goes on to state that the yearly produce of

5. I GIVE DEVISE AND BEQUEATH the residue of my real and personal estate of whatsoever nature and kind and where-soever situate hereinafter referred to as my residuary estate to my trustees UPON TRUST to sell call in and convert the same into money and to invest the proceeds thereof in such investments as are authorised by law and to pay the nett income therefrom to my said wife during her lifetime and subject thereto TO DIVIDE the same equally between my daughters DULCIE MILLER BERYL MAY DICK JOCELYN TISH and NOELINE PEGGY THOMAS and my son LENNARD DEMLER.

Len Demler believed he was in line for his father’s farm and when that didn’t happen he was “more than a little disillusioned”. He did eventually benefit when his father split his estate five ways on his death in 1975 all his children received equal shares.

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such investments shall be treated as income. Without a Certificate of Title we still do not know exactly where William Demler's Opuatia farm was once located.

I now move on to the next generations.

7. I AUTHORISE my trustees to postpone the sale or conversion of any part of my estate for such time and from time to time as they shall in their absolute discretion think fit and to retain as authorized investments in my estate any investments held by me at the date of my death notwithstanding that such investments may be of a terminable or wasting nature or may consist of freehold tenanted property or shares in a limited liability company AND I DECLARE that the yearly produce of such investments shall be treated as income for the purposes of the trusts of this my Will any rule of law to the contrary notwithstanding AND I DECLARE that my trustees shall not be responsible for any loss or losses occasioned by such retention.

8. I EMPower my trustees notwithstanding the trust for sale hereinbefore contained at any time or times in their discretion to partition or appropriate any real or personal property forming part of my residuary estate in its then actual condition or state of investment in or towards satisfaction of the share of any person or persons in my residuary estate with power for that purpose conclusively to determine the value of any real or personal property so partitioned or appropriated as aforesaid in such manner as my trustees shall think fit and every such partition or appropriation shall be binding on all persons interested under this my Will.

Some of the details of William Demler's estate appears in Clause 7. However, these clauses are usually automatically included in a will, especially when the testator owned a farm or a business.

10

Starting a Family

Len Demler certainly had his hands full. He had also started a family and was raising two daughters; Jeannette Lenore who was born on 6 February 1940 and two years later came the birth of Dianne Heather . . .

Their upbringing and schooling followed other rural Pukekawa families. Their small school was the hub of the community having been in existence since 1895. Both girls later attended St Cuthberts in Auckland, a college that their mother had also attended to become a young lady “of strong moral fibre.”

The life of Jeannette was fully covered by David Yallop in his 1973 book *Beyond Reasonable Doubt?* so it is not intended here to go into full detail of the years after leaving St Cuthberts.

Basically she embarked on a teaching career, first attending Ardmore Teachers’ College (1957/58) then Pukekohe North School and Mangatangi (1960) before going to Europe the following year. She returned to New Zealand 18 months later during November 1962.

While Jeannette was on her big OE, her father gained notoriety through a well-publicised case brought by Inland Revenue, but earlier wheeling and dealing had occurred where Len Demler was involved.

NEW TITLES ISSUED

First, to recap some details following Howard Chennells accidental death in 1950. Section 7 had been transferred into the names of the trustees, Alf Hodgson and Colin Sturrock, as instructed in Howard’s will and it will be remembered that the main beneficiaries were to be his nieces, Jeannette and Heather Demler when they respectively attained the ages of 25 in 1965 and 1967.

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Meanwhile the paperwork for Chennells Estate was proceeding and Section 7 largely became Section 13 in November 1955. Also part of the title was the small area of Section 14 which was included because of a number of other small adjustments to the boundary (the Raglan County Council had realigned the road), it grew slightly from 364.0.15 acres to 365.2.36 acres.

According to the Certificate of Title, there were also three extensions to the terms of lease following the passing of Newman Chennells in 1939 to the death of his son Howard in 1950. The reasons for this are probably not as important as how Len Demler managed to acquire land from the trustees, Hodgson and Sturrock, 27 acres from the top right corner of Section 13 that bounded on to his neighbouring property (Section 2).

The transfer of Lot 1 went through on 9 November 1955 and

*St. James Transaction of Lease 11001 to
Alfred Robert Hodgson & Patrick, Farmers.
and John William Sturrock & Son,
Minister or Secretaries - Entered 26-11-1952
at 2:55 pm*

*Cancelled except as to
Proclamations 4646 and 4901 and
P. R. Vol. 24 & 110 295 and*

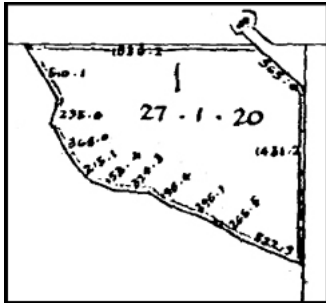
*Amberley
19-5-1953*



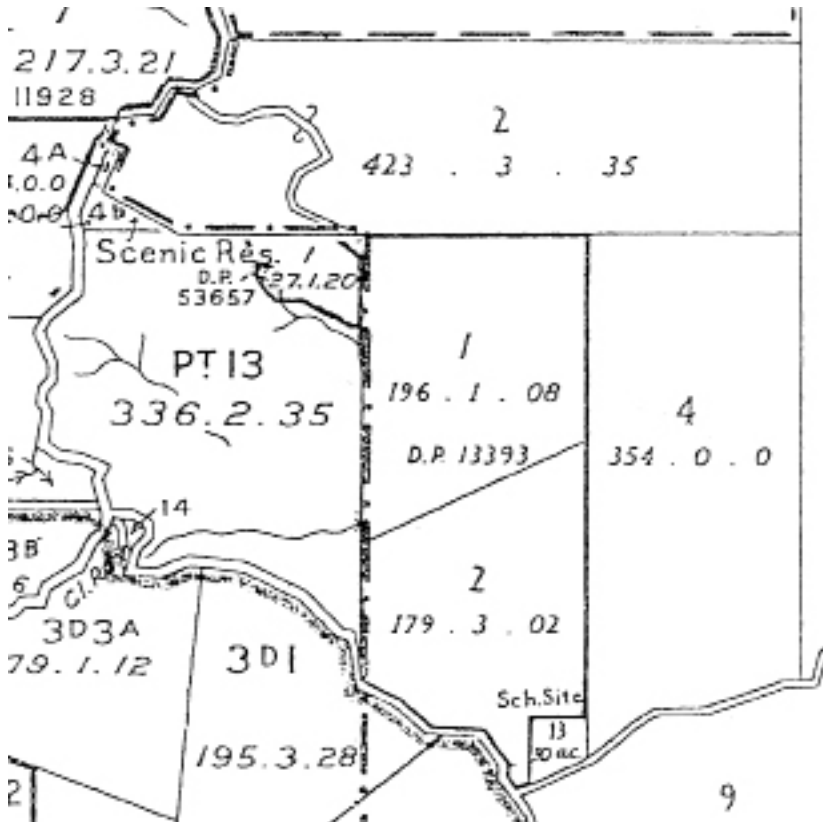
This very poor photocopy shows the last two transactions relating to Newman Chennells original Section 7 (inset) before the new Certificate of Title was issued when Len Demler acquired 27 acres (shown next page). The cancellation date is shown as 19 May 1953.



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The illustrations shown on these facing pages attempts to clarify the location of the 27 acres that Len Demler had acquired from the top portion of Section 13. Top left is the enlarged portion of Lot 1 that is tucked in almost out of sight on the right of the words "Scenic Res" as indicated on the cadastral map below.



The overall layout of the area is shown in this portion of a Cadastral map of 1960s vintage. Section 2 across the top is Len Demler's farm; Section 4 on the right was purchased by Newman Chennells in 1920 and sold in 1944 and held in trust while on the left, marked Pt 13, was originally Section 7 when purchased by Newman Chennells in 1921 and much later gained notoriety as the Crewe Farm.

benefit of Len's two daughters, Jeannette and Heather.

Len must have done some scheming as it was not until five years after Howard's death that Len's name did appear on the Certificate of Title of Lot 1 but this small block of 27 acres was to have a chequered history. Right from the beginning Len was not being totally honest as his ownership status later turned out to be debatable.

LEN'S OWN FARM

Meanwhile, to keep events in their time sequence, the ownership of Len's own farm (Section 2) turned up a mild surprise on his Certificate of Title. On 26 August 1956, barely 10 months after



This modern aerial view is an enlarged portion of the top left hand corner of the cadastral map opposite. The boundary lines are now different to those opposite (circled) but with a gully preventing easy access to it you can see why Len Demler was keen to purchase Lot 1.

*Transfer No 249406 of the residue,
Charles Edward Wheeler to Lenard
William Demler of Pukekawa farms;
produced 26. 8. 1956 at 2.50c.*

This entry on the Certificate of Title for Len Demler's Section 2 is being repeated from page 68 to make it easier for the reader to relate to the information in the text below.

acquiring Lot 1, a “transfer of the residue” occurred between Charles Edward Wheeler and Lenard William Demler. This “transfer of the residue” shows that Demler was still owing Wheeler the balance of payment.

I can only repeat again the lack of clarity when Len actually purchased his property. According to the Certificate of Title for Section 2, Wheeler held the balance of payment until the date of transfer to Len Demler (26 August 1956). The title shows Wheeler having discharged his own mortgage on 14 April 1936 meaning that Len had entered into an agreement with Wheeler.

Another line of thought can be considered as a result of Len's “paper trail” as it coincides with the time period when all New Zealanders were suffering through the depressions of the 1920s and 1930s then on to the effects of the 2nd World War.

These extracts from the 2013 book, *The Story of Te Kuiti*, by Russell Young will alert the reader to the hardships suffered by those caught up with financial situations they had no control over.

HARD TIMES STRUCK WITH GREAT SEVERITY

“The tentacles of the Great Depression reached every corner of the globe. Across New Zealand, bankruptcy and unemployment persisted for much of the next decade.

“These hard times struck Te Kuiti with greater severity than most other New Zealand towns. Nearby towns such as Cambridge and Matamata, for example, surrounded by productive land already developed and farmed for a couple of generations, were able to ride out the Depression by old-fashioned belt-tightening.

“In the King Country the belt-tightening plumbed to new depths. Banks and stock firms at first adopted a lenient approach believing

that, if their farming clients could remain on the land, they would ride out the Depression together. But when the expected recovery did not eventuate, banks had no option but to foreclose.

“The pool of farms placed on auction far exceeded the number of buyers. The Lands & Survey Department acted as a backstop at auction, paying sufficient to clear the bank’s indebtedness, leaving farmers to walk away with nothing more than their personal possessions.

“In some isolated instances, properties were purchased by a neighbour who had additional, usually family, resources, or the knocked-down values would allow a frugal farm worker with savings an opportunity to buy into a farm.

“Where the Crown had purchased the property the Lands & Survey Department and State Advances Corporation then negotiated with farmers to re-settle them back on the land.”

CHANGING THE NAMES OF PLACES

The names of the towns mentioned above can rightly be changed from Te Kuiti to Pukekawa; from Cambridge and Matamata to Tuakau and Huntly; King Country to Raglan County and so on as everyone was in a similar position, including Len Demler.

Russell Young continues: “In some cases, the same farmer was assisted three times to settle on the same property: once on first acquisition by ballot; again after the property had been abandoned during the Depression; and again when the farmer returned from service after the Second World War.

“In Te Kuiti, by agreement between various stock firms ‘stayed in’; that is, they desisted from selling up any farmer, elected instead to leave mortgages and current account advances as debts that would some day be repaid. This built enormous goodwill which lasted for following generations.”

TO BE PAID AT A LATER DATE

The question is, “Was Len Demler up to his eyeballs in debt or was he too proud to admit that he was biting off more than he could chew?”

Remember he had just been wheeling and dealing with the Chennells Estate trustees, Hodgson and Sturrock, for 27 acres off

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their block of land (Section 13) in November 1955, then the following year he was off on an overseas trip.

Len and Maisie took a trip overseas in 1955. It is presumed they left together as the only reference against Maisie's name was her arrival in Southampton, England on 4 June 1956, the same day that Len arrived.

Len's itinerary is recorded as leaving Auckland on the ship *Orion* on 6 April 1956 and arriving in San Francisco on 27 April then arrival in Southampton after departing from New York.

The reason for their visit and who paid is not known although one could easily speculate that real estate matters could have been on their list of important things to do.

If they had English wealth it is inconceivable to me that they wouldn't be there for some practical reason.

The Chennells Estate were in a position to provide private finance for family members that could be re-paid at a later date. One such arrangement has been previously mentioned (as recorded in the 1940 will of Howard Chennells) of a "certain Deed of Family Arrangement and Mortgage" between himself and his mother Nellie. Surely Maisie would have taken the opportunity for similar assistance.

Other arrangements had also been made over the years and it is my firm belief that Jeannette Crewe was intending to call these in. As a result, a number of affected parties were clearly not happy.

11

Humiliation for Len

Life was settling down for Len but it was to be the calm before the storm. The years 1961 and 1962 were full of upheavals . . .

First Len's daughter Jeannette left on her big OE and then roughly six months later in October 1961, his friend and family trustee, Alf Hodgson passed away along with the possible implication that there were family connections that could upset the apple cart as far as Len was concerned.

According to his will, Alf left his estate (upon trust) to his wife Rose Amy Hodgson along with his motorcar and personal effects. His stepsons, Geoffrey and Donald Gurney, were to benefit after the death of their mother.

The biggest shock for Len at this time was his run-in with Inland Revenue for tax evasion. It was a highly publicised case where Len was fined £9,540 relating to unpaid tax for the years 1950 to 1957 but apparently he got away with it until 1961.

It must be remembered that in November 1955 Len had just purchased 27 acres (Lot 1) and in the following year, on 26 August, Len had just paid the price to gain the title to his farm (Section 2) from Charles Wheeler. Squeezed between all this was an overseas trip with Maisie to England.

One could easily speculate that Len was under severe pressure and to top it all off, fellow trustee Alf Hodgson passed away in October 1961 barely four months after IRD had imposed their fine.

Without knowing further detail about his 'crime' with IRD, statistics can give an idea of the severity of his fine.

The first *Golden Kiwi* lottery being drawn in December 1961 had a first prize of £12,000, theoretically being able to purchase "a three bedroom house in middle class Wellington suburb, a new six-

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cylinder car, and some spending money to boot”.

The end of capital punishment also occurred in 1961 when the National Government had a free vote to abolish the death penalty (not that Len’s crime warranted being strung up). Author Chris Birt put it in a nutshell: “The public humiliation and financial hardship must have been a devastating blow for someone who had worked so hard for what he had.” It must have had the same effect on Len’s wife.

Birt continues: “With no financial resources to fall back on, Demler reluctantly and, it is said, “begrudgingly” sold half his farm to his wealthy wife, Maisie. He accepted £9540 from her, and as the certificate of title shows, transferred that portion of his estate to his wife.”

David Yallop writes on page 26 of his book *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* that Maisie Demler had paid her husband £9,540 in August 1962 and signed a Memorandum of Transfer acknowledging the deal (a copy of which was reproduced in his book as Appendix 1 and shown opposite).

Further proof is provided on the Certificate of Title. The transfer of “an undivided one half share” in his farm was not finalised until

S. 24.37.33, Transfer of an undivided one-half share in the residue, Leonard William Demler to May Constance Demler, his wife. Produced 11.10.1962 at 9.1802

The actual entry on the Certificate of Title of Len Demler’s Section 2 shows the transaction date as 11 October 1962 and clearly states it was a transfer of an undivided half share in the residue to his wife May Constance (Maisie). On the same day an identical transfer was made for the 27 acres of Lot 1. Full details of the transfers are shown opposite courtesy of Appendix 1 in David Yallop’s 1978 book *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*.

S. 24.37.33 Transfer of an undivided one-half share Leonard William Demler to May Constance Demler his wife Produced 11.10.1962 at 9.1802

Memorandum of Transfer

LEONARD WILLIAM DEANER of Auckland, Farmer
being registered as proprietor of an estate in fee simple

(subject, however,

to such circumstances, liens and interests as are notified by memoranda underwritten or endorsed

hereon,) IN all themselves of land situated in the provincial district of Auckland

containing THIRTEEN 423 acres 3 roods 35.5 perches

be the same a little more or less being part Section No. 2 block XIII of the Maramara...
survey District and being the residue of the land comprised and described in ...
Certificate of Title Volume 242 Folio 195 (South) of the Register Books at ...
Auckland, SEVENTEEN 14 acres be the same a little more or less being Sections 4A...
and 4B block XVI of the same survey District and being the whole of the land...
comprised and described in Certificate of Title Volume 674 Folio 20 of the ...
Register books aforesaid and THIRTEEN 37 acres 1 rood 20 perches be the same a ...
little more or less being Lot 1 on a plan deposited in the Land Registry Office...
at Auckland under No. 2,7677 and being the whole of the land comprised and ...
described in Certificate of Title Volume 1230 Folio 33 of the Register Books...
aforesaid SUBJECT to Section 33 of the Land Act 1948.

IN CONSIDERATION of the sum of NINE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY POUNDS ...
(£9,540. 0. 0.) (the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged) paid to him by...
MARION MAISE DEANER wife of the said Leonard William Deaner
THE COURT ROCK

WE HEREBY TRANSFER to the said LEONARD WILLIAM DEANER an undivided half share of
interest in the said land to the intent that the same shall henceforth be ...
held by them as tenants in common in equal shares.
~~all the estate and interest in the said piece of land~~

In witness whereof I have hereunto subscribed my name this 24th
day of August One thousand nine hundred and sixty-two.

Signed by the said
LEONARD WILLIAM DEANER
in the presence of

L. W. Deaner

This Memorandum of Transfer, dated 24 August 1962, is absolute proof that Len had transferred "an undivided half share of interest" in his land (detailed above) to his wife Maisie "in consideration" of £9,540 with the extra tag that it "be held by them as tenants in common - caption continued on next page ...

I Fed The Baby - John Ingley

Made by Land Transfer Act, 1962

Memorandum of Transfer

LW
~~WHEREAS~~ ILLIEN WILLIAMS of Pukekohe, Perpetrator (hereinafter called
 "the Transferor") an surviving executor under the Will of May Constance
 Dember deceased is
 in being registered as proprietor
 of an estate in two plots or to an undivided one half share or interest

subject hereto as such conditions, then and known as are notified by appropriate authorities
 or defined herein in Block 100 of land situated in the Land District of South Auckland
 containing SEVEN lots acres 0.6 hectares

more or less being more or less being part Section 8 Block VIII of the Hawkeburn
 Survey District and being the residue of the land comprised in Certificate of
 Title Volume 204 Folio 274 (South Auckland Registry) SEVEN to 2005400
 being Compensation Certificate to Treasurer of the Waikato County Council.

A SECTION containing 10 acres more or less being Section 14 and 15 of
 Block XVI of the Hawkeburn Survey District and being all the land comprised
 in Certificate of Title Volume 204 Folio 20 (South Auckland Registry)

SEVEN containing 27 acres 1 rood 20 perches more or less being Lot 1
 in Deposited Plan No. 20657 and being part Section 15 Block XVI Hawkeburn
 Survey District and being all the land comprised in Certificate of Title
 Volume 1230 Folio 21 (South Auckland Registry) SEVEN to the reservations
 and conditions imposed by Section 32 of the Land Act 1962

A SECTION in pursuance of the terms of a certain deed bearing date the 20th
 day of May 1971 and made between the Transferor and MORTIMER WILLIAMS LAWRENCE
 of Pukekohe (hereinafter called "the Transferee") are entitled to call for the legal
 estate in the lands

LW
LW
~~AND WHEREAS~~ IN SUBSTITUTION of the provisions the Transferor ~~has agreed to~~
 do the Transferee as joint owner to all ~~the said undivided one half share or~~
 interest in the said plots of land above described of which the Transferor is so
 or less share described.
 Registered as executor aforesaid.

A SECTION SEVEN more precisely have been described above & day of August

1971

SIGNED by the said ILLIEN WILLIAMS
DEEMED as Transferor in the
 presence of:-

L W Dember

in equal shares." The interesting aspect of a tenancy-in-common agreement is that the share in the title can be passed to a beneficiary of the owner's choosing. Fate played a hand as the 1969 will of Maisie does state that her share would go to her daughter Jeannette and not her husband Len. History will show that Len eventually did get his land back after the death of Jeannette as the Memorandum of Transfer, dated 6 August 1971 (reproduced above), clearly shows.

two months later, on 11 October 1962. It not only included Len's Section 2 but also half of Lot 1 that he had acquired from the Chennells Estate (originally Section 7 later to become Section 13).

LEN SWORE ON OATH

Len swore on oath during the second trial of Arthur Thomas that he did not receive this money from his wife.

A transcript of what Len Demler said during cross-examination in Trial 2 appears in Keith Hunter's 2012 book *The Case of the Missing Bloodstain* (page 60) where authorities tried to get some honest answers from Len while his hand was on the bible.

When he was asked where he got the money from to pay IRD, his reply was simple, "I had it in the bank." He was then asked if his wife Maisie had paid any of it and he said "No".

The cross-examiner took a different line in trying to find why Len had transferred an undivided half share of his farm to Maisie. He asked if he was "regularising" his own affairs to which Len relied, "Yes, It was to save paying so much tax, that's all, to make it half shares."

The next question confirmed that Len had, in fact, given a free gift of half his farm to Maisie. His typical replies were his trademark: "Yes, that's right" with another reply to a similar question being, "You could say it that way."

Most followers of this case would come to the conclusion that he was obfuscating or worse!

QUESTIONING THE SO-CALLED FACTS

In a sense, Len's answers were probably true in his mind. If the money had been paid into his bank account by someone else such as a family trust then he was technically telling the truth.

Around six months prior, having acquired control of the original Chennells trust investments, Len was in a position to use trust funds to pay IRD which meant he retained control of his farm.

However, Maisie was well aware of his past land dealings with the late Alf Hodgson and had no hesitation in saying a firm "No!" to Len's request for the money. She immediately drew up a land transfer agreement to which Len had no option but to sign. Once Len's signature was on paper she gave him the money to pay the

IRD the amount that Len owed.

Maisie wasn't a fool and to have added advantage she included the 'tenants in common' clause to give herself the final say in the property she would personally own as 'undivided half share'.

The definition of 'tenancy in common' is that two or more people to have equal ownership interests in a property. Each owner then has the right to leave his or her share to any beneficiary upon their death.

Maisie must have had a premonition, as future rifts in the family would show justice being done when she updated her will in 1969.

DOCUMENT IS QUITE CLEAR

In confirming the true legalities, the Memorandum of Transfer document is quite clear with these words:

IN CONSIDERATION of the sum of **NINETHOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED AND FORTY POUNDS (£9,540.0.0)** (the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged) paid to him by **MAY CONSTANCE DEMLER** wife of the said **Lenard William Demler**.

As he stated in court he could have easily given a "free gift" to his wife Maisie for tax purposes even regardless of his present tax difficulties but we will learn later on, that he did expect his land back after the death of his wife.

Was Len smarter than he looked or was he being outsmarted?

There are several more twists, yet to be explained, to the changing ownership of Section 13 after the deaths of the Crewes.

Additionally, in the lead up to the final sign off of Len's own property (Section 2) another quirk of fate occurred that possibly played right into Len's hands when he ended up as a sole trustee to Maisie's estate effectively giving him the upper hand.

12

At the Crossroads

Events were coming to a head between Chennells Estate trustees during the early 1960s with the risk of shady deals being exposed by others involved . . .

The death of Alf Hodgson, on 6 October 1961, may have removed one of the three wise monkeys (Hodgson, Sturrock & Demler) from the ring of deceit, but his passing was to cause a chain reaction of bitterness, distrust and vengeance within family circles.

These may be strong words and while their significance will become clear as the story progresses, there are a lot of dealings that have not been easy to untangle.

Hodgson's name has been mentioned on previous pages and mentioning his death seems a good time to enlarge further on his involvement.

He was a key player as a trustee and was fully aware of all trust dealings from the very start. It will be remembered that Alf was appointed a special trustee from the 1936 will of Newman Chennells and as a consequence, played a major role in the running of the Chennells family estates for decades.

Special trustees are sometimes used as trustees for a particular asset that will not be passed on to a beneficiary for a considerable time.

In a nutshell, Alf held a trusted position and would most probably have had access to all accounts, investments, shares and knowledge of a certain Deed of Family Arrangement and Mortgage plus returns from all ventures including compound interest plus other possible perks gained from the sale of Section 4 in 1944.

This was the section originally purchased by Newman Chennells in 1924 and on his death was left to his son Howard and daughter

I Fed The Baby – John Ingley

"It was a close call," said Mr. Wood this morning, "and if the flames had reached the walls nothing could have saved my house."

The house destroyed contained four rooms and conveniences and was owned by Mrs. May Demler, of Pukekawa. It was a wooden bungalow built about seven years ago. Mr. Wood's house of six rooms is one of the largest homes in the district.

This excerpt from an Auckland Star news report of 30 December 1937 talks about two houses caught in a fire that destroyed one belonging to Maisie Demler and the other which narrowly escaped owned by her neighbours, Rowland and Eileen Wood. Around 10 years later both owned neighbouring beach sections at Port Waikato.

Maisie. The proceeds from the sale amounted to £5,600 and was basically held in trust by Alf Hodgson and Howard Chennells.

This money was soon invested so it seems prudent to mention here that Maisie Demler was one of many who obtained a 21 year lease on a beach section at Port Waikato that was contained in a large block under the name of Cole-Baker. These documents were dated November 1948.

There had also been numerous land purchases "up north". The name of Maisie Demler was mentioned in an *Auckland Star* news report dated 30 December 1937 (above) as the owner of a house in Swanson that a family had escaped from after a house fire.

The neighbour's house, belonging to Rowland Wood, narrowly escaped destruction from the same fire but by a 'strange coincidence' Rowland's wife, Eileen, later owned a section at Port Waikato two doors away from Maisie Demler.

The plot thickens but at this stage I do not want be involved unless necessary. Needless to say, Alf Hodgson was involved along with fellow trustee Colin Sturrock and later Len Demler. We have named these men the three wise monkeys.

ALF HODGSON NOT WELL KNOWN

The names of Sturrock and Demler are well known but strangely Alf's name has never been mentioned anywhere. The fact is, and it

Circumstances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No.	When and where born	Name, if any	Sex	Name and surname of father	Name, surname and maiden surname of mother	Occupation of father	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar	Name entered after registration
157	Youngs Street, Auckland 1889	Alfred Robert	Boy		Ann Jane Hodgson		A J Hodgson Mother: Bridget Hill South Cowton	Youngs Street Auckland 1889	J. Newman	

Alf Hodgson's 1889 birth certificate does not show his father's name but strangely his 1936 marriage certificate does show his father as Arthur Hodgson then for some reason has been crossed out and replaced with father unknown. This was before the days of reliable paternity blood testing.

1936		19 36		Marriage in the District of		AUCKLAND	
No.	Place and date of marriage (State, description of building, and locality)	Name and Residence of the Parties	Age	Rank or Profession	Religion	Residence	Parents
47	1936 February 1 Registrar's Office, Auckland	Alfred Robert Hodgson Robert Amy Brocas	46 48	Farmer ---	Bachelor ---	Auckland Opuatia	(1) Father's Name and Residence (2) Mother's Name and Residence (3) Father's Name and Residence (4) Mother's Name and Residence Arthur Hodgson Annie Jane Hodgson William Lockyer Not known

Marriage, after the delivery to me of the Certificate required by the Marriage Act, 1908, by

is worth repeating again, he was deeply involved with the business affairs of the Chennells family (Newman, Nellie, Howard and Maisie) and also with Len Demler as a co-trustee.

I am sure Alf took many family secrets with him to the grave as he knew intimately or had prior knowledge of most, if not all, of the ins and outs their affairs.

Alf is believed to have had family connections with Newman Chennells in the UK and there are indications of him being related somewhere within the clan.

His birth certificate does not give his father's name although his mother's name is recorded as Ann Jane Hodgson. Alf's death certificate has Arthur Hodgson as his father but more confusion shows up on his marriage certificate with Arthur Hodgson being crossed out and the words "Fth unknown" inserted.

Alfred must have arrived in New Zealand when he was aged around 25 as his name last appears in UK in 1911 and next appears on the NZ Army WW1 nominated rolls 1914-18.

He eventually ended up farming at Opuatia and as a bachelor (at the age of 46) became the third husband of Rose Amy Brocas (who will feature later as this saga unfolds).

After the death of Alf Hodgson, fellow trustee and solicitor

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Colin Sturrock, suddenly became the sole surviving trustee of the Chennells Estate (previously Section 7, now Section 13). Land records show a transmission was entered for Section 13 on 20 February 1962 and at the same time Len Demler was surprisingly named as the replacement trustee. This was probably a logical move in the interests of Jeannette and particularly Heather who, at the time, had not legally reached the age of consent.

All these events of 1961 and almost all of 1962 occurred while Jeannette was absent in Europe and North America.

She was probably not aware of all the drama happening at home and when she did return around mid November, she ended up spending a short time relief teaching before moving to Wanganui to be with her OE friends, Dianne Ambler and Beverly Crewe (who later married Tony Willis).

It was at Beverly's wedding that Jeannette met Harvey Crewe. She was bridesmaid and Harvey was groomsman. According to Yallop their meeting "quickly blossomed into full romance" and by June 1966 the couple were married in Auckland.

*S227619. Transmission to Colin Rankin
Sturrock as survivor entered 26.2.1962
at 11.18 oc. [Signature] A.L.R.*

*S227620. Transfer to Colin Rankin Sturrock
above-named and Leonard Hilling Demler
of Pukekawa, farmer. Produced 26.2.1962 at 11.19 oc.
[Signature] A.L.R.*

It will be remembered that Section 7 (the original Chennells Estate), was legally changed to Section 13 in 1955 with Alf Hodgson and Colin Sturrock as executors. After the death of Alf Hodgson in 1961, Sturrock became the surviving trustee and duly signed up Len Demler as replacement trustee on 26 February 1962 (transactions from the Certificate of Title are shown above). It is good practice for a sole surviving trustee to immediately enter into a Deed of Appointment, bringing in another person(s) as trustee(s) otherwise, if that sole trustee dies, the estate or trust is left with no trustee at all.

13

Age of Eligibility

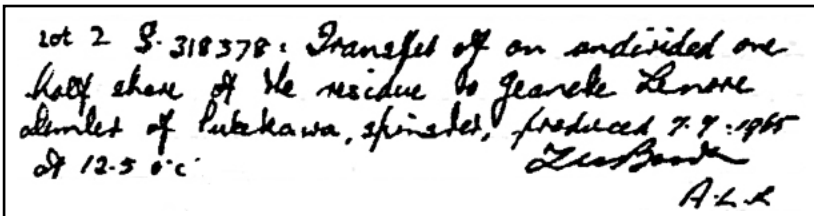
Jeannette reached the age of 25 on 6 February 1965 and became eligible for her inheritance of the Chennells Estate of which she held half share with her sister Heather . . .

Jeannette and Heather had both received a generous bequest from the 1940 will of their uncle, Howard Chennells, who had left equal shares of his farm plus the balance of the trust funds, to the nieces on each reaching the age of 25 years.

It will be recalled that Howard's farm (Section 7) was inherited in equal shares with his sister Maisie Demler from their father Newman Chennells in 1938. As mentioned earlier Howard had become the sole owner of Section 7 on 28 July the following year after Maisie had transferred her interests to her brother.

Section 7 was the original Chennells family farm and after the accidental death of Howard in 1950 the land was held in trust under a new title (Section 7 became Sections 13 & 14) but the farm itself was run by managers until Jeannette had reached the age of eligibility in February 1965.

However, it was five months before the transaction appeared on the Certificate of Title carrying the date of 7 July 1965: "Transfer of an undivided one half share of the residue to Jeanete (sic) Lenore



This Certificate of Title entry for Sections 13 & 14 (previously Section 7) shows Jeannette Demler legally receiving her half share on 7 July 1965 as stipulated in the 1940 will of her uncle, Howard Chennells.

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Demler of Pukekawa, spinster”.

In its simplistic state, residue is any portion of the deceased's estate that is not specifically identified. In this case the land was identified but the surplus from operating the farm and other 'investments' over the 15 years from Howard's death in 1950 to the date of stipulated inheritance then collectively becomes the residue or balance of the estate.

According to Yallop, Jeannette not only received her half share of the farm but came into a residue amount something like \$17,000 plus, wait for it, on the very same day (7 July 1965) she also received “an undivided one half share” in Sections 67 & 68 which until now has not appeared in any other documentation.

SECTIONS 67 & 68 EXPLAINED

These two sections of land, totalling 80 acres, could be relevant to solving this murder mystery but I believe the original purchase was to be a long term investment because of its close location to Sections 13 & 14 (soon to be the Crewe farm).

I believe its immediate use was to be a run-off for use by the family but it could also be seen as having more value as a kick-start to the land-locked area behind it which amounted to over 1000 acres.

The potential for owning Sections 67 & 68 was for the future



The ownership of Sections 67 & 68 by the Demler family (highlighted by heavy black border) has not appeared in any other public documentation. Those familiar with the area will recognise the location in relation to the Waikato River as a strange co-incidence when related to other facts of which more will be detailed later.

development of a dairy farm or cropping, an option that Jeannette and Harvey would have been considering in their expansion plans.

The past history of the Chennells family in their “sharp” dealings with land were mild when compared with what was going to happen here (the body dumpings). According to the Certificate of Title for Sections 67 & 68 (situated on Frost Road adjacent to the banks of the Waikato River in the Onewhero Block) the plot will thicken.

MORTGAGE CHANGES HANDS

This land first came to the notice of the trustees of Howard Chennells estate when solicitor Colin Sturrock sold the idea to fellow trustee, Len Demler, as a potential investment.

Sturrock had earlier found himself as a surviving trustee to the former owner and on 16 August 1963 Len Demler was legally named as a joint and contributing trustee on behalf of Chennells Estate to hold the mortgage of Sections 67 & 68.

Barely two years later, as to her entitlement, Jeannette received her undivided one half share “of the joint interest of Colin Sturrock and Len Demler” in the mortgage. Effectively, at this point, Jeannette became the joint mortgage holder of sections 67 & 68 and also half

*A 204916 Mortgage to Howard Chennells
and Colin Leathin Sturrock and Len Demler
jointly (Contributors) purchased 16.8.1963
at 9.35 a.m.
H 52753
J 518376: Transfer of an undivided one half share
of the joint interest of Colin Leathin Sturrock
and Len Demler in mortgage
S 264016 to Jeannette Leathin Demler
7.7.1965 at 4.50 p.m.*

These are the first two Certificate of Title entries relating to the acquisition of Sections 67 & 68 by the Demlers. The top entry, dated 16 August 1963, shows the names of Colin Sturrock and Len Demler jointly (contributing) purchasing as trustees of the Chennells Estate. The next entry, on 7 July 1965, records the transfer of an undivided one half share of the joint interest of Sturrock and Len Demler, in mortgage, to Jeannette Demler.

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owner of Sections 13 & 14. Another hiccup came just over two years later with the death of a joint mortgage holder of Sections 67 & 68, Thomas Martindale whose interest was transferred to lawyer Colin Sturrock as survivor then at the same time to solicitors Sturrock & Monteith. The date was 18 August 1967.

S-387653: Transmission of the joint interest
of Thomas Martindale and Colin Rankin
Sturrock in mortgage S-260006 to Colin
Rankin Sturrock as survivor entered
18.8.1967 at 12.25.00 *John*

S-387653: Transfer of the interest in
mortgage S-260006 acquired by Transmission
S-387653 to Colin Rankin Sturrock and
Douglas Gillies Monteith both of Glasgow
Solicitors produced 18.8.1967 at 12.35.00 *John*

S-405828: Evidence of the marriage of Jeannette
Lenore Brewster (incorrectly above described as Jeannette
Lenore Brewster) in mortgage S-260006 to David Agnew
Brewer entered 5-6-1968 at 12.03.00 *John*

5460028 *John* 570/119
S-460028: Transfer of the interest of
Colin Rankin Sturrock and Douglas Gillies
Monteith in mortgage S-260006 to
Jeannette Lenore Brewster produced 9.10.1969
at 10.50.00 *John*

These portions show the movements in the Certificate of Title for Sections 67 & 68 from the two entries dated 18 August 1967 when it came into the hands of solicitors Sturrock & Monteith. The lower two entries tidy up some loose ends with Jeannette's ownership, the most recent being dated 9 October 1969.

The records were again tidied up on 5 June 1968 on the evidence of Jeannette's marriage to Harvey Crewe then 15 months later, on 9 October 1969, the transfer of Sections 67 & 68 mortgage from Sturrock & Monteith to Jeannette Crewe (just 14 months before her murder).

UTILISING THE INHERITANCE

Time to wind the clock back a bit and consider if the aspirations of Jeannette and Harvey were going according to plan, a plan that is briefly touched on by David Yallop in his 1978 book *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*.

Originally their preferred choice, prior to their marriage, was to purchase a farm and settle in the Wairarapa but the cost was beyond their means so it made sense to take one step at a time and to first utilise Jeannette's inheritance.

Yallop writes that Harvey was very conscious of the opportunity he was given to start up his own farm because of Jeannette's circumstance although others were saying he had only married Jeannette for her money.

Yallop then goes on to confirm these thoughts after interviewing Jeannette's friend Clare MacGee: "She told me that it would have been better if she had not had any money. Better for the marriage if they had had to rely on Harvey's income. He resented the fact that she was wealthy. That's why he worked so hard to justify himself. There were quite a number of people, I know for a fact, who thought he had married her for her money."

Regardless of these claims Jeannette and Harvey were prepared to make a go of their life on the land and after being married on 18 June 1966 set about meeting the many challenges that were yet to raise their ugly heads.

YALLOP WAS MISTAKEN

David Yallop wrote on page 30 of his book that Harvey Crewe had bought Heather's half share of the Chennell farm before his marriage to Jeannette but the Certificate of Title says differently.

Suspicion that something devious was going on was in finding a gap in the Certificate of Title entries where the name of Jeannette's sister, Dianne Heather Demler, was not actually recorded as owning

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one half share of her uncle's farm. Anyone with a suspicious mind would wonder what was going on.

Sure, there may be some logical explanation for this but I smell a rat.

HARVEY BUYS HEATHER'S HALF SHARE

Heather was eligible for her share in January 1967 but according to Yallop, Harvey Crewe had already purchased Heather's half before marrying Jeannette in 1966 which enabled Heather, through the trustees, settlement of her estate ahead of time.

No dates were given by Yallop but the Certificate of Title suggests it was after the wedding as the date of the transfer is legally recorded as 22 August 1966 which was actually two months after the wedding.

copy of title M
S.531315 Transmission of the interest
of David Harvey Crewe to Colin
Reginald Harvey of Mangakino farmer-as
executor entered 6.9.1971 at 11.40 o'clock
produced 6.9.1971
Abraham
A.L.R.

S.531316 Transfer of the interest
acquired by Transmission S.531315 to
Colin Reginald Harvey abovenamed and
Douglas Gillies Monteith of Tuarau
solicitor produced 6.9.1971 at 11.40
o'clock
Abraham
A.L.R.

S.531317 Transmission of the interest
of Jeannette Lenore Crewe to Leonard
William Deamer of Pukekawa farmer as
executor entered 6.9.1971 at 11.40 o'clock
Abraham
A.L.R.

S.531318 Transfer of the interest
acquired by Transmission S.531317 to
Leonard William Deamer and Douglas
Gillies Monteith both abovenamed
produced 6.9.1971 at 11.40 o'clock
Abraham
A.L.R.

S.353639 Evidence of the Marriage of
of Jeannette Lenore Deamer incorrectly
abovenamed to David Harvey Crewe of
Pukekawa farmer entered 22.8.1966 at
10.56 o'clock
K.E. Burke
A.L.R.

S.353640 Transfer of the one half
share of Colin Rankin Sturrock and
Leonard William Deamer to David
Harvey Crewe of Pukekawa farmer
K.E. Burke
A.L.R.

produced 22.8.1966 at 10.58 o'clock

K.E. Burke
A.L.R.
S.353641 Mortgage of the residue to
the State Advances Corporation of
New Zealand produced 22.8.1966 at 11.0
o'clock

K.E. Burke
A.L.R.
THIS REPRODUCTION (ON A REDUCED SCALE)
CERTIFIED TO BE A TRUE COPY OF THE
ORIGINAL REGISTER FOR THE PURPOSES OF
SECTION 215A LAND TRANSFER ACT 1952
Abraham
A.L.R.

Discharge of Mortgage S.353641 as to
Lot 1 plan S.7368 produced 16.12.1971
at 9.40 o'clock
Abraham
A.L.R.

S.543213 Transfer of Lot 1 plan S.7368
to Rose Amy Hodgson, Geoffrey Gurney
and Colin Rankin Sturrock produced
16.12.1971 at 9.40 o'clock
13D/255
Abraham
A.L.R.

S.543214 (ONCT) Cancelled as to the
16.12.1971) Residue and CT 13D/256
issued
Abraham
A.L.R.

Cancelled
duplicate destroyed
Abraham
A.L.R.

This is an untidy mess for a legal document as the entries are recorded out of sequence which suggests to the layman that mistakes had been made so corrections were necessary but were they deliberate? The first four entries shown were dated 6/9/1971 (after the murders) and the next four, marked by left hand brackets and dated 22/8/1966, shows the transactions of Harvey Crewe's purchase of Heather's entitlement of her one half share through the trustees Colin Sturrock and Len Demler. It also records Harvey's mortgage to State Advances and its subsequent discharge in 1971. Of special note is the transfer of Lot 1 to Rose Amy Hodgson, another legal loose end that will be covered in a later chapter.

In fact, the transfer shows Harvey Crewe actually purchasing the half share from the trustees, Colin Sturrock and Len Demler and NOT from Heather.

The obvious reason being that she had not yet reached the age of eligibility and of course a cynic may believe that more was going on than met the eye. For whatever reason, a mutual agreement had obviously been made with Heather as a means of allowing the transaction to go ahead.

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, Jeannette and Harvey had big plans for expansion after taking up her inheritance in 1965. She already had her half share in the Chennells Estate (original Section 7) and also Sections 67 & 68. Jeannette was also in line for her mother's share in Len's farm which prompted Harvey to express his desire to buy out his father-in-law.

History will show that sale did not happen so Harvey must have thought that Heather might be persuaded to cash in her share of the Chennells Estate. According to Yallop, Harvey did pay \$45,000 for Heather's share with a deposit of \$9000 being paid in cash, "the rest by the way of a mortgage that he raised with State Advances." (The Certificate of Title opposite shows the transaction did occur two months after their marriage).

The former Chennells Estate then became known as "The Crewe Farm".

MARRIAGE "SLIGHTLY UN-NORMAL"

The marriage of Jeannette and Harvey started off on the right foot and while friends and neighbours saw them as keeping to themselves and not socialising, Jeannette's sister Heather is quoted in Ian Wishart's 2010 book *The Inside Story* as being so attached to each other in a way that was "slightly un-normal".

Heather's feelings were not explained but my gut was saying that it had to do with land and assets plus greed.

Readers may think I am obsessive over this line of thought but I am still keeping an open mind. Even at this early stage of her marriage Jeannette was a very wealthy young woman and destined to become very powerful particularly after her mother passed away less than four years in the near future.

To my mind, being slightly un-normal would come more from

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Harvey's neck of the woods as he knew he was on to a good thing and there was no way he was going to upset 'she who shall be obeyed!'

UNSOLVED INCIDENTS

The unsolved events of a burglary, the Crewe vehicle brake line cut and two fires over the next three years have not appeared on the list of priorities for the Police nor have mainstream news commentators applied any real importance to these crimes. However several authors have attempted to find factual links with perhaps Ian Wishart coming up with the most feasible in his book *The Inside Story*.

The most obvious reason for not connecting any dots was not being able to look far enough afield for suspects. There are people out there whose names have not yet appeared on the radar and to this day have no apparent connection with the double murders.

These unsolved crimes are definitely linked to the murders and were carried out initially as warnings which to me suggests feuding within the circle of those 'in the know'.

Like others I've studied the dates leading up to that fateful day in June 1970 and have found connections worth investigating. Let's look at the timeline of events:

Feb 1965:	Jeannette reaches age of eligibility for inheritance
7 July 1965:	Transfers of half share land interests to Jeannette
18 June 1966:	Marriage of Harvey and Jeannette
22 Aug 1966:	Harvey purchases Heather's share
21 Jan 1967:	Heather becomes eligible for her inheritance
18 June 1967:	1st wedding anniversary
29 July 1967:	Crewe house burgled
29 Aug 1967:	Harvey & Jeannette make their wills
18 June 1968:	2nd wedding anniversary
1 Dec 1968:	Birth of Rochelle
7 Dec 1968:	Fire in Crewe household
17 June 1969:	Haybarn torched
18 June 1969:	3rd wedding anniversary
18 July 1969:	Maisie Demler changes her will
26 Feb 1970:	Death of Maisie Demler
17 June 1970:	Harvey and Jeannette last seen alive
18 June 1970:	Would have been 4th wedding anniversary

Not surprisingly, the dates do show up some coincidences with others having no visible relationship but all show that a person would have to have some knowledge of family affairs, would know detailed movements of the Crewes and most of all local knowledge as one would have to be within striking distance yet stay undetected.

The timeline shows the timing of the recent events being deliberate as they coincide with anniversaries but the date of the first burglary appears unrelated and would likely have been actioned as a first warning to back off.

COMMENTS FROM YALLOP AND WISHART

David Yallop says in his book *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* that the break in occurred during the evening while the Crewes were at the Demler farm.

Amongst the items the robber allegedly took included Jeannette's personal effects such as handbag, her watch, two brooches, a sterling silver brush and comb set, a string of real pearls and her engagement ring. Because these items all belonged to Jeannette, this suggests to me that the burglary was committed by a woman. To top it off Harvey's gun was not touched. Again it would be of no interest to a woman.

The Police were called and after assessing the crime scene were convinced it was not a genuine robbery as the house had not been searched. The target had been Jeannette's dressing table and strangely money and other valuables remained in another dressing table. The robbery remains unsolved with the stolen items not recovered to this day.

Yallop had also interviewed family friend Beverly Batkin who said Harvey's gun was there in the lounge. "I don't know much about guns, but apparently it was quite a good one. That was not taken." She was probably referring to Harvey's shotgun, not a .22 rifle.

Author Ian Wishart was forced to dig deeper to back up his theory that Detective Len Johnston was actually the villain as he was there from day one in 1967 and was in a position to cover his tracks at any of the following crime scenes.

As the investigating officer Johnston was present for all the crimes on the Crewe's property then again following the murders where he and Hutton were found to have planted evidence. Wishart

ended up compiling an almost foolproof set of theories—that he admits to being entirely speculative—about the antics of Johnston and his amazing ability to manipulate evidence and people, despite the 2014 Police Review assessment that Wishart’s theory was fanciful. I don’t believe it though and there are no hard facts.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

The next warning to the Crewes followed the birth of their daughter Rochelle. Harvey returned home after visiting Jeannette in hospital to find the spare bedroom ablaze. At first, Harvey claimed the fire was caused by faulty wiring, a fact that could not be confirmed by an electrician and fire officer, but apparently he was later to concede that it could have been started deliberately.

If it was deliberate, the arsonist had to be familiar with the house but why go inside, why not light it from the outside where there was less chance of being caught red-handed? I believe the arsonist was inside the house for another reason but on the spur of the moment decided to send another warning that they meant business.

Without a doubt the second mysterious fire was planned. It occurred the evening before the Crewe’s third wedding anniversary and was another warning. This time the arsonist did not want to be seen near the house so torched their haybarn.

So far Police were called to all three crime scenes and while the offender/s were never found, Maisie Demler also wanted the matter kept quiet so asked the local newspaper editor not to publish any details.

My belief is that Maisie knew much more than she was letting on. She has been quoted as saying, “What are they going to do next?” She was careful not to expand on who “they” were but as the person who was very close to the Crewes she would have had good knowledge of any past indifferences or bitterness within the family.

And as scary as it may sound, I’m certain that the murderers were already planning for another showdown one year ahead on the day before the Crewe’s 4th wedding anniversary of 18 June 1970.

Their plans changed when Maisie died four months short of D-Day. The sh*t was starting to hit the fan and quite a few investors and family were to become disgruntled in a big way with the upcoming sale of Maisie’s estate.

14

Common Denominator

The reader may have noticed by now that one person seemed to be keeping close tabs (and tight control) on the family's inheritance. That person was Maisie Demler . . .

Over the last three or four decades I had noticed patterns emerging while unravelling the many twists and turns of this sorry saga.

Although it took some time to sink in I slowly came to the conclusion that Maisie was becoming the common denominator and that she seemed to have a finger in every pie.

There were of course other key players and to give credit where it was due, she had expert and invaluable advice from Tuakau solicitor, Colin Rankin Sturrock, who did his best to cover all the loopholes and to keep her ahead of the play.

During my long and frustrating research, several other names apart from Sturrock, were consistently appearing on a lot of the documents dealing with legal matters connected to the families of Chennells and Demler.

These documents followed a similar pattern with presentation and wording that only those 'in the know' would understand. I believe that assets were hidden with some trustees being outside the family circle but nevertheless having the valuable inside knowledge. There was a reason for this.

The earliest involvement of Sturrock seems to be with Maisie's father, Newman Chennells. As a land agent, Newman would have been using him for conveyancing and later on with updating his will. It was on Newman's will, dated 24 June 1938 remember, that I took notice of the words "English property" along with the similar references on several probates that followed.

His will is the only document that specifically refers to property in England and for some unexplained reason all legal documents

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This is the written document, now produced and shown to Lord William Dunsley of Salisbury, and approved to in his affidavit to the Court of Probate to himself and Joseph Thomas, son of Salisbury, David Brown, a solicitor, now at Exeter, and the day of March 1870 before us:-

A Solicitor of the Supreme Court of the County of Devon

This is the last Will and Testament of me
MARY CONSTANCE DEMLER of Salisbury married
Woman.

1. I revoke all former wills at any time heretofore made by me and declare this to be my last and only will.

2. I appoint my husband Lord William Dunsley and my daughter Gertrude Anne Brown, living, called my trustees, with possession of the said my survivor of them in other trusts of the my will (hereinafter appointed). It is executed and signed by this my will.

3. I give and bequeath to my daughter the said Gertrude Anne Brown absolutely all my property and interests and estate of whatever kind and by whatever means.

4. I give and bequeath all the real and personal property both real and personal of whatsoever nature and whatsoever estate (hereinafter called my residuary estate) unto my trustees when dead to allow my husband the said Lord William Dunsley to use and occupation thereof and the income arising therefrom during his lifetime and after his death to stand possessed of my said residuary estate upon the following trusts:-

(a) As to the sum of Two hundred dollars (\$200) for the use of the Trustees of the said Church and to be used for the general purposes of the said Church.
(b) As to the sum of Two thousand dollars (\$2000) for my said daughter Gertrude Anne Brown for her own use absolutely when she attains the age of twenty five (25) years.

(c) As to the balance of my said residuary estate for my daughter the said Gertrude Anne Brown for her own use absolutely in if she should predecease me or the before attaining a vested interest absolutely for her use and if more than one in equal shares for their own use absolutely upon their attaining the age of twenty five years.
In witness whereof I have set my hand and the day of the month of March 1870 and the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy.

M. C. Demler.

This is the written document, now produced and shown to Lord William Dunsley of Salisbury, and approved to in his affidavit to the Court of Probate to himself and Joseph Thomas, son of Salisbury, David Brown, a solicitor, now at Exeter, and the day of March 1870 before us:-

The infamous handwritten will of Maisie Demler. It was deliberately in the handwriting of her solicitor, Colin Sturrock, possibly because she didn't want any changes or alterations made (to counteract pressure from Len). After her signing that it met her wishes, it became absolute!

that followed never directly mentioned any English assets.

But Maisie knew, and so did a couple of other close members of the family. It was Nellie (Maisie's mother) who set the pattern of protecting her English assets by not specifically referring to the land like her husband had. Nellie was a business woman and despite being disabled and having 24/7 care, her will made it quite clear that her English estate would go no further than her offspring, Maisie and Howard, or to the survivor.

She was also allowing for the unlikely event of both her children predeceasing her with her intention of giving any grandchildren her legacies. It's true that Howard was accidentally killed during the process of probates but to sidestep the complications that did arise, Maisie ended up inheriting the lot as the only survivor.

MOTIVE FOR MURDER

The next stage of the journey is where somebody completely lost it and a motive for murder becomes apparent although not as cut and dried as one would hope.

I believe that Maisie, who was faithfully carrying on family tradition where the presence of land in England had to be hidden in legalese, wrote in her will words that didn't exactly give the game away but were there for those who knew what she meant.

But first some observations about Maisie's will that caused me some sleepless nights.

The Last Will and Testament of May Constance Demler was handwritten by her solicitor, witnessed and signed on 18 July 1969 (only seven months before her death on 16 March 1970). It was to become disputed, pulled to pieces and claimed by some to be a fake.

My reaction, and I could have many times done a haka on it, was to discover that the thread of doubt was always there if read carefully. For many years, and because this handwritten will with its unclear scrawl hiding its true intent, has led many by the nose around the bull paddock with not an exit in sight.

One has to read between the lines and to make this a little easier I have included the word for word transcribed copy (overleaf) used in the probate document that was placed before the Hamilton High Court by solicitors Sturrock & Monteith on 24 March 1970.

It is important to remember that Maisie appointed her husband

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THIS IS THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT of me MAY CONSTANCE DEXLER of Puckaway Married Woman.

1. I REVOKE all former wills at any time heretofore made by me and declare this to be my last and only will.

2. I APPROPRIATE my husband Leonard William Dexler and my daughter Jeanette Lenore Grewe (hereinafter called "my trustees") which expression shall include the survivor of them or other trustee of this my will howsoever appointed] to be executors and trustees of this my will.

3. I GIVE AND BEQUEATH to my daughter the said Jeanette Lenore Grewe absolutely all my jewellery and silverware and articles of personal apparel or adornment.

4. I GIVE DEVISE AND BEQUEATH all the rest and remainder of my property both real and personal of whatsoever nature and wheresoever situate (hereinafter called "my residuary estate") unto my trustees LEONARD DEXLER to allow my husband the said Leonard William Dexler the use and occupation thereof and the income arising therefrom during his lifetime and after his death to stand possessed of my said residuary estate upon the following trusts:-

- (a) As to the sum of Four hundred dollars (\$400) for the Puckaway Vestry of the Anglican Church to be used for the general purposes of the Puckaway Church.
- (b) As to the sum of Two thousand dollars (\$2000) for my grand-daughter ROCHELLE SARAHNE GREWE for her own use absolutely upon her attaining the age of twenty-five (25) years.
- (c) As to the balance of my said residuary estate for my daughter the said Jeanette Lenore Grewe for her own use absolutely or if she should predecease me or die before attaining a vested interest hereunder for her issue and if more than one in equal shares for their own use absolutely upon their attaining the age of twenty-one years.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have set my hand to this my will this 18th day of July One thousand nine hundred and sixty-nine.

SIGNED by the Testatrix the said
May Constance Dexler in the sight
and presence of us together present
at the same time who at her request
in her sight and presence and in the
sight and presence of each other

M.C. Dexler

Although unsigned, this accurately transcribed and typed version (known as a 'true copy') of Maisie's handwritten will was used in her probate document for clarity.

Lenard and her daughter Jeannette as executors and trustees (see Clause 2) and notably missing throughout is any mention of her second daughter Heather. The reason for this was her disinheritance.

However, the key words are found in the middle section of this clause where it says “. . . which expression shall include the survivor of them or other trustee of this my will howsoever appointed”.

What does this really mean? Should both trustees be killed in say a motor accident, the estate stands possessed (meaning: owns) then another trustee could be appointed. However, as history will show, only one trustee would survive and would become sole trustee of an estate of multiple properties that had had past disputes plus other undisclosed effects.

TELLING A STORY

To add to the confusion one has to read Clause 4 and sub-clause (c) together as one statement. Then take note of the words *my residuary estate; to stand possessed; balance and vested interest*—all being of importance and telling a story.

Some may argue the toss with their many and varied opinions of Maisie’s will without really understanding what the hard-to-read “scrawl” was actually saying. These interpretations were in fact trying to contest her written word but for me the penny had fallen and I, for one, knew it had hit the ground.

Let me explain how I see this. It looks like to me that along with her legal advice Maisie was using her skills gained from stringent schooling of how the English language should be used to convey a carefully worded meaning for those ‘in the know’ who would understand.

Maisie’s will was handwritten for a reason as she had expressed her wishes from her hospital bed directly to Colin Sturrock, her solicitor, who in turn wrote it out on her behalf in the legalese language that she probably requested (we now use Plain English). As there were no corrections or additions slotted in Maisie had obviously prepared it and approved it, as it carries her authorised signature.

At least one person was not happy and wasted no time in making serious attempts to change certain parts of her will. Was it Heather’s disinheritance or something else that caused her husband Len’s haggling and begging at her hospital bedside. He was quite

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desperate as he, and other shareholders, could see an unsatisfactory outcome if not altered. My suspicions remain—it was something other than Heather’s disinheritance—something else that extremely important to Len.

VISUAL DETAILS OF MAISIE’S WILL

It is plain to see that Maisie named two trustees (Upon Trust) whom she, in turn, gave each one a separate part of her estate minus the \$400 to her church along with \$2000 to her grand daughter Rochelle plus other expenses.

To her husband Len she gave the use, occupation and income of half the total interest Maisie had in Section 2 (the Demler farm) until the day the farm was sold or Len had died. Other than that he was only a trustee but after his death Maisie was instructing Jeannette “to stand possessed” of her “residuary estate” that is, what was left—all assets, farm, bank etc. He had a life interest in all her estate except personal possessions given to Jeannette.

She then details that instruction in sub-clause 3 where she gives Jeannette the balance of her residuary estate “for her own use absolutely” but here’s the crunch “should she predecease me or die before attaining a vested interest” then her issue (Rochelle) would inherit on attaining the age of 21 years. There is no mention of any other beneficiary, which would have been a standard substitution for children.

Although the “balance of her residuary estate” is not specifically mentioned, it would include the investments made on her behalf by her trustees, Alf Hodgson, Colin Sturrock and others, between 1938 (on her father’s inheritance) and 1970 upon her passing.

These assets would most likely involve Company Shares, Mortgages, Investments, Property plus her father’s estate in UK also her mother’s UK estate (under the name of Nellie Chennells) that Maisie and her brother Howard filed for, on probate, in Somerset House after Nellie died in 1948, and while they technically could have been disposed of since, I’m almost certain they weren’t.

Both daughters, Jeannette and Heather, would not have been aware at this stage of the huge total value of their mother’s assets and estate.

The plot is starting to thicken some more.

15

False Signatures?

Chapter 24 of Chris Birt's book The Final Chapter examines the claim that Maisie Demler's signature on her Last Will and Testament was possibly forged . . .

There could be an element of truth in his assertions as Chris does point out a number of differences in the signatures that he has used as examples. My belief is that his examples only tell part of the story.

Chris has used as his first example the signatures from Len and Maisie's marriage certificate of 7 October 1936 then with others from later documents with emphasis on Maisie's handwritten Last Will and Testament.

Birt has stated that Maisie's signature on her will "contained an element of forgery" possibly by cut and paste. A specialist's opinion was that the style of handwriting used to sign Maisie's name was "consistent with having been created by her husband, Lenard Demler."

Another expert was not so sure and couldn't positively state that Demler signed his late wife's name on her will. However, she did hold the view that "two different writers" completed the signatures of M C Chennells and M C Demler (see top line below).

To our inexperienced eyes there are quite obvious differences



On the left are the two signatures from their marriage certificate of 7 October 1936 while on the right is Maisie's signature from her 1969 will and Len's remarriage certificate of 1972.

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especially with the letters M, C, and slope of the lower case l. Len's signatures are also slightly different, notably the L and D plus the omission of the W for his middle name of William.

All Len's other signatures after this date are almost identical and the same goes for those signed by Maisie. It is only the pair on the marriage certificate that are different so it seems both Len and Maisie, for whatever reason, changed their style.

In checking out the possibility that we could be mistaken I undertook a search of all documents on my files and it is in my humble opinion that Maisie's signature was definitely not forged on

May Constance Demler.

This example, from an Affidavit to Lead Grant of Probate for the estate of Newman Chennells shows Maisie signing her full name. She rarely did this, preferring M C Demler but her writing style did not change over the years following and it is only her marriage certificate that is radically different.

14 July 1938

M. C. Demler.

Newman Chennells Probate

28 April 1939

L. W. Demler.

Howard Chennells Coroner's Report

22 May 1950

M. C. Demler.

Memo of Transfer (Guy)

20 June 1946

L. W. Demler.

Memo of Transfer from Maisie

6 August 1971

M. C. Demler.

Nellie Chennells Probate

8 October 1948

L. W. Demler.

Application for Transmission (Jeannette)

13 August 1971

M. C. Demler.

Maisie's Last Will and Testament

18 July 1969

L. W. Demler.

Len's Last Will and Testament

30 March 1992

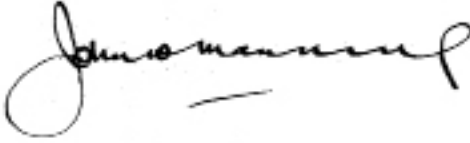
her Last Will and Testament.

ANOTHER DUBIOUS SIGNATURE

Unexpected discoveries are the pennies from heaven and I couldn't believe my luck after receiving the probate records for Nellie Chennells from Archives New Zealand in April 2009.

Apart from hitting the jackpot with finding the Somerset House receipt for Nellie's estate in England, I also found a set of double signatures that raised more questions for me than answers.

In the records sent by Archives was the "Affidavit of Executors to lead Grant of Probate" actioned by Nellie's Auckland solicitors

SWORN by the said LEONARD
DEMLER at Auckland } L. Demler
 this 8th day of } L. Demler.
October 1948
 Before me:-

A Solicitor of the Supreme Court of New Zealand.

SWORN by the said MAY CONSTANCE
DEMLER at Auckland } M. C. Demler
 this 8th day of } M. C. Demler.
October 1948
 Before me:-

Why would a double set of signatures appear on a legal document? The darker and heavier names are the normal signatures of Len and Maisie Demler while the lighter ones above are what the naked eye could not see. Of importance is the unmistakable difference with Maisie's handwriting when compared with her normal signatures shown on the opposite page. Sometimes lawyers mark where the signature should be for the client to sign but why would do this?

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Glaister, Ennor & Kiff and duly signed on 8 October 1948 by her executors and trustees, Len and Maisie Demler.

The photocopied page bearing the signatures of the Demlers revealed a second set of signatures, although much fainter, that did not match the document's final signatures as witnessed by the Supreme Court of New Zealand.

When I first viewed the original held by Archives I did not notice the double signatures and it was not until I got home and studied the copies of the documents that I got suspicious about the dual signatures that had mysteriously appeared on this very important document.

On querying Archives about this unusual phenomenon I was told that the ultra violet light from modern photocopiers can conceivably pick up all traces of signatures previously erased.

POTENTIAL ACT OF DECEIT

On giving this more thought I asked myself the obvious question of why these signatures were done twice in the first place? It sounds like a simple question until a closer inspection reveals a potential act of deceit.

The name Demler appears four times, three of which are identical to Len's handwriting—Len's two signatures signed opposite his name are almost identical while the top example of Demler above M C Demler has also been written by Len. What was Len up to?

It is apparent that Len had initially signed his wife's name as Maisie's hidden signature is clearly totally different from her normal signature (see earlier examples).

It seems Len thought it was okay to sign his wife's name but on presenting the papers to court was told that the signing of legal documents had to be witnessed by the Court for the very reason that M C Demler could be anyone.

An embarrassed Len Demler would have realised his "mistake" and been forced to admit what he had done. The Court would have erased the incorrect signatures so that the couple could sign again in front of a court solicitor

There was no apparent gain for Len's action so while it could possibly be that Len pre-signed in pencil to show where the final signature should be, was it only a thoughtless mistake?

16

What about Heather?

Very little has been written about Dianne Heather Demler. What we do know is her birth date of 21 January 1942; she goes by her middle name of Heather; she went to school at Pukekawa then St Cuthbert's; left school and became an air hostess in New Zealand, then her life changed . . .

Much to her mother's dismay Heather became involved with a divorced American named Bob Souter who had three children from a previous marriage.

According to other sources, Souter was also an undischarged bankrupt, a situation that must have gone down like a lead balloon with Maisie and we imagine, after much heated discussion and bitterness, she subsequently changed her will and disinherited her daughter, Dianne Heather.

David Yallop later made other serious claims that added to the stress but he initially wrote that Maisie was a very high-principled woman who, unlike many, apparently lived by her principles and expected her children to do the same:

"In July 1969 she changed her will, cutting her daughter Heather off from every single cent. Not even an item of her jewellery was to go to her younger daughter. The Reason? Heather had 'married' a divorced man named Robert Souter. As a father of three and an undischarged bankrupt, Maisie did not consider him the ideal husband for one of her children."

Can you imagine how Heather felt? With one foul swoop of the pen Heather lost the bulk of her inheritance through her mother's ruthless action of basically teaching her wayward daughter a bitter lesson.

Yallop went on to say that the favouring of children "burst into bitter acrimony" with Len subsequently changing his will by cutting

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Jeannette out and then leaving half of his property to Heather.

He continues: “So once again the two sisters were destined for half-share each in a superb farm, Len and Maisie Demler’s.” But these feelings went much deeper than that, so deep that anyone with a sense of getting her own back would surely want to get even.

That stark piece of reality could well lead to further bitterness of debate over the division of Maisie’s will.

KNOWN TO ALL FAMILY MEMBERS

Just think about it. Right from the start, the Chennell Estate business matters, in my opinion, would be known to all family members—Chennell, Demler, Hodgson, Sturrock and others—the others being people whose names are yet to be mentioned.

In the past I have tried to stay clear of Diane Heather Demler because of what appeared to be her non-involvement on related family matters. This is against all odds and could not be true.

Heather, born in January 1942, would have been 19 years of age in 1961 and would have been aware of her father’s IRD hassle over tax matters. Also in 1961 on the death of Alfred Hodgson (the special trustee to her and Jeannette’s estate), the legal processes would probably have given the girls full details of most, if not all, of the business dealings of the Chennells family.

At the age of 19, long distance communication would have occurred and would have been possible by Telex, Airmail and International toll calls. This basically means that all family members would have been aware of all business transactions, especially valuable as Len would have been looking for an alibi.

NEVER PUT IN THE HOT SEAT

In the past, the media and authors of a number of books printed before and after the year 2000, have pussyfooted around the issue of putting Heather Demler in the hot seat to ask awkward and perhaps embarrassing questions.

One has to be careful of what one says about underhand dealings, but one can be sure where there is money around (and lots of it) to think that Heather was totally ‘out of it’ is naive.

So why did Dianne Heather Demler fade into the background?

To be brutally honest, it suited her perfectly. She wasn’t really

16: What about Heather?

prepared to take any risks or put herself in a position of having to tell the truth. It is obvious to me that Heather wanted to keep a low profile.

Fortunately for her she was never officially asked to come forward on any matter so avoided having to give any information and if pressed I'm sure she would have given a "don't know" answer—a reaction that was on par with her father's later replies in court of "that is right" or "something like that". This is what she told Police at the time she returned to New Zealand after the murders. Like her father, all she had to do was to keep her head down and to keep a still tongue.

S. 516378: Transfer of an undivided one-half share
of the joint interest of Edwin Rankin Sturrock
and Leonard William Demler in mortgage
S. 266416 to Jeanette Leone Demler
27.2.1965 at 10.50 Heather
Act
S. 266491 Transfer of the remaining
half share of the joint interest
of Edwin Rankin Sturrock and
Leonard William Demler in
mortgage S. 266416 to Jeanette
Heather Demler. Produced 27.2.1967
at 10.50 Heather

The Certificate of Title for Sections 67 & 68 turned up a couple of surprises with two entries showing the name of Heather Demler. It is interesting to show both entries for each sister receiving their one half share from the trustees of the Chennells Estate. According to the 1940 will of Howard Chennells each child was eligible to receive their inheritance upon turning the age 25 years. Jeannette, who was born 6 February 1940, was due for her half share of the Chennells in February 1965 but in reality was not transferred until five months later. Heather was eligible in January 1967 and her transaction happened immediately after reaching the eligible age. Her name appeared again shortly after the untimely death of her sister when, on 18 August 1971, a transfer was made to Sturrock & Monteith Securities Ltd thereby cashing in her interest in Sections 67 & 68. These transactions were the only ones found that specifically records Heather's name. Other personal property she had acquired over the following years is mainly held, I believe, under a trust of which she would be a percentage shareholder.

FURTHER SCRUTINY NEEDED

As pointed out in previous chapters, there were a number of irregularities that need further scrutiny.

First the final transactions with Sections 67 & 68, the seemingly “forgotten” sections off Frost Road that Jeannette had inherited on 7 July 1965 as a mortgage. The same procedure was followed nearly 18 months later, on 23 February 1967, to transfer the remaining half share to Heather Demler as her entitlement upon reaching the age of 25 years.

It should be remembered that these sections were transferred from the joint interest of Colin Sturrock and Len Demler who were also trustees of the Chennells Estate.

The next action involving Dianne Heather Demler came on 18 August 1971 when her interest was transferred to Sturrock & Monteith Securities Ltd just 14 months after the murder of her sister Jeannette. More about that later.

Observant readers will have noticed that Heather was still using her maiden name on legal documents of 1967 and 1971. While this may be common nowadays, back then it probably meant that, at these points, she was yet to marry Robert Burns Souter. Have other investigators and writers jumped to conclusions by assuming that they were actually married, when they weren't?

S529316 Transfer of the interest of Dianne
Heather Demler in Mortgage S264216 to
Sturrock & Monteith Securities Limited produced
18.8.1971 at 2.15pm. H.Burns

This entry on the Certificate of Title for Sections 67 & 68, dated 18 August 1971, is proof that Heather Demler was still using her birth name on a legal document. Does this mean that she was yet to marry Bob Souter?

17

The Heat was On

Brief mention has been previously made on the roles played by Maisie's trustees, particularly Alf Hodgson and Colin Sturrock but a new name is being thrown into the mixture of deceit and drama . . .

When Alf Hodgson died in 1961 few had known of Colin Sturrock's active involvement in Maisie's affairs.

Sturrock was not only a trustee to Alf's estate but had been the legal brain behind all the investments Alf had made on the behalf of Maisie Demler for the previous 20 or so years.

The money from Section 4 (formerly owned by Newman Chennells) came through the deaths of Maisie's mother Nellie and her brother Howard. Finally the death of Alf Hodgson left only a single beneficiary alive for Sturrock to either contend with or to assist towards a conclusion that might not suit everyone.

There are no prizes for coming up with the "beneficiary" as being Maisie Demler then later her daughter Jeannette Crewe.

At this time, trustees Colin Sturrock and his nominated trustee, Len Demler would have seen what was at stake and operated accordingly. A wild card is that Alf's wife, Rose Amy (who had succeeded him as a trustee "notwithstanding the trust for sale hereinbefore contained") will become a debatable thorn in their side.

The heat was starting to come on and to find out why one has to first click into 1965, the year that Jeannette turned 25 and was eligible for her share of her inheritance from her uncle Howard Chennells. It might be viewed as a coincidence, but a transfer of Sections 6 & 7 (and other small parcels) in Block XIV Opuatia was made the same year to Honetana Farms Ltd.

This is a completely new name to be thrown into the mix of this

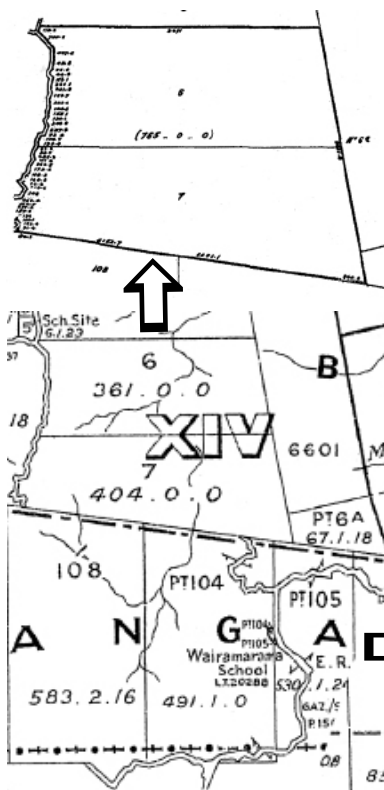
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saga and up to this stage I was not sure when and where it should be introduced. I can say that there are compelling reasons for mentioning this as a connection to the ultimate fate of the Crews.

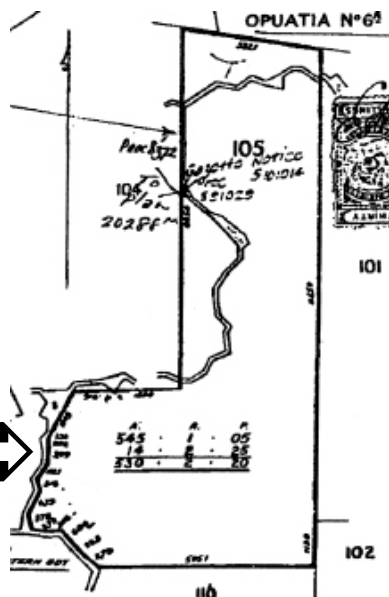
First some background on Honetana Farms Ltd, its location and its former owner, Gordon Hamilton Jones, and more importantly, why I think the link is so important.

In 1965, Gordon Hamilton Jones (as vendor) sold the farm he had owned since 1945 to Colin Rankin Sturrock as trustee for a company to be incorporated under the name of Honetana Farms Ltd. This link with Sturrock is worthy of attention as it may show an association with the Chennells Family Trust, something that happened often.

The Honetana property was in the Opuatia Block XIV Sections 6 & 7 of 765 acres (more or less) plus another adjoining block of 67 acres (Opuatia 6a) and Allotment 192 of 34 acres, totalling 866 acres.



These maps show the properties owned by Dixon, Jones and later Honetana Farms Ltd. Top left shows Sections 6&7 while below is Allotment 105. Lower left shows their relationship to each other with 6&7 easy to find but 105 is partially shown as our copy did not show the complete section.



Its location is off Wairamarama Rd and not far as the crow flies west from the Crewe farm at Opuatia.

Honetana Farms Ltd was registered as a company on 27 September 1965 with Gordon Hamilton Jones as Governing Director to manage the farm (it was eventually struck off the Companies Register on 30 June 1986).

Jumping ahead a bit I found the link to Honetana Farms to be critically important as Gordon Hamilton Jones and his relatives were caught up in the fallout with the Chennells Family Trust. Now, first some more background.

WHAT WAS REALLY GOING ON?

For me it was the human involvement along with the wheeling and dealing these people did that led me to some unexplained events and loss of sleep.

I was in a dark place because of a series of co-incidences that jumped out at me while adding further information to my ever so important timeline. There were events happening in the Demler and Crewe families that were in tune with transactions from Honetana Farms Ltd.

This alerted me to look a little wider and while I was questioning myself whether more was going on than met the eye. I became convinced there were cover-ups as some things were not adding up. All those involved in hiding the truth would have benefited somewhere and in my opinion the ones who have kept their mouths shut over this affair have not done this without return.

It is very complicated and it's only through the lack of hard facts that some of the dots are still failing to connect up. I may get it partially wrong but the proper authorities who have access to files that have been put beyond my reach would be able to tidy up the loose ends if they ever wanted to.

CHANGE OF LAND

Around the early 20th century, after the land had changed from Maori to European, the Jones forefathers and other relatives that had an interest in what later became Honetana Farms also had vast interests in other surrounding land through ruling family ties.

The titles that specifically interested me, apart from Sections 6&7 and its small attachments, was the neighbouring property of

530 acres on the southern boundary which carried the legal title of Allotment 105 in the Parish of Whangape.

DOVETAILING OF LAND TRANSFERS

At times I didn't know where I was coming from or where I was even going. To make it easier for the reader to get their head around what was originally a jumble of dead ends that didn't make sense, I now want to start from what appeared to be a dovetailing of land transfers that joined some dots.

In studying the Certificate of Titles for the leases of Sections 6 & 7 and Allotment 105 together, I found transactions that were carried out using the same transfer numbers and lease numbers on entries occurring on the same day and at same time for these neighbouring sections.

Of all the land transactions I have studied, these combined properties of around 1400 acres, did not appear to be connected until the names of various lessees were matched with each other.

The first occasion was on 20 June 1920 when Morgan Hamerton Cox transferred the leases and mortgages to Lionel Marmaduke Dixon then two years later the process was repeated but this time to Richard Orme Dixon.

The conclusion to this is that the collective acreage was being farmed by one lessee, Lionel Marmaduke Dixon then later by Gordon Hamilton Jones and to a point, briefly by Honetana Farms.

ADJUSTMENT OF LIABILITIES

A Court of Review hearing, held in October 1937, under the Mortgages and Lessees Rehabilitation Act 1936, saw Lionel Marmaduke Dixon applying for an adjustment of liabilities with State Advances Corp (1st Mortgagee) and Richard Orme Dixon (2nd Mortgagee). This action only applied to Sections 6 & 7 (and other bits) and as far as I could determine, not to Allotment 105.

Dixon was facing hard times and like the rest of New Zealand everyone was fighting their way out of the black cloud of Depression and to survive meant taking every opportunity to reduce expenses, a grave situation that was adequately covered in an earlier chapter.

The outcome of the hearing was pleasing for Dixon as many concessions were made to enable him to continue trading. The

report of the hearing is of interest but has too much detail to repeat here. However, an example from the court order was a reduction in arrears of interest, the term of the mortgage was extended to 45 years and no principal repayments demanded for the first five years.

An extract (below) shows Dixon had money advanced by an appointed trustee to carry out improvements (d) that included a woolshed, dip, fencing and 30 head of cattle.

ASSESSING THE FARM

I had a personal look at the land in 1998 and read it from quite a few angles. It is very deceiving as to contour with many hidden valleys giving shelter from the wind. What looked to be steep country from the road turned out to be different from another angle—the ground would be more workable than one would think.

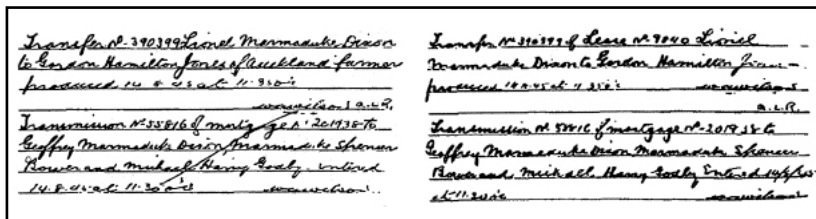
If I am to believe what I have been told, the farm had only been broken in partially up to the period around the early 1940s with only about 400 acres in production. The rest was in heavy tea tree and punga.

Recovery would have been slow for Dixon and in August 1945 he realised he was losing the battle and managed to find a buyer for all his leases and mortgages on Sections 6 & 7 (and other bits) plus Allotment 105 (again using matching numbers, dates and time) to

5. That the Trustee appointed under the Rural Mortgages Final Adjustment Act 1934-35 shall forthwith dispose of the Trust moneys held by him in the manner following and shall thereupon be discharged from office :-
 - (a) To the Trustee in payment of the balance of his fee.
 - (b) To the Mortgagor's Solicitor in payment of his costs in these proceedings £21: 0: 0.
 - (c) In payment of the sum of £36: 13: 8 to the Delgaty & Company Limited being interest accrued to 31st. of March 1937.
 - (d) In payment of the balance to the Mortgagor who shall set aside the sum of £630 for the early erection or provision of a woolshed, a new dip, about two miles of subdivisional fencing and the purchase of thirty head of cattle (steer calves).

This Court of Review extract from the 1937 hearing is of interest as it shows the appointment of a trustee who was able to advance money for improvements which are clearly stated in (d). Lionel Marmaduke Dixon would have been pleased.

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Above left are the entries from the Certificate of Title for Sections 6&7 while on the right are those for Allotment 105 on the day when the leases for both properties were transferred from Lionel Marmaduke Dixon to Gordon Hamilton Jones. Of special note are the dates—all entries were on 14 May 1945 and during the same time period. Also identical for both are the lease transfer number of 390399 and mortgage transmission number of 55816. Jones retained Sections 6&7 until sold to Honetana Farms Ltd in November 1965 but Allotment 105 was not retained by Jones as it changed hands in December 1946 to his brother Hector Douglas Jones who seems to have ended up with the short end of the stick.

Gordon Hamilton Jones (see above).

The following year, on 12 December, a mortgage with State Advances was taken out on Allotment 105 by Hector Douglas Jones, a brother to Gordon Hamilton Jones. This connection with the Jones name is very significant as these men were uncles to Leslee.

JONES AND STURROCK

Right now I need to continue with the involvement of Gordon Jones who farmed the properties until 1965 when it was taken over by Honetana Farms Ltd.

The next stage of this journey is to delve deeper into the role played by Colin Sturrock who was intimately involved in the purchase of the Jones property on behalf of Honetana Farms Ltd to the value of £25,000.

Sturrock, as readers know, was also the solicitor for Newman Chennells, solicitor and trustee of Chennells Family Trust and also governed Maisie Demler's investment money along with Len Demler as trustee. It shouldn't take very long for readers to work out where the money came from. Maisie, 'the banker' of course!

On purchasing Sections 6 & 7, Honetana Farms made an intelligent move by hiring a front man to handle the shovel as Managing Director. The best man for the job was the previous owner, Gordon Hamilton Jones. His job was to basically answer any awkward questions, an old ploy used to throw a spanner in the

works, that is, to prevent an activity from succeeding.

In addition, it would be wise to keep in mind that Honetana Farms Ltd was sold in August 1968 (three years later) to Lester Murray Kershaw for the inflated price of \$62,250 (up from £25,000 remembering that decimal currency had arrived in the meantime). Keep in mind also that the money received by Honetana would still be held by the trustees “for as long as the law will allow”, a legal phrase that I have struggled with.

Although Lester Kershaw was director from 1968 onwards, one would gather he did not have the final say in business matters although a previous trustee with past agreements could have been brought to his attention in 1969 about the time that May Demler had been diagnosed with a brain tumour.

At this stage, I can only guess at the extended bitterness caused by any Deed of Arrangement (or Arrangements) held on any land, farms or leases held by Maisie Demler which very soon were to be handed on to Jeannette after Maisie’s death in February 1970.

The worry for me, and it stands to reason, that in the span of years gone by there could have been many Deeds of Arrangements that had reached or passed their date of maturity. Has the cat finally been put amongst the pigeons with a revelation from an insider?

A SHOCKING REVELATION

The activities of Gordon Hamilton Jones are a long way from being hidden in the shadows. When Gordon Jones sold his estate and all his interests in 1965 to Honetana Farms Ltd and when they sold on to Kershaw in 1968 all traces of Honetana should have disappeared but no, a reaction over 10 years later in 1979 revealed a shocking revelation.

In May 1979 after the death of Gordon Hamilton Jones on 20 April, his will was read and I imagine after a lively debate and possibly a brief conflict or ‘set-to’ by the brother-in-law over the settlement and governing of company shares, the sh*t was well and truly hitting the fan as some of the beneficiaries started to get wise.

Trevor Leonard Flexman, executor of the will, was so incensed that he made a sworn statement before the Supreme Court renouncing all his rights and title to probate and execution of said will by making an extremely eye opening explanation that he would

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“not thereafter intermeddle therein with intent to defraud creditors.”
Just what is Flexman covering his butt against?

There's more to come and it's possible there will be chaos when this saga has ultimately been told. There will be winners and losers. I cannot help that, as that is how the legal system, and hopefully the justice system, is meant to work in New Zealand.

IS THE SUPREME COURT OF THE ISLANDS
NEW ZEALAND

IN THE ESTATE of GORDON HAMILTON JONES late
of ONEHORO PARISH Deceased

WHEREAS GORDON HAMILTON JONES late of Onehoro Parish
died at Otahuhu on or about the 20th day of April 1979 .
having made and executed his last will and testament ...
bearing date the 20th day of December 1976 and WHEREAS
he appointed me the undersigned one of his executors ..

NOW I the said TREVOR LEONARD FLEXMAN of Mangataniwhiri
Parish DO HEREBY DECLARE that I have not intermeddled
in the estate and effects of the said deceased and will
not hereafter intermeddle therein with intent to
defraud creditors AND I DO HEREBY RENOUNCE all my
right and title to the Probate and execution of the said
will.

DATED at Auckland this 11th day of May 1979.

SIGNED by the said TREVOR
LEONARD FLEXMAN in the ... *T. Flexman*
presence of:-
Schuter
Trecker

*This is the Testament of Renunciation marked "A" mentioned and referred to in the
Sworn Affidavit of JESSIE MURPHY JONES of Onehoro Parish and MURRAY JONES
of Otahuhu Parish and the said JESSIE MURPHY JONES and MURRAY JONES
are the only persons who were present at the making of this will on the day of the
making of the will.*

A Solicitor of the Supreme Court of New Zealand.

I think this sworn statement by Trevor Leonard Flexman, a brother-in-law of Gordon Hamilton Jones, is probably an indication that the probate was incorrect and without credibility to the shareholders of a Company mentioned in his will.

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Len gets Anxious

Len Demler was starting to show the pressure he was under and while he could see his future going down the gurgler for the hundredth time, he gathered his thoughts and figured out how he was going to gain the upper hand . . .

During his lifetime, Lenard William Demler had many setbacks but he had learnt how to deal with it over the years and above all he knew when to keep his mouth shut . . . but ultimately was he a murderer? People who knew him immediately suspected that he was the culprit.

Was Len a lot smarter than he looked? The short answer is yes! Len took most of his setbacks on the chin and while he seemed outwardly to have a bad and uncaring attitude when the odds were against him he would brush it off with a nervous chuckle. In the end he got some of his own back by being cunning and devious.

His first real disagreement was in 1936 when he told his father to 'stick it' (or words to that effect) and went his own way. He married Maisie Chennells and the following year (1937) leased the farm bordering the property of his in-laws at Opuatia.

In 1942 his mother-in-law Nellie Chennells signed off her Last Will and Testament by appointing Len as her trustee along with Len's wife Maisie. After the death of Nellie in 1948 I believe that Len was to learn, probably more by observing, how delays in the process of probate both in New Zealand and England would, in the long run, benefit his wife in a way that could not be predicted but would become useful for him to copy some time in the distant future.

FAMILY FORTUNE WON BY DEFAULT

Right now Len was to get a practical lesson when a twist of fate

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would play out. A set of sad circumstances involving the untimely death of Maisie's brother Howard in 1950 (during the tail end of the probate process) saw Maisie inherit the family fortune.

At the time I wondered if Maisie had actually won by default due to good luck rather than good management or did the fact that the unintentional time lag of Nellie's probate being signed after Howard's death help?

The fact will remain that Maisie, as the resulting sole survivor, was now in line to fully protect the family fortune.

Meanwhile, Len was watching from the sidelines and doing a bit of scheming of his own. He managed, in 1955, to wrangle a transfer of 27 acres that bordered his farm from the Chennells Estate and by the following year had accompanied his wife Maisie on a long overseas trip to England (via USA) where they both did more than enjoy a holiday.

Like a lot of events unfolding in this saga one has to continually speculate as desperately sought after facts have not always been forthcoming. Anyone with common sense would know that Maisie's inheritance in England would have been near the top of their visits' agenda.

Remember, Len and Maisie were trustees and executors of Nellie's estate so both would have either wanted to or had to appear in person to sign off the legalities lodged in Somerset House.

Alternately nothing may have happened on their four or five month long "holiday" but only a fool would think they didn't kill more than one bird with one stone! Perhaps the land in England was sold and everything was cashed up. Whatever went down was crucial to retaining control of the family jewels.

Len Demler, as trustee, would have retained knowledge of how things were done along with the ability to use it to his advantage much later on.

MORE STRIFE FOR LEN

Len was to face further demands and strife on returning to New Zealand so there is a need now to recap, intermingling new facts.

His first demand seemed to come from Charles Wheeler. On 26 August 1956 a land transfer involving the residue of Len's farm (Section 2, 450 acres) was settled before the farm could legally carry

the name of Lenard William Demler. There is no indication of what it cost Len to settle.

During the same period Len was beginning to be hassled by Inland Revenue Dept (IRD) but it was not until 1961 that he was actually formally accused of tax evasion. Meanwhile, on 26 February 1962, Len was on the receiving end of an action that was to have far reaching consequences.

Trustee Colin Sturrock found himself sole surviving trustee of the Chennells Estate after the death of fellow trustee Alf Hodgson. In his wisdom he appointed Len Demler to fill the position. Suddenly finding himself a trustee would have been like a gift from heaven with the added bonus of looking after the interests of his daughters who would be collecting their inheritances within a decade.

TAX OFFENCES HAD TO BE PAID

Wrong! Len was heading for more strife, this time with his wife Maisie. After the Court had handed down a bill for almost £10,000 for tax evasion, Len was struggling to find the money to pay IRD.

Remember that this shortfall was the value of a complete house and section at the time.

The commonly held view is that his wife Maisie gave Len £9,540 to settle his tax offences in August 1962 and in return she received, in October, an undivided half share of his 464 acre farm that included the 27 acres Len had acquired from the Chennells Estate.

However, Len's version of events differ as he told the court that he had paid the tax from money in his own account and he had given Maisie a "free gift" of his land for tax purposes. Yeah right!

Basically, from Len's point of view, settling the IRD bill had put him between a rock and a hard place. Len, as a trustee to the Chennells Estate, would have felt quite entitled in his own mind to draw down a loan against the equity he had in his farm and engineered circumstances to achieve his own ends.

As a beneficiary Maisie wouldn't allow him to use trust funds so she quietly filed for half the farm and paid for it with her own money and as a result the pair become tenants in common. By owning an undivided half share in the estate of Section 2 she was able to lay down some conditions.

Maisie had Len where she wanted him but those conditions did

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not sink in immediately as Len was under the impression he would get his farm back on her death.

DUTIES OF A TRUSTEE

Len knew from past experience as a trustee what his duties were under the 1956 Trustee Act (later reviewed in August 2013). The Act was a shadow of mystery—in fact many trustees had the idea that, as of right, they were untouchable.

The dishonest trustee could attempt a few slippery deals involving misrepresentation of funds or residue and quietly say nothing but today would be brought to justice along with any person or persons that were an accessory to the fact or even a partner in the crime.

The trustee should be aware of what his or her duties were at all times bearing in mind, because of some tragic events in this family, someone somewhere will seek the truth.

The right to question the actions of a trustee on any decision or ruling was always there but in this particular case, the media and Police held the limelight thereby smothering the truth, whether intentionally or not.

I believe the original trust deeds in this story would have told a different tale to the many so-called “enquiries” that failed to find the truth.

Len Demler, Colin Sturrock and other legal representatives on the other hand would have known full well what the law said about the management of trust deeds particularly in relation to information never recorded by register or private mortgage of contract.

THOSE IN THE KNOW

It is the knowledge of this information that has caused the strife. Lawyers and accountants hid it from general view because they were private affairs.

These people are amongst the ‘shareholders’ and there are a bunch of them. Not all of them were at the front line but most were aware of the trouble that was brewing since Alf Hodgson died.

Those most affected were smart enough to predict what could happen once the Demler daughters, Jeannette and Heather, had reached the age when the Chennells Estate would be legally divided between them—in 1966 for Jeannette and two years later for Heather.

It must be remembered that the die was cast on 24 November 1952 when the contents of the Last Will and Testament of Howard Chennells was read.

To recap again briefly, this is because Howard's property (Section 7 of 364 acres) was to be divided equally between Jeannette and Heather, each upon reaching the age of 25 years. Until then, the land was held in trust with Alf Hodgson and Colin Sturrock as trustees. A new title was also issued changing it from Section 7 to Sections 13 & 14 plus other small allotments after realignment of the road.

In the following 18 years up to 1970 when the murders were committed, the Chennells Family Trust would multiply the value of its returns through the skills of its trustees, Hodgson and Sturrock. The investments had the potential to earn truckloads of income until greed raised its ugly head and an innocent couple were brutally murdered.

LEN'S FEAR OF THE FUTURE

Len Demler eventually found himself in the hot seat and with all the other 'events' happening in his life he was fearful of how the future would unfold.

Quite honestly, Len got to the stage where he couldn't give a sh*t, he was callous to the truth, he just did not care and he had no conscience. I don't believe that he was the one who pulled the trigger but this was the hard man that the public saw at the time.

I also needed to find out how Len ended up having so much control. I had to first look at the sequences of trusteeships and inheritances (common names are used for ease of reading):

1938: The beneficiaries on the death of Newman Chennells were his daughter, Maisie Demler and his son Howard (his wife Nellie was not mentioned). His general trustees were Maisie and Howard with a special trustee being Alf Hodgson.

1948: The will of Nellie Chennells named Len and Maisie Demler as trustees with the beneficiaries being her children Maisie and Howard.

1950: The accidental death of Howard Chennells saw the Chennells Estate family trust formed. The main beneficiaries were Jeannette and Heather Demler, the children of his sister Maisie. His will appointed Alf Hodgson and Colin Sturrock as trustees.

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- 1961: On the death of Alf Hodgson, his estate went to his wife and stepsons with his trustees being named as his wife, Rose Amy, his stepson Geoffrey Gurney and solicitor Colin Sturrock.
- 1962: The death of Alf Hodgson also saw his trustee position on the Chennells Estate being filled by appointee, Len Demler although Alf's wife, Rose Amy, had inherited the right to claim any residue owed to Alf by the Chennells Trust.
- 1970: Maisie Demler's Last Will and Testament of July 1969, appointed her husband Len and her daughter Jeannette as joint trustees. The beneficiaries on her death were only to be Jeannette and granddaughter Rochelle Crewe.
- 1970: The contents of Jeannette Crewe's 1967 will reveals that her husband Harvey was appointed sole trustee and if he failed to survive her then her father Len Demler and mother Maisie were to become trustees. As Maisie had already passed away, Len, through this so-called quirk of fate, became the sole trustee.
- 1992: Len Demler leaves one half of his estate to his second wife Norma and the other half to his daughter Heather Souter.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

The implications from settling the estates of Maisie and Jeannette will be covered in a later chapter because the detail of how Len cleverly tidied up the loose ends is crucial to explaining why Len was definitely smarter than he looked.

Meanwhile think about whether Len did have enough reasons to murder. After all he seems to have had an obvious motive and in every sense he would have been quietly pleased (in a sick kind of way) that Jeannette was out of the way.

It was what Jeannette was going to do about the family fortune that was to see her brutally murdered. I believe though, that those at the front of the queue as the murderer did not include Len Demler.

There are definitely two sides to this coin!

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It Didn't Start Yesterday

Most followers of the Crewe murders were only able to point the finger at 'whodunnit' from the information reported in the media or from the long-running court hearings but motives go further back than yesterday . . .

Almost everybody pointed their finger at Lenard William Demler as the villain but the lack of enough evidence to convict him, caused the Police to suddenly change direction and charge Arthur Allan Thomas for the double murders.

Unfortunately the Police did not put enough time into their investigative work sought to 'solve the crime' under political pressure, looked in all the wrong places and came up with the wrong answer, as history later showed.

The old story of never letting the facts spoil a good story didn't stop Arthur Thomas from being found guilty of the 1970 double murders then again in the 1973 retrial to suffer the same fate of life imprisonment.

It took a Muldoon initiated Royal Commission to rightly pardon Thomas for a conviction as a result of a faulty case. Thomas received a full pardon after serving nine years in prison plus \$950,000 in compensation.

The total cost to the taxpayer may never be known but over the following four decades nobody has come any closer to naming who the killers were. Even Rochelle Crewe broke her silence in October 2010 to ask the Police to reopen the case supposedly with the hope of finding who had killed her mother and father.

Nearly four years were to pass before Detective Superintendent Andy Lovelock produced his findings and while he found serious deficiencies in how the case was handled, he was not able to name

the people responsible for pulling the trigger either.

FACTS NOT EASY TO FIND

I do sympathise and I do understand why the Police have not had a result. It has taken me over 40 years of frustrating but patient research to find the facts outlined in this book. That's not taking into account all the speculation and jumping to conclusions that came with it. The work is still ongoing but I have certainly delved deep and been down too many blind alleys to give up now [Ed: 2016].

According to Andy Lovelock a number of "missed investigative opportunities" have now been officially catalogued including recognition that insufficient priority was given to a previous burglary and fires on the Crewe farm.

I believe, if these leads had been followed up, the front line killers would have been identified. Maisie Demler knew who they were but wanted to hush up the crimes by asking the local newspaper not to report them.

Maisie was quoted as saying, "What are they going to do next?" She did not mention who "they" were but "they" means more than one person which confirms my belief that there was never a single person involved.

I strongly suspect who "they" were but I'm not prepared to release names just yet [Ed: John's sentiments changed after writing this] because those who had issues with the trustees of the Chennells Estate had already made their feelings known and had started their aggravation as early as 1961 soon after the death of special trustee, Alf Hodgson.

CHAIN REACTION AFTER DEATH OF ALF

I mentioned in an earlier chapter that Alf's passing was to cause a chain reaction of bitterness, distrust and vengeance within family circles. This needs further explanation as I believe Alf's death was the turning point.

First, Alf was as straight as a gun barrel and when alive was a key player as a trustee. but his health and also that of his wife, Rose Amy, may have led Sturrock, fellow trustee and solicitor, six months later, to appoint Len Demler as replacement trustee.

Colin Sturrock realised Rose Amy could cause future problems

as according to the interpretation of Clause 6g of Alf's will "notwithstanding the trust for sale hereinbefore contained" meant Rose Amy had probably inherited some responsibility of not only dealings regarding Alf's own estate but her knowledge of the affairs and investments of the Chennells and Demler families would have caused her name to appear on land transactions in 1971.

Sturrock was not taking any risks. I don't think he trusted her, so he appointed Len Demler as replacement trustee, which was later to backfire on Sturrock as Len ended up with more power to juggle events and to make sure the assets were protected.

BACK TO ALF HODGSON

Alf was also a "dabbler" and took part in many activities from local body politics to real estate and farming.

As the right hand man of Newman Chennells he was fully aware of all dealings from 1936 and as a consequence, played a major role in the running of the Chennells family estates for decades.

It is worth repeating again that Alf held a trusted position and had access to all accounts, investments, shares and particularly knowledge of a certain Deed of Family Arrangement and Mortgage to Howard from his mother Nellie (as I said, I believe there were others in addition to this one). Add to that returns from all investments, English income, including compound interest or residue plus other perks gained from the sale of Section 4 in 1944, the proceeds which amounted to £5,600 at that time.

Remember, this was the section originally purchased by Newman Chennells in 1924 and on his death, apart from a few procedural hiccups, any revenue was to go to his daughter Maisie under the governorship of trustees, Howard Chennells and Alf Hodgson. It became commonly known as the Chennells Family Trust.

This money was soon invested, compound interest loans were made to family members, agreements were made for repayment (some ended up on the never-never) but it all boiled down to the dangers of wheeling and dealing with land, fast growing assets then ultimately greed.

TIME WAS RUNNING OUT

While Alf Hodgson and Colin Sturrock were at the forefront throughout, others were lurking around the fringes but it was not

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until Alf died in 1961 that the realisation that time was running out became obvious. There was only another four years to run before Jeannette Demler reached the age of 25 and could claim her inheritance (in 1965). Legally her sister Heather had to wait another two years.

A very strange comment was made by Len Demler relating to the inheritance details that proved he didn't always tell the truth.

In taking the stand during the first trial in 1971, Paul Temm QC asked Len who was the trustee for his daughters in the Chennells estate? The transcription published in David Yallop's 1971 book quotes Len on page 127 with his response: "Alf Hudson and myself. He is dead now." (Readers will notice the incorrect spelling of Alf's surname which should have been Hodgson and I add that this is the only time Alf's name appears in court evidence).

Temm goes on to ask, "Did he die before or after your daughters came into their inheritance?" Len's answer: "He was still alive at the time." Len knew Alf had died in October 1961 and Jeannette was not due for her inheritance until 1965 so why did he have to bend the truth? He should have said he had replaced Alf and his fellow trustee was actually Colin Sturrock and that he was now sole trustee but he didn't.

LEN'S ANSWERS QUITE EVASIVE

Len Demler was also quite evasive with other answers in the same cross-examination by Temm. For example, he was less than forthcoming with answers relating to the family finances at the time of the murders. In fact, Temm really struggled, even with prompting, to get enough useful information.

Temm didn't realise at the time that he had reached the back door of true motive but didn't ask enough of the right questions to open it. Temm was so close to cracking the case wide open.

Meanwhile, the rules of land ownership were about to change again when the inheritance of Jeannette and Heather came into force, respectively in 1965 and 1967 then big time five years later on the death of Maisie Demler.

KNEW WHAT MONEY WAS AVAILABLE

Meanwhile, the 'three wise monkeys' now numbered two but the person keeping a close eye on their activities was Maisie. She

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knew about their gripes and in fact, as the keeper of the books, knew down to the last penny what “they” owed and what money could be available should Jeannette and Harvey go ahead with their future plans for much needed development.

In the meantime, my ever so valuable timeline reminds me of other events happening in 1965 particularly after Jeannette reached the age of eligibility. Not only did she collect her half share inheritance of Sections 13 & 14 but also on the same day, a half share of Sections 67 & 68 that had been purchased by the Chennells Trust as an investment in 1963.

Another transfer to keep in the back of your minds occurred in November 1965 with the transfer of Block XIV Sections 6 & 7 (and other small parcels) to Honetana Farms Ltd.

OTHER IMPORTANT MILESTONES

The remaining years of the 1960s also carry important milestones. June 1966 saw the marriage of Jeannette and Harvey then two months later Harvey’s name appears on the Certificate of Title for Sections 13 & 14 (former Sec 7) on evidence of his marriage.

Also recorded on the same day is the residue of mortgage to State Advances. This transaction means that Harvey had purchased Heather’s share of Sections 13 & 14 but readers will remember that Harvey did not purchase directly from Heather but from the Chennells Estate trustees, Colin Sturrock and Len Demler on 28 August 1966, the year before Heather was legally eligible.

From this point the farm became known as the Crewe Farm and somewhere within this period of tidying up Heather’s inheritance issues, the battle lines between mother and daughter had been drawn.

HEATHER’S SHARE IN OTHER LAND

The next significant land transfer on my timeline occurred in February 1967 when the remaining half share of the joint interest of Colin Sturrock and Len Demler of Allotments 67 & 68 (80 acres) in the Parish of Onewhero went to Dianne Heather Demler of which Jeannette still held the mortgage. (Note: Heather is probably yet to be married to Souter as she is still signing legal documents with her maiden name).

Remember, in the month following the Crewe’s first wedding

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anniversary, their house was burgled with the only valuables being taken belonging to Jeannette suggesting a woman was involved. The implication also being that it was not a genuine robbery. It seems Maisie didn't really want this crime (and those following) solved as she knew (or at least suspected) who "they" were. Again, it is important to note that one of the items of value not stolen was Harvey's gun, again of no interest to a woman.

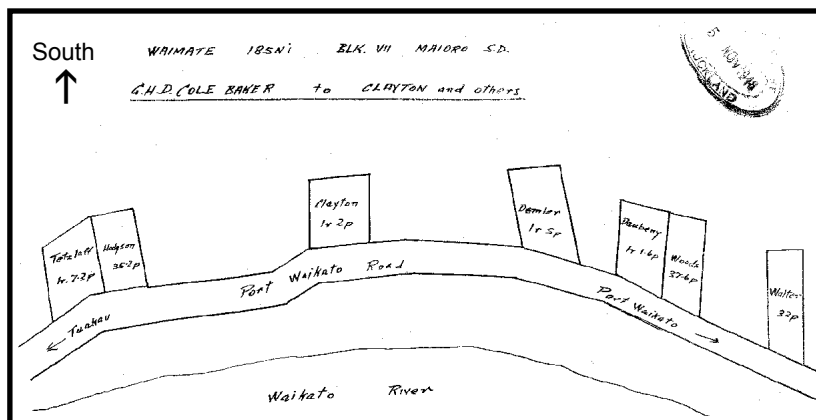
By the end of August 1967, the Crewes had made out their separate Last Will and Testaments. Basically their estates would go to each other or in trust to any children on attaining the age of 25 (Rochelle would not be born until the end of the following year).

PORT WAIKATO BEACH SECTIONS

Sliding in almost unnoticed in November were the Port Waikato leases (a large block of beach sections under the name of Colebaker) due to be renewed after 21 years.

These leases came from probably the early investments made on Maisie's behalf by trustees Alf Hodgson and Howard Chennells who had received the £5,600 from the sale of Section 4 in 1944.

The original purchasers in 1946 included Alf Hodgson (he and his wife, Rose Amy, lived there for over 10 years), Clayton (Sturrock's



This sketch map was the only one found showing the beach sections at Port Waikato. It is a little confusing as the compass rose (our addition) should be showing north but this sketch has been drawn in reverse and needs visually flipping so will not match a standard cadastral map showing the true locations of the Block VIII Maioro SD sections. The names shown on these sections are, from left: Tetzlaff, Hodgson, Clayton, Demler, Dauberry, Woods, Walter.

legal clerk), Maisie Demler, Eileen Woods (a friend of Maisie's from Swanson), Walters (who farmed opposite Demler), Dauberry (a land agent turned farmer) and Tetzlaff (unknown).

RELATED EVENTS OF 1968

The year 1968 started off being reasonably quiet, until 5 June just 13 days before their second wedding anniversary. Then came the change of the mortgage for Sections 67 & 68 into the joint names of Jeannette and Harvey Crewe.

On Sunday 1 December Rochelle had been born and on the following Saturday while Harvey was visiting Jeannette in hospital, a fire was started in Rochelle's bedroom using new baby clothes as a starter.

I suggest again that the intruder was a woman, someone who was very familiar with the interior of the house. I feel the lighting of the fire was carried out on the spur of the moment probably as an action of spite or simply as another deliberate warning. Much later the Police were not able to find any evidence that linked these events with the murders of the Crewes but that doesn't mean they weren't.

ANOTHER FIRE BUT THERE'S MORE

The third and final warning came on the eve of their third wedding anniversary when their haybarn went up in flames. It was a Tuesday evening and the attack was planned but the arsonist (who had to be familiar with the farm layout and also knew the movements of the Crewes) did not want to be seen near the house.

The reasons for this fire and who possibly did it was covered in depth in Ian Wishart's 2010 book *The Inside Story* and also David Yallop's 1978 *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* where Yallop mainly covers Maisie's "What are they going to do next?" comment plus how frightened and nervous Jeannette was to be alone in the house.

To my mind there was another crucial and extremely important 1969 event that overshadowed the previous 'warnings' and one that was to have far-reaching consequences within the next 12 months.

MAISIE CHANGES HER WILL

On 18 July 1968, just under a year before the double murders, Maisie changed her will and completely cut her daughter Heather from an inheritance that she was, in the normal course of events, quite entitled to receive as instructed in her Uncle Howard's will.

Maisie's publicly stated reason for this brutal action was Heather's involvement with a divorced, bankrupt American (and father of three) who may or may not have had dollar signs in his eyes. Just because that was the main reason given for her punishment doesn't mean to say there wasn't more behind her actions.

My assumption is that Robert Souter, by his past attitude or body language, had other traits that Maisie immediately saw through, which meant, in her mind, he was not of an acceptable social standing or character to qualify for her daughter's hand.

She didn't have any problem with Harvey being involved with Jeannette and I believe it was because of Harvey's family background. His great grandfather, David Crewe, was a highly respected businessman of Pahiatua and served nine years as Mayor, frequently being returned unopposed. He was connected with many institutions and local bodies, even putting himself forward in three general elections for the Pahiatua seat in 1899, 1904 and 1908 but failed to get elected.

The senior Crewe arrived in New Zealand from Worcestershire in 1877 to settle in Masterton where he was involved with dairy farming for around seven years before moving to Pahiatua.

He lived in *The Grange*, an elegant residence that was the meeting place of the elite of Pahiatua's society. David was a popular man and was responsible for building three of the local hotels, a boarding house and other buildings in the town.

He subsequently went into the auctioneering and land agency business and was eminently successful in all his dealings.

David Crewe passed away on 10 November 1913 and his son Jonas, by now a councillor, was voted in unopposed three days later as Pahiatua's interim Mayor then at the next election was voted in again by the people and went on to win every election

that he stood for after that.

Harvey's grandparents, Jonas David Candy Crewe and his wife, Lucy Elizabeth (nee Wakeman), had two children, Mary who was born in 1903 and William in 1912. William David Candy Crewe was the father of Harvey and Beverley.

Four generations of the Crewe family are buried at Pahiatua's Mangatainoka Cemetery along with a double grave of Harvey Crewe's mother, Marie Lal Crewe (nee Harvey) and Harvey's sister Beverley Turner.

MAKING THE GRADE

There was no question in Maisie's mind that Harvey's family had status both socially and professionally in the business world so there was no reason not to welcome him as a son-in-law.

While both men could be accused of marrying for money, obviously Maisie's hostility for Souter went deeper with my impression being that Maisie was not going to tell the world what she really felt in case it damaged her good family name.



LEFT: The headstone of Harvey Crewe's great grandfather David (Mayor of Pahiatua) who died on 10 November 1913 at the age of 60 years.

TOP: William David Candy Crewe was the father of Harvey and Beverley. He died in 1952 at the age of 40 years.

Both are buried at Mangatainoka cemetery Pahiatua along with other members of the Crewe family.



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In saying that, I can't imagine why Maisie would treat her daughter so harshly without having more reasons than to "do as I say or else I'll cut off your heritage" attitude, unless . . . there was something else! If she was using this threat as a means of making her toe the line romantically or to meet some other unrelated demand, then it bit her in the bum and backfired.

Predictably Heather wasn't going to be told who she could sleep with and angrily reacted, in essence, "Up yours Mum! I'm old enough to make my own decisions."

LEN ALSO IN FIRING LINE

Don't forget Maisie was also teaching her husband Len a lesson or two as well with her strict instructions of what he could receive from her will.

In a nutshell Maisie was allowing her husband the use, occupation of, and income from her share of his farm. Then to dig the knife in a bit deeper, she was leaving her half interest in the farm (that she took from Len as a result of his tax problem) to her daughter Jeannette.

Len, on the other hand, counter-attacked by changing his will as well. He cut Jeannette completely off by leaving his half share of the farm to his youngest daughter, Heather.

The last laugh eventually went to Len as Maisie was not to know that Jeannette would soon lose her life and would not collect her mother's inheritance. Heather could have contested mother's will under the Family Protection Act but this was not to be.

This left Len as the sole survivor after Jeannette's sad demise but how Len managed to play the last trump card showed his talent in outsmarting the system.

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Legacy of Greed

Maisie Demler passed away on 26 February 1970 and less than five months later, on 17 June 1970, Jeannette and Harvey Crewe were last seen alive, the day before their 4th wedding anniversary . . .

Did Maisie Demler unwittingly sign the death warrant of her daughter Jeannette and her son-in-law, Harvey? Some will argue that she did while others put it down to a simple case of jealousy from a former admirer.

Unfortunately for the Crewes, the writing was already on the wall that trouble was brewing but not from the direction that the Police thought, although Len Demler was still in the firing line as the most likely suspect.

The events leading up to June 1970 hold the key but there too many threads in this tangled web of deceit to come up with a simple cut and dried answer. Some of these events came off the starting block more than a century ago and while disagreements and unhappiness within the family circle were starting to surface during the early 1960s, eventual greed or self interest was actually coming from more than one direction. Basically, there were two sides to the coin—those who had the money and those who borrowed it. That is probably an over simplification as it was really far more complex and devious than that.

THE TIMELINE TELLS THE STORY

Those who have managed to follow the ins and outs of everyone's timeline so far will know that the underlying issues involved land and finance—lots of it in one form or another. The crunch is that some of the families finally woke up thinking they were going to lose the lot. Shareholders (I use this in a loose way here) also ended up getting suspicious then became too greedy.

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To recap the big picture briefly we have a background of wealth that was carried from England and linked to New Zealand through the families of Chennells (Newman) and Louis (Nellie Chennells).

On the deaths of Newman in 1938 and Nellie in 1948 along with the accidental death of their son Howard in 1950, the foundations of greed had already been laid. Their daughter Maisie Demler, ended up as sole beneficiary, and now had control of the family jewels. Peace was basically kept while she was alive although she made some bad decisions that had far reaching consequences.

On the deaths of Alfred Hodgson in 1961 then Maisie Demler early in 1970, tight control had lost its grip and those with an axe to grind were finalising their plans as events were coming to a head.

THOSE WITHOUT THE MEANS

On the other side of the coin were the people who didn't have the money or the means to dig themselves out of a hole. A surprising number of these people were within the family circle or were in some way related. There were a lot of fingers in the pie and I am sure that this is why nobody has let the cat out of the bag—there was too much to lose by opening your mouth or by 'potting' others.

It was not until I started to trace family genealogy and resulting land ownership that I realised there were quite a number of people who had something to lose but not all of them having a 'do or die' reason to murder.

Many had borrowed from the Chennells Estate, either for farm development or to survive during tough times when the traditional banking system was unable to take the risk thereby forcing, at the worst, eventual foreclosure.

COMPOUND INTEREST

Apart from making wise investments, the Chennells Estate family trust were basically acting as a bank by lending money with those wanting to borrow being faced with extra costs that somehow became unsustainable.

The killer, pardon the pun, was compound interest. Everyone knows it costs to borrow money and depending on the rate accepted, the debt quickly and relentlessly increases particularly if regular repayments are not made.

To give an example, using easy to understand figures, one soon

realises that apart from having to pay capital back, the dilemma of being able to earn more from using somebody else's money or losing the lot through digging a deeper hole was part of reality. The negative situation could force someone's hand by committing murder, in fact, as we now know, a double murder! This is the big secret in the Pukekawa region—indebtedness to Maisie's interests. This has never come out with all the focus on Arthur Allan Thomas and the Police investigation.

It sounds a bit extreme in normal circumstances but let's try a simple calculation using simple figures to show how compound interest works. We may want to borrow say \$10,000 over five years at an interest rate of 10%. With compounding interest, interest is worked out for the first period, then added to the principal. Then for the next period we calculate the interest on the new total and repeat this for the five year period.

The figures will look like this: \$10,000 plus 10% interest rate equals \$11,000 then another 10% on the new total equals \$12,100, and so on when after five years the total has grown to \$16,105.10. Apart from the total interest of \$6,105.10 after five years, the interest for the last year was \$1464.10 and not \$1000 if had been taken out on simple flat-rate interest.

The power of compound interest also works in reverse and is then seen as a good investment (if the lending is 'safe'). Because these figures are only hypothetical, the amounts will vary depending on the decade when it is taken out.

It was not only the issues of borrowing money but the terms of leases for property or certain Deeds of Family Arrangement & Mortgages—of which I believe numbered many more than the one mentioned in Howard Chennells will of 1941!

FINDING THE EVASIVE PROOF

I openly admit now that I have sadly failed to track down any absolute proof that other documents exist and I reserve the right to be wrong. The way I look at things this type of information has been jealously hidden in secret, half secret trusts or hard to understand legalese or simply not disclosed. The land in England is a perfect example of how to successfully hide assets.

Apart from the trustees, Maisie Demler was only person who knew the exact details regarding the state of finances. It has been

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said more than once that as the keeper of the books she knew “down to the last penny” but others within the family circle still had a pretty good idea of where everybody stood.

For whatever reason some in the chain were wanting agreements to be changed otherwise they would lose ‘big time’.

I feel strongly that the initial dissatisfactions came through Maisie dropping subtle hints, at first around the early 1960s, that trust debts were going to be called in as many leases and agreements had run well past their ‘due by’ date. This was the reason for the fires, burglaries and most likely other mischief that was never reported to the Police, and also Maisie’s efforts to keep it all quiet.

Although Maisie tried to be calm and retain peace while under siege from the wolf pack she was also coming under extreme pressure from Len to change her will and thereby protect his interests.

Chris Birt covers the drama very well in his book *The Final Chapter* and on page 39 writes that Maisie’s intention for her estate was openly disputed by Len. While she lay seriously ill at an Epsom home, Demler was “often seen remonstrating with his wife about cutting Heather from her estate.”

Page 174 continues along the same theme about Len’s constant hassling of his dying wife at the Epsom nursing home.

“The evidence points to a prolonged era of bitterness, resentment and anger towards the stoic Maisie Demler by a husband who clearly demonstrated his disdain for her proposed actions in bequeathing half of ‘his’ farm to his elder daughter, thus relegating his younger daughter to the ranks of also-rans.”

A ONCE-UNITED FAMILY

Birt goes on to say that Maisie clearly played a dominant role in the disintegration of a once-united family, and probably in the deaths of Jeannette and Harvey.

Len’s unhappiness with Maisie disinheriting Heather was almost the straw that broke the camel’s back. While Birt has come close to discovering a likely motive, either by Len or Heather as he seems to be suggesting, it is only when one learns what Len did with the wills and probates that the two-sided penny will drop.

21

Opinion and Failures

The Police never worked out why the Crewes were murdered mainly because they failed to come up with a logical motive.

The one they thought had a motive slipped through their fingers and the one they convicted never had a real motive . . .

Up till now I've left plenty of clues but I'm not ready yet to join up all the dots. There is more to come yet as further beneficiaries have yet to be scrutinised. The net does tighten now though as more possible motives appear.

When I first decided to tackle this now infamous cold case, real facts were in short supply so it was important to carry out in-depth research to find the necessary evidence to flush out the real criminals.

The failure of the authorities to dig deep enough is what led to wrong decisions and fabrication of evidence. That was embarrassing enough but the public are still not aware of the real reason why the Crewes were killed. They actually know very little!

In an attempt to untangle what really went on, one has to resort to a mixture of fact and opinion. As I have not had access to Police files, I have to rely on what other authors have written or from other official reports.

Sadly, most of the millions of words already published have now become irrelevant as they have no connection with the information that I am presenting. For example, the bulk of the Arthur Allan Thomas trial is of no use although I do believe that at least one member of the Thomas family tree is still involved in this mess.

THE RIGHT TO BE WRONG

My opinion will be from what I see looking in from the outside and from what my research indicates. I could be slightly wrong on some counts and perhaps way out on others. My thinking on this issue is that most of the truth will be found in what I call logic and

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common sense. In the confusion at the time of the murders I believe the Police, in hindsight, should have assessed the crime scene by standing back for a moment to get a better view of the true situation, rather than taking a narrow stance.

Serious mistakes were made from time to time which in the circumstances are best left alone while I concentrated on taking a different path where there were a number of people involved in the crime and resulting cover-ups. Only some had the motive to mislead or fabricate away from the truth.

IT'S WHAT HE DIDN'T SAY

Len Demler, the Police's number one suspect, tends to come within that category. While I believe he was definitely a major ringleader (if not THE ringleader) present during the four day cleaning-up process and while he was a 'master' at answering "that is right" in almost endless monotone, Len tried very hard to avoid the truth coming out. In my opinion it was what he didn't say that led everyone on wild goose chases, and shows his complicity.

At the first trial Len squirmed around during cross-examination trying to find non-committal answers to the questions put to him by defence counsel Paul Temm QC and while Temm came close to making a breakthrough, the Police had him cornered by not releasing all the information they had as, at the time, it didn't fit their agenda (or was it because they didn't want anyone 'stuffing around' with their agenda?)

The fact that Police were able to withhold information is, to my mind, a complete failure of the justice system. My reasoning is that if everyone was really serious in finding out the truth, then both sides (prosecution and defence) would share information and eventually nail who was actually responsible.

In a real and honest world that would be ideal and in this sense I respect the inquisitorial justice systems as opposed to the adversarial systems, but the New Zealand law allows for the smartest criminal lawyer to win regardless of whether all the facts have been presented. It sometimes seems to be just a game that everyone plays to justify their income and to me the charge against Arthur Allan Thomas can be seen to fit this scenario.

Despite the fact that Thomas was eventually acquitted, after twice being found guilty, this proves to me that the prosecution

were short on real facts. I will still point the finger and say they didn't try hard enough or put in the effort to dig much deeper to find the truth—a blinkered approach that has continued until today with the 2014 Police Review [Ed: 2016].

PROFESSIONAL INPUT NEEDED

Readers who have reached this chapter may wonder why I am making these rather “big picture” uncomplimentary remarks about our judicial system. The answer is simply that my “bushman’s mind” is at the stage where it needs a lot more professional input to make sense of the cold hard facts presented in previous chapters.

I am willing to admit my failures and in doing so I want to say that my knowledge of what really happened to cause this double murder cannot be fully published as I lack all the facts that I set out to find. However, there should be enough information on these pages for the professionals to follow up and to take appropriate action—if they want to. They should be able to gain access to the archival information that will take this saga to its next level.

Quite honestly, it could be the professional mind, one that has intimate knowledge and understanding of the legal system (able to read between the lines) that could ever bring the culprits to justice. The phrase that I discovered in many wills were the words “as far as the law will allow” and to me, while maybe standard legal text, it held most of the secrets that I was unable to fully untangle.

I keep thinking that this will be territory where angels fear to tread and I do realise that there will be people who won't want their names connected to this. They will probably be relations of some sort or may carry the same surname or have someone in their family tree who could be involved through no fault of their own.

In saying that, the guilty ones will know how deep they stand in what the cow has dropped.

EDUCATED GUESS OR GUT FEELING

My intention in bringing these thoughts forward is to warn readers at this point that events being covered in following chapters may, on odd occasions, lack hard fact and will carry some doubt or be open to interpretation. In other words I may be taking an educated guess or trying to explain a gut feeling but I will be endeavouring to make it clear. If I don't know, I will do my best and say so. Some may think I'm trying to cover my butt but it is quite the opposite. I

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have reached the stage where I had to make a decision to go with what I have or try a little harder to discover those elusive facts. My health has taken a hammering in recent times [Ed: 2016] and I may not get to see the light at the end of the tunnel but I am determined not to waste all the effort (and cost) of an undertaking I have been committed to since the early 1980s.

It was always going to be a toss-up whether to publish and be damned or to simply publish most of what I already know and more importantly, feel confident enough to put my thoughts into simple language. However difficult it is, all I ever wanted was justice, especially for Rochelle.

Hopefully the facts I am presenting will provide a part of the justice! I can't help thinking that it's really the legal system that needs a shake up as it has prevented the truth from coming out.

FACING MY FACTS OF LIFE

It seems quite strange to be writing these words halfway through a book (instead of in the introduction) and while I feel that time is running out, I have to face the fact that I may not be in a position to answer the questions that will undoubtedly arise. Or, at its very worst, being shot as the messenger instead of the justice system doing the right thing by following up on the clues being given and to lift the lid on this infamous cold case.

The following chapters will be the most crucial in finding the real offenders and while I am unable to prove everything beyond reasonable doubt (as the criminal law demands), I am placing it before the reader. Although that didn't seem to matter to the upholders of law in this country!

As a result, I won't feel guilty in expressing some opinion while presenting my views on what officialdom has failed to do with all the resources they had access to.

The events in the few days prior to 18 June 1970 were fairly well documented but nothing was explored along the line of "the facts" that I have discovered. The public had no idea what was going on behind the scenes and I often wonder how much the Police knew. I can tell you that it must have been a lot more than what they were letting on.

I also wonder if readers have worked out yet why both Crewe parents had to be killed and why their daughter Rochelle was kept alive.

22

Inventory of Assets

The next major episode in the timeline of the murders revolves around the administration and management of Maisie's estate after her death in February 1970. There were issues with carrying out the provisions of her will while processing her probate . . .

In attempting to explain these issues please remember that a probate is a legal document. Probate is the certificate granted by a court to confirm that the contents of a will of a deceased person has been officially proved. It gives the right to administer, in this case, the estate of May Constance Demler by her trustees, whom she had named as her husband, Lenard and her daughter, Jeannette Crewe.

Legally both trustees were required to act together and their decisions had to be unanimous. I don't believe for one minute that their decisions were harmonious as each appeared to have their own agendas.

As already explained in earlier chapters Len had openly hassled his wife over the contents of her will and Jeannette was now digging her toes in to abide by what her mother had instructed.

I think that Keith Hunter had correctly assessed the situation on page 247 of his book *The Case of the Missing Bloodstain* when he wrote that Len was "an absolute bastard while his wife lay dying in hospital" and Jeannette knew he had "pestered her mother about the will because staff at the hospital who detested Demler for it had told her." Maisie had been adamant that Len could not have her half of the farm outright as she was leaving it to Jeannette.

Hunter goes on to say that Len had previously asked Jeannette to be reasonable about the will and let him have the proceeds of

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his life's work so he could retire. "She wouldn't have a bar of it. Her mother's will was what her mother had wanted and she was not going to change it."

Maisie had really put the boot into Len and Jeannette was obviously keeping to a promise she had made to her mother.

Len must have been hyperventilating at times and it may appear that it was more about Maisie not giving him back her half share of the farm than cutting Heather completely from her will. But there was a larger issue that was tormenting Len over the division of Maisie's estate. This will become self explanatory in due course.

THE PROBATE PROCESS

The "Copy Probate" I have for Maisie Demler was dated 24 March 1970 and while the process is usually straight forward I will note here that it is what happened after the double murders that showed Len in his true light. I will deal with Maisie's probate first and check off the procedures that should have been followed.

Regardless of any likely disagreement amongst the two trustees, they were now obliged to carry out the administration of Maisie's estate. The basics of closing bank accounts, paying funeral expenses and dealing with specific gifts in the will are generally handled first. Identifying her assets would be the big one and it would be time consuming especially if some of those assets were overseas.

There were no problems with Clause 4, 4a & 4b of her will where Maisie's jewellery, silverware and personal items were concerned or the \$400 Maisie gifted to the Tuakau Anglican Church. I understand that the \$2000 gifted to Rochelle on attaining the age of 21 in 1989 wasn't verified.

Clause 4c of her will concerning her assets in total as to her residuary estate is where I feel any dispute would occur. From Jeannette's knowledge of her mother's estate plus certain verbal instructions she had been given, she would have been wide awake to what should have been accountable to her estate and quite separately, what assets belonged to the original Chennells Family Trust.

It would be worth reminding readers again of the major difference between a will and a family trust. Regardless of how the the trustees interpret the will, the trustees (Jeannette and Len) determine who receives what from the family trust.

22: Inventory of Assets

IN THE ESTATE OF MAY CONSTANCE DEMLER
of Pukekawa Married
Woman

Deceased

BE IT KNOWN TO ALL MEN that on this 24th day of March 1970 the last will of May Constance Demler of Pukekawa Married Woman deceased who died on or about the 26th day of February 1970, a copy of which is hereunto annexed, has been exhibited read and proved in Chambers before Mr Registrar W.E. Rigg at Auckland acting under Rule 426H of the Code of Civil Procedure AND ... administration of the estate effects and credits of the deceased has been and is hereby granted to LEONARD WILLIAM DEMLER of Pukekawa Farmer and ... JEANNETTE LENORE CREWE of Pukekawa Married Woman the executors therein named being first sworn faithfully to execute the said will by paying the debts and legacies of the deceased so far as the property extends and the law binds AND whenever ordered so to do to file in this Court and verify by Affidavit a true full and perfect inventory of all the estate effects and credits of the deceased which shall have come into our hands possession or knowledge and also a full distinct and proper account of our execution of the will.

The last four lines in the probate preamble clearly asks the trustees to provide a "true and full perfect inventory" but this document, if it still exists, would provide some clear answers as to why the Crewes were murdered.

Providing the "true and full perfect inventory" asked for in the probate document depended on how it was interpreted but an asset under Maisie's control that was to cause so much strife had to be dealt with quite separately as it was in the name of a family trust and not part of the will nor part of her estate.

I am sticking with this understanding with confidence because certain facts did come to light after the murders that gave me several likely motives why the murders were committed.

PREVENTED FROM SIGNING

Jeannette most likely realised she had thrown the cat amongst the pigeons but she was prepared to stand her ground. Her demise was still around 11 weeks away and I imagine, in the intervening period, that a lot of activity was going on and that would include those involved in the eventual crime.

In trying to unravel these events, it becomes obvious that Jeannette had not put her signature on all the legal paperwork. In fact, despite statements from the Police to the contrary I currently

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believe she was murdered before she would agree to her mother's probate. Again, the absolute proof will be found a year later when certain transactions were being carried out to tidy up the legal paperwork.

This basically means Jeannette did not have time to transfer the dual assets of her mother (that she was entitled to) into her name. The questions that need to be answered are basically what assets and investments were in dispute and more seriously why had she stood up to those with other interests in her mother's estate/trust.

ATTEMPTING TO FIND THE ANSWERS

It becomes clear that the paperwork had still not been finalised in the few days before 17 June 1970 and obviously, in hindsight, the process was nearing the point of erupting.

Where was this going to leave Len and others with vested interests? It would become apparent to Len (and others) that the options of settlement within Maisie's probate were quickly becoming fewer.

This raises another question, "Would Jeannette and Harvey still be alive if she had co-operated?" The hypothetical question also has to be asked, "What if the investments and assets of Maisie had been settled and what if Jeannette had received her full inheritance and gained the responsibility of resolving past debts and land arguments?"

The short answer to these questions is that, either way, Maisie had unknowingly signed the death warrant of her daughter. I now explain more about the responses to Maisie's estate as the journey nears the fateful date of 17 June 1970.

COMPLEX PATHWAY

The section of Maisie's will that needs interpretation appears in Clause 4 and subclause (c) where it talks about what will happen to her land. The words "of whatsoever nature and wheresoever situate" simply refers to her "residuary estate" but purposely gives no detail as that is how the legal system has always done it.

The legal meaning of a residuary estate is that part of a deceased person's estate which remains once all the specific distributions, gifts, and bequests have been distributed to the named beneficiaries, and after all the person's debts and claims have been satisfied.

The land that Jeannette had inherited at the age of 25 from her

4. I GIVE DEVISE AND BEQUEATH all the rest and remainder of my property both real and personal of whatsoever nature and wheresoever situate (hereinafter called "my residuary estate") unto my trustees UPON TRUST to allow my husband the said Lenard William Demler the use and occupation thereof and the income arising therefrom during his lifetime and after his death to stand possessed of my said residuary estate upon the following trusts:-

- (a) As to the sum of Four hundred dollars (£400) for the Tuakau Vestry of the Anglican Church to be used for the general purposes of the Tuakau Church.
- (b) As to the sum of Two thousand dollars (£2000) for my grand-daughter ROCHELLE JANEANE CREWE for ~~her~~ her own use absolutely upon her attaining the age of twenty-five (25) years.
- (c) As to the balance of my said residuary estate for my daughter the said Jeannette Lenore Crews for her own use absolutely or if she should predecease me or die before attaining a vested interest hereunder for her issue and if more than one in equal shares for their own use absolutely upon their attaining the age of twenty-one years.

Clause 4 of Maisie's handwritten will holds a few key statements that needs to be remembered as my text is followed. Bear in mind that Maisie is talking about "residuary estate" of "whatsoever nature and wheresoever situate" (2nd & 3rd lines) then under sub clause (c) is wording that the text will enlarge on plus the complexities that followed.

Uncle Howard Chennells along with the land Harvey had purchased from Heather is not the issue as it was already in the name of Crews.

It was other assets that Jeannette would inherit from her mother's estate that would cause intent to murder. This would have included any investments, mortgages or leases regardless of any terms or agreements made by Maisie or by Alf Hodgson and his successor, Len Demler on her behalf as trustees of the original Chennells Family Trust. Also in the mix is the role played by Colin Sturrock as family lawyer and trustee of Maisie's estate.

The pathway to the fate suffered by the Crewes is complex in the sense that readers will need to be able to get their heads around why they were really murdered and when that is understood, it should in principle lead to the guilty parties. To do that one has to completely erase from the mind the reasons given against many others whom the Police had previously accused of this crime.

In the instance of the Crewes, the real reason was simply a form of power struggle over ownership. For Jeannette and Harvey it had

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everything to do with the ingredients of land and money along with both verbal and legally worded instructions from the will of the deceased that would allow them to basically expand their farming operations either in Opuatia or elsewhere.

My feeling is that the Crewes were going to cash up and move elsewhere to start afresh, quite likely in the Wairarapa where Harvey's family originated. This was their original intent and additional funds would have made this possible.

WITHIN THE INHERITANCE CHAIN

On the assets side of the ledger one has to remember that in Maisie Demler's lifetime she had inherited estate shares in New Zealand and England from her father, Newman Chennells, in 1938; from her mother, Nellie Chennells, in 1948 then from her brother Howard, in 1952 with the next in line to receive the family jewels being her daughter, Jeannette Crewe (remember Heather had been disinherited).

Within the inheritance chain are assets and income that is potentially exceeding more than a million dollars. I have been unable to come up with anything more accurate but it does involve a lot of money and whether it was enough for other related family members to kill for remains debatable.

Again there were two sides to the coin. While one side would gain, the other was going to lose big time so which side were the murderers on? Again, there's a short answer. People from both sides actually had motives and that is what makes this case so complex.

COLLECT OR FORECLOSE

Of note are the Deeds of Arrangement made between the families and/or their farms that would legally come to an end upon the death of Maisie. In other words some of these "arrangements" were likely to have been overdue which meant that when the probate of court released Maisie's estate to Jeannette, the Crewes would end up having the power to collect all debts or foreclose on any Deed of Agreement.

Just how many people held these deeds is not known as nothing has been found in accessible archives or elsewhere that is recorded on paper. The crucial minute book/s I mentioned earlier, may not have ever existed. I am not saying that nothing has ever existed but

for me, after more than three decades of research, I can only give a reluctant “only God knows the truth” answer.

However, little snippets here and there have given me enough clues and apart from “a certain Deed of Family Arrangement and Mortgage” mentioned in the will of Howard Chennells, there is no other documentation that will hold up as absolute proof.

This has been by far the biggest setback in my research and indeed the most frustrating and testing of one’s patience.

However, I have personally been involved with a “Deed of Arrangement” where it was basically a contract between myself and another person related to the case. This deed was a pure and simple contract witnessed by a lawyer. The only reason this deed would ever come to light is from a dispute. I suspect, this deed of arrangement would be similar, if not the same, as those issued by the Chennells Family Trust.

I know that the Chennells Family Trust would have had detailed records and I would have no reason not to believe that their ledgers somehow disappeared into an incinerator or most logically into the open fireplace at the Crewe home on or shortly after 17 June 1970. The situation was so serious that all evidence had to be destroyed.

This means that those who owed money to the Chennells Family Trust or had leases that were going to be called in, regardless of “mislaidd” documentation, could be happily let off the hook. I can almost hear the reader exclaiming, “The remaining trustee must be the culprit!”

DEMLER AND THE CHENNELLS ESTATE

I won’t go there just yet with Len Demler but to carry on, it also took me a long time to realise why the gobbledegook found on wills only made sense to those in the know.

Len Demler, as the eventual sole surviving trustee of the Chennells Family Estate, was only one of a number of others who knew what the wills really meant. For instance, their favourite terms were “as far as the law will allow” and when referring to land it was invariably “wheresoever situate”. Sadly, those references were only there to shift the heat elsewhere. Basically, a different set of rules would apply if, for example, land was held in a family trust and it was the control of these trusts that will cause two people to

ultimately lose their lives.

WHERE IT ALL STARTED

It's not hard to see where it all started when one looks at the events leading up to the fateful evening of 17 June 1970.

Trouble had been brewing in the Demler household from the early 1960s, first from Len's brush with IRD in 1961 closely followed by the death of Alf Hodgson, then the following year Len was appointed a trustee by Sturrock to replace Hodgson on the Chennells Family Trust.

Later in the same year Len was forced to give Maisie half his farm with Jeannette returning from a trip to Europe soon after to find a disgruntled father that had found himself as a trustee in an unsavoury position.

By the time Jeannette had turned 25 in 1965 and gained her inheritance, her father and Sturrock had specifically done an earlier deal on a further allotment of 80 acres to which Jeannette inherited half share with Heather on the same day.

Sturrock, as trustee, also did another land deal for Honetana Farms shortly after they were incorporated in September 1965.

HEATHER DEPARTS AND FIRES START

Jeannette and Harvey were married in June 1966 and around the same time Harvey "acquired" Heather Demler's inheritance share although she kept her half share of the 80 acres before her departure to USA with Bob Souter early 1967.

Due to this relationship, to use a common phrase, battle lines had already been drawn between Heather and her mother and by mid 1969 Maisie Demler had cut her youngest daughter from her will. The real reasons have never been made public and the family were quite happy to let the public speculate.

The vandalism, thefts and fires against the Crewes started shortly after the Crewes' first wedding anniversary. This deeply seated grudge continued after their daughter Rochelle was born in December 1968.

On top of all this were the bickering of words between Len and Maisie during her period in hospital and that wasn't always about Heather losing her inheritance because I believe Len's continual

haggling over the will was to stop any further argument or claims on all Maisie's inherited property.

I'm absolutely certain that Maisie was trying to perpetuate the family dynasty through Jeannette and had instructed her accordingly.

In addition, and this will add more confusion, were the antics of Norma Eastman not long after the murders when she jumped in boots and all supposedly battling for Len, yet at that time, was neither a trustee nor married to Len.

COMING TO A HEAD

I will repeat again, I'm certain this horrendous crime wasn't committed on the spur of the moment.

In 1966 when Jeannette and Harvey made a decision to stand by Maisie, the heat then started to come on about who was going to govern or manage all the investments. It became apparent that the governing powers were being tested as Maisie now had two other allies.

Coupled with Len's seemingly devil-may-care attitude and with the covering up of a mass of sins related to other secret little deals here and there by the trustees, the situation was fast coming to the point of no return. Something had to happen and it was with the death of Maisie Demler, and with the non-disclosure of all her estate (some of which was held in trust), that left the trustees and others with few options.

These people also knew the contents of both Jeannette and Harvey's wills (basically, they had each left everything to the other) and in their minds the unacceptable outcome, should they be alive to inherit all of Maisie's fortune, was going to cause damage to those on both sides of the coin.

One doesn't need to try very hard to guess who, as trustees, would actually know the total account of all the estate at the time of Maisie's death.

EXACTLY WHO STOOD TO GAIN?

I believe that Maisie's will, handwritten by Sturrock in an almost unreadable scrawl, has distracted, if not fooled hundreds of people for years as only a lawyer's mind would be able to interpret its true

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meaning in relation to a hidden agenda of assets.

The value of Maisie's estate had not been accurately recorded and I do know that it was deliberately minimized as, for example, there is no mention anywhere or even a hint that Maisie was a beneficiary of land in England.

It is this land that has been smuggled away in legalese and it doesn't take too much thought to narrow down the field of who is benefiting from it today (Ed: 2016).

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In the Days Before

In an early chapter I said experts worldwide claim that crime comes down to—99 times out of a hundred—love, hate, or money. In the case of the Crewe murders, it was money and lots of it! The question is, “Did this crime come from within the family or was it from those who had outstanding amounts in arrears from the Chennells family trust?”

To deal first with the Crewes one has to go back to evidence given in court to obtain some idea of the dollar value of Jeannette’s inheritance.

The financial affairs of Harvey and Jeannette were questioned in depth when Len Demler faced cross-examination by Paul Temm. A verbatim transcript of the trial cross-examination was published in Yallop’s book *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* (pages 130 to 133) and it was clear that Demler was being deliberately evasive and to me his answers were quite shifty.

It was like trying to get blood out of a stone and with Paul Temm almost putting figures into Len’s mouth, Len was making him work very hard. Without going into a blow by blow account of what was said, my conclusion is that Len, like his deceased wife, knew exactly who had what down to the last dollar. After all, he had also been a trustee for Nellie Chennells.

Len also thought (incorrectly) that he stood to gain from Maisie’s shares in the Auckland Harbour Bridge and a Dairy Company as both were held in their joint names. I realise that jointly owned shares should have passed to him, but not shares in her sole name. He was entitled at least to the dividends on the shares.

It is also interesting to note what the pundits had discovered and

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published about the value of Jeannette's inheritance plus what her bank accounts totalled. Page 35 of *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* (David Yallop 1978) says her estate was worth at least \$150,000. In her three personal bank accounts were sums totalling \$4,640, in a joint account with her husband was a further \$1,667 (totalling \$156,307). His two bank accounts totalled \$34.

Page 22 of *The Case of the Missing Bloodstain* (Keith Hunter 2012) claims at her death she had \$7000 cash in the bank and her estate was worth \$70,000, excluding another \$70,000 she was about to inherit from her mother, the total being \$147,000. Harvey's personal bank balance was still \$34.

These figures are basically irrelevant as in reality, it was only the tip of the iceberg and, in my humble opinion, Harvey actually had far more potential than \$34!

THE CRUNCH WAS COMING

Two days before the murders Len saw his lawyer and signed off the balance sheet of his wife's supposed assets with an affidavit that, at the time, was accepted by the court as being true and correct. Needless to say the enquiry within the system mentions very little about the exact content of this document, but the crunch came earlier than planned.

Jeannette had visited her solicitor the day after her father and also received a detailed account of her mother's estate. Both father and daughter had noted that the death duties were much higher than expected mainly due to a revaluation of Len's farm.

According to page 52 of Keith Hunter's book *The Case of the Missing Bloodstain* it was actually called a "document for death duties"—or to put it crudely, was it simply a document for death?

LEN'S RESPONSE

While Jeannette was pleasantly surprised at how much her mother's estate was worth she clutched the paperwork and wasted little time returning home to give Harvey the good news.

Her father Len would have had a different reaction after he had visited his lawyer in Tuakau. His initial response would have been emotionally mixed. Apart from the shock of high death duties Len still saw himself and his daughter Heather dipping out by not

receiving their perceived entitlements.

Heather could be seen as the biggest loser as she had been disinherited from her mother's will and to be fair, Len had also got offside with his wife and now suffered the humility of losing badly, at this stage, all but half of his farm to Jeannette. Maisie's probate confirmed she had no intention of giving Len back her share but she did allow him the use and occupation of the farm during his lifetime. Neither did she begrudge him the income or ability to have total control of the farm.

But if he decided to retire some time in the future and sell the farm then Maisie's half would still go to Jeannette (as per her mother's wishes). He would still have got the income off Maisie's half of the farm proceeds.

It would be an understatement to say that Len was unhappy with Maisie's instructions and in keeping with previous and future responses Len immediately changed his will, an action he would often repeat over the following 20 or so years.

REVOKING OF LEN'S WILLS

I've tried to find evidence of Len's changes to his will and because I was too late arriving on the scene (six years after the murders) each so-called change had been deemed null and void during the process of revoking all previous wills.

If Len had applied a codicil (an addition or supplement that modifies an existing will) then those changes would have been recorded but it appears Len made a new will each time and according to my calculations he made five new wills between Maisie's death in 1969 and his own in 1992.

I want to mention this as I believe some of the steps Len took could have left him wide open with a motive and on the other hand he might have been cunning enough to conceal his real intentions.

Len's wills could prove, one way or other, whether he is guilty as most believe or was he just protecting his family's interests by manipulating the process and perhaps he was only guilty of tidying up the loose ends from the mess other parties had left.

CHANGES TO HIS WILL

In taking an overview and without assuming the worse I will

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repeat again that Len was smarter than he looked and it was not what he said but what he didn't publicly say that shows this.

When Maisie savagely cut Heather from her will, Len levelled the playing field by changing his will and according to Yallop (page 34) “[cut] Jeannette out and leaving his half of their property to Heather.” He goes on to say that once again the two sisters were to have a half-share each in a superb farm . . .”

However, Ian Wishart, author of *Arthur Allan Thomas: The Inside Story*, has a different version on page 26. He says Demler, “in an attempt to restore balance between the siblings, reduced Jeannette’s share of his own estate from half down to one third, leaving the rest to Heather.”

This doesn't make sense as Jeannette is now in the box seat with her mother's half share plus one third of her father's half share.

Wishart has surely made a mistake, but he continues this version (page 30) nearly 12 months later when he outlines Demler's response at his lawyer's office when signing off Maisie's balance sheet. He says Len drafted a new will of his own, apparently on the spot, “leaving two thirds of his share of the farm to Heather and one third to Jeannette.” The 2014 Police Review sides with Wishart's take on the will proportions.

Another source says Demler returned to his solicitor's office on Friday 19 June and signed the new will he had asked for four days previously (*Final Chapter* page 99). The word of author Chris Birt has to be taken as being the most accurate but it does raise some issues that could show whether Demler was involved in the actual murders.

The Crewes were last seen alive late on Wednesday 17 June which meant that if Len was at the scene of the double murder, he would already know that his daughter was dead and if, for some reason, he didn't sign off his will, it would be paramount to admitting guilt because what's the point of signing if the will was already out of date and needed changing again?

Whether he was guilty or innocent Len still had no choice but to sign off as the consequences were to prove, in hindsight, that Len could have easily lost control of Maisie's estate. There are serious issues that Demler had to cunningly resolve with steady nerves.

WILL QUITE SEPARATE FROM TRUST

In returning to the assets of the Crewes and to clarify the detail of Maisie's assets, the reader has to remember that her will was quite separate from the family trust. This meant that his lawyer would have explained to Len what he was legally required to do because of his role as Maisie's executor and trustee of her total estate.

As executor of her will he (and Jeannette) were bound to pay death duties and any outstanding tax (out of the estate funds) and as trustee of her family trust he would have declared anything he held in trust in Maisie's name.

Reports have said Len then drove to Hamilton to see his accountant about his tax obligations and to clarify future ownership of Maisie's shareholding in other companies and organisations.

Len would have known, for example, that Maisie's half shareholdings in the Harbour Bridge and Dairy Company were to be inherited by Jeannette as they were part of the balance of Maisie's residuary estate. Not only was Jeannette in line to take Maisie's share of his farm but she was also ending up with shares he thought he was entitled to. This would have been a bitter pill to swallow.

Loaded with this information Len joined his daughter and Harvey the following evening for his traditional Tuesday meal where undoubtedly the main topic of discussion was in agreeing to sign off Maisie's probate. Len is reported as saying that the will was only mentioned briefly once and that was when he going out the door on his way home.

Len was lying through his teeth. Or do pigs really fly? One would have to be completely daft to believe Len's version. Without a doubt Len would have continued his pleadings and while Jeannette had turned off her ears, Len had no intention of letting the matter rest.

To apply for probate, the executors sign an affidavit regarding the date of death, and that "this is the will" and that "we are the executors". The solicitor signs an application, and these are filed in court along with the undated probate. The court grants the application; puts in a date on the probate; signs and seals it and releases it to the solicitor.

I think that Jeannette's refusal to co-operate in signing the affidavit (a standard uncontentious legal form) so that probate could

be applied for, was probably the actual trigger for the murders the following evening.

LEN WAS PREPARED TO SIGN

Len knew positively one day before Jeannette what his wife's assets were which meant he would have also known what was listed on the inventory demanded by Maisie's will. He also knew, as a trustee, the details of the Chennell Family Trust and who was going to benefit the most.

Len was prepared to sign but it was quickly dawning on Len that Jeannette was not going to sign until the items she knew were hers to inherit were included. In other words Len was trying to minimize his wife's assets to his advantage. While he still had ownership issues, he also knew that shareholders of the Chennells Trust were getting quite tense and jumpy.

From the minute Maisie's probate was signed Jeannette and Harvey Crewe had the right to disclaim or dispute all or any part of it, to alter, add to, or claim accordingly should there be any misrepresentation by the trustees over a long period of time.

The troublesome period over the past nine years, 1961 to 1970, and with Alf's death would have given Maisie as sole investor in that family a better margin of control over the trusts in operation. These trusts were in fact owned by a 'switched on' mother and a daughter groomed to follow in her footsteps.

What it boiled down to, over a period of 30 years, mother and daughter through fate and good management became the two major 'investor shareholders' in a company that was deemed by law to be settled in another name—a family trust "as long as the law allows".

The death of an investor or end of a period of a trust is final as to total settlement of all assets and property held in trust or company leaving Jeannette as the sole owner.

This is the position of control that Jeannette found herself in and not realising the danger she had placed herself in would have been telling her father that she would be abiding by the contents of the will and to the other parties she would have made it clear that she would be calling in all outstanding debt.

Len Demler would have left the Crewe house on Tuesday night in utter defeat and pondering the few options left.

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The Days Between

It's now time to narrow the focus to what happened on 17 June leading up to the brutal double murder and of the events during the following five days. There's a heap of information available from a wide variety of sources so my intention, for the record, is to provide a brief account of this period along with some thoughts related to the findings that I have talked about throughout this text. . .

While much has been said on the movements of the Crewes on the day of the murders, it is true that Jeannette had been visited during the morning of Wednesday 17 June by Thirryl Pirrett (an old friend) while Harvey was discussing, around the same time, the potential purchase of a bull with stock agent John Gracie.

The pair soon left and made a trip to look over some breeding bulls for sale at Glen Murray then later, on the same day, Harvey and Jeannette attended a stock clearing sale at Bombay to look at another line of bulls.

Questions crossing my mind as a layman included asking how many bulls were the Crewes going to buy and from what breed and blood line. How many working bulls were needed and what was wrong with the existing bulls? Were these bulls for replacement or to upgrade another herd?

Hopefully the answers to these questions would have given me a clue as to whether the Crewes were serious about cashing up and starting afresh elsewhere or were they going to stay put.

The niggling thought is that four years seemed a long time for Harvey to wait to replace inferior stock or was it simply being able to afford it now because of a pending improvement in Jeannette's bank balance (from her inheritance). I think so.

CONDITION OF THE HOUSE

The earlier lack of resources could also be applied to the condition of the house. It had been widely reported that it was without character as a home and had a run-down drab appearance within and yet, I noticed in the garage, a brand new 1970 Hillman Hunter car.

Despite the apparent lack of resources, I believe the bank actually held ample funds in Jeanette Crewe's name as well as other securities on loan. Also, prior to 17 June 1970, the family lawyer, Colin Sturrock, made a statement saying the Crewes were going to extend their land holdings in the near future.

Yet surprisingly the condition of the farm at the time was good. Stock numbers were up and over the years some of fences and tracks had been replaced or attended to. But the house had had no upgrade or alterations, even the curtains were not replaced after one of the fires, and although Jeannette had ordered material, Harvey had cancelled this on 15 June two days before their murders.

In mentioning all these facts there can only be one conclusion to the riddle of the condition of the house, bearing in mind one does not renovate or buy curtains for a house that a family has no intention of living in.

The better option would be to cash in all or any mortgages, shares or other interests, plus her mother's inheritance, then sell sections 13-14 and 67-68 to buy a bigger and better farm, say in the Wairarapa away from the harassment and other problems—their original intention.

This logical option would, no doubt, set the cat among the pigeons. Does Len spill the beans immediately to those who had debts to the Chennells Family Trust or were plans already in place to cover the eventuality of having to make some hard decisions?

STANDING IN THE SHOES OF OTHERS

I've tried to stand in the shoes of Len for his reaction and also those who had been applying the scare tactics in the years preceding.

My feeling is that all parties involved had a motive to murder. But to find who actually pulled the trigger has done my head in more times than I care to admit.

Originally, and like the bulk of others, my main culprit was Len

as he had the most to lose and while he had motive, did someone else beat him to it after they “lost it”? In saying that I don’t believe Len was even present during that altercation but he definitely was involved with cleaning up the mess afterwards and making sure everyone’s butts were covered and were all on the same page.

Regardless of his likely leadership or passive role in the murders Len would have been in damage control after assessing the murder scene and after considering the options, and without losing his cool, stalled for time while he thought through the various consequences of any action that had to be taken.

LEN’S MOVEMENTS WERE DOCUMENTED

Meanwhile, without getting sidetracked too much, let’s try to retrace Len’s movements from Wednesday afternoon until Monday morning either to establish guilt or varying degrees of innocence.

I can only do this from information others have written about as I was not there, nor have I personally interviewed anyone involved and have only recently had access to the NZ Police *Crews Homicide Investigation Review* of 2014. This series of reports are regrettably not complete and are hugely biased towards the Police but they have been helpful because of their ‘first hand’ information.

I have mentioned previously about the importance of the timeline that I had compiled to keep me on track. It has already unearthed many gaps in this saga and at this moment I want to show if Len had enough time available over the next five days to get rid of the bodies, to clean up the mess and to throw everyone off the scent.

It was a stroke of luck for the Police that they were able to factually determine the time frame of when the murders were committed. It is known that the Crewes were last seen alive late Wednesday afternoon. Their primary intent was to create the impression of normality but the perpetrators did not realise that they had made a serious blunder in not checking the mailbox at any stage between Thursday morning and the following Monday.

Mailman Emmett Shirley had noticed his deliveries had not been collected for several days but did not realise the significance until some time after Len had “discovered” the couple were missing.

Also the Police, perhaps unconsciously, kept this vital Wednesday evening piece of evidence from becoming public knowledge.

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It is also obvious to my mind that if Len was involved, everything he says over the following days would have to be big fat juicy lies otherwise he ran the risk of incriminating himself if he gave the wrong answers when being questioned later. Once again it is not what Len says but what he doesn't say that is striking.

Let's test this theory with the following quotes recorded by various authors: Keith Hunter recorded in his book *The Case of the Missing Bloodstain* (page 17) that Len testified it was "a dirty wet day [on Wednesday] and I stopped home most of the day as it was too wet." He went on to say that he never went near Harvey's farm that day. Later, on page 53, Hunter says Len intended to watch a rugby match in Hamilton but it was too wet so listened to it on radio, never used the phone, never saw the Crewes, went to bed at 9:30.

David Yallop says on page 2 of *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* that Demler stayed close to his farm most of the day. "He for one would not be going to any ratepayer's meeting that evening, but then he never went. Having spent the previous evening at his daughter's Jeannette's farm he decided to catch up on some letters that needed writing."

Did anyone think to ask Len for proof of who he had written to so that it could be verified? Len could have easily been doing essential paperwork but who is to say he wasn't destroying evidence or covering the trail of the murderers?

Chris Birt writes of evidence Len Demler gave that said he was alone at home on Wednesday night, "no one was with him and no one called on him" so in essence had no alibi (*Final Chapter* page 187). It is absolutely true that Len had no alibi so could say essentially what he liked!

Hang on a minute Len! What about the significant phone call you said you had received that evening?

Ian Wishart, author of *The Inside Story* wrote on page 34 & 35 that Len gave evidence that stock agent Joe Moore had phoned him around 7:00pm on Wednesday night complaining that he could not raise the Crewes on the phone.

Strangely, there is no mention in the Police Reports of this particular phone call. However, they do record a visit from stock agents, Joseph Moore and John Dagg, to the Crewe homestead on Monday morning around 9:00 am.

Len claimed he wasn't worried about the Wednesday evening call at the time and says he forgot about it until Monday, four days later, when further phone calls arrived from at least three others who were also trying to contact Harvey.

Really? Did Len really forget about Wednesday's call until Monday? It just doesn't add up and we will soon know why.

THAT CRITICAL PHONE CALL

Wishart believes if Wednesday's phone call was true, the Crewes were dead by 7:00pm or they couldn't answer the phone because they had a gun pointing at them.

These facts would surely let Len off the hook as he couldn't be in two places at once although the timing of the gunshots that allegedly killed the Crewes bears further scrutiny. If neighbour Julie Priest's recollection of hearing gunshots some time between 8:00pm and 8:30 is taken as being fairly accurate then Len had plenty of time to check out why Harvey was not answering his phone.

To him this would have been an ideal excuse for Len to visit Jeannette again as he still had unfinished business to attend to.

He had more than an hour or so after the phone call to make up his mind whether to poke his head through the back door to basically check out whether everything was okay and, if so, could continue pressuring Jeannette to change her mind about certain details of her mother's will.

If Len was telling the truth and never went near the Crewes that evening then who got rid of the bodies and did the clean up? All I want to say at this point is that Len had no alibi and could easily bend the truth to suit the circumstances.

WHERE WAS LEN ON THURSDAY?

Reports later received by the Police revealed a lot of activity near the Crewe household on Thursday morning. Reports came in of 16 year old Ross Eyre seeing an unidentified woman driving the Crewe car, a Hillman Hunter, south at 8:30am while waiting for his bus.

A little later, at 10:30am, Raymond Fox, a share milker, also saw the same car heading south which he described as a blue Hillman occupied by two women, one of whom he thought was Mrs Crewe. Strangely these sightings were not revealed to the defence team or,

it seems, followed up and fully investigated by the Police. In fact nothing was recorded on the *Chronology of Events* compiled for the 2014 Police Investigation Review. However, to be fair, the Fox sighting was mentioned in their Conference Notes of 24 June where Sgt Seaman come to his conclusion and said, “I don’t put much weight on this sighting at all.”

From what I have learnt surrounding this mystery is more about the close associates of Leslee. This will make it easier for readers to follow as members of her family owned a light blue car, a 1970 Toyota Corona, that could easily be mistaken for a Hillman Hunter as it drove past particularly if you were looking at the women rather than the car.

Other relations of Leslee’s family did live in the neighbourhood, and to me this is a very significant piece of information that will join up some important dots but right now I want to continue working on the rather sketchy movements of Len.

IS LEN BEING DELIBERATELY VAGUE?

Keith Hunter (page 53) also tried to justify what Len was doing: “. . . did some work on the farm, got back to the house at about 5:30pm . . . I cooked tea, watched TV and went to bed around 9 to 9.30m. I didn’t ring Jeannette or Harvey that day and didn’t see or hear from either of them. I didn’t go anywhere near their property. I went to bed and never went out again that night.”

Who’s Len trying to kid? There’s a whole day of daylight that is missing of any substance. All Len could say was that he “did some work on the farm” so if he was involved then it would not surprise anyone that he gave such a vague answer.

He could hardly admit that he had been working next door, cleaning up a murder scene and getting rid of the bodies, so he had to bend the truth a little more.

I’ve often wondered what sort of questions the Police asked and were they thorough? Did they leave no stone unturned? After all, Len was their number one suspect and while they were trying hard to nail him by putting a firearm and an axle in his hands, other vital evidence was being concealed by Detective Inspector Bruce Hutton (the officer in charge of the murder inquiry).

Keith Hunter devotes Chapter 9 (pages 97-105) to Hutton’s

mysterious actions and covers in full detail how four months of police investigation had disappeared. Today, all the evidence Police had against Demler no longer exists and in all probability will never be disclosed as its contents would probably reveal damaging information that would make total fools of those upholding law and order.

Police had interviewed Len at length numerous times during their investigations and while there is admission that they could not “break” or “crack” Len, all common sense says that Len would have incriminated himself, however unintentionally that he knew much more than he was letting on.

Further conclusions reached by Hunter will also later show that Len knew of other seemingly minor events only known by police at the time.

WHAT ABOUT FRIDAY?

Presuming again that Len is involved and is co-operating with others known to be on the Crewe property during this period, foundations were already being laid to fool people passing by that Jeannette Crewe was, in fact, still alive.

Bruce Roddick, a farm labourer, almost proved that Jeannette was still in the land of the living.

He is on record as sighting a woman (standing in front of the Crewe car near their house) whom he described in detail in Yallop’s book (page 11). This woman (whom I believe was Leslee) was at the scene of the murders around 9:00am while he was feeding out hay for Ron Chitty who lived opposite the Crewes.

Initially the police believed they had “one fairly reliable” sighting but amid some controversy, the police tried to change the position of where Roddick was standing to throw doubt on his vision. This woman has never been positively identified and sadly, Roddick did not know Jeannette so had presumed it was her. In doing so, he was at odds with the police who later tried to portray him being an unreliable witness as far as their agenda was concerned.

The police went as far to say in their conference notes that Roddick was “not too brilliant by any means” and a “simple soul” but admitted he had “good eyes.” According to their conference notes of 15 July the Police eventually decided this sighting was unreliable and disregarded it altogether.

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For me, and from what I know of the woman who said she fed the baby, I am convinced in my mind that the woman seen by Roddick in front of Crewe's house was one of the pair seen in a blue Hillman in the neighbourhood by Raymond Leslie Fox.

This lady wanted to be seen to provide an alibi for Len. I also think it was part of Len's long term strategy of keeping control of his and Heather's legacy. He had something over her, as did others in the family.

Part of this developing situation was not lost on Keith Hunter (page 51): "The unasked question was *'why was she seen?'* and its answer must be that it was her purpose. She was being seen—with the Crewes' car beside her. She was saying: *'Here I am, Jeannette Crewe, alive and well. I haven't been murdered yet.'* The trick worked on Bruce Roddick. He thought it was Jeannette Crewe."

Later that day, around 2:30pm, Sonia Hawkins had visited the Chittys (neighbours opposite) and had noticed the blinds had been drawn across the two big front windows of the Crewe house. She had thought it "uncharacteristic" and because she was running late didn't bother to check it out. If only she had stopped and knocked on the front door!

LEN'S TURN TO ALIBI HIMSELF

So what had Len actually been doing on Friday? Unfortunately there is nothing on record to show Len's movements prior to 4:30pm which means again that, to my knowledge, he had no alibi.

It has already been mentioned by Chris Birt that Demler had returned to his solicitor and signed the new will that he had requested on the previous Monday. Then Demler said he had drank heavily that night till 10:15pm.

Keith Hunter's version of Len's movements were similar (page 53): He drove into Tuakau for an appointment with his solicitor at 4:30pm and later went to the hotel with a friend for a few drinks until 7:00pm. He had a feed at the fish shop opposite then went back to the pub until closing time and arrived home about 10:40pm.

Again for Len, there is almost a full day not accounted for!

IN THE MINDS OF THE PERPETRATORS

Further activity around the Crewe homestead on Saturday

morning reinforced the notion that nothing was amiss and there was no need for anybody to be nosey.

The Crewes were apparently still alive and the double murder was supposedly not due to happen until Saturday evening or at the latest, on Sunday. The time didn't really matter as the object of the exercise was to show enough activity to give others, particularly Len, justifiable alibis for Friday and Saturday.

As history should show, the ploy was carried out with a coolness of nerve and daring that would have made a movie director quite envious. It was perfectly scripted with eighteen month old Rochelle Crewe playing the leading role.

Rochelle was most likely told quietly to go outside and play but to go no further than the front gate and if the script was being followed she would have also been directed to return immediately to the house if somebody came up the driveway.

As it turned out Dale and Queenie McConnachie drove past the Crewe farm on their way to the centenary rugby match shortly after 1:30pm. Queenie noticed Rochelle and described the "lovely little girl" as a toddler wearing a pair of overall trousers with a bib front. Her husband Dale verified the sighting three hours later, at 4:30pm, on his way home after the rugby.

According to their conference notes of 15 July (page 12) police found Queenie McConachie's sighting of a toddler in the front yard on Saturday afternoon "hard to accept" which explained why Chris Birt responded by revealing their reasoning.

In his book, *All the Commissioner's Men* (pages 85 & 86) Chris slated the police for not releasing this "key evidence to the Thomas defence teams, the two trial juries nor the 1980 Royal Commissioners."

In hindsight, all this play-acting was a complete waste of time as the uncollected milk bottles were already testifying that Wednesday evening was the last time the Crewes were seen alive. This fact was not known by the perpetrators so it becomes obvious that those involved, at least three people, Len and two women (probably the murderers if these people weren't guilty), already knew that the Crewes were dead.

SATURDAY RUGBY KEPT LEN VISIBLE

David Yallop gave a good account (on page 4) of Len's activities at the rugby on Saturday. He wrote of Len not being alarmed when

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his son-in-law, “a good footballer and keen follower of the game” failed to attend the Onewhero Jubilee match. “He equally did not consider it was cause for concern when the young Crewes did not appear at the dinner and dance that followed the match.”

It seems Len was deliberately being visible yet nobody thought to ask him why Harvey and Jeannette were not present. I’m sure people did ask him and depending on his answer, none of his mates thought it strange enough to check out.

Chris Birt didn’t place any importance on the Crewe’s absence either as all he said on page 99 was that Len drank until about 2:00 am and arrived home after 2:30.

Keith Hunter had a lot more to say on pages 53-55 and 62 of his book *The Case of the Missing Bloodstain* where he had also been documenting Len’s movements.

“(On the Saturday) . . . at about 12pm I left for the football. This was at Onewhero . . . After the game I went to the clubhouse and had a few drinks and later attended the football club’s jubilee dinner at 6pm . . . then they had a dance. I left there at about 1.40am and arrived home about 2am . . .”

Hunter continues: “Since the evidence of the last sighting of the Crewes and the roadside mailbox established that the murders were committed on the Wednesday, there was never a need for the police to question or check this narrative.

“Had they been persuaded by the mystery sightings that the Crewes were not murdered until the Saturday, then they would obviously have checked. They would then have noted that Demler the farmer might well be the sort to feed his daughter’s farm animals.

“They would have thought it irrelevant that he had been home alone on the Wednesday and Thursday nights, but it would have been of considerable relevance that he was drinking with friends in Tuakau on the Friday night when someone was burning a carpet square and a cushion in the Crewes’ grate and sparks were seen belching from their chimney, and that he was drinking with a whole football club well into the early hours of the Sunday morning after the Saturday night when his daughter and her husband were murdered. Len Demler would have been completely ‘alibi’d’.” I note though that the 2014 Police Review has discounted the ‘sparks from the chimney on Friday night’ story.

HUTTON QUESTIONS LEN ABOUT SATURDAY

In fast forwarding Hunter's commentary to comments made from one of Bruce Hutton's interview questions to Len Demler sets the scene: "Are you sure you didn't contact Jeannette or Harvey about going to the Football Jubilee with especially view of the fact that you had a double ticket to the football dinner after the game?"

"No. I thought of contacting Jeannette on the Thursday or Friday but I didn't get around to it. I suppose I should have and all of this wouldn't have happened."

Hunter writes that Hutton apparently saw no significance in his suspect's last reply above. The point that escaped him was that Demler was providing a time for the Crewes' disappearance. That time was after the Thursday and Friday of the week prior, to the Monday on which he had discovered them missing.

"Len had already proposed that the disappearance resulted from a murder-suicide. If he had taken one of the Crewes to the football dinner on the Saturday night there would have been no murder suicide. It follows that he was suggesting that the murder suicide had occurred on the Saturday night. Why? Ostensibly Demler had no cause for the supposition."

Hunter is of the opinion that only someone who knew about the mysterious events and their indication that the Crewes were still alive until the Saturday afternoon would have ventured a time of death at all, let alone propose the Saturday night.

"The Wednesday was always a more logical choice because it was the last day the Crewes had actually been seen. The only people who knew about the mystery sightings at the Crewe house on the Friday and Saturday in that week were the police.

"In the interpretation of the mystery sightings proposed above, one other person would have known, not of the sightings but of the events themselves. That person would have been the one who organized those events.

"No-one had reported the sightings to Len Demler. Almost three weeks after he had found the Crewes missing he didn't even know that the police had long decided, principally on the evidence of the mailbox, that they had disappeared on Wednesday 17 June. Though he could not have known about the reports of the sightings, he

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seems to have known about the events themselves, and that they appeared to dictate a Saturday night disappearance.”

That Demler displayed knowledge available only to the police and the killer was strong supporting evidence against Hutton’s suspect.

However recognition of the significance of Demler’s comment—during an interview specifically intended to elicit evidence from him—required the interviewer to have analysed the mystery sightings as outlined above. This never happened. Consequently the point was lost on the interviewer—Detective Inspector Hutton.

ACCOUNTING FOR LEN’S DAYLIGHT HOURS

The events of Saturday still contained gaps, the most obvious being the whereabouts of Len during the morning, in fact every morning for the past three days is basically unaccountable. On Thursday nothing prior to 5:30pm; Friday it was 4:30 and Saturday nothing recorded prior to midday.

What was Len actually doing during those daylight hours? There are no records available (remember Len’s police interview notes had disappeared) so one can only speculate and think the worst. Len would say he was doing farm work and was working so hard that he didn’t notice that Harvey wasn’t tending to his animals.

But what about Sunday? Len may have been sleeping it off after a hard night and early morning on the turps but my timeline shows very little activity for Sunday except for two events that have never been properly explained.

Chris Birt wrote that Keith Brown, a Tuakau stock and station agent, had passed by at 8:30 am and saw the back porch light on and car at front gate. The car, believed to be Crewe’s Hillman Hunter, had been seen in the same spot on Friday and in the same place on Saturday afternoon but by Monday was parked in the garage.

Someone had moved it and it wasn’t the Crewes. They were dead. Was it Len or one of the two ladies earlier seen in the car or another male who helped to move the bodies?

Journalist Pat Booth recorded in his book *Trial by Ambush* (page 33) the sighting of a brown International truck near Crewe’s woolshed on the Sunday, a fact that Wishart says was overlooked by David Yallop and other authors who followed with their books.

He also thought the truck implied “someone with commercial ties.”

I believe what he meant was that this truck was local and commonly seen around the district. A very similar truck I remember visiting the Demler farm during haymaking, was also used during school holidays to transport children to a nearby farm.

The thought that passed through my mind was the truck being an ideal vehicle to transport a couple of bodies from the woolshed to the Waikato River.

This is the part where a few dots can be joined up but this is not where I want to mention it as my explanation will need additional information otherwise it will be out of context please just hold the thought.

WHAT DID SANDY FLETCHER SEE?

The only other information of significance not included in my timeline was a date relating to what Sandy Fletcher saw on the banks of the Waikato River in June 1970—an exact date would have been very helpful but it seems nobody had the sense to actually record it somewhere.

However, to cut a long story short Fletcher was looking for a whitebaiting spot and, according to author Chris Birt, he “saw two horses, some dogs, a man with a trilby hat and a middle-aged woman trussed up in wet weather gear.”

They said they were “just dumping some rubbish.”

The belief of Fletcher and a large number of his supporters was that the couple were Len Demler and his girlfriend at the time, Norma Eastman (nee Thomas).

Strangely none of the investigators, or authors of books, were prepared to name the 48 year old “middle-aged woman”, a woman Demler was to marry less than two years later, on 7 April 1972 at the age of 63, and a woman erroneously claimed by some to be responsible for feeding the baby.

The only clue to when Fletcher made this sighting was his description of it being a cold drizzly day late in the afternoon in June. There was no indication what day of the week it was and my attempts to discover what Len was doing during this period (analysed on previous pages) may determine if Len and his helper were involved.

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Wednesday was known to be a “dirty wet day” but is easily eliminated as the murders had not yet occurred. The timing was right for Thursday as Len had only done some farmwork and according to him was home by 5:30 which would have included a two hour horse trek to journey back.

Friday and Saturday did not fit a late afternoon time frame which only left a last minute rush on Sunday to tidy up the loose ends.

The weather conditions on Sunday are not known and apart from the two events already mentioned, Sunday is a complete blank as far as written records are concerned. I could not find anything in the books published or in evidence given at court hearings. The Police Review 2014 failed to mention anything that Fletcher had seen, not even a comment rubbishing his claim.

Part of the reason would be, I feel, is connected with what the police eventually told Fletcher. They said his information was not relevant then added that he had to keep the matter to himself or he would “find himself in serious trouble.”

DID POLICE HAVE ANOTHER AGENDA?

On the whole, and in hindsight, that was an incredibly stupid comment to make by a member of the police force. What exactly was annoying him? The answer is simple when the reader realises that the police wanted to cover up anything that could jeopardize the arrest of Arthur Allen Thomas.

My timeline shows how the events unfolded and why the police reacted the way they did.

It was several days after Fletcher had heard of the disappearance of the Crewes that he phoned the police to report what he had seen. As a result nothing happened until Arthur Allan Thomas was arrested on 11 November 1970.

Fletcher then went back to the police as the young farmer they had arrested was a far cry from the elderly man he had seen in June. It was here that he was told it was not relevant and to keep the matter to himself or he would find himself in serious trouble.

Prior to this the police had been advised at a major conference on 2 October 1970 not to charge Demler due to insufficient evidence. If that was true, why was it necessary to make this seemingly unprofessional threat?

The police were obviously worried that if they were able to prove it was Demler dumping bodies then their case against Thomas would have been thrown into total disarray as they were close to reaching the point of no return with Thomas. They were not in the position to back out then go through the process of saving face.

Even stranger still was their attitude towards Fletcher. Chris Birt summed it up in his book *All The Commissioner's Men* (page 92) with this comment: "The police maintain that there was no record of Fletcher in the Crewe homicide file, no interview sheets and no job sheets, and no account of what he saw at the edge of the Waikato River that day in June 1970."

In my opinion, Fletcher saw what he said he saw. I doubt though (for other reasons) that it was Demler disposing of the bodies.

MONDAY MORNING ARRIVES

The phone commenced ringing in the empty house of Harvey and Jeannette Crewe from as early as 6:55 am and to the frustration of Joe Moore, a stock agent for National Mortgage Association, was unanswered.

As a stock agent who knew the neighbours, Moore immediately rang Len Demler and asked if the Crewes were away. Len later told the police that as far as he knew they were at home to which Moore responded by saying that he might make a visit later that day.

Moore was true to his word and according to police records arrived between 8:45 and 9:00 am with his colleague John Dagg who knocked on the back door. He noticed the light was on in the room to the right of the back door but did not hear any movement so left.

Other reports say Moore "hammered on the front door awaiting a reply that never came" (Wishart page 27). Both men then left.

It surprises me even to this day that neither men tried the doors and it is common knowledge that the back door was not locked. Farmers in those days rarely locked doors so it would have been easy to open it and yell out "Anyone home?" Hindsight is a wonderful thing and if the timing had been a bit closer, the stock agents might have met Emmett Shirley at the gate making his rural delivery. A quick chat would have solicited the obvious signs that nobody was at home.

Police conference notes of 15 July had reported Emmett Shirley

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looking up from the mailbox and “always seeing” Mrs Crewe feeding Rochelle in the front bedroom. When he looked up on this morning (Friday) he noticed the blinds were down and no sign of the Crewes.

In returning to the events of Monday we find Ron Wright, transport foreman of Tuakau Transport Ltd trying to contact the Crewes between 12:35 and 1:00pm. He received no answers so phoned Len and asked if he would go and tell Harvey to get his sheep ready for collection.

Len acted immediately and went to find Harvey. He ‘discovered’ blood stains on the lounge carpet and as the saying goes “the rest is history.”

WAS LEN TELLING LIES?

The question that still needs answering is whether Len Demler knew what was going on and had time or the inclination to become involved during these four days of shame.

I concur with a comment found in Police conference notes of 24 June 1970 after a certain family had been interviewed, “. . . they all know the family very well. They did say that Demler was extremely callous at the time his wife was dying. He was absolutely steaming drunk at times and they detested Demler. They said he was purely and simply interested in keeping up appearances. They said he was inclined to be very mean, tried to defraud Income Tax. They hate Demler. They said that Demler contacted the Crewes every day, sometimes on business over farming, sometimes just passing. If Demler said that he wasn’t there for 3 or 4 days, he was telling lies.”

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The Aftermath

Had Demler been telling lies and why was he stalling for time during the process of reporting what he had discovered at the Crewe homestead? He certainly took his time but there was a logical reason and it had everything to do with timing. I will be putting my head on the block by quietly revealing clues to the identities of the most likely villains . . .

Meanwhile Len Demler was going to find himself in the hot seat for the next three or four months as police tried extremely hard to pin the double murder on him. Without doubt Len was everybody's prime suspect.

At least six books have been written on this subject and so far nobody has fingered who actually fired the fatal bullets nor has anyone worked out the reasons for this horrific crime.

I have some of the answers, much of it circumstantial but enough I feel that other professionals, with the resources to follow up, can provide the standard of evidence that will stand up within the legal system which I have previously mentioned is quite different to having a justice system.

There is no need to go there just yet but to keep some flow to maintaining some sense of the timeline, I need to continue to draw from what other researchers and authors have written.

Bearing in mind that the facts, as viewed by the legal system, can still be presented various ways but ultimately a fact is a fact. Finding what I believe are facts has not been without its headaches and loss of sleep. I have actually been to hell and back wrestling with the unknown and at this stage I am very reluctant to totally give up without first offering what I know and for readers to digest.

STRANGE THINGS THAT DEMLER DID

I have chosen some extracts from Ian Wishart's *The Inside Story* (from page 27) that, to me, outlines the most of the strange things Len Demler did on Monday 22 June 1970 and over the following days:

"It was just after 8 o'clock on the morning of Monday, 22 June 1970, when stock agent Joe Moore and colleague John Dagg pulled into the driveway of the Crewe farmhouse. Swinging open the front gate, they hammered on the front door awaiting a reply that never came. Dagg saw the outside light was on but didn't try the back-door. Moore had also tried the phone before he left the office, but no one picked up. If he'd peered through a window he might have seen the bloodstains, but he didn't. He might have heard baby Rochelle, but if he did it wasn't mentioned later. Instead, the two men left.

"When he got back to town Moore rang Len Demler, asking if he knew where his daughter and son-in-law had got to. Demler replied in the negative. The crusty old farmer must have been getting frustrated, however, by the time Ron Wright from Tuakau Transport Ltd called, just before 1pm that day. Wright explained he had a load of sheep he was scheduled to pick up from the Crewes, but couldn't raise them. Demler said he would go and check.

"According to police notes from 24 June, Demler found both the main gate and a smaller gate to the home's front garden shut when he arrived about 1pm. Although he didn't mention it, Demler would have walked past milk and newspapers lying uncollected at the main gate since the previous Thursday. He told police he walked to the rear of the house and found the outside light on, and the key in the back door's outside lock."

To cut a long story short, Demler entered the house and saw stains of blood on the kitchen floor and large stains of blood on the carpet in the lounge. He then says that he checked the house for any sign of Jeannette and Harvey, without success, before entering Rochelle's bedroom where he found the 18 month old in a distressed condition.

Demler's reaction was bizarre and in a supposed moment of panic he got his priorities totally mixed up. Wishart asked the obvious question of why Demler didn't first rescue his granddaughter from her cot, particularly if he thought someone might still "be lurking in the house."

Wishart continues: "The grandfather's actions in fleeing the scene, leaving a two year old alone and distressed in a bloodstained house, don't fit with what most of us think we would do in similar circumstances.

"Nor did Demler ring Tuakau Transport from the Crewes' phone. He decided to drive home, without Rochelle, and ring Ron Wright from the Demler farmstead. Adding insult to injury, Wright was out of the office when Demler called to cancel the sheep pick-up, but rather than simply leave a message and immediately return to the Crewe house, Demler chose to wait for Wright to get back and return his call."

DEMLER RETURNS TO SCENE

Len Demler didn't cease behaving oddly after returning to the scene of the crime. On his way he called on his neighbour Owen Priest to ask if he would go to the Crewe home with him to carry out a search for Jeannette and Harvey as they were missing.

It's worth repeating a Wishart paragraph with words from an earlier interview Yallop had had with Priest: "Initially when we entered the house Len kept saying, 'The bugger's killed her and done himself in. I tell you Harvey's killed her'. It began to play on my nerves after he'd come out with this two or three times. I turned to him. 'Look Len, we don't know what's happened. It could have been a third party'. He was silent after that."

This suggests murder/suicide, a theory that some others believed but the same evasive facts forced me to look deeper for the truth.

Wishart continued with the observation that Rochelle showed no sign of being starved of food or liquid for five days, a situation I was personally able to confirm from Leslee who had admitted to me in a situation of distress, some ten years after the murders, that she had fed the baby. I admit that I don't know for how long or on what days she fed Rochelle though.

And before everyone starts jumping on me for not making these comments known to the authorities, I can state here that I had already been classed as a "nutter". I do have good logical reasons and it will be through this book that the answers will be given in their proper context. However, Leslee will be viewed widely as an accomplice.

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The main thrust of my thoughts has been to find enough facts to eliminate Demler from the gristly scene or to implicate him in those five days leading up to his so-called “discovery” of the missing couple. I also learned that trust in the police wasn’t the wisest course of action either.

SIGNS THAT DEMLER WAS NOT THE KILLER

Many will ask if Demler spent the previous five days preparing for the inevitable discovery of the crime scene and baby Rochelle or was it a complete shock to him? According to Wishart, Demler had showed numerous signs of not being the killer.

He wrote this on page 42: “Whoever killed the Crewes had carefully disposed of the bodies, left absolutely no fingerprints in the entire house, burnt evidence, tried to clean up and looked after the baby—tasks all suggestive of prior planning and organisation. Why would this cool, calculated approach suddenly fall apart?

“If Demler was really the killer, surely he would have grabbed Rochelle from her cot, dishevelled and stinking, and driven straight to Owen Priest’s house saying ‘Call the police, I found blood all through the house, no sign of Jeannette and Harvey, and Rochelle alone in her cot!’

“If he’d done that, Demler would have been the hero, quashing all speculation about his bizarre actions on the day. The difference between the cool chutzpah of a killer and accomplice who hung around the scene of the crime for days (and to this date have gotten away with it)—and the bumbling panic of Demler, are too much of a sharp contrast. Demler’s actions instead made him an automatic suspect in the eyes of police and his neighbours—a magnet for attention that was so strong he was almost prosecuted. “

Wishart also wrote that Demler’s behaviour did not actually fit the psychological profile of the very careful killer he knew must have murdered the Crewes. His thought about Demler’s behaviour during police searches aroused suspicion but were explainable.

“If he truly knew where the bodies were, then he also knew police had no chance of finding them on the Crewe and Demler properties. Yet here he was, metres away from police search teams, unseen in the fog, awaiting their discoveries as keenly as Bruce Hutton was.

“It’s yet another piece of the growing jigsaw of evidence that suggests Len Demler wasn’t involved in the murder of his daughter.

His actions don't match the profile of the killer. They instead fit better with that of a grumpy old farmer with dodgy people skills, who wanted to know where his dead daughter was but didn't want to be the one to find her body, and who wanted to help police but became furious about being treated as a suspect."

PAINTED IN THE ROLE OF A VILLAIN

Then the tables were turned as Wishart explains: "All references to Demler crying as he delivered Rochelle into the care of a neighbour vanished as police instead began to paint him in the role of villain. How did Len Demler manage to rub police up the wrong way so soon after one officer said he would 'stake my reputation' on Demler's innocence?

"The best answer is probably 'personality clash', or what police refer to as 'failing the attitude test'. In the context of a murder inquiry, detectives instinctively hunt for behaviour that's out of the ordinary, that's 'suspicious'. Demler had already fallen into that pigeon-hole with the way he'd handled the discovery of Rochelle left alone, so when he started to get his 'back up' over the perfectly natural requirements for the police to investigate his movements, that was like sticking a flashing light on his head whilst holding a sign, 'Pick Me!' as far as police were concerned."

BEHAVIOUR SEEN AS SUSPICIOUS

It's interesting, as a crime reporter, says Wishart, to see how behaviour comes to be seen as 'suspicious' and directly relevant, even though it later turns out to be utterly irrelevant.

These wry comments from Wishart are exactly what makes this case so difficult to solve and sorting the wheat from the chaff is how I feel when trying to justify my comment at the beginning of this chapter asking why Len Demler was stalling for time and why timing was so important. Perhaps Len Demler knew he couldn't be proven to have killed and actually wanted to be the target to take the heat off others and his ploy worked perfectly.

HAVING ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE

But was Len really stalling for time? Were there other more serious issues troubling Len?

Having knowledge of what happened almost a year later when Len, as trustee to both wills of Maisie and Jeannette, was dealing

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with their probates that a complex situation arose that could see him lose everything he had worked for.

This situation will undoubtedly be considered a definite motive for murder. Quite frankly, having a murdered daughter would have perfectly suited his apparently devious mind but having no body would have completely fouled up his plans.

Len would not have wanted his daughter's body to disappear as that would put him into a position where he could not process her estate and deal with any of her assets. Jeannette's assets would therefore be frozen until a death certificate could be issued by a Coroner. With no body this would be years, and potentially a serious problem.

It was critically important to Len to do what he ultimately did but there are still a lot of unanswered questions to deal with before the finger can be pointed elsewhere.

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Answers Well Hidden

The reason why the bodies of Jeannette and Harvey Crewe were moved from their house created a lot of discussion, speculation and head scratching but it was during the process of establishing who might be guilty that more questions were popping up for me than answers . . .

My initial thought was “Why move the bodies?” It would be easier to leave them where they fell, then quickly put some distance between yourself and the crime scene. I imagine that’s what any self respecting criminal would have done.

I can’t understand why anyone would want to stick around. As it turned out they had five days and nights to cover their tracks before the Crewes were reported missing. They did this easily as by Friday morning a mystery woman was brazenly allowing herself to be seen and to give the impression the murders had not yet occurred.

As we all know, including the mystery woman, the murders had already taken place two days previously which meant the bodies were gone by this stage and were already in the Waikato River.

When the bodies were discovered several months later—Jeannette on 16 August 1970 and Harvey on 16 September—there were few positive clues left to work from. Apart from the partial remains of two .22 bullets there was nothing else on the bodies to indicate who pulled the trigger, so why was it necessary to go to the bother of removing the bodies especially Harvey who was 15 stone (95 kg)?

What were they trying to hide? It seems obvious that the killer realised that the lead in their heads would be traceable sooner or later to a weapon so they had two options—leave the bodies and get rid of the firearm or hide the bodies and hope they are not found.

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The killer did take a gamble that the Waikato River would not divulge any secrets and then, to make doubly sure, why not throw a firearm into the river at least 10 miles above where the bodies were put in or bury it somewhere never to be found.

To the police, the remains of the bullets were the only clues left and all they had to do was match them up with a firearm. The police spent an incredible amount of time trying to put a gun in Demler's hands and when they gave up on that theory almost succeeded in nobbling Arthur Thomas while the defence put in the same effort trying to disprove their fake logic.

If the blinkers had been taken off, there were actually plenty of other clues. Other leads needing follow-up were staring at them in the face.

OTHER POSSIBILITIES NOT FOLLOWED UP

As history has already shown, the weapon that fired the fatal shots has never been positively identified.

Every book published so far, including the extensive coverage in the Royal Commission Report, has covered the saga of the fatal bullets to the minutest detail so it is not my intention to repeat or rehash their detailed evidence but to add an avenue of thought that was never followed up although mentioned several times earlier as a possibility.

First, police records revealed that Jeannette's wound showed signs of blackening which suggested being fired at close range or as a contact wound. What is not widely known though is that Harvey had similar injuries.

As a result police seized all .22 rifles or pistols from anyone living within a five mile radius of the Crewe farm plus suspects from a wider area. Len Demler was also questioned if he owned a .22 rifle and he should have been asked also if he had a pistol.

The key word here is "pistol". In Wishart's book is this paragraph on page 66: "It's worth noting that forensic tests by the British Home Office on the Crewe bullets found a very high likelihood that the bullets were in fact fired by a pistol, not a rifle. Of 15 matches they achieved in their own weapon tests, 11 of the matching weapons were .22 handguns, only four were rifles."

Soon after I came on the scene in 1976, I learned from Leslee,



The Ladies Companion was a small .22RF (rimfire) calibre weapon—a five or six round 'barrel cluster', with a single action, spur trigger prone to misfiring and jamming. Leslee asked me to help her clean/fix the one I believe that was used to kill Jeanette and Harvey Crewe. She told me that her grandchildren should know of its interesting history. Again hinting at her motherhood.

the lady who later told me she had fed the baby, of a .22 pistol in their family, an heirloom called a "Ladies Companion." Leslee was related to families at the centre of this case. She described it to me as a very small pistol no more than five inches long with a whale bone or pearl handgrip. I'm told it also had the reputation of being the cheapest and most efficient handgun in the States to settle Mafia family disputes!

She added that it was easy to conceal but it had one or two faults. Sometimes it would misfire and I gathered from her that the breach block would jam. She asked me if I could fix it. I replied that misfiring could be caused by the age, or type of ammunition used and if an automatic it can be tricky at times if not kept clean.

She went on to tell me that, "There's a story with this pistol" and when her grandchildren are old enough it should be told. Regretfully now, I never got to hear the story or had the opportunity to check the pistol's faults, one of life's big missed opportunities it seems!.

I gathered this pistol had, in fact, been in the family for some time. Apparently the previous owner, her grandmother (long since passed on), had moved out of her old house and while it was being pulled down, the pistol was found. As close as I could determine, the pistol was handed on or kept by Alf Hodgson, a very strong clue as to who pulled the trigger.

The guts of this discovery is that the pistol had a history of being in the Chennells family or with someone who had close connections.

It has been always been a distinct possibility that the fatal bullets had come from a withheld or undiscovered weapon and certainly one that had not even been tested. The fact that the lack of distinct rifling marks made it difficult to positively match up with tested

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firearms put the investigation on the back foot.

To make matters worse the police had suppressed the report of neighbour Julie Priest hearing gunshots between 8:15 and 8:45 pm on the night of 17 June. According to David Yallop this evidence was never heard by a jury at any of the court sittings. In fact, Mrs Priest was so sure that the shots had come from the direction of the Crewe farm that she prepared to swear in any courtroom of what she heard.

It was Yallop who had actually discovered the suppression when he interviewed Mrs Priest for his book in 1977. She had explained at that time, it was a few days after Jeannette's body was discovered that she reported hearing gunshots to the police. In fairness to the police, they did carry out some tests of whether gunshots could be heard from Priest's house. The police claimed that their tests could not be heard so came to 'the conclusion' that Mrs Priest was mistaken.

Again in fairness, the Royal Commission could not verify the times given by Mrs Priest so decided to fix the time to between 8:30 pm and 11:00 pm. They also added that it could not "be said definitely whether or not those shots related to the murders."

Personally I believe what Mrs Priest recalled. Why should she come up with a time to suit other agendas? She had nothing to gain, she heard what she heard, end of discussion.

In light of how other witnesses were dealt with who didn't agree with police views, I can also understand her reluctance to fix an accurate time. It's nitpicking as common sense tells me that the time would have been closer to 8:30 than 11:00 pm.

At this stage, according to my timeline, the police were still trying hard to put a firearm into the hands of Demler so what Mrs Priest had to say was conveniently disregarded and pushed into the background as not being relevant.

LEN OUT-THOMAS IN

Around six weeks after her report, police investigators took off in a complete new direction when they gave Len up as a suspect. They said it was through insufficient evidence when in reality they had dreamed up a hare-brained case against Arthur Allan Thomas.

The idea was so half-baked that police resorted to planting a shell-case to strengthen their theory that Thomas was the killer.

It was to be around two weeks before Thomas was arrested on 11 November that the Priests again heard rifle shots from the direction of the Crewe house consequently found by the Royal Commission to have been fired by Detective Inspector Bruce Hutton and by Detective Len Johnston.

The point here is not a “whodunnit” but a “who heard it?” The police claimed they could not hear rifle shots during their tests after Mrs Priest’s original report but when their places were swapped six weeks later the Priests again heard two shots from the same distance. This begs the question whether the earlier shots, if fired inside the house, would have ever been heard?

By this time Priest’s report had been completely rubbished so again it was quite convenient for the police as her timing of shortly after 8:00pm would not have suited their agenda of wanting the murder to happen after TV had closed down at 11:00pm.

The truth of the matter was that the police could hardly admit to an earlier time as it would have given Thomas an alibi. Remember, they were in the process of setting up Arthur Thomas with a planted shell-case and it was far too late to turn back. Their ploy did shamefully backfire (pardon the pun) when the Royal Commission presented its findings in 1980 and found the shell-case had, in fact, been planted.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

If the police did make as many errors as found by others and did suppress so much evidence I am surely allowed to make some observations of what I think could have happened I am also convinced Leslee was the mystery lady seen by others on Friday and Saturday.

There were at least two others at the crime scene, both men, one of whom was the killer and the other was Len who helped to clean up to put in place events that would not only protect his interests but would, in the short term, keep the identity of the killer secret.

At this crucial stage, Len would not have wanted Jeannette’s body hidden forever, particularly weighted down in a river, as it was essential to minimize her estate before finalising Maisie’s probate. In other words I think he had to bend some rules and switch the order of the one who died first and make her second priority.

These events will become clear as the legal paperwork was being

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done but right now I want to put my beliefs forward as to what I think really happened on the Wednesday evening of 17 June 1970.

To me it is perfectly logical that Jeannette and Harvey had agreed to listen to the concerns of a blood-related couple who did not want the Crewes to call in all debt related to the Chennells Estate without first allowing them some latitude to make other arrangements.

One of them, a neighbour I believe, had torched Crewe's hay barn previously as a final warning that they weren't going to tolerate the tough actions being taken against them. It had been tit for tat for a number of years as Maisie's health deteriorated and it had now come to a head as Jeannette was steadfastly applying her mother's wishes.

Len was also mixed up in Maisie's hard-nosed business dealings and to be fair to him, I do not believe he pulled the trigger. I do believe that Jeannette had invited her father for a meal prior to their visitors arriving so that he could mediate if events got out of hand.

Len may have left before the visitors arrived then missed the action when the discussion became heated or when tempers were on the verge of exploding. Who knows?

On the other extreme, the temperature of the evening was quite the opposite. It was cold and windy, the windows were closed, the fire was roaring and at one stage Harvey excused himself to get another load of firewood. It's quite plausible that the one who had borrowed the pistol from the lady's purse or the woman who had the pistol met Harvey at the gate, opened it for him and as he came through with both hands on the wheelbarrow, shot him point blank through the head.

The oilskin Harvey was likely wearing would have taken most of the gunpowder burns and while Mrs Priest heard two shots close together, one of them may have missed their target as only a few fragments were found in his skull, but the second shot is impossible to explain in retrospect without evidence.

These shots would have been heard from within the house and when Jeannette jumped up to see what was wrong she was grabbed and firmly held by the accomplice(s) which would explain the bruise found under her left arm.

Within moments the killer would have arrived from outside to deal with Jeannette, firing the third shot heard by Mrs Priest.

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The Murder Scenes

Detailed information covering the various murder scenes is readily available from other sources with resulting evidence being quite compelling as to what actually happened. From my point of view after studying police photographs, promising and vital evidence was overlooked as it didn't necessarily fit the police agenda . . .

First, and of particular interest to me, was the lack of scrutiny involving the wheelbarrow, an old oilskin (or parka) and the tendril bush by the gate near the back door.

To set the scene I am using the following extract from the 1980 report of the Royal Commission which officially outlined the situation at the time. This is what paragraph 428 said: "When the Police commenced their inquiries into the Crewe murders they took a substantial number of photographs of the scene as they first found it. Several of these photographs show some cloth or material with ragged edges lying on the grass alongside a wheelbarrow near the back door of the house. The Police considered the wheelbarrow was used by the murderer, for flakes of rust from it were found by the front door adjacent to some blood stains. Also, it gave the appearance of having been washed."

The Commission goes on to say that the ragged material was examined visually by police but they saw nothing that obviously connected it with the murders so literally ignored its significance. Added to that they said the material never became an exhibit or was tested in any way.

My immediate response in reading this was still one of disbelief even though I had previously had the same feeling that a lot of so-

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called evidence would eventually end up somehow as actual facts.

The most disappointing feature was the lack of any reference to these items on the police file which meant nobody was aware of its existence. The Commission also considered the police had a duty to advise the Defence of its ultimate fate and to give them the opportunity of finding witnesses who could give evidence about parka. But they didn't!

IMPORTANT EVIDENCE

The photo taken by the police of the house is showing the two items just mentioned. The wheelbarrow by the back door steps also shows what looks like a coat. The police said it was an oilskin while another says it was a cow cover. I don't know personally what it was but for the ease of description I'm going to refer to it as a parka (a large windproof jacket with a hood).

It was very tattered whatever it was but the thought did go through my mind that the parka could easily end up being a red herring. Its use could have simply been a cover to keep the firewood dry on its way to the home fireplace and had nothing to do with the murders.

Perhaps though, it wasn't a red herring. Perhaps it held important



The Crewe house showing the path out the back door (centre-left) through the side gate where Harvey Crewe was shot and then out to the firewood shed. Harvey's body was taken by wheelbarrow from the left gate to the front door via the path in front of the chimney.



The wheelbarrow and parka as recorded by police on Monday 22 June 1970. It was later found that the material was allegedly completely burnt from a cigarette butt, an explanation that the Commission even found difficult to believe. Strange don't you think? In police hands one minute then destroyed the next and right at the start of the inquiry. To me this important evidence was obviously destroyed, either through deliberate action or by the police not taking enough care to preserve what could have been vital evidence.



clues. Nobody will ever know as early on in the investigation the parka had mysteriously disappeared. Why? Did somebody realise on closer inspection it would point the finger so it had to disappear? It would have been incredibly risky to smuggle it away from the scene. One has a tendency to believe the police explanation that it was accidentally burnt by a policeman casually throwing away his cigarette butt or maybe its demise could have been quite the opposite—deliberate.

The Commission were told that the parka was “completely consumed, leaving only charred grass behind it.” Because of dampness they did not believe that unaided a cigarette butt could have caused a fire which “completely consumed the material including a long ragged tendril lying out to one side on its own.”

From other evidence they, the Commission, believed that some

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person with an interest in the material returned to the scene and was responsible for its destruction or removal.

I was also told that other parts of the tendril bush (apart from the long ragged piece) had signs of being burnt. The smouldering or burning parka could have been picked up from the lawn and thrown in the bush where it burnt out. On the other hand, there could have been blood in the tendril bush that also needed destroying.

The opportunity to dig a little deeper for clues was regrettably lost. Sadly, to the police, it didn't require further investigation or even worth recording

Think about it, if there were any disturbances left on the ground, the rain would have since washed most of it away especially blood and other particles of interest. Also flattened grass, boot marks, any damage to shrubs made by the wheelbarrow, or from a falling body, would have been lost. Rub marks would have weathered, cobwebs replaced and the smell of something unnatural would have disappeared in the wind.

To the hunter all these things are recognised from experience. The sight and scent of an area that is five days old and through nature, can and will hide many secrets.

IT DOES DEFY BELIEF

So, who was this mystery person? Who 'fixed' things? One name comes immediately to mind (Len) and another is close behind—the murderer! This person has a familiar face, lives in the area and would not raise too much suspicion by wandering around the site.

I have been struggling for over four decades to join up enough dots to hang the offender(s) and while I'm close to blurting out what I believe to be the truth, I was heartened by comments made by Mr Justice Henry during an interview with David Yallop for his 1978 book *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* (page 192). Here's what he said:

"It was to my mind a local murder. No stranger could have gone on to that farm, committed a double murder and carried out the various acts that were unquestionably carried out. How all that was achieved by the murderer I will never know. No one saw or heard anything. It defies belief.

"It was truly extraordinary that there was no forensic evidence to link Thomas to the murders. No prints, no hair, no blood. They

usually leave some trace somewhere. But in this case not a single thing anywhere. No clothing of Thomas destroyed, and who ever did it must have been covered in blood at some stage. It defies belief.”

Mr Justice Henry had echoed the same thoughts I have been harbouring for decades and while he has used the name of Arthur Thomas, it could easily apply to anyone local, somebody not even suspected. We all now know that Thomas was not the murderer so obviously the perpetrator’s name(s) is/are still out there!

I have always believed locals were donkey deep in this double tragedy, that’s why I have relentlessly pursued the angles covered so far in this book and I’m not finished yet. There are more surprises to come, many of which have come from clues given by the public but not followed up by the police as shamefully it didn’t fit their Demler or Thomas agendas.

DEMLER’S BIG MISTAKE

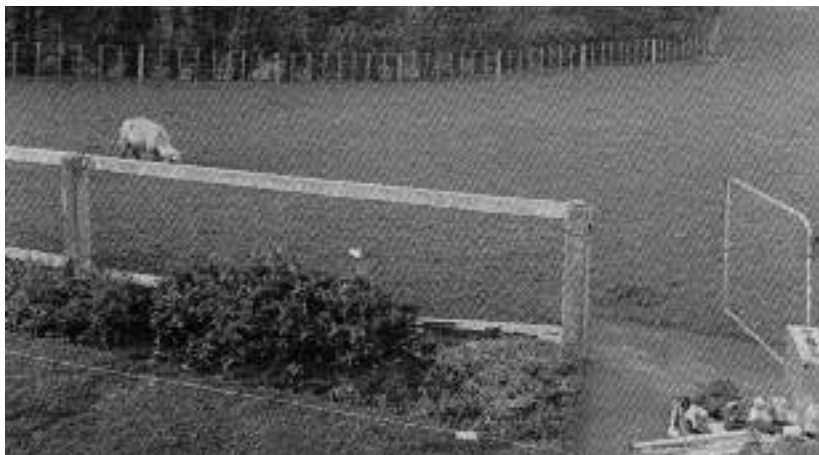
The other name belongs of course to Len Demler, the man police wanted desperately to nail for the crime. I keep saying that Len was most certainly implicated, in fact, he had no alibi for the days following and to me was a logical suspect. He now seemed to take it upon himself to cover butts by tidying up the loose ends.

I had some of my suspicions confirmed when Len unconsciously stated at the first trial of Arthur Thomas that he identified the recovered body of Harvey Crewe with these words: “I couldn’t recognise any of the clothing, but the gumboots were the type he wore.”

Without realising it Len said Harvey was wearing gumboots when in fact police had described him as wearing socks (no gumboots) plus a blue knitted pullover, trousers, a singlet, underpants and a green checked shirt.

Demler later retracted the gumboot statement and changed it to “hand-knitted socks”. Everyone seemed to believe it was a genuine mistake, that is, apart from myself and probably a few others who saw this as another of Len’s verbal blunders.

To me it wasn’t just a slip of the tongue as Len was simply recalling where he had last seen Harvey’s feet. The vision in his mind was fixed on his gumbooted feet protruding from the tendril



This photo was used by police to show where the planted cartridge case was found but my purpose is to support my theory that Harvey Crewe was killed while passing through this gateway with a wheelbarrow load of firewood. The killer held the gate open for him then shot him through the head with a pistol. He fell into the garden by the tendril bush and broke the bottom railing. When Len Demler saw him by torchlight only his gumboots were protruding.

bush beside the side gate (pictured above).

This is where I believe Harvey was shot and in making this bold statement yet again I want to back this up by putting forward another possible solution to the puzzle, a notion I have always believed in, as to how Harvey Crewe died and where.

It all started many years ago when, in conversation with others on the subject, someone confidently said, “Oh! Harvey wasn’t shot in the house anyhow.” I thought that was a strange comment as that person had later lived in the same house but in considering his status in the community I figured his unsolicited remark was worth following up.

This clue had initially given me a completely different line of thought and since several decades have now passed I am reminded that nobody has really worked out what actually went on in the Crewe lounge. From information that I have already revealed or hinted at in this book it would be timely to bring my thoughts up to date by using some country logic and common sense.

SETTING THE SCENE

I have earlier spoken about a number of unhappy people who

had borrowed finance from the Chennells Estate and leading up to the death of Maisie Demler, their debts were being called in. Events were literally starting to heat up.

Readers will recall a series of mysterious fires and other mischief against the Crewes that resulted in Maisie's grouch of "what are they going to do next?" The key word here was "they" and from the few personal items stolen indicated a woman was involved.

Added to this was a fire that was started in Rochelle's bedroom suggesting someone who had knowledge of family movements was brazen enough to enter the home in broad daylight, strike some matches then escape without being seen.

I have narrowed this down to the local couple who duly arrived at the Crewe home for serious discussion. The pair had known Len and Maisie Demler from earlier dealings and along with the Crewes had visited their respective homes more than once. They were likely related and there was probably more than two of them.

They were expected on this Wednesday evening in June 1970 so there was no need for any stealth, surprise entrances nor even being someone who had a reason to shoot at them through their louvre window.

On this occasion though, and because of Jeannette faithfully carrying out her mother's wishes, the Crewes would have felt some trepidation or even apprehension in facing their opponents. The subject under discussion was going to be rather touchy and needed to be diplomatically dealt with in a tactful but forceful way without being self-defeating. I don't think that the Crewes would ever have imagined though, that their lives were in danger.

MEANS OF ARRIVAL

I could pad this out by trying to speculate on the drama as it unfolded but almost like everybody else I wasn't there. I now believe there were at least three or four people present, and probably some of them over the next days and through the weekend, including Len.

Readers who have read all the reports will no doubt jump on me as there is no absolute proof that so many people were present. The deductions have been that only three people including the Crewes were present as the dining table had food for three but only two had eaten. When the police arrived on Monday it appeared only three

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seats had been used to watch TV.

Regardless of numbers, their means of arrival has also puzzled me as there were no reports of a vehicle parked in the Crewe driveway on that fateful evening although there was a lot of passing traffic from other functions plus reports of several cars seen parked further down the road. As part of their investigation the police did compile a list of all the cars that were seen in the district but chose to keep this information mainly to themselves.

It could be a totally different story if Len Demler was initially involved. He could have easily been the third person with the meal being intended for him but the distraught couple arrived either with Len or shortly after.

The visitors could have left their vehicle at his house then entered by the back way as Len had a common boundary with the Crewes. It is local knowledge that Len has, at times, advised others not to go by road from his place but to go by foot through the bush as it is “not so conspicuous”.

The question is, “Did Len go as far as escorting the couple? If he did then Len has put himself deeper into the mire and if that’s true he was hardly going to tell the truth when questioned which means it will now be impossible to prove.”

Just how events actually unfolded will probably never be known but the situation must have eventually built up to such an explosive point where it basically ended up where, dare I say it, a likely “do or die” ultimatum had to be given to settle the dispute.

THE WEAPON USED

Someone obviously “lost it” bad enough to commit a double murder but one has to ask where the weapon suddenly appeared from?

If it was premeditated then an easily concealed pistol would halt everyone in their tracks or if Demler was present, he would have left the .22 rifle (the one police couldn’t prove that he owned), at the back door just in case it was needed. On the other hand, the murderer could have left his rifle at the same spot.

A rifle would have been difficult to conceal on one’s person so another alternative for the killer was to use one of Harvey’s firearms. He was known to have a shotgun, clearly shown in a police photo

resting on coat hooks next to the fridge in the laundry. He was also believed to own a .22 rifle but no trace of it could be found. The police must have known whether it existed or not.

Demler was questioned heavily in court whether Harvey actually owned a .22 rifle. His answer was consistently “not to my knowledge” which doesn’t mean yes or even no. This .22 has never been found nor, in fact, has any murder weapon been positively identified. Both could still be hiding undiscovered somewhere in the Waikato River or buried out of sight. It’s reasonably unlikely that the murderer would retain the murder weapon after disposing of the bodies.

My belief is that all the above is not relevant if a pistol was used.

NO SIGNS OF GUNFIRE

Remember, official records claim that Harvey had been shot in his chair, the bullet travelling from left to right with an exit discharge very close to the door jam or wall yet no blood discharge or bullet fragments were found in that location, at head height or elsewhere in the house.

The police had also completely stripped Harvey’s chair and failed to find any trace of a bullet in the material or structure of the chair.

As I’ve mentioned a couple of times previously, the probable reason for this is that Harvey was not shot inside.

The police tried exceptionally hard to claim that Harvey was shot through the louvre window while dozing in his chair. We now know this to be a fallacy and extremely unlikely.

Again, my opinion for what it’s worth, is that an unknown person was holding the gate open for someone with a load of firewood on a wheelbarrow to come through and with his hands occupied (and head down pushing the barrow), and with no side vision because of the parka, the man was vulnerable and defenceless.

Harvey was caught totally unaware and with a pistol shot behind and slightly above the left ear, his body hit the inside of the fence and landed between the tendril bush breaking or dislodging the bottom rail. This would have left his gumboots protruding to be seen later by Len in torchlight.

Both the wheelbarrow and parka may have revealed more clues

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particularly if the parka hood had been closely examined especially within the area behind the ear. A little hole in the fabric may have revealed the truth or told a completely different story. Unfortunately we will never know.

PATTERN OF SILENCE

In this case, from day one to the last day, there has been a line of events I am calling a pattern. And yet there are people out there more qualified than myself on the subject who for some reason have kept a still tongue in their head. Maybe we should call it the pattern of silence. Much more on this later.

After dealing with Harvey the killer left him where he fell then hurriedly came from outside through the back door past his accomplice(s) and confronted Jeannette in the lounge where she had tried to defend herself, hence the smash in the face that knocked her senseless to the floor where she was eventually shot.

I'm aware that a pistol, my weapon of choice, would hardly cause the serious damage Jeannette received but a heavy piece of wood from the wheelbarrow could have been a handy alternative then destroyed in the fireplace later along with other incriminating evidence.

There is also circumstantial evidence of a fight that involved Leslee too.

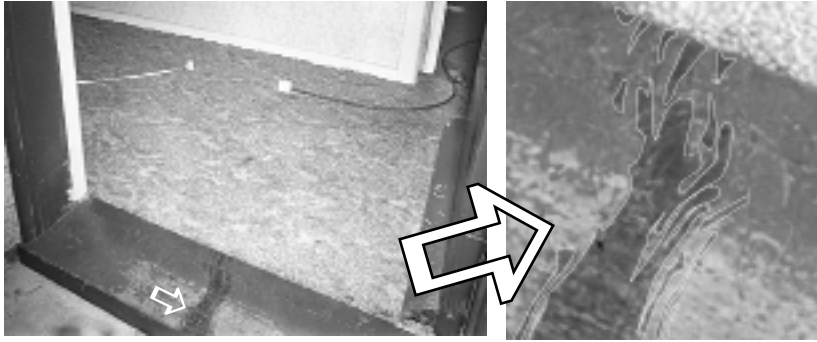
DRAG MARKS ARE REVEALING

It is soon realised that Harvey's body was still lying outside and it being too risky to wrap him up in bed material where he fell, it was decided to bring him inside where it was safer. Both bodies could then be dealt with behind closed doors.

It is agreed Harvey Crewe was in the armchair for a period of time after death. But this does not mean that he was in the chair at the moment he was shot.

Harvey would have been bundled into the wheelbarrow after being taken to the front door. Drag marks shown in police photographs are detailed enough to show the direction of pull. It is perfectly clear that this was an outside to inside dragging! Harvey was killed OUTSIDE and dragged in, just as the later occupier of this house had told me, personally.

Again the rust found on the porch from the wheelbarrow



Police photo of the front doorstep showing drag-marks in blood (left photo, bottom centre). Enlargement (right photo) clearly shows the direction of dragging from left to right (outside to inside) before the blood had dried. This was probably only minutes after the two murders due to the volume of blood and bodily fluids on the inside chair. Drying times would have been retarded with lower winter temperatures and increased humidity with the inclement weather.

indicated pulling of a body out of the wheelbarrow at the front door, not the reverse. Rust dropped as a result of pulling Harvey's body OUT of the wheelbarrow, not while putting it IN!

The view showing the broken apart TV lead also to my mind indicates an outside to inside pull. If Harvey's body was being dragged out, the lead would be in a different position. In actual fact, like the position of the furniture after five days of activity, nothing was probably in its original position after the shots were fired.

I have never claimed to know all the facts and what I am saying may mean something to those with an open mind. However, the experts will maintain the direction of pull was solely from inside to outside and that the crime was committed by a single person which basically means that Len Demler fitted the MO perfectly as "the local" with the most to gain.

Details given in Keith Hunter's book *The Case of the Missing Bloodstain* is essential reading to bring balance to my comments and it is quite easy to agree with his logic and conclusions. I am willing to rest my case but the fact remains that the Crewes are now dead and a decision had to be made to dispose of their bodies.

SHIFTING THE BODIES

As I said, the reason for removing the bodies has been another area that has tested my grey matter and the only way I found to

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connect up some of the dots was to believe what Leslee said to me later in our relationship about how she hated woolsheds.

The police couldn't discover what means were used to remove the bodies nor could they establish when the weights were tied to their bodies or where on the Waikato River they were dumped.

I have my own ideas on how this happened but at the end of the day it is only speculation and quite devoid of hard fact. I shall call it another point of view or if I'm honest, frustrated opinion!

After the bodies had been wrapped in bedding and not necessarily bound with wire at this stage, the wheelbarrow was, in the first instance, supposedly used to cart the bodies from the front door to some means of transport ready for disposal in the river.

Although a short piece of wire was found at the front gate, it does not mean the wire was readily available unless the murderer came prepared. If he did it was premeditated although he could have nipped across the road say, to his own property, picked up a suitable weight and pieces of wire to keep the bedding in place.

Remember, the police were unable to find any evidence on



This view of the Crewe house and woolshed is misleading as the photography has foreshortened the view. A better perspective can be seen in the next photo. Note the large number of people (centre), incredibly, walking over an important crime scene exactly where I am sure that the victims were dealt with in preparation for taking to the Waikato river beside sections 67 & 68 for dumping!

Demler's farm so like everyone else, I'm guessing which practically means I'm either way off beam or getting close to the truth.

There was another farm, Alf Hodgson's, where I went with Leslee, which had an old car body from which a car axle and wire could easily have come from.

HORSES OR CAR AND TRAILER?

If Demler was the culprit then most believe he used horses for transport resulting in being seen by Sandy Fletcher apparently "dumping rubbish" in the Waikato River a day or so before the Crewes were reported missing. Despite pressure from the public the police were not interested in this sighting as it had, I believe, the potential to jeopardise their case against Arthur Thomas.

The police had ideas that Demler shifted the bodies in his car as they found a bloodstain of Jeannette's blood type on the front seat of his car but this line of thought was reluctantly dismissed.

What did the other suspect, Arthur Thomas, use for transport? The truth is he didn't. His vehicle showed no signs of blood or even being in the neighbourhood. I imagine if he did commit the crime then he would have left the bodies where they were and dumped the rifle. It's all academic as Thomas was later pardoned.

USE OF THE WHEELBARROW

The police did figure that a motorcar and trailer was used to access the river but had no idea who it could have belonged to. There were no leads whatsoever to give them a clue although they did consider it could have been someone yet to appear on their radar. It's a pity they didn't follow up this as a real possibility.

The wheelbarrow was the top of my list for the first stage of transporting. My reasoning is that the wheelbarrow was used to manhandle the two bodies from the house with minimum delay to somewhere much safer from prying eyes. To my mind that location was the nearby woolshed.

It would be risky for a vehicle being loaded with two bodies to be parked near the house as a passer-by could hardly fail to notice the activity. At first, and regardless of the risk, this seems to be the most practical means of removal until other options are considered.

I've analysed the lay of the land at the Crewe property and in



Access from the road to the house and also to the woolshed by vehicle or wheelbarrow is easy to identify in this aerial view. It would be risky for a vehicle being loaded with two bodies to be parked near the house as a passer-by could hardly fail to notice it. The car shed, just visible behind the trees where the four cars are parked, offers better security but is closer to the road. The best option would be to use the wheelbarrow by exiting from the front door (centre left of house), around past the back door, along the ridge to the woolshed where, after two trips, a local farm truck was waiting to transfer both bodies to the Waikato River.

person more than once. Beyond the house there is no vision from the road because of the rise it is built on. On the right towards the woolshed one's vision is obscured again because of fences and the contour of the land. A line of trees by the car shed makes it impossible to see this area properly. To conceal one's activities the woolshed access would seem the best.

The woolshed would have been an ideal place to properly prepare the bodies for their journey to a watery grave. In fact, an unpublicised sighting discovered in Police Conference notes of 26 June 1970 confirms activity at the woolshed. Detective Bruce Parkes reported that he had seen "a Mrs Margaret Hunter, who is not a good witness" who had said she had seen lights on at the Crewe woolshed about 9:00pm on Wednesday night as she was passing the farm.

This seemingly insignificant snippet of information fully justifies my logic that the woolshed was being used for some obviously mysterious reason. The time frame of 9:00pm indicates the Crewes were already dead and when the dots are joined up with the

unanswered phone call at 7:00pm and with the shots heard by Mrs Priest around 8:00pm, it does not take a rocket scientist to add two and two and come up with the right answer. I hate to think what other pieces of evidence were not disclosed by police.

WAS IT AN AFTERTHOUGHT?

Weighting the bodies could have been an afterthought as there was no evidence anywhere at the house to show where this work was actually done. It is quite feasible that the murderers had not come prepared with weights or wire but fortunately had the use of a truck to pick up these items possibly from their own farm or alternatively they could have picked up the old axle on their way to the river that had been dumped by car enthusiasts on the roadside near the Eyre farm.

Quite frankly I could believe that both bodies were not weighted. Some say Harvey was a “floater” and while Jeannette was definitely recovered without a weight and downstream from the Crewe sections, there was some doubt that the axle found under Harvey’s body was actually attached. Some sources have said that two axles were believed to be recovered from the river but no details were given by police for the other as to its location.

I shudder AGAIN to think what else could have been manipulated by the police to fit their agenda. I stand to be corrected on all this though.

FRUSTRATIONS WITH SHAKY INFORMATION

My approach has been to keep an open mind during the process of endeavouring to find facts and while battling the many frustrations, I have been forced to take educated guesses from the information I have gathered at times.

I do have the added advantage of having had a relationship with Leslee and it is from her snippets of information and from odd bits of disjointed history of her early family life that I have learned the truth. I feel it is now time to mention that I have not managed to connect up some dots properly.

On one occasion, in September 1976 not long after I met her, we were heading down country from Whangarei to Henderson then through Wiri and soon on to metal roads that became quite rough. We were going through country I had never seen before.

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Leslee was talking about her past life as a teenager on a farm with her cousins in the area we were travelling through. We went past a house built of brick standing on a rise on the left and she muttered something about it from which I gathered things would never be the same with her cousins again.

At the time I had no idea that it was the former Crewe home and she was talking, without being specific, about the tragedy that had happened some six years previously.

I asked her where we were going and she replied to her Uncle Alf Hudson's old place. I couldn't hear her properly (the metal on the road was pounding the car) and asked if she said Hudson or Hodgson. Her reply was that it didn't matter, "He may call himself that but really he is my grandfather's half brother."

Many years later I also recalled Alf's name being mentioned back in 1958 in Demler's hay paddock while visiting as a teenager with my stock broker grandfather. It did not mean anything special to me back then.

Now back to Leslee. We continued past the Crewe house and turned right down a side road to a house surrounded by old pine trees. In a clearing was an old lean-to cottage that had at one time been painted white with light blue facings.

We pulled up and I asked Leslee why we were there. She simply replied, "To pick up a few things." She found the key and I had to open the door. At this time I was busting to go to the toilet so I moved down the steps, quite high, to the corner of the house where I could see a long-drop on an angle, suggesting it hadn't been used for years.

SIGHTING OF AN OLD CAR

I finished my business and noticed the remains of an old car, maybe 1930s, laying in the grass close by. Why am I mentioning all this? Without realising it, I was probably looking at the source of the old axle that could have been attached to Harvey.

I returned many years later and it took me several attempts to locate where the old house once stood but I was too late as there was no sign that anything ever existed, particularly the remains of an old car. But, like Sandy Fletcher (the man who saw Demler at the riverbank), I know what I had earlier seen.

Quite a few decades later I discovered Rose Amy Hodgson's name on the Certificate of Title for this property and it was then that I made some sense of many comments made by Leslee on this trip that I didn't fully understand at the time. This would have been Section 3C4.

I had the feeling that Leslee wasn't quite herself after passing the brick house and during further conversation she mentioned an uncle who used to take her sister or cousin to a farm sometimes. They would come down by train to Tuakau where they were picked up and transported by an old truck he owned to his farm.

With the knowledge of photos I had seen in Te Kuiti during the winter of 1977 showing two men standing by an old truck with other farm scenes showing four or five young girls aged from eight to 15 sitting on the truck deck, led me to believe these photos were taken at Opuatia during the mid 1950s or early 1960s. It was summer time as the girls were wearing flower patterned dresses.

I could not positively identify the surroundings but feel it was one of two farms, either the Crewe property or another close by. These photos later 'disappeared' after I had mentioned them to Leslee.

The truck I saw in the photos was either a Dodge or International with a flat wooden deck. I thought maybe a one ton or 30 cwt.

In returning to the weekend of 21 June 1970 (the day before Demler had found the Crewes to be missing), a vehicle was reported near the woolshed. In an earlier chapter I had mentioned that Pat Booth had commented in his book *Trial by Ambush* of a brown International truck seen close to the Crewe woolshed on the Sunday.

Things were starting to make more sense but I can't explain why it was there on the Sunday and not two or three days earlier when it was thought the bodies were moved to the Waikato River.

Most men of the land can move with little or no sound should the need arise. The truck I am loosely describing belonged in the area and was often seen around the neighbourhood and is the classic example of being regularly seen but not actually noticed.

A daylight inspection would remove all trace of anything amiss. Perhaps the perpetrators were still tidying up loose ends just in case something had been overlooked in the woolshed? For all one



Locations where the bodies of Jeannette and Harvey were found in relation to Frost and Aitken Roads, and Sections 67 & 68 (circled), an 80 acre block that has never been mentioned by police or media at any time during this saga. I wonder why?

knows, a wrong date may have been quoted.

WAS IT A SPOOKY COINCIDENCE?

I can disclose at this stage that the farm where this truck resided has connections with the Chennells Estate and for a period they were leasing Sections 67 & 68, land that Jeannette Crewe had a mortgage on just prior to her death. This land was located on Frost Road adjacent to the banks of the Waikato River. This section of the river, by a ‘spooky coincidence’, was where the bodies of Jeannette and Harvey were later found. This was the site where at least one of the bodies was disposed of.

For a long long time I was convinced that the mystery truck had transported the bodies to this area as it was a vehicle commonly seen down this road. Who would question it being there?

Without trying to shift the facts to suit my theories, I had to carefully study the positions of where the bodies were found and work out how they arrived there. Admittedly only one body was allegedly weighted and may have not moved far but what were the odds of both bodies being on the same side of the river, the northern side that was deemed “no man’s land” with no access.

It was quite difficult to work out how Harvey ended up more or less opposite the point of entry of Aitken Rd, on a section of river that was quite wide. We also know about the axle that was supposedly

found under Harvey's body and of its many points of origin. The only value this axle has to me is its nomination of the body's location and to believe the direction the body came from.

Added into this mix is the tidal nature of the river and when in high flood or high water there is a backwash that reaches in force many kilometres upstream. And what was the riverbed like? Was it metal, sand, mud or full of obstructions? I've dived this river for hours during my research.

Harvey apparently showed no signs of dragging or mutilation and the wire attached to the axle was so flimsy that it supposedly broke during recovery. He didn't move far.

Another nagging thought is why go umpteen miles out of your way to hide bodies in a place one is not familiar with. Sure, the killer wants to hide the bodies as far as possible from the event, it's human nature but as animal instinct shows, a dog never buries its bone in the opposition's section.

I may say all these terrible things because there is nobody I can refer to that has a genuine and truthful reply. Only the killer(s).

BACK TO THE WOOLSHED

The woolshed still held some secrets, especially after a heart-felt and bizarre comment from Leslee that finally convinced me that she knew more than she was willing to openly admit.

At the beginning of this book I spoke briefly about the lady who fell on the floor and in a moment of distress, offered the stunning news that she had fed the baby. I then asked her what she was doing there and she answered that she was cleaning up. My next question to Leslee asked where the others were.

I was never quite sure whether I heard her answer correctly. I think she said "the woolshed" but it was not until I recalled that strange reaction she had made three or four years beforehand (1977) that I realised that she had definitely said, "Woolshed."

It was shearing season on this occasion and while I was meeting a sawmilling contract in the King Country I asked her to accompany me to a woolshed. She wouldn't budge from the car no matter what techniques of gentle persuasion I used. She finally blurted out in her defence that the filth and smell of such places made her violently ill.

It was an unusual but plausible explanation which I readily

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accepted and on reflection many years later it did confirm that whatever took place in the Crewe's woolshed must have left her emotionally strained and while she had been moody with me at times she obviously managed to hide most of those stressful memories. I never had the courage to press her for more detail and it was never mentioned again.

Likewise, her later admission of having fed the baby certainly warranted more discussion but it was not the time or place as we were in the middle of a domestic that eventually led to the parting of our ways. This was the turning point in our relationship and while I saw very little of her after that, it did have repercussions.

Admittedly I had a number of regrets but I soon learned that Leslee was leading more than a double life which was to cause me more strife as I continued to untangle the web of deceit—the code of silence. I had undoubtedly touched on the nerves of those who made it possible for the crime to remain a mystery!

28

Len's Master Plan

In hindsight, and in general, one can now see the larger side of the pattern in the fight for control of the estates. From the hidden agendas of the shareholders to those looking after the welfare of Rochelle, came a battle of minds and ultimately cunning moves that had winners and losers . . .

Sometimes in research, chance would be a fine thing but apparently not in this case. The rules did change and what was lost only came to the surface in return to many unanswered questions.

Why did Jeannette Crewe's will and probate and the dividing of her mother's estate become a tangle? The timing of how each step was processed was crucially important or to be perfectly blunt, it hinged solely on making sure delays happened at the right time.

I strongly suspect these delays were well planned and were mainly in place before the murders!

Little did the public know that within the ranks of trustees and shareholders of vested interest, a rather sticky problem had to be carefully overcome.

The wills and conditions of both Maisie Demler and Jeannette Crewe were known but the million dollar question remained.

How were the listing of all the effects and property from both estates going to be presented to the probate of court and more importantly who was going to gain the most?

We know that Maisie Demler died of a brain tumour on 26 February 1970 and from Police evidence, the Crewes were last seen alive on Wednesday 17 June of the same year but it was not until

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two months later, on 16 August, that Jeannette's body was found in the Waikato River.

MARIE CREWE TAKES ACTION

Prior to this Len Demler had found bloodstains in the Crewe homestead (Monday 22 June 1970) and Harvey's mother, Marie Lal Crewe, feared for the worse and was already taking action.

Her mind was obviously, and quite rightly, centred on the well-

3. IN THE EVENT of my said husband failing to survive me as aforesaid then I APPOINT my father LEONARD WILLIAM DEMLER and my mother MAY CONSTANCE DEMLER (hereinafter called "my trustees") which expression shall include the survivor of them or other the trustee or trustees of this my will howsoever appointed) .. to be executors and trustees of this my will and I GIVE DEVISE BEQUEATH AND ... APPOINT all my said estate to my trustees UPON TRUST for my children and if more than one then in equal shares for their own use absolutely upon their attaining the age of Twenty-one (21) years. AND IN THE EVENT of no such child of mine attaining a vested interest hereunder then UPON TRUST for the said ... LEONARD WILLIAM DEMLER and MAY CONSTANCE DEMLER or the survivor of them in ... equal shares for their own use absolutely.

3. IN THE EVENT of my said wife failing to survive me as aforesaid then I APPOINT COLIN HARVEY of Mangakino Farmer (hereinafter called "my trustee") to be the sole executor and trustee of this my will AND I GIVE ... DEVISE BEQUEATH AND APPOINT all my said estate to my Trustees UPON TRUST .. for my children and if more than one then in equal shares for their own... use absolutely upon their attaining the age of Twenty-one (21) years PROVIDED HOWEVER that if I should die leaving no children as surviving or if no such surviving children shall attain a vested interest hereunder ... then I DIRECT my Trustees to hold my said estate UPON THE FURTHER FOLLOWING TRUSTS:-

(a) AS to the sum of FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$5000.0.0) (the dollar equivalent being \$10,000) to pay the same to my mother MARIE LAL CREWE for her own use absolutely.

(2) AS to the residue of my estate to pay the same equally to ... LEONARD WILLIAM DEMLER and MAY CONSTANCE DEMLER or the survivor of them for their own use absolutely.

The wording in Clause 3 for the 1967 wills of Jeannette (top) and Harvey were identical except for the names of the trustees. Both had made provision for their daughter Rochelle upon reaching the age of 21 in 1989 but no record has been found on whether Rochelle actually received any inheritance from the estates of her parents. There is also doubt that she collected the \$2000 from the will of Maisie Demler (her grandmother).

being of her granddaughter Rochelle.

The wills, both dated 29/8/1967, of Jeannette and Harvey (below) were identical in stating that their estates be held “upon trust” for Rochelle until she reached the age of 21 years to which Marie was determined to see fulfilled.

I believe Marie was mindful of the previous four years of threats and torments to Harvey and Jeannette so to even the score, dug her toes in.

David Yallop, in his book *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* (page 39) observed that the history of both the Crewe and Demler families were “marked by squabbles and infighting about property and money, people cut out of wills, people contesting wills” so I was not surprised with Marie’s reaction.

Both families wanted custody of Rochelle and in the words of Yallop, Heather Demler wanted to take Rochelle to America and Marie Crewe wanted Rochelle to remain with the Crewe family.

TAKING A STAND FOR ROCHELLE

The “problems” elevated tenfold four days after Jeannette’s body was recovered with evidence of not only a bullet to the brain but also an obvious assault bordering on brutality. I don’t for one minute accept the Police conclusion that Jeannette’s six missing front teeth came out of her jaw after being wrapped the submerged for a few months in water! And the other bone injuries?

I don’t hazard a guess of the thoughts of Marie at the time or of making a stand with the caveat she filed with the Hamilton Supreme Court, dated 20 August 1970, demanding that nothing could be put before probate on both wills without prior knowledge or examination by Marie Crewe.

With one stroke of the pen Marie had crippled the trustees of both wills and to a lesser extent, the shareholders.

In the short term Marie was successful and Rochelle went to live with members of her family but after nine months the bitter toll of the legal system inflicted upon Marie Lal Crewe became very apparent.

During this period, trustee Len Demler and his daughter Heather, had filed through the court for custody of Rochelle and rightly or wrongly won by presenting a case showing the odd wine

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bottle indicated a not so good environment or habitat for Rochelle. It is thought this report came from outside the local precinct through another source in the west. I can't say any more than that at present, but this highly suspicious.

There is an old saying, if one cannot fix the problem then get rid of the one causing it. Through this action, not only had Rochelle been taken away but also any future interests held by Marie.

Rochelle was now held by the guardian and trustee of all Harvey and Jeannette Crewe had supposedly left their daughter!

Very little was said by the media at the time. Some of the reports put forward by those in selected positions were not in favour of Marie Crewe in the battle of the court proceedings.

Within days of 22 April 1971 when Marie had withdrawn

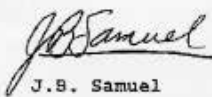
LET NOTHING be done in the Will of JEANNETTE LENORE CREWE
late of Pukekawa in New Zealand Married Woman Deceased ..
without notice to Harkness Henry Course & Annan, Solicitors,
Hamilton as agents for Mahony Herman & Co., Auckland ..
Solicitors for MARIE LAL CREWE of Pahiatusa Widow
having interest _____

DATED this 20th day of August 1970

Marie Crewe used the caveat above to delay procedures but as it turned out only long enough for the family to get their ducks in a row (below). She knew a lot more than others realised although her major concern was for the welfare of Rochelle.

MARIE LAL CREWE, the caveator herein, hereby withdraws
her caveat against a grant of probate

DATED this 22nd day of April 1971


J.B. Samuel
Solicitor for the caveator

her caveat (see opposite), Len Demler was granted probate and transmission of the said total estate of Jeannette without objection.

Closely following was the total estate of Maisie Demler being put before probate and transmission in court in the same manner within days of the first probate being granted and made legal.

Observant readers might notice an irregularity in the way these probates presented. The woman who died first was dealt with second. Why?

I think, all it needed, and quite legally, was for the trustee to say that they were still waiting for all Maisie's paperwork to arrive from England.

Consider this. If the Crewe bodies had not been discovered or ever found, Len would have been forced to deal with Maisie's probate first and need I say, at great loss to himself and consequently to his daughter Heather.

NOT BEING THE SHOOTER

Len was not at the scene when the shots were fired but could have come on the scene shortly thereafter. Did he realise during all the drama happening around him that getting rid of the bodies was not in his best interests?

The last thing Len would have wanted was to hide the bodies and for this logical reason, and from his point of view of knowing he was not the one who twice pulled the trigger, he was in the likely danger of losing control.

I believe Len was outnumbered and apart from feeling that his part in the crime was not of major value, he knew that he had a clear conscience and could not be blamed for murdering his daughter legally even if he engineered it. In dealing with the fatal parts of crime all he needed to do, if he was under pressure, was to let the other people do all the talking.

In studying these things over time, I came to the conclusion that if Len made any comment on any subject in this case I was sure he knew he was on solid ground and could not be proved wrong.

Quite simply, because of his way of thinking, if he had no involvement in that particular part of the crime, there was nothing to worry about.

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The only time he might have broken down and spilled the beans was when he was told that Rochelle was learning to talk. He went silent and white. This proved to me that Len's true colours came to the surface only in the time frame he was involved in.

Len certainly knew the person who fed Rochelle so imagine the baby blurting out the name of who was feeding her. Obviously this information about Leslee would have led directly to the killers.

This, I feel, was a very dangerous area for Len, and to a certain extent, the involvement of Leslee. They had to tread carefully. Leslee was reasonably safe as she was not on anybody's radar but Len was to become the prime suspect.

The old saying, one thing leads to another, could have been their downfall. Many parts were being played by those involved and all Len had to do was to play his part while the others did the dirty work.

Len was actually under threat of losing control of the estates that he was fighting hard to retain. The others didn't care that he was going to 'steal' all the money, assets and land from his late wife, daughter Jeannette and regrettably his grandchild Rochelle, so the decision to get rid of the bodies was not Len's to make.

Others had a different agenda so my feeling was that the bodies were already in the river before Len really realised the consequences of that decision. Len had to 'suck it up' as his ultimate goal was not to be sneezed at.

HOW FUTURE EVENTS UNFOLDED

Keeping a time line of events throughout my research has proved a very useful tool. It has kept my mind visually focused chronologically so that I could easily pinpoint events happening at the same time or within a specific time frame.

One of the strange facts that did emerge from keeping the timeline were the gaps as future events started to unfold. At times everything appeared to be in limbo.

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Leslee

I mentioned in Chapter Two that Leslee's confession triggered my investigation into the Crewe murders. It's no exaggeration to say that this has been a painful lifelong experience, but it started with trying to understand Leslee . . .

Who was she and why were there so many strange things about her and her past?

My understanding eventually came from stitching together a string of events but when I gained an answer to one question, that often created more questions! It certainly wasn't a lineal progression of learning.

I found myself thinking back to previous experiences and putting things together retrospectively. At the time of these events I wasn't in the frame of mind to doubt my girlfriend, but it was very different after her breakdown, the end of our relationship and my eviction. That was when I started asking questions.

The chief question for me was her identity. It sounds strange to say this, but at times it was like I didn't even know the girl, like there was more than one person impersonating her, or she impersonating them. In the end it seemed to me that I was dealing with more than one Leslee, and I know that it may sound strange but even when she confessed to being "Pam", I questioned her real identity. Leslee? Pam? Someone else?

There was one situation where I saw her standoffish to one side by a tree, after she returned from the *SS Australis* trip in 1977, almost like a stranger. You'd think that after time away there would be a bond restored, but it was like I was dealing with a stranger, like a twin sister not the real Leslee. Was I going mad or were people playing games with me? It was weird, and I keep thinking back to

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these kinds of events, yet it was real!

Leslee had sisters, more than one of them. She led a double life and lied, extensively, particularly about her past life but also who she really was. This was all the important background to her stunning confession in a time of deep emotional stress. This was the reason that her confession means so much to me—it seems to me that this was probably the only time that she was actually being honest!

RECOUNTING STRANGE EPISODES

It has been a disjointed journey for me, so I'll now recount just some of the many times that Leslee was the centre of my personal sanity challenges:

Some time after our separation I saw her at the Pokeno Service Station. She was walking across the yard and she knew I was there but ignored me. We had talked before, after our breakup, so why did she do this that day? What (or who) did she have to hide from?

I was on the phone (this was in the days before mobile phones) and I was speaking to a woman who sounded very like Leslee, with the exact same English accent. I asked for Leslee, and she answered, "Yes, this is Leslee!" yet simultaneously I saw Leslee walking across the Farmers car park right in front of my eyes. How could this be? What was so special about Leslee that one of her sisters or someone similar to her would cover for her? Why would they conduct this charade?

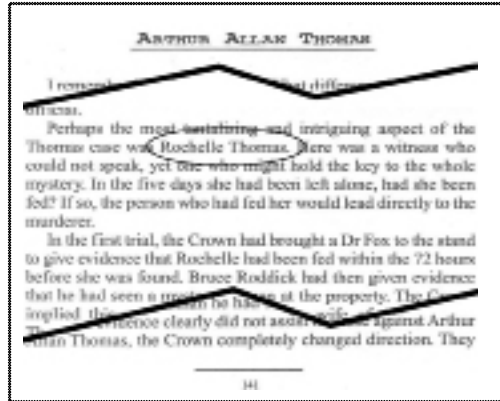
Why did she take down her nursing photo when I mentioned it? Was this another falsehood about her past?

When passing what I now know as the Crewe farm, which I have been through more than a couple of times since, Leslee mentioned that life would never be the same. She had played there, in that house and around the district as a child yet she and her cousins had life-changing experiences that they could never undo. What were they and why were they so secret?

When Leslee went to Alf Hodgson's old house to get the Ladies Companion 'pepperbox' pistol and some other things she tried to hide what she was doing putting it into her purse. There can be only one explanation to me, especially when she later mentioned that the pistol had a story associated with it.

I've always wondered why Leslee had stretch marks but without

Was Kevin Ryan trying to subtly tell readers something important or was the surname of Rochelle printed in his 1997 book Justice an error?



having a child in tow. Where was her child? Could I dare even think that a child was swapped a decade previously and who other than Rochelle fell into that age group? And was the father a Thomas and this is why Kevin Ryan insisted that his use of Rochelle's surname remained as he had written (on page 141) of his book?

LIED THROUGH HER TEETH

Leslee told me that she was not present at the murders—that others did it and that she only cleaned up, yet she was a skilled and proven liar.

She had two missing front teeth and wouldn't talk about what happened for her to lose them. Surely an accident like say a cricket ball wouldn't need lying about and wouldn't trigger cold silence? Jeannette fought her assailants to the death and had serious injuries so I find it quite plausible that Leslee lost her two front teeth in a physical confrontation with her cousin at the times of the murders.

Then there was the time that I found a letter on the table addressed to Pamela Howard, or Pamela-Ann. Leslee's hurried explanation and refusal to talk any more doesn't wash with me. Pamela-Ann Leslee Sinton (nee Howard)? No. I don't think so! Pamela-Ann Howard was Leslee's younger sister. Perhaps—and much more likely!

MORE TRAUMA FOR LESLEE

One day I made mention of the wigs that Leslee had. They then disappeared, and permanently. Somebody was trying to masquerade for others as well as me. Leslee would have nightmares. Whatever

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was driving her subconscious played ‘merry hell’ with her during her sleep. Her confession indicates to me that it was her involvement with the Crewe murders that caused her that trauma.

Leslee and I went to her supposed deceased husband’s grave (Sinton) at Waikumete Cemetery. She mentioned that she was to be buried beside her husband’s grave but when I later researched this, I found that this was again another lie—husband and wife rarely have side-by-side graves—and the grave that looked vacant was actually occupied, just without a headstone! This impostor whom I knew as Leslee Sinton was not likely to be THE Leslee Sinton!

I’ve mentioned Leslee’s aversion to a woolshed and when pushed her plausible explanation that their smell made her sick is another clue that indicates yet again that she was in the centre of untoward events of the 1970’s at Pukekawa, very likely at the Crewe woolshed.

I remember a situation in Whangarei when I came home late one night, and slept on the verandah. I overheard a conversation between Leslee and [supposedly] her mother shouting at her firmly, “You will do what we tell you [young lady]” didn’t seem to me to be a natural mother-daughter relationship. It seemed far more likely that Leslee was an impostor being given protection for some reason and

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ADDRESS _____

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Leslee Sinton joined the last official voyage of SS Australis on 1 June to South Hampton along with her father, Allan Howard and other family friends. Leslee did not record the purpose of her six month visit to the UK in her numerous Aerogramme letters to John and apart from her return address of Todmorden Village in Yorkshire, she was not revealing anything incriminating.

who was living under secrecy and with serious threat.

LESLEE HAD FUNDS FOR WORLD TRAVEL

Leslee, for all her desperation to steal money, defraud and bleed me, seemed to have resources to travel the globe, often for extended trips abroad. Travel to Europe, especially in those days, and so many times to Norfolk Island (one of her favourites) cost a lot. She had funding all right and deep funding too when needed.

Some time after the murders, Leslee went on a world cruise to England. It was the last *SS Australis* trip and I have many letters that she sent back to me at the time. Interestingly she went to the Howard Castle, but I suspect that this familial tie back to the Howard family had something to do with the English land mentioned in the will. I also suspect that transactions were being undertaken relating to the Chennell wills, probate or transfers—probably the actual reason for Leslee to be in England at the time.

Leslee owned different properties and lived at different addresses after we parted company. She married more than once, too. This is not suspicious activity in itself except when put into the context that Leslee professed to be short of money at the time. She clearly lived a lie.

CONFUSION WITH CAR IDENTIFICATION

Some of the witnesses in the initial investigation mentioned seeing different cars and female occupants. Hillmans, Toyotas and green/blue. These sightings were either ignored or explained away by Police at the time, and later of note, in the 2014 Review. “The Review team are not satisfied that the users of seven motor vehicles . . . were adequately identified and eliminated on merit.”

I believe that some of these sightings would have included Leslee’s blue Corona and that Leslee was involved along with another of her sisters or associates, the nurse. There was more than one car sighted.

The Police are correct that it is difficult to be certain of identities and sightings from so long ago, but knowing that Leslee and more than the one vehicle was involved, answers many questions.

LESLEE’S FALSE IDENTIFICATION

Leslee explained many times that she was a school teacher—teaching Home Economics at Whangarei High School. My research

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The Toyota pictured (above left) is similar to Leslee's blue Corona and when compared with Crewe's dark green Hillman Hunter could easily be mistaken at first glance.

though showed that she was not on the roll or list of teachers. This false identification was typical of the life she led.

One day when I was walking down the driveway to her house, another woman shouted out the window at me, "Piss off John! Go away! You are not welcome here." They then tried to run me down and I escaped death when I innocently jumped over a puddle, luckily at just the right time to avoid getting killed. The resulting damage to my car was serious, but the Police took me on! What was the problem that then caused her and her minders to take to such violence?

I asked myself why were the Police involved and protecting her? Leslee seemed to have 'friends in high places'. I had a confrontation with the Police threatening me after following Leslee another time. It shook me—not so much because of the threats, for I had done nothing wrong but because of the involvement of Police in Leslee's life.

The policeman standing next to me then tells me Leslee is under Police protection. I am to keep away or there will be trouble. I say "what charge" and was quietly informed that if I persist, a charge will be found. That gave me proof she was being protected . . . a recurring theme in all my investigations . . .

I think the best words to use to understand Leslee is to mention some comments she made in one of her many letters to me when she was overseas. She had asked why I would want to deal with someone like her who has so many problems?

If she was indeed the woman who fed the baby, I guess that would have been the second time that she spoke something honestly to me!

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Investigation Failures

In 2010 the Minister of Police initiated a Review into the Police Investigations into the Crewe murders. After digesting their 2014 Report I found myself agreeing with some of their conclusions but not all . . .

The writers claimed the Report Team used only evidence with little speculation. This is not my observation, and it is remarkable to me at the absence of certain critical matters.

If you say that some evidence disappeared and that conduct was negligent, but if you don't even consider why this may have happened, then you are effectively suppressing the investigation! What is NOT said speaks as loud as what IS said.

The bottom line is that no arrests have been made and the case has been a cold one, even though it needn't have been. For me it's been hard and lonely work probing so-called evidence that led nowhere. In the quest for finding facts to back up my gut feelings that something was terribly wrong, I was going to do my best to find the truth.

There have been a lot of loose ends and in this chapter I want to compare my investigations with this Investigation Review released by the Police on 30 July 2014.

I note from the Detective Superintendent Andrew J Lovelock's commentary, a strong bias towards supporting the Police's conduct, except of course when Police misconduct was undeniable when he simply notes it and accepts it without comment.

The 2014 Report wasn't a whitewash as such, but came up with incorrect conclusions in some areas, and made the same mistakes by way of assumptions just as the Police back in 1970 did.

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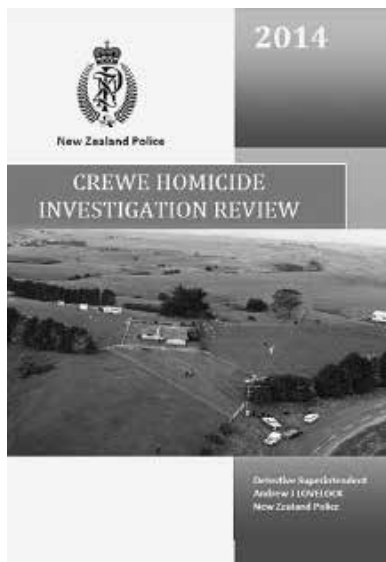
Statements of fact such as, “The reason why the Crewes were killed is unknown” are true but meaningless. There were murders so there must have been a motive. I found the truth by digging but they either didn’t, couldn’t (or did but suppressed it for some reason).

Failure to investigate certain people or to capitalise on opportunities during their investigations may have been part of bias or incompetence. There’s little point in digesting evidence alone without a motive otherwise you are grasping around in the dark.

Focusing on bullets when they didn’t have the correct murder weapon has sent the Police around in circles. This makes a mockery of the entire Thomas saga. I’ve kept right away from this as I have found it to be a major distraction.

BIG ‘BAD’ BOB SOUTER

The 2014 Police Review summarises Maisie’s disapproval of Bob Souter in paragraph number 1866: “In 1969, May Demler changed her Will leaving her personal assets to Jeannette, rather than both of her daughters as had previously been her intention. May Demler was unhappy about Heather Souter being in a relationship with a divorced man who already had three children and effectively sought to cut her out of her Will. Lenard Demler did not support his wife’s stance in this regard.”



The 2014 Police report contains a wealth of detailed information but fails to prove a murder weapon; nor point even remotely in the direction of the killers; let alone gives justification for the millions of dollars spent on an investigation that remains unsolved. It makes basic errors of assumption and The Review itself contains 15 Chapters (328 A4 pages) plus 17 Appendices (excluding the Appendix 1, not released and unobtainable unless by way of an Official Information Act request) a grand total of 1467 pages.

This is factually correct but like much of the Police investigation, it misses the point entirely . . . Maisie knew who the perpetrators of the fires and burglaries were, thus she would have known who the murderers would have been. More importantly though, she knew Bob Souter VERY well.

If you ignore the issue of Bob's claimed location as being in the United States at the time of the murders, I'd consider Bob Souter to be the prime suspect. He was a "nasty piece of work" who had motive, means and the mentality to shoot two people over monetary matters, execution style from point-blank range without compunction.

I knew that I'd never get access to his military records, so gave up on that route of enquiry, but Bob Souter was much more than just a "divorcee that Maisie disapproved of".

Investigators will find some big surprises in the circumstances surrounding his discharge from the military. He was a trained killer, an undischarged bankrupt and had 'a record'.

Bankruptcy regulations in the States are different to those in New Zealand and Bob remained a bankrupt until his death, for good reason too—it suited Bob and Heather quite nicely for financial reasons in both New Zealand and the USA.

Official records prevent Bob Souter from being a suspect as he was "in the United States" but while the Police state that "As a result of immigration enquiries undertaken in 1970, the investigation team were satisfied that Heather Souter was not in New Zealand on 17 June 1970 or 19 June 1970. She did not arrive from the United States until 25 June 1970." What about Bob though?

It is still an assumption that Bob Souter was with her, and that he did not have access to military systems or clearance. Stranger things have happened before, and I'd want to see strong proof that he was not in New Zealand before discounting Bob Souter as a prime suspect.

WHO IS LESLEE'S CHILD?

Talking about strange things, I've noted that Leslee had stretch marks yet there was never any mention of her child. I've often wondered if Rochelle was Leslee's child. She'd be the right age and they knew each other as cousins who grew up together.

Again I know that this is a far-fetched thought that may sound ridiculous but has Rochelle undergone any paternity (or maternity) test using modern methods? Kevin Ryan in his book *JUSTICE Without Fear or Favour* (page 141) refers to “Rochelle Thomas” rather than Crewe, a hint perhaps a hint of inside knowledge and I’ve been told Kevin didn’t remove or correct it when it was drawn to his attention. The last thing I would want to do is cause an innocent person trauma of considering this possibility of doubting their pedigree but Leslee did confess that she was at the scene cleaning up and to feeding the baby.

If Leslee was Rochelle’s birth mother and lost her two teeth in a fight to the death (literally) with Jeannette, possibly the adopting mother, then this could explain Leslee’s conduct, presence and participation.

If Leslee was forced into this situation and leverage was exerted, this would definitely fit my observations of a woman who was under extreme stress while living a lie.

Again, these are simply ideas and matters that others can verify.

INCORRECT CONCLUSIONS

My claims in this book are that the perpetrators of these crimes were insiders and wanted the semblance of normality around the Crewe house for as long as possible. This runs contrary to Police (and other) thinking that the murderer(s) would want to high-tail it out of the scene of the crimes and never return so as to avoid detection.

These people knew that they were known within the Pukekawa community. Indeed many in the rural community would have either known who they were, or at least suspected who was involved.

This has resulted in what I think to be wrong conclusions. Some examples of this are when the 2014 Police Review said, “No one has ever come forward to Police acknowledging being the person in question and explaining their reasons for being there”.

Oh sure, can you imagine Leslee fessing up to being there; participating in an assault and cleaning up a murder scene? Who said it was only a man involved in the murders too? Then again, “If the sighting [of a woman, probably Leslee] by Bruce Roddick occurred, it was either not on that day or was of an unknown and

unidentified woman". The latter scenario is true. The first one is simply illogical guesswork and the very thing that the Police said they wanted to avoid!

Again the 2014 Police Review says in regards to the child allegedly seen at the Crewe property on Saturday 20 June 1970, "The alleged sighting of a child on the property that day by Queenie McConachie was supported by her husband, Maurice McConachie, although Maurice's alleged sighting was at a different time of the day. To have exposed Rochelle Crewe to public view would have placed the person present at serious risk of being identified as being complicit in the murders."

This is correct, but they make a big jump to then say, "It is concluded that if the alleged sighting occurred it was either not on that day and/or the child was someone other than Rochelle."

On the contrary, Leslee's job was to make sure that Rochelle was seen! Duh!

SHORTFALLS IN THE INVESTIGATION

Refreshing confessions came from the Police in the 2014 Review. Consider these statements, collated for ease of reading:

"Shortfalls that occurred early in the investigation certainly influenced aspects of it as the investigation progressed. The initial action phase failed to adequately secure and preserve the scene area which led to contamination. Scene management and security was less than adequate."

Then in regard to Len Demler's involvement, "Detective Inspector Hutton's belief in the guilt of Lenard Demler at an early stage in the investigation led to the exclusion of other worthy persons of interest being considered."

More damning however are the claims from three witnesses that Len had, "an unbreakable habit of having at least one meal a day" at the Crewe home. Perfectly understandable given the fact that he was recently widowed and Jeannette and Harvey lived next door. Heather remember, was living overseas.

To this huge discrepancy in behaviour the Police admitted, "The frequency with which Lenard Demler visited the Crewes became an important aspect of the investigation, because there had been no contact between them for six days. Whether this was a usual practice

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or represented unusual behaviour, was never fully explored.”

That’s a MAJOR shortfall and yet thoughts or discussion about the significance of this shortfall is notable by its absence!

SECTIONS 67 & 68

A few other things have also slipped past the Police and other authors in the intervening years. No mention has ever been made (at least that I know of) of Jeannette’s half ownership of Sections 67 & 68 in 1965 (full details on page 110).

I find this extraordinary because it makes a perfectly logical dumping site for the bodies. As I mentioned earlier, their vehicles would be known around the area and their known red/brown International truck arriving on a weekday morning would raise no concerns to anyone.

Didn’t the Police know of this? It seems incredible to me if they didn’t!

HODGSONS, GURNEYS, SMITH & JONES

The lack of mention of the Hodgsons, particularly Alf Hodgson too surprises me. The Police only mention him in passing once as a trustee but in this book, he was one of my key players in the lead-up to the murders. There are also other names in the mix, Smith, Jones, specifically Gordon Hamilton Jones. Alf, Rose Amy and her sons, the Gurney boys (Alf’s step-sons) were intimately involved with the Demlers for decades and they all knew more than anybody of the many financial comings and goings on.

Alf was as straight as a rifle barrel, even if his wife Rose Amy and her two boys (Alf’s step-sons) weren’t. Rose Amy was easily led and after Alf’s death the Gurney boys ran the roost although she got all the chattels. She inherited some of Alf’s responsibility and had the signing rights with a small input from those on Alf’s side of the marriage. Rose Amy was always after “the residue” and to put it simply, it all boiled down to the fact that she knew too much.

Her death in 1993 followed an extended period when her mental capacity was impaired. The Gurneys ran the show, something important to understand for what will make more sense shortly.

Rose Amy was an outsider. She married into the Hodgson family and when Alf died her new man was Johnny. In a coincidence that

is all too common within related farming communities, I met Rose and Johnny in 1965 when they came to the Waipa Sawmill. I lived in Te Kuitu at the time and worked at the Waipa Mill. I recognised the vehicle they were driving in first—a 1937 Chev Coupe—a bit worse for wear but the ‘blue flame’ motor was sound!

Alf had quite some standing in the Maori community and from 1926 on you can see a considerable number of Maori cross leases. Rose was well known in the area and was a ‘favourite aunty’ of many. Alf & Rose Amy’s marriage along with Len and Maisie’s meant that these families all had shared experiences Rose-Nellie-Maisie-Jeannette. Rose Amy for example was present when the Demler girls were born. She watched them grow up and cared for Maisie when her brother Howard died in 1950.

Missing all of this personal background has prevented people from seeing the context in which the Crewe’s were murdered. It has to be understood that when Police follow one lead or take one direction in an enquiry like the Crewe murders, it leaves other options closed. Without any clear motive the Police will and did only follow the leads they had—like bullet fragments, a few fingerprints and a ‘whacky’ theory of a ‘random’ shooting through open louvres on cold, wet wintery night!

WHERE THE MONEY WENT

So to the other important things missing from the 2014 Police Review . . . where the wealth went. On page 66, I showed the broad pattern that substantial family wealth intended by Maisie to go to Jeannette Crewe (and thence to Rochelle) actually ended up in the control of Len Demler first, then Heather Demler and Bob Souter.

In fact Len’s activities weren’t simple and it was all quite complicated, so he obviously had good legal ‘advice’. It is also interesting to note that it would have suited him to have BOTH Harvey as well as Jeannette out of the way which again conflicts with many of the assumptions inherent in the Police and other commentary that one or the other was the prime target and the other ‘collateral damage’.

I hardly even touched the surface of these multiple intergenerational dealings with trusts and companies and land in this book but I did find lots of references to land sales backwards and forwards between the people involved. Len Demler bought

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then sold then bought back Lot 1—the corner of land of the Crewe farm that he always wanted

ROCHELLE'S FATE

I want to pause here for a moment and respectfully ask why Rochelle was actually allowed to live.

If her mother and father were killed execution style, then I'm sure it wasn't because of compassion to spare the baby as some believe. To my mind she was fed to keep her alive not only because she was to be the person to gain the most from her parent's estates but sadly through other high stakes that were at risk.

It also gave those controlling how the inheritances were to be split up almost 20 years grace to sort out the legalities, or any hiccups, before Rochelle turned 21.

Quite simply, with Rochelle dead there would have been a complete change in direction and apart from there being a huge inquiry plus a probate that could be held up for seven years until settled, Len would have been relentlessly grilled to answer a lot more awkward questions.

One has to think also about the implications of such an event, bearing in mind to do this, you need to view the problem through the eyes of a trustee or beneficiary.

My research along with logic here tells me that this child was deliberately kept alive. There is another possibility that has been suggested to me, and this is that she was not 'blood' anyway and that if push came to shove that could be proven. There are clues that this may be the case, but I didn't go down that track in my search for truth either. It's an uncomfortable possibility.

At the time Len (to the Police) was number one on the list as a suspect. Had Rochelle been killed I don't think Police would have hesitated in putting him behind bars, even if it meant fabricating evidence too.

Not being a professional lawyer my opinion on the subject is one that could be wrong. In all of what I've written I believe Rochelle was kept alive to play the part mentioned to distort the line of events where her grandmother's estate (her inheritance) was supposedly 'safe' in Len's care for her. It was a wild card for the public to play with thinking Rochelle would inherit her mother's estate.

THE COMPANIES

Lastly, a huge amount of my research time was spent analysing the various property transactions of the entities associated with the Chennell, Hodgson & Demler affairs prior to but also in the years following the Crewe murders.

If the question of where the money went is answered by my single chart (see page 66) pointing to Len Demler and his choice of daughter over Maisie's, then this is actually too simplistic. A large swathe of the Pukekawa environs was in the control of multiple entities, people, companies, Charitable Trusts and family trusts all bought and sold key plots of land—in particular from two years following the murders onwards. I suspect that those beachfront properties were 'paid' to professionals and insiders, hence the decades of silence!

The Phoenix Charitable Trust, Sterling Nominees Ltd, Honetana Farms Ltd, Day Dawn Farms Ltd and more all had their finger in the pie. In particular the role of Honetana Farms Ltd (the company that Lester Kershaw withdrew involvement with in disgust prior to the murders) drew a lot of my attention. There is no question in my mind that skulduggery surrounding Honetana Farms was central to the events that spawned the murders. The Police though seem to have no mention of this in either their initial enquiries nor any subsequent reports. This is a huge, glaring hole to my way of thinking.

Sections 67 & 68 (which are right next to where the bodies were found); Sections 190 & 191 the huge land areas adjacent to Section 3C4 (Rose Amy's land that had a perfect view of the Crewe farm) and of course the Crewe/Demler lands of Sections 7 (renamed 13 & 14), Section 2 (May and Len Demler's farm) and Section 4 (later owned by the Crewe girls) all featured prominently in the comings and goings of these intertwined moves.

Then there are the lands and interests in and around Te Kuiti, a neighbouring region to the south which Len Demler used extensively for farming purposes. This was so much the case that one person even called it "Demler country" when discussing the case!

There is so much more that I'd probably need another book to show how this all fitted in to aftermath of the murders."

And they said . . .

One wonders from this selection of quotes who was confused about where the truth lay . . .

Robert Adams-Smith (1979):

"That somebody did go back after the murders seems clear."

Keith Hunter (2012):

"Dogs don't go five days without food and act normally. Somebody fed them. Who?"

Owen Priest (1980):

Q. If these dogs had been left unattended for five days, would you have expected them to be sitting less quietly as they were on this occasion?

A. No they weren't quiet, they were quite normal as far as I was concerned.

Len Demler (1980):

Q. The dogs did they look as though they had been fed?

A. The dogs didn't look as though they were starved.

Barbara Willis (1970 Lower Court hearing):

"Before I gave her anything to eat she showed no signs of wanting anything to eat but she was pleased when she got it."

Dr Fox (1970):

"A child such as Rochelle, living under the same conditions outlined above might survive six days, but she would be seriously ill at the end of that time... Rochelle had been unattended for approximately forty eight hours with a maximum of seventy two hours prior to 1430 hours on Monday, 22nd June, 1970."

Bruce Hutton (1970):

"As far as I am concerned regarding the feeding of the baby, I accept Dr Fox's report."

Bruce Hutton (2001):

"I am convinced beyond any doubt in my mind that baby Rochelle was never fed and hence the mystery woman does not exist."

Professor Jenny (2014):

"[I am] certain that Rochelle had been provided with food and/or fluids following her parents' murder."

Crewe Homicide Review (2014):

"Of the medical professionals consulted, Professor Jenny is the most qualified to give an opinion . . . Whilst acknowledging the advice of Professor Jenny, when all aspects of the crime are considered in totality, the Review Team are not persuaded that Rochelle was tended to or provided with any sustenance following her parents' death until she was found on Monday 22 June 1970."

Leslee Sinton (nee Howard) (1976):

"I fed the baby!"

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Whodunnit?

Events relating to Arthur Allan Thomas' involvement, arrest, legal events and supposed guilt are preposterous and totally contrived. Much salient information was suppressed and/or ignored by the Police. Informants were maltreated, sometimes substantially . . .

I believe that statements, claims and conclusions from the Police both then and in the decades following are highly suspect and should be treated with huge caution, and in some cases gross contempt. This though does NOT exonerate all people from the Thomas clan from any involvement, nor that many in the Police did their best.

Harvey Crewe was shot at point blank range on the evening of Wednesday 17 June, 1970. The killer was someone whom he either knew or trusted, and whom he was most likely actually expecting for discussions with Jeannette.

He was killed after dark and was most likely returning from gathering firewood or perhaps he was on his way outside to get it. Weather was inclement. The missing oilskin parka (or cover) was destroyed for a reason, probably by Len as an afterthought but possibly by a Police insider. Colleagues of the murderer were likely already inside the house with Jeannette when his murder occurred, thus he (or she) may have accompanied Harvey to go outside for the firewood. The firewood shed was out the side gate and to the south east.

Jeannette was the target and as the 2014 Review Team explained, "Harvey must have represented a significant risk to the safety of any assailant and as such, had to be incapacitated to enable Jeannette to

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then be murdered.”

Harvey fell into the garden onto or beside the tendril bush by the side gate. This is where Len Demler first saw him and why he said he only identified Harvey’s boots because of limited lighting and the way that Harvey had fallen.

The bottom rail of the fence was either broken by his fall or an existing break was worsened by his fall. Police later removed it altogether.

Harvey was wearing the oilskin parka or jacket seen in an early photo beside the wheelbarrow—the parka that the Police falsely said had accidentally caught alight with a discarded cigarette butt.

The hood of the oilskin was probably up which would have limited Harvey’s hearing and awareness with limited peripheral vision. If it wasn’t a parka but was a cover, he probably had it over his head and shoulders. His carrying of firewood or use of the wheelbarrow would also limit his movements and have prevented any natural response by way of defensive moves. A possible bullet hole in the hood is likely a reason that it, along with evidence such as blood and brain matter, in on or, around the tendril bush was burned.

Remember this is a crime scene being grid searched that would find a needle. For an item like this to go amiss is more than “negligent”. It’s removal wasn’t an accident.

IT WAS A PISTOL

The murder weapon was an antique Pepperbox .22 rim-fire pistol called a “Ladies Companion” which was found when Chennell’s old house was demolished. It was very likely imported when their ancestors immigrated from England many decades previously.

It had a white (possibly ivory or most likely a whalebone) inlaid handle with a low powered .22 ammunition. I have sighted this weapon and it was the pistol that Leslee and I retrieved in 1976 from its hiding place in Alf’s old home at Opuatia.

No rifle was used in the Crewe murders. Even the 2014 Review talks of a “likely” murder weapon that “could well have been” and that it “could have been shot” from Thomas’ rifle. It wasn’t a rifle.

The visitors present were also known to Jeannette (indeed likely related to her) and were purportedly there to ‘discuss’ the matters

of contention—most likely their calling in of debts due to Maisie’s family trust with the Crewe’s intending move out of the district. Maisie knew who ‘they’ were—burglars and arsonists, but did not want this known.

Jeannette would have known immediately that the single (or double) gunshot was likely one or more of the visitors taking on her husband and that she was facing an escalation of the financial conflict to a level of life and death.

Her own injuries, loss of six front teeth, bruising and a serious skull fracture were sustained in the physical altercation that occurred most likely immediately after the first gunshot(s) occurred, and in the Crewe house. It is likely that Leslee’s loss of her two front teeth meant that she was inside with Jeannette and fought her when Harvey was killed.

One of the Gurney twins (the ‘nasty one’ who was known to hate Harvey with a passion), was Harvey’s killer. This was all prepared for long in advance in general but they only planned it in detail within 24 hours.

If all this was the case then most likely Leslee (or her sister, lookalike or impostor) was inside with the second twin who was with her inside watching over and ready for Jeannette’s reaction knowing what was going to transpire.

If pressed to say who was present at the time of the murders, I would bet on a single man (one of the Gurney twins) with the pistol outside at Harvey’s death and at Jeannette’s death inside, the twins plus Leslee.

The murders were not ‘conducted in a vacuum’ as I have attempted to show in the book thus far. We are dealing with a very large estate worth nigh on a million dollars with generational history back to English aristocracy and this was supposed to all end up in Jeannette’s control.

That it didn’t, but that her father and sister gained control, proves fraud and the likely ringleader Len had the personality and motive, and a very good reason to have Jeannette ‘removed’. We will likely never know the full extent of his involvement in the murders but he, along with many others had ample reason to have arranged them and assisted in the cover-up and disinformation exercise that followed.

INCRIMINATING PAPERS

I believe that two fires (one in the Crewe house and another I became aware of elsewhere) contained incriminating papers. I'm sure that these would have shown the fraudulent activities that Len Demler and others in his family had tried to conduct relating to May Constance's attempted bequeathing of her inheritance to Jeannette alone.

So many times debts are erased with a death. While it may be stretching the possibilities for normal people to justify murder, many in the region who had loans due to Maisie and the Trust had good reason to breathe easy and perhaps even celebrate with their demise. This helps to explain the widespread and long-term conspiracy.

Jeannette's surviving daughter Rochelle was deliberately spared for it gave the criminals another 20 years (till she was of age) to misappropriate assets, whereas her death too would have caused obvious and unwelcome suspicion.

Many farms in the surrounding districts were indebted to Maisie's estate through commercial loans and with Jeannette and Harvey's stated intent to cash up and move to the Wairarapa there was no shortage of reason within the Pukekawa district for the murders to both occur and be conveniently 'forgotten about' by all.

Len Demler's involvement in the clean-up, body disposal and dis-information following was central to the entire saga, in particular to the Police investigation. He either ordered the events or strongly condoned them but he deliberately wasn't actually there at the murders, nor indeed at other critical post-murder events.

This was all by design giving him plausible deniability. The third untouched meal of flounder was probably bought for, if not intended for him.

HARVEY'S BODY WAS MOVED

Harvey was dragged into the house, not out of it (see page 221). The "body fluids" in his armchair that did not reach the carpet, I can only explain by secondary transfer after he was placed there.

I don't know for sure why they took Harvey's body into the Crewe house and put him in the chair in the lounge along with Jeanette's body but it makes sense to me that they wanted to get his



Above left: Milk bottles left in the Crewe roadside delivery box give clues that the Police had the correct date and time of murder. Partially used milk on the kitchen bench (centre), not yet sour, shows that baby Rochelle was fed at least once. As the Police rightly summarised, in their 2014 Review, whoever fed the baby would lead us to the murderers thus the identity of Leslee is a critical component to solving the Crewe murders cold case. Right: An unopened milk bottle found on the kitchen bench was dated 17 June.

body out of sight, perhaps till the morning.

It could be that they just did this to gather their thoughts and plan how to get rid of the human evidence.

I think that the bottles and deliveries uncollected in the letterbox was an oversight. Remember that everything was done through the back ways—Len Demler’s access didn’t come through the front gate and the appearance of normality appeared to be their intentions, which were largely quite successful, and for days access from 3C4 to the woolshed was a possibility

Leslee and her look-alike or sister or another woman fed and changed the baby in the first few days and their sighting in and around the property was no accident.

SIGHTINGS WERE DISCARDED

Many sightings of people, vehicles and sounds were received but discarded by a blinkered and increasingly biased Police. The 2014 Review notes seven of nine vehicle sightings unexplained! You can see this progression and bias clearly by reading the Police files and reports if you’re alert to it. Most of the critical documents, of course, are missing—deliberately removed from the Police files.

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I've explained in greater detail how the people involved used the wheelbarrow to transport the bodies to the woolshed out the back and away from the road visibility. The woolshed light was seen shining on the night of the murders so something was happening there!

The woolshed held the bodies for possibly the night (if they transported them in the evening), but it was certainly the location of wrapping them and then loading them onto the International truck the following morning.

The events were not planned in detail long in advance but the general idea was. One phone call from Len Demler to say, the Gurneys sometime in the 24 hours prior to the murders along the lines of, "It's all on. Jeannette's not cooperating. Bring the pistol and come to my place!" and everyone would have known what to do.

Their access would have been unseen from the road if they had all come via Len's house (the 2014 Review noted that there were no cars seen at the gate) if they used the back access and if it was dark or getting dark. The girl(s) could have already been staying at Len's house or close by or opposite (the 2014 Review noted one person saying that a woman was staying with Demler), and the girls' presence was likely accepted or normal or at least accepted by the Crewes.

Decades of fighting and jockeying for power (as evidenced by the annual events of arson, their brake sabotage and theft perpetrated against the Crewes) prepared Len Demler for legal and social acts long in advance of when they actually triggered the actions that meant eventual death. Maisie's assigning her assets to Jeannette instead of Heather (Len Demler's favourite) was the key event that actually set the stage for the murders.

She knew who "they" were but kept it under wraps while she was alive. Do you really want family fighting in the newspapers.

Jeannette's refusal to sign (or at least to accept) her mother's accounts via affidavit a day before her murder was the event that actually triggered the murders. She found something or knew that there were things wrong, most likely gross misappropriation of key assets (probably from her English inheritance).

Her insistence on doing things the way her mother had intended was the resistance that required Len to initiate lethal force.

IT'S COMPELLING CONDEMNATION

Len's evasiveness when facing something condemning, compared to his arrogance and indifference when dealing with something he had an alibi for, is notable. It's compelling condemnation.

There is little doubt in my mind that he was the instigator and probably the central planner of the crimes and cover-up. As long as he had time following the murders to affect his plans (which he did) he could, as surviving executor and sole trustee, work it all out as he had intended.

It is also certain that feminine involvement from his new wife Norma (who never even lived with him) and the influence of Alf Hodgson's wife (Rose Amy) played a driving role as well. The role of women in these events going back generations cannot be ignored.

Corruption within the authorities was more widespread and long-term than just the two Police officers who planted evidence. My experience with the authorities and indeed all involved with these murders, their investigation and the events that followed show me that the whole subject is too hot to handle, for everyone. There is good reason for this.

TOO MANY PEOPLE

There are too many people with vested interests; too many people with their fingers burned; too many people who have gotten it wrong and sadly, too many people got paid out in hush money (or land) for truth and justice to be natural.

My experiences interviewing the Thomas family showed dishonesty. My dealings with other authors showed patronising indifference and worse. The Police in particular are highly resistant to criticism. The 2014 report contains bias and is naturally pro-police and overly defensive.

The stonewalling and way that those within bureaucracy ran for cover with anything to do with the Crewe murders or the matters I have investigated show me very clearly that there are people even now who fear exposure.

Rochelle, the surviving daughter, refused to speak with me. Ian Wishart ignored me. People and families that have moved away from the Pukekawa region report huge rifts within the community

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as a result of these sad events. Large tracts of land have been sold and divided among people who know the inside story and who are associated by marriage, blood or in business.

Our blind trust of those in the professional industries simply because they are lawyers and are sworn to uphold the law may be unwise. Many who have come forward with information have been ridiculed and some fared quite badly as a result of their goodwill.

Lastly, the murderers have not been held to account, certainly not publicly. I find this sad and wish that others eventually come forward and that the conspiracy of silence is broken, once and for all.

John Ingley

Te Kuiti

2016

Publisher's conclusions

Understanding the events of Pukekawa in June 1970 cannot be just limited to analysing bullets and working out who 'made' a couple of dead bodies. John's criticism of the Police bias and failure to think laterally shows this well.

David Harvey Crewe and Jeannette Lenore Crewe (nee Demler) died in the context of inter-generational family feuding over land and money, going back for years.

Many of the region at the time knew of the true situation. Many gained from Jeannette's death as the Crewes were in the process of cashing up, calling in loans and transferring their farming operations to the Wairarapa.

Some left the area because of the rifts within the community and others have taken their secrets to the grave. Most have been too scared to talk, or if they have talked then they've learned that the system is corrupt and it has worked against them for talking.

A huge chasm existed in the Demler family relating to the end beneficiaries of the Chennell estate. How Len and Heather ended up with the gold (when it was Maisie's intent that Jeannette kept control) may never be fully known outside of the ones on the inside.

Oh my, if only those ashes could talk!

The exact method of Len Demler's eventual gaining of control of the family wealth, most of it vested in Maisie's family trust, has to be the biggest secret of the century! When you are the sole trustee, you have the means to do the deals and pay others off using the trust resources as it suits you. Len most certainly did that.

Professionals such as accountants and lawyers are generally viewed as trustworthy but it is inconceivable that with so much at stake, for so many people (in a rural community with families who variously fought and inter-married for generations), for these people not to know what was happening. Even more so when legal events would have been required for the misappropriations. One quickly

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gains the ire of an entire industry by questioning the integrity of the legal profession, but to preclude the active involvement of lawyers in these crimes of greed denies basic human nature and is naive.

A total approaching a million dollars (a huge amount in those days) was at stake, and the conspiracy of silence was by both agreement and achieved under duress. Those who are prepared to kill are usually feared. This conspiracy was both active (“Do this or else!”) and passive (the kind of street wisdom that says, “Just don’t go there!”) The seeds of dispute go back decades too. We are not talking about a simple crime of passion here, where somebody got killed because of another’s anger.

Applying simple skills of logic, observation and experience as a hunter, John’s investigation gave us some core explanations to the riddle that the Crewe murders became, but in the process he has also showed us some things that are not particularly savoury.

Most glaringly obvious was the corruption within the Police. Seriously exposed for the first time, the New Zealand public awoke to the ills of bureaucracy that they previously trusted.

Comments from the Police Review of 2014 relating to their sins are brief and short on detail. “Police Notes for 2 October 1970 are not part of the investigation file and cannot be found” is an accurate statement but so too are many other critical documents missing!

On missing evidence the comments too are brief and unexplored, “The failure to record the presence of a piece of material, possibly an oilskin coat . . . was negligent”. Oh dear! Is that all we can say about it? No possible reasons explored?

Then another key finding that, “A number of potentially significant witnesses were not interviewed [which] represents an investigative shortfall”. Oh dear, again!

JOHN INGLEY WAS UP AGAINST IT

Systemic defence exists within any authority but vested interests in these matters seemed to be far wider than just a couple of ‘crooked cops’ who planted evidence.

John really was up against it, and his file notes make this reality plain. It makes sobering reading when he reports actions that threatened his life and show me that Leslee had “friends in high places”.

From the early days, he says privately “I try to write a book on

the subject. It turns into a nightmare, rotten. I do not have enough information on the subject. Besides I can see no motive. But the matter [for John] won't rest."

John quickly learned, after having fought with yet another bureaucratic obstruction, that the system within the system was protecting itself "first and foremost in all matters", Police, politicians and judiciary.

He has also been ostracised for asking the 'wrong' questions and his resulting extreme frustration with negative experiences is totally understandable.

His belief was that should anything he had written be proven true then it would spell disaster for many people in high places. The defence of those against him was to label him the village idiot. His quiet response was simply "Then so be it, I've earned that title if only for my own welfare."

THOMAS FAMILY EXPERIENCE

His experiences with visiting the Thomas family, namely Des, Richard and Ray, neither productive nor enjoyable. His notes reveal some of his thoughts: "Richard to me at a loss for words no answer. Either looked at the floor or out of the window, Said the truth will out. Ray was ever watchful. Didn't say much but his eyes spoke volumes. Des was the mouthpiece. Jumping from subject to subject backwards and forwards. Discarding this or that the flick of the wrist. Trying to keep me on my toes."

His interview resulted in deep disappointment. He received very little information in return and to top it all off was being secretly recorded after agreeing not to be. He noticed, on returning from the toilet, that the red indicator light on the radio tape recorder was on.

"I didn't mention it and gave no indication. I was put out and off balance. I had come in good faith and trust to help this family. Why the games?" John's simple logic is that the family had something to hide. As with all involved in investigating the crimes, he found that they all knew much more than they let on!

SAME GAMES BEING PLAYED

John also believed author Chris Birt was playing the same games with him by wanting to know what he knew but gave nothing in exchange. "Chris hadn't really made an effort to show

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or tell me anything. In true journalist style he would rather I did all the talking.”

On a later occasion John found him very devious as he kept changing his story. “When Chris disagreed over some of the remarks I made, I didn’t like what I was hearing. For every point I made Chris had an answer. Before my eyes all that I had told him was being pushed sideways.”

John realised that Chris had no intention of ever bringing other people into the ‘crime frame’ apart from those he had on his own agenda. “It had appeared to me before that Chris is very consistent in trying to shield some of the names I put before him—the very people I feel played a major part in this double murder.”

John wrote that he never under estimated Chris “for one moment” but his methods to gain information was not unlike the “many departments within the legal system.” This was a repeating pattern he experienced over decades of inquiry. The 2014 review comments support his conclusion.

JUSTICE WAS ELUSIVE

Ross Meurant said it well in his frequent condemnation of Police corporate culture and in a *North & South* article said, “Regrettably, this practice of placing the preservation of police above preservation of the rule of law has been condoned by successive governments.”

Peter Williams QC too noted that the Arthur Allan Thomas saga would “go down in history as an exemplar of absolute corruption by both the Police and DSIR.”

Noted defence lawyer Kevin Ryan too, in his book *Justice, Without Fear or Favour*, commented in regard to “The Royal Commission’s” independent approach: “I knew then this commission would not be tame but would search and sift for that elusive quality—justice” but it came too little far too late and has still not delivered justice.

Then there is the less than stellar conduct of the judiciary and the ‘justice’ system that protected itself first, ahead of obtaining justice. The same too with many other political leaders, particularly with the Arthur Allan Thomas circus.

This side-show must have been hilarious for the perpetrators to watch as dis-information held the public’s attention for years. The media frenzy that spawned a myriad of books, documentaries and

articles was a multi-million dollar windfall for that industry.

Authors, investigators and others all chipped in to have their two cents worth. "She did it!" "He did it!" "They are the guilty ones!"

Following the money, asking the question, "*Cui bono?*" (translated from Latin "who benefits?") shows that human nature in New Zealand in 1970 is the same as it always has been. Greed and self-interest is a universal characteristic, and justice can be elusive.

I've spent many hours pouring over John's personal notes and comparing them with official documents. There are some huge take-homes from digesting his life's work . . .

TOO HOT TO HANDLE

He paid a high price. It cost him his life as his health worsened, very likely because of the burden he had placed himself under.

I think of the struggle John faced working from the outside seemingly fighting against the system. His frustration is palpable. I can only imagine his pain at being mocked and used by other investigators—some with inside information that they deliberately kept from him, then pumped him for what he knew.

The rejection time after time from government departments, corrupted bureaucracy protecting those 'higher up' and the dead cert knowledge that anything to do with the Crewe murders was just too hot to handle.

He tried to put threats to and attempts on his life to one side, minimising them when he was being interviewed but you cannot ignore it all. When he was getting too close to the ones he was closing in on they made his life difficult, or dangerous.

He was affected all right. It's just that he was a strong man—as equally strong as the guilty parties were (and are) morally weak.

THE PAIN OF FINDING OUT

Then there was Leslee—the woman that John loved, and the pain of finding out that she was living a huge lie. How he had walked into the centre of a high profile criminal case totally innocently, and his curiosity getting the better of him as he found out piece by piece what really happened. I think of the process, as he described it, a non-linear awakening as it all started to make sense to him years after the events transpired.

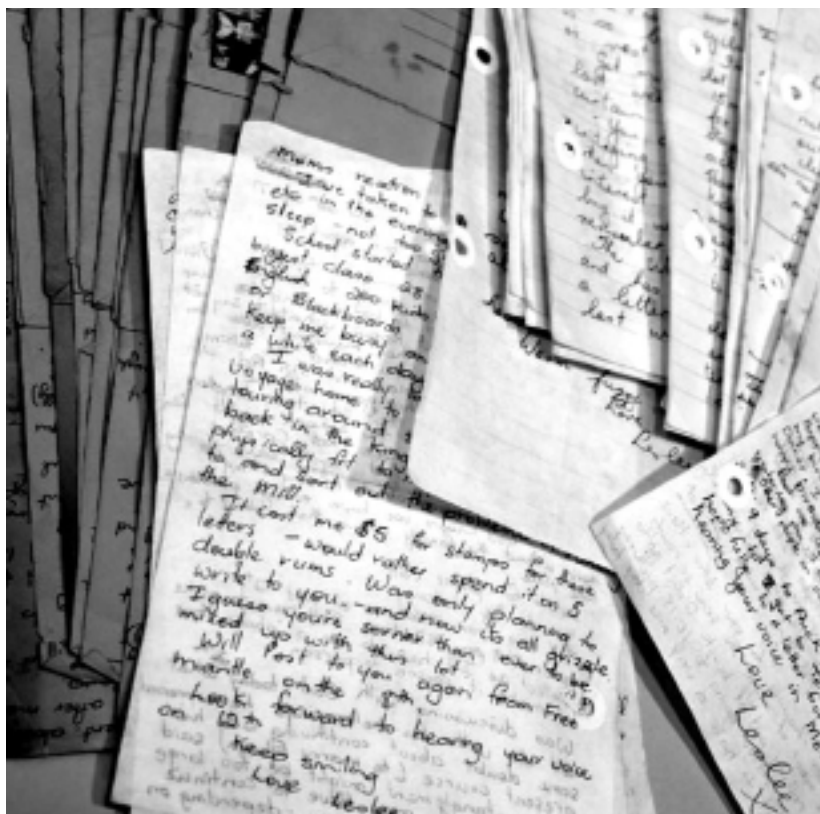
I can feel the pain as he realised, revelation by revelation that not

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only had he been conned, and lied to, but that he actually had the keys to a major New Zealand cold case, and that seemingly nobody else wanted to know.

I am struck also (as he said in his own summary) by the significance of so many women with power and money that pop up in John's research. French author Alexandre Dumas used a phrase in his works a hundred years ago, "*Cherchez la femme, pardieu! Cherchez la femme!*" which translates to, "Look for the woman, by God! Look for the woman!"

Doing this in John's case brings forth a trail of *femme fatales*—aristocratic English money that has flowed through to the New



APPLICATION OF TRANSMISSION - 27/AUG/1971

(SOT)

23/4/01/16

IN THIS DOCUMENT (2) IT IS NOTED ON THE 26/3/1970 JARRETTE WAS GRANTED TO LEND DEMLER A SUMMER CROWN AS TRUSTEES OF MRS DEMLER'S ESTATE. AS FURNISHED IN THE FINAL SETTLEMENT OF THE ESTATE.

HOWEVER IT WAS NOT UNTIL A LATER DATE 16/6/1970 JARRETTE PAID - JARED THE ESTATE ACCOUNTS AND GOT A PROVISIONAL BALANCE SHEET OF MRS DEMLER'S ESTATE. ONE MIGHT ADD AT THE TIME THIS ENTANGLED 2 TRUSTEES AND EXECUTORS OF THE ESTATE WHO REQUIRED THE SIGNATURES THAT STATED IN THE SCHEDULE OF THE TRANSMISSION OF THE ESTATE THAT NOW THERE WERE TWO TENANTS IN COMMON OF A UNDIVIDED HALF SHARE IN THE OWNERSHIP OF THE ESTATE (UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS)

AS REGISTERED PROPRIETORS

TO DATE I HAVE NOT SEEN A DOCUMENT RELATING TO JARRETTE CURRENT BEING A REGISTERED PROPRIETOR OF THIS PROPERTY. - ANY CLAIM WAS ANNULLED TOO DATE LATER - DEAD SHOULD AS IT MAY SEEM (16 MONTH LATER)

ON THE 27/AUG/1971 A SECOND APPLICATION OF TRANSMISSION FOR SOT 2 IS MADE BY LEND DEMLER THE SOLE SURVIVOR - EXECUTOR TRUSTEE.

AS NOTED, THE TRANSMISSION IN THE SCHEDULE HAS BEEN ALTERED (JUST A LITTLE BIT) TO COMPLY WITH JUST ONE EXECUTOR - PROPRIETOR GIVING LEND FULL CONTROL OVER THE TOTAL ESTATE - TO BE ACCEPTED BY THE COURT.

A MEMO DATED THE 22/NOV/1973 IN TANDON WITH THE APPLICATION RE M.C. DEMLER MAY OR MAY NOT GIVE ONE SOME INSIGHT INTO A NOT SO PERFECT LEGAL SYSTEM

IT WOULD ADVISE: IN THIS CASE, IF THE FIRM WONT ~~BE~~ ^{BE} PREPARED, THEN ~~REND~~ ^{REND} HANDLING THE ~~NUMBER~~ ^{NUMBER} DING INTO SHARE UNTILL IT IS ACCEPTABLE. (BEARING IN MIND) AT THIS POINT IN TIME JARRETTE CREWE COULD OR WOULD NOT HAVE BE ABLE LAY CLAIM TO ANY SHARES - NOT OR FILE AS REGISTERED OWNER - PROPRIETOR OF LANDS NO BE INHIBITED FROM MRS DEMLER M.C. DEMLER AN OPINION OF A STAGE WILL GET RID OF WITH THIS PART OF THE TRADING AREA.

The author's handwritten research notes includes thoughts, questions, frequent spelling and grammar errors, but solid research and sound logic. In this example John discusses the complex issues surrounding Len Demler's post-murder financial shenanigans.

Zealand offspring of which Jeanette Crewe was intended to be the next in line as one of the matriarchal inheritors.

STRUGGLE WITH DYSLLEXIA

One of the things that I have a unique handle on as publisher, that has been concealed in the writing process, is John's struggle with dyslexia.

Common with those with autism, or other conditions on the Asperger's/ASD scale, John had unique giftings but he also struggled in other areas. He left school early for the practical world and had a unique way of phonetic spelling. He had to write and rewrite his pages often more than once in order to get it right.

Writing a book for John was a huge uphill battle—perhaps even an impossibly high mountain—for which he needed a lot of help. Even the title of this book caused him endless grief; *The Plot Thickens*; *Legacy of Silence*; *Legacy of Greed* and finally *I Fed the Baby*. Easy for some . . . not so for John.

An example (opposite) of one of John's hundreds of research pages shows frequent spelling errors, including detailed rewrites and corrections. This sample page will have started with multiple handwritten scripts, then moved into this capitalised handwritten version then a typed version done by a local lady, then numbered in preparation for passing on to his editor.

He would also pop in to answer myriads of questions, sometimes up to three or four hours a visit, while his family would have to wait outside in their car. His work was a major struggle and commitment.

A LIST OF 'IFS'

The flip side of this uniqueness though was that he had a natural capacity for lateral thinking—thinking outside of the box.

If Leslee confessed to being there at the time of the murders and there was violence sufficient to knock out half a dozen of Jeannette's front teeth, could this be the same event that knocked out Leslee's teeth too, especially seeing as Leslee wouldn't talk about how she lost them?

If the Police had motive to gain a conviction at any cost (even to the point of perjury and planting of evidence) then wouldn't they ignore or minimise meaningful information for others that wanted to follow the evidence and find the 'real' truth?

If Len Demler and his second wife Norma never lived together and if she got paid out, and if the laws back then gave spousal privilege (meaning that she could never been forced to provide evidence against him) then perhaps this was a marriage of convenience and yet another indicator pointing to foul play?

If the Demlers had access to Sections 67 & 68 (incidentally never discussed in the Mainstream media nor mentioned as possibilities in the hoopla surrounding the crime) then wouldn't it be natural for them to dispose of the bodies in the river from there, where their presence would not be questioned?

If Leslee was retrieving a Ladies Companion pistol from Chennell's old house and the UK report said that there was a greater probability that the bullets that killed the Crewes were fired from a pistol then perhaps . . .

You get the picture. These were the kinds of questions that John would ask—logical to him, yet only obvious to others when their attention is drawn to it.

FEEL FOR MATTERS OF TRUTH

As a Private Investigator myself, I know how you can get a feel for matters of truth when you are on a case. Truth has a distinctive aroma. Sometimes it is not what is said that catches our attention, it is more what is not said that speaks volumes.

Other times it is the way something is spoken—a specific word used, or a turn of phrase, or (when in person) with body language, eye contact, or lack of. In writing it can be a false signature, or a word rewritten; perhaps a whole paragraph crossed out, corrected and even rewritten as knowledge increases or as events occurring over time change things.

I have a lot of time for John's research and deductive skills. In doing preparation work for this book, I would analyse his corrections and additions to his notes for clues not only on what he said, but understanding the 'why' of the changes he made.

I found a high level of credibility in his investigative work, coming to the conclusion that he was indeed one of those rare breed that humbled themselves sufficiently to show a deep and genuine respect for the truth.

This is not to say however that he got everything right. His legal

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understanding wasn't high being 'uneducated' in this regard, but he wasn't a fool and could most certainly smell a rat.

DID LEN BEND THE TRUTH?

At the time of writing I'm still undecided about John's take that Len Demler manipulated the order of probate to his (and Heather's) benefit and to remove Jeannette's entitlement to what his wife Maisie had intended.

My understanding is that a probate simply authenticates a will legally. The order of deaths is the key factor in determining gifting. It seems to me that John over emphasises the importance of the date of probate, but most definitely the granting of estate executorship to Len (as a result of Jeannette's murder) opened the door to his ultimate control and misappropriation.

The point though is that the end results of the skulduggery that occurred shows that something untoward must have happened. Maisie's intent was clearly circumvented. That Jeannette was killed is the proof of this.

I Fed the Baby was never intended to be an encyclopedic documentary of a cold case crime from 1970. It was also never intended to become an answer to all the questions that remain. One would need a lifetime and substantial resources to achieve that.

John's work though has provided three answers, first, a revelation of the identity of a key player in the crimes (Leslee); secondly it revealed the murder weapon (a Ladies Companion, .22 'pepperbox' pistol); and thirdly it detailed the motive for the crime (a family feud over substantial misappropriated inheritance money).

For that we all owe John Ingley and all those who helped him along the way, a huge debt of gratitude.

Dennis A Smith

Abundant Past Ltd, Q2, 2019

**I
Fed
the
Baby!**

For decades, a conspiracy of silence has surrounded the real people at the centre of the murders of Jeannette & Harvey Crewe in Pukekawa, 1970.

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Forget the theories & hype of authors, news media, corrupt cops, dodgy evidence & false legal verdicts. Join with this investigator on a journey from the murders back through wills, land ownership & trusts to England . . . and forward to real-life death threats, stone-walling, obfuscation, frustration & more.

Posthumous publication was promised to him, and this investigator, knowing the identity of the mystery women [pl], now takes aim himself at the murderers.

John Ingley [1943-2017] was a hunter & bushman born in the central North Island of New Zealand. His questions relating to his relationship with the woman who confessed to feeding the Crewe baby triggered a hunt for the truth; an investigation that consumed decades.



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