



NEWSLETTER 8: CURLEWIS FAMILY TREE UPDATE: JUNE 2020

Dear Family,

It has been 6 months since my last newsletter and some of you may be wondering why there has been such a long hiatus on the family tree front from my side. So allow me to explain and give feedback.

Well, a few things happened, which necessitated pause and reflection from my side whilst still very much staying in the game of genealogy and working hard behind the scenes.

If you remember the last post was my Newsletter 7i (December 2019) re the ABW and 7ii would follow; to discuss the 2 Curlewis men interned at Bermuda during the ABW.

While intensifying my research on the ABW POW camps in St Helena, Bermuda, Ceylon, India and Portugal; I also had to find out who the second Curlewis male was who was interned at Bermuda together with the first, namely Robert Gray Curlewis.

It was in this very time that Basil forwarded an email from Ian Curlewis (Perth, Australia) to me, who turned out to have the exact same query re Bermuda as myself!

John Curlewis started a FB page for the Curlewis family across the world. Some of you have already joined, and will know that John nominated Megan Curlewis who runs the curlewis.net site from Australia and myself to update and document the South African Curlewis family information.

Through the above group, I made contact with Willie Curlewis, Ian's cousin, who just like Ian, was eager to find out who the second Curlewis was on Bermuda.

To find the illusive James Frederick Curlewis was vital information for my next Newsletter and so I had to do a lot of digging so to speak. It was an "eureka moment" for Ian, Willie and myself when I eventually managed to find "our man". Willie and Ian who have a vast knowledge of the SA Curlewis family and of course of Robert Gray, who was their grandfather; helped me to fill in the gaps to this fascinating story.

Apart from my search for the above, I also redesigned a family unit history sheet and in collaboration with Ian and Willie, I have just completed the first sheet, namely that of Rev FJ Curlewis. This will be forwarded to Megan so that she is able to update her site. Her site so by the way, is an excellent virtual library to all the Curlewis families.

What thus started out as a family tree for our Curlewis family bloodline, has now become a quest to ensure that the complete family tree of all South African Curlewis's for both the James - & Walter roots are documented; to be as detailed and factually correct as possible. This is a huge undertaking, but I am up for this challenge 100%. There are many more family sheets to complete and much more intensive research and collaboration needed from various SA Curlewis families, including yourselves at some point.

Ian has a treasure trove of Curlewis photos, memorabilia and diaries written by his father and mother and has also uncovered many facts about our own Curlewis family, as has Willie. This collaboration and fact checking mission, is well worth it and exactly what I was hoping and aiming for.

Whilst I will be doing the broader research on the SA Curlewis families; I will still be writing the newsletters for our own Curlewis family. The piece on the POW at Bermuda is thus in the pipeline and I hope to render this piece to you very soon. If I have piqued your interest with regards to the mysterious James Frederick Curlewis; you will have to wait a little longer. All will be revealed in good time.

Lastly, I do suppose that no one in the world has been left untouched by the corona virus that has devastated every sphere of society and has affected individuals, families and communities as a whole.

For a while I found myself creatively stifled, unable to focus and experienced the worst case of writer's block! Apart from the Family Tree, I dabble with poetry and short stories on the side, but simply did not have the gumption or energy for any of this for the largest part of lockdown.

Slowly but surely, I am getting my groove back, as I, like the rest of world, try to make sense of these tumultuous times and reach a state of new "normal".

Please stay safe and healthy where ever in the world you may be. Till next time...

Fondest regards,

Frances