

## Turvey and the Kiwis

At some point in the 1850's something significant changed in Turvey. What happened is not clear, whether a crisis in farming, housing, employment or religion, or just a persuasive sales talk in the Village Hall of the day. It lead directly to some 40 people from Turvey families leaving the village to start a new life in New Zealand.

It seems that the first to go – on the ship **Sir George Seymour** in 1850 was a Brick-maker by the name of William Garlick (1830-1900), with his wife Sarah (1831-1881 née Ayres) and an unnamed child. They were travelling in steerage class on one of the first four colonist ships to reach New Zealand. The Kiwis are quite proud of these pioneers and there are commemorative plaques in Christchurch.

The reports coming back must have been favourable, so in October 1851, on the ship **Canterbury**, they were followed by Arthur Gibbs (a cousin 1813-1900 ) with his wife Rachel (née Harley 1815-1900, married in Turvey 1832) .

In 1855 on the ship **Cashmere**, his brother James (1820-1864) followed with his son Thomas, and his niece Elizabeth. He was recently widowed after the death of his wife Mary Huckle in 1847, . The 3 travelled on the ship Cashmere arriving in October 1855. The journey time was 3 months or more and could take in far flung points such as Cape Town or Tristan da Cuhna – it was a long time by sail before the age of steamships and the Suez canal. Organising these trips must have been difficult with messages coming back 100 days after an 100 day voyage, and this was before the days of rapid travel by train.

Also on the Cashmere was James' sister Kezia (1816-1884), who had married farmer Benjamin Bailey (1816-1904) in 1838 at Turvey, and their son John.

In September 1856 the ship **Egmont** carried the eldest Gibb son George (1810-1864) taking his wife Mary (1810-1876 née Powell, married 1832 Turvey), and 6 children. (Sarah, Hepzibah, Rosetta, Mary, William and Harry.) They had spent some time in Sussex before emigrating.

In September 1858 this Exodus from Turvey seemed to be completed when the ship **Zealandia** took 23 people from Turvey:

A Turvey Widow Elizabeth Drage (née Stanton 1820-1891) joined James Gibb – they married there in 1858) and took with her two children – Mary and James.

William, the youngest Gibb brother (1825-1880), his Lavendon wife Ann (1824-1904 née Marshall) and their 4 children, Arthur, Elizabeth, George and Samuel. A widow, Mrs Rachel Markham, (1793) who had lived with the Gibbs family in Turvey accompanied them.

Sister Elizabeth (1818 – 1900, sister in law to the original Sarah Garlick, who had married Thomas Ayres 1817-1886 in 1841 in Turvey) and their children, Samuel, Sarah and Thomas, plus Rebecca, born en route.

With them were Henry Wooding 1820, his wife Sarah (1822, née Bailey, sister to Benjamin) and their children Elizabeth and John, plus Charles Skevington (1831-1906) , his wife Ann (1833- née Sinfield) and Mary Ann and Charles Edward.

It should be noted that those going out to New Zealand were volunteers, not convicts or guards as might have been the case for New South Wales or Tasmania. There seems to have been an assisted

passage system in place to populate the territories being carved out of virgin lands.

There doesn't seem to be many traces of Turvey in New Zealand today, just a couple of street names, but it may be that they were too busy building farms and roads to get round to naming new settlements. The Maoris, who got there 600 years before those from Turvey do seem to have left their mark on the place names. The Gibbs brothers all had houses close to each other, and the settlement became known as Gibbs Town, but this changed to Woodend, Waimakariri.

Why so many would leave at the same time is unknown. The Gibbs' father George (1792-1838) a Turvey shepherd had died some years earlier, while their mother Mary (1786 née Stanton) died in 1853, leaving just one sister in Turvey – Hepzibah, who had married William Hartwell in 1848. It may be that there was a religious aspect, in that one of the first things that the Turvey ex-patriates did in 1858 was to erect a Methodist Chapel in the new township of Woodend.

The chapel still stands, albeit a bit knocked about by the major earthquake in Christchurch 2011. Earthquakes are not new to New Zealand, and there were major quakes in 1853 and 1858, which may have unsettled the new settlers.

Today there are many Gibbs, Ayres, Woodings, Skevingtons, Garlicks and Stantons out in New Zealand, all who can trace their roots back to Turvey. There may have been more, but the facsimile copies of the ships logs do not always list the town or village of origin.