**Foreword**

*The photo that started it all!*

I never thought that going to a housewarming party at Aunty Betty’s would turn me into a genealogy fiend, who travelled the world looking at family heritage, organised a family reunion, tramped graveyards looking for the right gravestone, learned to access the internet, email, gedcoms and spent hours looking at census and microfilms. But it did.

While at Betty O’Brien’s housewarming we had the photo below taken. Many weeks later I was trying to name those in the photo so went to Aunty Betty. Within a very short time I was caught hook, line and sinker by the stories of my forebears.

![Photo](image.jpg)

*Back row: Nancy Shirley, James Shirley, Gaybrielle Langdon, Kath Woodley, Christine O’Brien, Chris Shirley, John Goldfinch, Norman Redman
Front: Joan Redman, Betty O’Brien, Rosemary Kerin, Rosemary Goldfinch, Julie Shirley
Photo taken c2002*

Not everyone will agree with everything in this book - there are many points of view on some episodes and our ancestors were not saints! As far as possible I have substantiated everything with certificates and newspaper articles. Please let me know if you have another view of an event.

Thank you to Viv for the editing - it has been a long and tough job! This book would not exist without you. Thank you to Margaret, Maggie, Joan, Christine, Michael, Colleen, Terry, Jonlys, Jan, Morny and others who have spent time with me. Thank you to everyone who unfailingly helped. I have met and made hundreds of new friends, from all over the world. I hope you find the result both informative and entertaining.

*Kath Woodley, August 2010*
When the Irish arrived in New Zealand, they were frequently greeted with the derisive term ‘Bog Irish Micks.’ To be called any of these three words individually or together was to start a brawl. Irish were considered by many to be the lowest of the low, fit only for domestic service or as labourers. Within a generation there were O’Brien lawyers, bank managers, broadcasters, film makers and even an All Black.

So now I use the term ‘Bog Irish Micks’ in a loving and proud sense to indicate where we have come from and where we are now - due to the courage, hardship, loneliness and often, I am sure, despair of our ancestors who chose to come to New Zealand to make a home.

**Dedication**

To the five children from the marriage of John O’Brien and Margaret Malone who all left Scariff, Ireland between 1874 and 1893. We are their dreams come true.

**Ed: Kath Woodley 2010**