



Reflections

Newsletter of the
Phillip Island and District
Genealogical Society Inc.

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PRESIDENT : PAT BOWEN 0405 319 584

SECRETARY : MALCOLM SWAINE 0418 178 343

Postal Address: PO Box 821, Cowes, Victoria. 3922

E-mail: piadgs@gmail.com

Opening hours: Tuesday 10 am – 1 pm
Thursday 10 am – 4 pm
Friday 1 pm – 4 pm
Saturday 10 am – 1 pm

web page : www.piadgs.org.au

Reflections Editor: Jan Andrews

E-mail: janani@waterfront.net.au

Our Premises

Following on from the reference to this topic last month in our newsletter, we are pleased to be able to advise that real progress has been made. In our last newsletter we mentioned that PIADGS might no longer have its own room but be allocated space in an enlarged library. The overall concept for the proposed new centre is one of shared space and facilities.

There is, however, recognition of the unique and personal relationship that PIADGS has with its members and the need for proximity of our research library and computers. Our members value the privacy of our rooms for research and interaction in a dynamic yet private and discrete environment, both with other researchers and the duty volunteer. We have stressed the importance of an identifiable enclosed space for PIADGS.

Fortunately, as mentioned last month, the renovations of our "old rooms" have been really well done, providing more space and light. Whilst the new development is still conceptual, we have been advised that when it is completed we could move back to our old, refurbished, rooms, possibly just sharing the office with the Historical Society. This would mean that we could continue to provide the personal and convenient member service with which you are all familiar. We would also have access to various meeting rooms and a kitchen etc. in the new centre.

In December there will be an information tent in front of the Cultural Centre outlining the concept for the new centre. We encourage you to attend as this is an exciting development that has the potential to create a new and vibrant hub for Cowes and the Island.

Christmas Closure: Saturday 19th December - reopening Tuesday 12th January

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

All meetings are held at our rooms, 56 Chapel St., Cowes

Saturday 28 November from 12 noon. **Christmas lunch at the San Remo Hotel.** This is a popular function. Do make a note in your diaries to keep the date free.

RSVP by November 23 to piadgs@gmail.com (Christmas Lunch)
or to Pat 0405 319 584

Tuesday 26 January 2016 12 noon. **Australia Day BBQ**

Saturday 6 February 2016 1.30 pm – 4 p.m. **Family Tree Maker User Group**

YOUR COMMITTEE 2015 – 2016


Helen Swaine

Genevieve Hayes, Liz Bowen, Jan Andrews, Bob Hayes
Bernie Billman (treasurer), Susan Lilley (vice-president), Pat Bowen (president), Malcolm Swaine (secretary)

Photo courtesy Phillip Island & San Remo Advertiser

Unfortunately Christine O'Donnell, who was elected to the committee, has had to resign due to her move off the Island. We thank her for her involvement over the past year and look forward to seeing her in the rooms from time to time.



We are very pleased to advise that Linda Patterson has accepted the Committee's invitation to fill the vacancy. Linda has been one of our most regular researchers over the past months and we greatly look forward to working with her and getting new ideas and input from her.

The 1939 Register

This register was a survey of the civil population of England and Wales in September 1939 and contains personal details of 41 million people collected by the British Government.

The register is now available online through *findmypast*. A preliminary search will only reveal (if available) the names, birth year, borough/district and county of a person being searched. To access further information *findmypast* requires payment to 'unlock' a household. Even with a subscription to *findmypast*, payment is required to 'unlock' a household. The unlocked information should include the name, date of birth, sex, occupation and marital status of every household member, including the original record image which may include some surrounding houses. (Records for persons under 100 years of age are closed until proof of death has been verified).

The cost to unlock a household is: \$13.50 (60 credits) for one household, \$48.50 (300 credits) for 5 households, \$106.50 (900 credits) for 15 households. (Credits expire after 90 days if not used). You do not need a subscription.

Given the cost involved, great care needs to be exercised to ensure that the correct household is being 'unlocked' before proceeding. A preliminary check of more than one known household member will help to ensure that the correct household is being unlocked.

This information was taken from <http://www.findmypast.com.au/>



Expect the Unexpected – an African Journey

Pat Bowen September 2015

David Bowen, born in Wales in 1744, is my earliest known paternal ancestor. His son, Owen, was a shoe maker in Llandeilo.



His grandson, a second David, moved to Alfreton, Derbyshire, England, where he became a reputable clock maker.

I was fortunate enough to view one of his clocks in a private collection in 2014.

Breaking the family tradition, his son, Alfred, left England for the Cape in 1875. The detailed diary of his voyage is in the Grahamstown Museum in South Africa. Alfred joined the mounted police. My second cousin has the handgun issued to him, inscribed with his name.

Alfred Bowen married Carolina Smith in the Eastern Cape in 1883. Carolina's grandfather was George Smith, the source of many family myths. As a child I remember hearing on numerous occasions how Captain George Smith had escorted Napoleon to exile on Elba, and then again fought against him at Waterloo. In 1820, George Smith was said to have led an expedition of settlers to the Cape, calling in on Napoleon, whom he knew personally, at St Helena on the way to the Cape.

I was able to confirm that Lieutenant, not Captain, George Smith was part of the party that escorted Napoleon to Elba. He fought at Waterloo where he was injured. He received a medical discharge and did lead a party of 71 settlers to the Cape in 1820. Correspondence between George and the relevant authorities, when he was applying for permission to lead the settler group, makes fascinating reading. For example his letter to Earl Bathurst starts:

Your most humble Petitioners, being His Majesty's most Loyal and most faithful subjects, doth most Humbly pray that your Lordship will condescend to listen to the prayers of the Petitioners

I was not able to confirm whether the ship, the *Stentor*, stopped at St Helena on the way to the Cape, but Napoleon was still alive on the island at the time.

On my maternal side, also in Africa, my grandfather was Hendrik Johannes Visser. He married my grandmother, Marjorie Bain, in 1919 in Windhoek, now in Namibia. This was a marriage between English and Afrikaner in South Africa less than 20 years after the Boer War. Both sets of parents disapproved of the marriage and were not mentioned in the wedding invitation. Hendrik Johannes' names were anglicised and he was known as Henry John. Hendrik Johannes had fought in WW1 and had been taken prisoner in the battle of Delville Wood on 12 Oct 1916.

My grandmother, Marjorie Bain, has a very interesting Scottish ancestry, traced back to Alexander Bain born in Thurso in 1772. He married Jean Geddes in 1792 and many of their descendants have Geddes as one of their given names. Their son, Andrew Geddes Bain, (my 3rd great grandfather), emigrated to the Cape in 1816. He was a recognised explorer, road engineer, and geologist. His exploits with various African chiefs are well documented and he was the first European to penetrate as far as Dithubaruba in Bechuanaland, now Botswana. 'Bains Kloof' on the Garden Route in the Eastern Cape was named after him. He was also a pioneer in early geology and discovered the fossil *Dicynodon Bainii*.

As a child I was made very aware of this famous ancestor and his exploits. My research so far had, as expected optimistically, confirmed the family stories. So I turned to the Afrikaans connections.

Andrew Geddes Bain's son, Thomas Charles, (my 2nd great grandfather), had married Johanna Hermina de Smidt on 26 June 1856. Tracing her ancestors unearthed a huge range of Afrikaner and Dutch names – names such as Muller, Redelinghuys, Wessels, Essel, Bezuidenhout, Pretorius, Nell, Zaaiman, and Krotoa. I did not think that Krotoa was Dutch so decided to investigate. Did I 'expect the unexpected'?

Eva Krotoa was born about 1642. She was the first Hottentot (indigenous African) woman to appear in European records of settlement at the Cape as an individual personality and active participant in cultural and economic exchange. Jan van Riebeeck was the first Governor of the Cape when the colony was founded in 1652. Eva joined his household at the fort at the age of 12. She had a flair for language and became a translator and assisted in negotiations between the Dutch and various Hottentot tribes. She converted to Christianity and was the first Hottentot to be baptised. In 1664 she married a Danish surgeon, Pieter van Meerhof, and they had three children.

Pieter van Meerhof was an adventurer, traveller and surgeon. In 1661, he is recorded as the first white man at the Cape to see a giraffe. This was at Meerhofskaasteel, named after him. On an expedition with the slaving ship *Westwout* to Antogil Bay in Madagascar, he was killed in 1668.

After Pieter's death Eva became an alcoholic and was eventually sent to the prison colony on Robben Island for disorderly conduct. She died in 1674 and was given a Christian burial.

On 10 August 2012, Eva Krotoa had a city square in Cape Town named after her. She was acknowledged as 'one of the most influential women at the Cape ...' She also had commemorative post cards and postage stamps issued in her honour in South Africa.



Many prominent 'white' South Africans are descended from Eva Krotoa: the first Transvaal President, Paul Kruger, Prime Minister Jan Smuts, and President F.W. de Klerk who was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize jointly with Nelson Mandela.

Eva was my 9th great grandmother. I plucked up courage to delve further into her children.

I was learning to expect the unexpected: there was a book about Eva's daughter, Pieterella, my 8th great grandmother. *Pieterella: daughter of Eva* by Dalene Matthee, published by Penguin in 2009.

Pieterella and her siblings were among the first mixed-race children born in the Cape. After Eva's sudden and untimely death, Pieterella and her younger brother Salomon were sent to hurricane and drought afflicted Mauritius, a penal colony at the time, to work as slaves to foster parents. Pieterella married a free burgher, Daniel Zaaiman, at the age of 14 to get out of slavery. Daniel gave her a slave as a wedding present. With a strong marriage and ultimately a large family they survived hardships in a brutal and often lawless place. Initially Pieterella just wanted to return to the Cape. By the time she and Daniel were forced to return (when the Dutch gave up the colony) she wanted to stay in Mauritius where she had forged a life and identity.

Eva and Pieterella – in family history, expect the unexpected.

NEW IN OUR LIBRARY

Buchanan, Gregor	Penguin land : how Phillip Island's little penguin beat the property developers and won an eighty year battle for survival
Twomey, Christina	Deserted and destitute. Motherhood, wife desertion and colonial welfare
Adam-Smith, Patsy	Australian women at war
Smith, Babette	The luck of the Irish. How a shipload of convicts survived the wreck of the <i>Hive</i> to make a new life in Australia
Lord, Richard	The Isle of the Dead. Inscriptions on the headstones and historical background of the cemetery at the Port Arthur penal establishment 1830-1877

PHILLIP ISLAND IN THE NEWS – 100 years ago

"Bottled" Messages from a Transport.

A bottle containing three messages was picked up on the beach at Orpe Wollamai, Phillip Island, by a party of mutton bird hunters. The messages had evidently been written on board one of the transports. On one slip were the words, "Good-bye, Melbourne, from Sapper Jones, 11th Reinforcements, 2nd Co. Engineers," and on the reverse side—"Farewell Australia." Another slip bore the message—"Farewell, Australia; from Sapper Jones and H. Wilson," and the third, "Farewell, Melbourne, from Sappers Jones, Davies, Shebla, Murphy, Rogers, Martin and Tope." Sapper Jones gave his address at 213 Adderly street, West Melbourne.

The Argus. Wednesday 8 December 1915

San Remo Patriotic Picnic Sports.

PLEASANT DAY'S OUTING.

Fine cool weather favored San Remo for the Patriotic Picnic Sports on Wednesday, December 29. There was a very large attendance, about £25 being taken at the gate. Several motor car loads of Wonthaggi visitors made the journey and special trips were made by the Genista and Ripple with patrons from Phillip Island ports. Had there been a few more horses present the contest would have excited more interest. The course was in excellent order. Those present included the three shire council representatives of the locality (Cr Steenholdt acted as judge) a sprinkling of Melbourne bookmakers and exploiters of race course throngs. The stewards and office bearers of the club were efficient in the discharge of their several duties and the energetic secretary, Mr E. H. Smith, is to be congratulated on the result. Arrangements will probably be made to have a registered race meeting next February. At night a patriotic ball was held in the Shire hall and largely attended.

Powlett Express and Victorian State Coalfields Advertiser.
Friday 7 January 1916

NEW BATTALIONS.

The twelve Victorian territorial areas from which units will be drawn for the new Australian force of 50,000 men have now been fixed by the State recruiting authorities. The following are included:—

58th Battalion.—To be raised from the territorial area embracing the following civic, municipal or local bodies:—Berwick, Brighton, Caulfield, Cranbourne, Dandenong, Flinders and Kangarong, Fern Tree Gully, Frankston and Hastings, Hawthorn, Malvern, Moorabbin, Mornington, Mulgrave, Oakleigh.

Cowes.

The visitors to Phillip Island held a New Year's Eve carnival and fancy dress procession, and £19 was raised, while £2 3s was collected by Mrs T. Spillane, and £1 13s 6d by sales of confectionery. Of this amount £16 10s was given to the Cowes sewing branch of the Red Cross Society and the remainder to the public library. Since the war began the residents of Phillip Island, about 450, have collected for the Patriotic Fund £120, Red Cross Funds £89, Belgian Fund £393, Shire Roll of Honour £12; total, £615.—

Powlett Express and Victorian State Coalfields Advertiser. Friday 7 January 1916

San Remo.

There was an unusually large influx of visitors to this place during the holiday season. The weather being exceptionally fine they had a good time. On New Year's Eve the customary orchestral assemblage supplied with tin pots and kettles to honor the incoming year was on the jetty at midnight expecting every moment to take the lead from the delighted screech of the steam whistle of the S.S. Genista, which have never failed on any other similar occasion since the arrival of the vessel in Westernport. But "the trumpet spake not to the armed throng" and a damper fell on the spirits of the would-be music makers from which they had some difficulty in recovering. The popular explanation of this omission on the part of the Genista is that she had a cold in her siren. Even Madam Melba does not sing when suffering from catarrh of the larynx.

Powlett Express and Victorian State Coalfields Advertiser. Friday 7 January 1916

59th Battalion.—To be raised from the territorial area embracing the following civic, municipal or local bodies:—Alberton, Avon, Bairnsdale, Buln Buln, Healesville, Maffra, Mirboo, Morwell, Narracan, Omeo, Orbost, Poowong and Jeetho, Rosedale, Sale, South Gippsland, Tambo, Traralgon, Walhalla, Warragul, Woolamai and Phillip Island (including Wonthaggi), Woorayl.

The 59th Battalion is to be known as "The Gippsland."

Gippsland Mercury (Sale), Friday 7 January 1916

Source: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/home>

MORE FREE INTERNET SITES

- Historic Walhalla <http://www.walhalla.org.au/>
- From weaver to web. Online visual archive of Calderdale history. Covers the towns of Hallifax, Brighouse, Elland, Hebden Bridge, Cowerby Bridge & Todmorton in Yorkshire. <http://www.calderdale.gov.uk/wtw/index.html>
- Sussex online parish clerk <http://www.sussex-opc.org/>
- New Zealand Defence Force Personnel Files <http://archives.govt.nz/world-war-one>
- World War 1 Pictorial Honour Rolls of Australians <http://www.ww1anzac.com/>
- Catholic Parish Registers at the National Library of Ireland <http://registers.nli.ie/>
- Their duty done. A tribute to the men and women of the East Gippsland region who died as a result of their participation in World War One:- 1914 to 1919
<http://www.theirdutydone.com/tdd%20introduction.htm>
- Norway Genealogy website <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~wgnorway/>
- Ireland - Great parchment book <http://www.greatparchmentbook.org/>
- Jersey heritage catalogue <http://remote.jerseyheritage.org/>
- Glasgow Story <http://www.theglasgowstory.com>
- The Scottish Villages. Information on the villages of Scotland.
<http://www.the-scottish-villages.co.uk/>
- Old Bailey, London. Proceedings 1674 -1834 <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org>

A pack rat is hard to live with, but makes a fine ancestor



Best wishes for a very
merry Christmas
and a safe and happy
(and genealogically successful)
2016

IGA COWES

Anyone shopping at the IGA Grocery store in Cowes, please give our **Shopper Number 595** and all credits will go to the Phillip Island and District Genealogical Society Inc. It would be most appreciated by the Committee if you could spare a few points.

Contributions are accepted in good faith and the Newsletter Committee do not accept responsibility for accuracy of information or opinions expressed.
