

Reflections

Phillip Island and District
Genealogical Society Inc.

Inc. No A0023887G

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As our Club is about to move into new premises and a new era, I thought we could take a look back at our history courtesy of our previous editor, Jan Andrews.

The first meeting to form the Phillip Island and District Genealogical Society was held in the Phillip Island Library in June 1991 and the group was incorporated on 14 October 1991. Unfortunately, the list of those present has 'disappeared', but Stuart Thomas was elected as acting chairman, and Yvonne Hancock as acting secretary / treasurer until elections could be held. We initially met monthly in the library on a Saturday - Yvonne was the librarian - and had the use of two microfiche readers and very basic Victorian microfiche (not indexed) whenever the library was open. A third microfiche reader was lent to the group. Unfortunately, this caused the library to be evacuated when it burst into flames!

The first edition of 'Reflections' was published in June 1992. In 1996 we moved into the former Welfare Officers' rooms adjacent to the library. In 1998, just prior to her death, Yvonne Hancock gave us our first computer, scanner and printer. In 2013, when one of the external walls of our rooms was deemed unsafe, we moved to our current rooms. A lot has changed in 30 years!

EARLY LOCAL NEWSPAPERS: In 2009 P.I.A.D.G.S. used a grant to buy films of the San Remo Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser and the Western Port Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser from the State Library of Victoria. The only film reader we could afford at the time was one that attached to a microfiche reader. Unfortunately, the only way to read the films was to lie on your side. Not very practical, or comfortable! The films were put away and virtually forgotten. In 2019 P.I.A.D.G.S received grants from the Bass Coast Shire for \$1284.36 and the R.S.L. for \$1000 for the National Library of Australia to digitize these papers, the San Remo Times from 1896-1898 and the Western Port Times from 1898-1903. Covid 19 delayed digitization, but these papers are now available for searching on Trove. Our thanks to these two organisations for enabling this.

Our new home is a much smaller space and thus we will have to greatly reduce our equipment and library (85%?). We will keep locally relevant items, but hopefully some other items will be taken by GSV, other local societies or researchers. The remainder of the library will be offered for sale to members and the public.

Also, attached to this edition is a questionnaire. We would appreciate it if you could please have a read and respond. This will help us make decisions on the future of Reflections. Many thanks!

March 2024 Treasures, Troubles and Tea Afternoon

Our Treasures, Troubles and Tea afternoon was a great success.

Members entertained us with tales of family and childhood. Some of the treasures were beautiful crockery, fossicking finds, christening gowns, handmade

apprentice metal objects, an original naval record, pocket watch and velvet paintings. A sumptuous afternoon tea was followed by a discussion of research problems. Thank you to those who attended and to the committee who provided the food, lovely crockery and set up the room.



Member's Stories



Flood hero by Gail Wade

My 3rd great aunt, Bridget Goodwin and her husband, John Phillip Sheahan sailed to Australia on the ship, "Aliquis" from Cobh Harbour in Co. Cork, Ireland in 1838. In Australia, John began work by supervising his uncle's run of horse drawn coaches in Cootamundra, NSW for 4 years. They then moved to Jugiong, NSW and purchased the *Sir George Tavern*. As per the written history below the picture: In 1852 floodwaters from the Murrumbidgee washed away

the original structure killing 87 people and destroying the Tavern. John made 5 perilous trips in a rowboat and rescued 32 settlers, giving them refuge in his inn. The NSW Legislative Council recognised his feat by presenting him with a silver cup, which is still treasured in the family. He wasted no time in rebuilding the pub on higher ground with the help of some stonemasons from Ireland. The sandstone walls are 500cm thick and it has a real old-world charm. The tavern was owned and operated by succeeding generations of Sheahans and still stands today. Until it was sold out of our family in 2015 (after a period of about 153 years) it was the oldest continuously held family hotel in Australia. It is now known as the Sir George Hotel. Jugiong is on the Hume Highway between Melbourne and Sydney and the hotel is just a minute or two's drive from the highway.

MESMERISED by Jean Dunstan

What inspires someone to venture into the search of family history? In my case it was a series of things: my children's questions relating to the family background, my own curiosity, and my inheritance of a large carton full of photographs (mainly unlabelled) of, I guessed, family and friends and an assortment of letters and other documents.

So where to start? My initial efforts were rather ad hoc. I joined Ancestry.com, entered some names and followed the green leaf hints. This was confusing because some of the hints were contradictory. I then made some google searches, this gave me more unsubstantiated and confusing information. It was at this stage I sought help. Phillip Island and District Genealogy Society was suggested as a possible source of assistance.

I joined the group and was given just the direction I needed. By following their guidance and using their online programs I was able to find birth and death registration records which had other valuable information as well. It opened a whole new world for me, I was hooked.



I started by following my maternal line as I had a photo of four generations - me, my mother, her father and his father. From my personal relationship with my mother and, to an extent, her father, I knew much of the history of these two ancestors. When it came to my great grandfather William there were some anecdotal memories but nothing I could substantiate. I applied for his death record from Victorian Department of Births Deaths and Marriages. From this I was able to establish his date and place of death, his age at that time, where he had died and was buried, where he was born, the names of both his parents and his siblings.

An introduction to Trove enabled me to do further research and discover that he had been employed as Chief Officer in the Department of Wills and Probate with The Public Records Office of Victoria for 45 years. Oh, what an asset he would be for me today! Then, by following the paper trail back even further, I found the records relating to William's father's Death records which gave me information regarding his place of birth and the names of his parents, James and Emma.

James was born in South Pool, Devon, England. and migrated to Geelong Victoria with his brother Nicolas. They were both registered as shoemakers. William set up business in Geelong and Nicolas eventually moved to Ballarat.

Moving further back in time I sought information on James and his family prior to his immigration. The English Census forms from 1841 indicated that he had lived in Kingsbridge Devon with his parents William and Martha and was a shoemaker. By the time of the 1851 census, he was still living in Kingsbridge but in a house in Ebrington street with his wife Emma, his daughter Frances and their servant Susannah. His occupation was listed as Professor of Mesmerism.

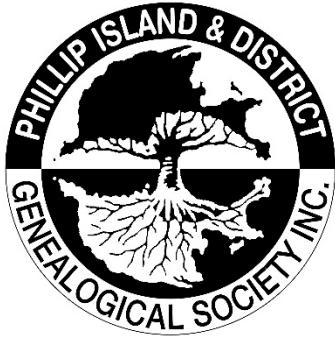
NO WONDER I HAD BEEN SO MESMERISED BY THE WHOLE PROCESS!

In this investigative process it seems that one revelation leads on to more questions. Why did James Leave England? and why did he not continue his chosen field of mesmerism as it seemed to provide him with a comfortable way of life in Kingsbridge. The challenge continues!

More stories to come in future editions of Reflections...

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.



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It would be very much appreciated if you could take five minutes to answer the questions below. This will help us to make decisions where this publication is concerned.
Thank you!

1. Do you read Reflections?
2. Do you find it interesting?
3. Is there anything you would prefer to read about?
4. Reflections comes out four times a year - is this too often?
5. Would you like to see more editions, ie monthly?
6. Would you like to see fewer editions?
7. Would you prefer to NOT receive Reflections?

Please send your response to sueviney@icloud.com

Many thanks!!