



Reflections

Phillip Island and District
Genealogical Society Inc.
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12th April 2025 – Opening Day – Trivia Afternoon

Members were invited to join together at the Newhaven Hall, to explore our new home and to learn about the new website.

Overall, everyone was pleased with what they found. There was a Trivia challenge (won by Lesley) and which really did challenge us. We thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon tea!



Island Characters:

(From Phillip Island Chronicle)

"She can crack walnuts with her teeth" and was the oldest subject of Queen Victoria. Her name was **Miss Eliza Coghlan**. This remarkable woman was employed by Mr James Duffus, who had selected Block 142 around the year 1873. She had worked for two generations of the Duffus family and was renowned for her hardiness and insistence of old traditions. "Old Eliza" as she was known to Islanders, was once met walking to Cowes (about 5 miles distance), carrying a heavy turkey for sale. When asked why she walked the journey, she replied: "The servant must not drive with the Master"



CATHERINE WALKER (nee KITTY MILLER)
Photographed with three of her children around 1888.
(The identity of the man and the youngest child in this photograph are unknown.
Records show that Catherine's husband, James Walker, died in 1885. Her youngest child was her daughter Flora, on left in the photo.)

leading to it from the north, is called Kitty Millers Bay Road.

Kitty is recognized as one of the pioneering women of Phillip Island despite not living permanently on the Island for more than a few years. But Kitty was a rarity – in the early 1870s at a time when women were seen and not heard, Kitty purchased the land in her own right and in her own name. She lived on Phillip Island during her teenage years and according to family information worked as a schoolteacher as she grew older. In December 1871 Kitty married James Walker, a butcher, after which she left the Island and lived in Melbourne.

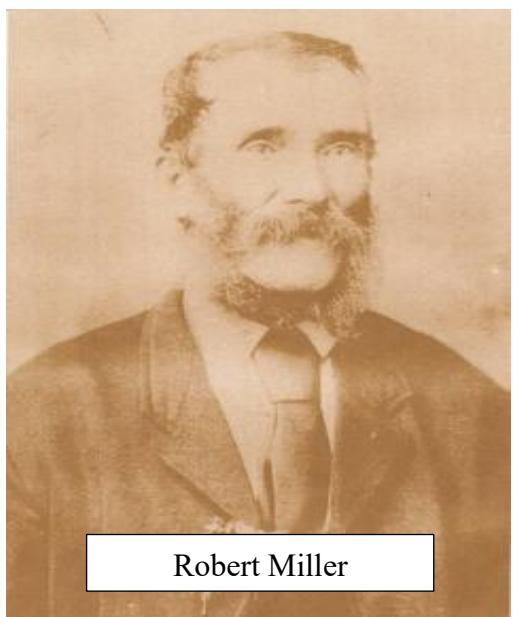
Who was Kitty Miller? (Pam Rothfield)

Kitty Miller was the name of Scottish born Catherine (Kitty) Miller, born in 1853, eldest daughter of Robert Commodore Miller and Flora McInnes.

The family arrived in Melbourne in July 1860 after a 140-day voyage on the ship, 'Merlin' when Kitty was only seven years old. They lived in Melbourne where Robert practiced his profession of a coachbuilder.

After 8 years in Melbourne, Robert entered his name in the ballot for land selection on Phillip Island on 2 November 1868. Robert's was the 22nd name to be drawn out of the ballot and he selected Lot 21 comprising 124 acres (50 ha) on the south side of the Island.

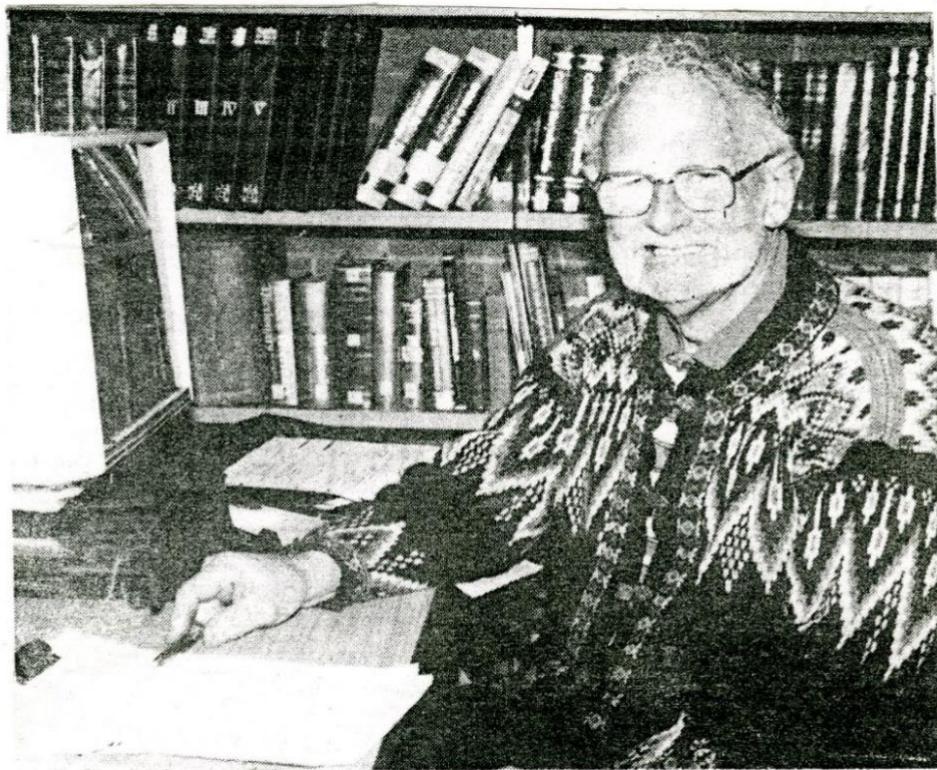
A short time later his daughter, Kitty, at the age of 18, selected 43 acres (17 ha), also on the southern coast of the island, near an almost circular bay, not far from her fathers' land. The bay became known as Kitty Miller Bay and the road



Robert Miller

Jan Andrews shared the following story with us:

Phillip Island & San Remo Advertiser 20 August 1992
(Note: Bernard passed away in June 2002)



Unique history of Islanders

In the real sense of the word, Bernie Grayden, of Cowes, has produced a truly unique book.

'Genealogy of Phillip Islanders 1842 - 1912,' is the only one in existence, and records the people who have lived and died on the Island in that period.

His records include early Island deaths.

The earliest listed are William Phillip Grossard, who died at the age of 62, and was buried at Grossard's Point, Ventnor, and baby Reuben Maria Phillips. Both died in 1869.

The book uses cemetery trust records from 1890 onwards. Records of deaths prior to that date were burnt in a house fire.

Mr Grayden said that, at that time, there was only one register, which was kept at the home of the trust secretary.

No such accident can now destroy the records, as copies are held by the cemetery trust secretary, and the cemetery committee; and there are two in the

shire offices.

Pre-fire records in the book were taken from local historical records and gravestones at the cemetery.

The book also contains a record of Phillip Island special events, births between 1854 and 1879, and family sequences.

Ancestors of the Grayden family were among the first on the Island. Mr Grayden's great-grandfather selected land at Newhaven in November, 1868.

You could say Mr Grayden started to prepare for the writing of this book about 50 years ago, when he first became interested in genealogy as a young man.

He is the first life member of the Phillip Island and District Genealogical Society, which was formed in June last year, and often works in the genealogical section of the library.

When microfiche facil-

ties were added to the library in 1988, he lent his own large collection of microfiche records and other historical material.

Interest has been shown by the Victorian Genealogical Society in having a copy of the book. It will be made available when the already extensive cemetery lists in it have been completed.

The book is a continuing project. New information will be added to, as time allows.

It represents a major contribution to the recorded history of the Island, and an outstanding achievement by a man who is deaf and unable to speak.

All conversations with him are conducted with pen and paper.

Although retired now, Mr Grayden spent 31 years making engine parts at the GMH factory at Dandenong.

George Cox: The Mailman of the Sea



There's no one left who remembers the little timber hut that once stood tucked into the Cowes foreshore, just east of the jetty. For more than thirty years, this modest shelter was home to George Cox—a man whose sea-worn face and adventurous tales made him a favourite among the local boys in the early years of the 20th century. They'd gather at his hut, spellbound by stories of distant ports and perilous voyages.

George was born in 1829 in Cromer, Norfolk—a coastal town in England where his life at sea began. As a boy, he caught crabs and lobsters for the London market, using hoop nets baited with flounder.

At sixteen, he was apprenticed as a sailor to Humphrey Middleton, spending four years aboard the brig Isabella, which hauled coal between Middlesbrough in North Yorkshire and Hamburg.

By 1849, having completed his indenture, George turned his sights to soldiering. He served in the 1852 assault on Rangoon and fought in the Indian Mutiny, where much of the Bengal army rose up against British rule. In 1854, while stationed at Gibraltar, he heard rumours of gold in Australia—and like so many others, he set sail for Melbourne.

George's first job in Victoria was brickmaking for Mr. Rennison in Northcote, where he also met and married Lucy Holmes. His strong work ethic earned him the trust of his employer, who later sent him to Mornington in 1863 to care for a pack of kangaroo dogs on his newly purchased cattle property. These 'sight-hounds'—including Greyhounds and Scottish Deerhounds—were prized by settlers for hunting kangaroo, emu and wallaby, and for guarding livestock.

George and Lucy built a small home in Mornington, where they raised four children. In 1873, they moved again—this time to Sandy Point (near present-day Somers), where George had accepted a new role: carrying mail from Frankston to Phillip Island three times a week. He began with a tiny boat, Bella, later upgrading to the Alert, a narrow 20-foot vessel.

The job was more than delivering letters. George and Lucy's home at Sandy Point became a makeshift depot, offering storage and accommodation for passengers, mail and goods whenever wild weather made sailing across Western Port impossible.

After Lucy's death in 1888, George was granted a fisherman's licence, which allowed him to build a hut on the Cowes foreshore—just a few yards east of the Isle of Wight Hotel. It became his final home.

On the morning of 23 June 1920, George vanished. At first it was thought he might have walked to visit Lucy's grave at the cemetery, but a search of the surrounding bush revealed nothing. It's believed he drowned, though his body was never found.

Following his death, George's hut was dismantled. For many years, the only trace of it was the remains of a fireplace he had cut into the red volcanic rock. Today, even that has disappeared, buried beneath the foreshore development that reshaped the coastline. All that remains is the story of a seafarer who found a home—and a kind of legend—on Phillip Island's shores.

Do YOU have a story to share with us... please contact or email Sue Viney: sueviney@icloud.com



To our members who use Family Tree Maker software. The FTM 2024 upgrade release is underway. Software MacKiev has just begun sending the emails with your FTM 2024 release and upgrade information. You should receive your upgrade information over the next few days. So ... keep your eyes on your in-box (and spam folder)! The emails including the update will be sent out gradually to avoid overwhelming the system.

To learn more about the upgrade to FTM 2024, here is the FTM 2024 FAQ:

<https://support.mackiev.com/963849-FTM-2024-FAQ>

Bookmark for your Diary:

Do not miss this workshop

June 21st – Newhaven Hall 1.30pm

Guest Speaker Dr Jenny Redman

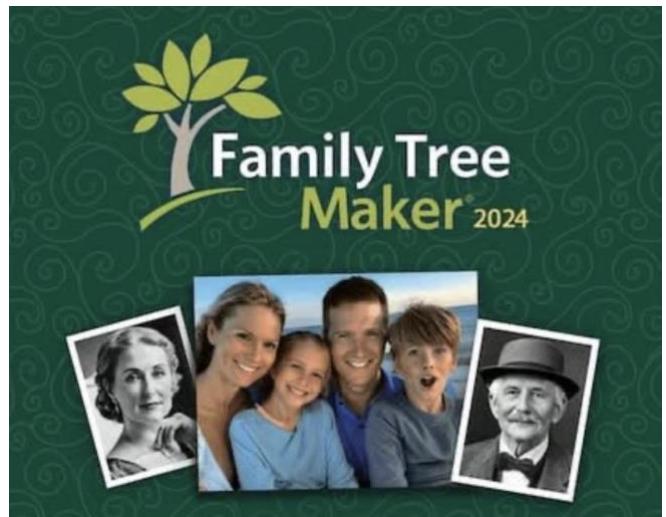
Subject: DNA and your Family History

We are excited to have Jenny from the GSV (Genealogical Society of Victoria) come and speak to us about DNA and how it can help your research

An opportunity for questions and answers

Check out our new Facebook Page:
Family History : Phillip Island & District

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1704498350155545>



Scottish Genealogy

5 Free Online Resources

- #1 [ScotlandsPeople \(search is free\)](https://scotlandspeople.gov.uk)
<https://scotlandspeople.gov.uk>
- #2 [Scottish Indexes](https://scottishindexes.com)
<https://scottishindexes.com>
- #3 [Scottish Post Office Directories](https://digital.nls.uk/directories)
<https://digital.nls.uk/directories>
- #4 [Scottish Emigration Database](https://abdn.ac.uk/emigration)
<https://abdn.ac.uk/emigration>
- #5 [Scottish Family History \(NLS\)](https://www.nls.uk/family-history)
<https://www.nls.uk/family-history>



Genealogy In Action with Julie Cahill Tarr
GenealogyInAction.com

