



Reflections

Newsletter of the
Phillip Island and District
Genealogical Society Inc.

Inc. No A0023887G

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Thursday 10 am – 4 pm
Friday 1 pm – 4 pm
Saturday 10 am – 1 pm

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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

Saturday 2 March Brick Wall Discussion Group 1.30 – 4 pm

Tuesday 2 April Family Tree Maker User Group 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm

Wednesday 17 April Introduction to Family History Research 1.00 pm to 4.00 pm
David Rathgen will be presenting an 'Introduction to Family History Research' session for those people interested in starting family history research but are not sure how to go about it.

Saturday 4 May Brick Wall Discussion Group 1.30 – 4 pm

AUSTRALIA DAY BARBEQUE

More photos on page 3



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.

A TRIP TO PHILLIP ISLAND in 1878

A TRIP TO PHILLIP ISLAND.

WE started from Melbourne, a few days before last Christmas, for a trip to Phillip Island; and to have a glimpse of the other interesting spots which lay along the route.

The first portion of the journey is to Schnapper Point, by coach. The road is a capital one, and the coach jogs along easy; but for all that the journey was very tedious. The coach was crowded, as it always is at the approach of the holidays, and the weather hot. These two disagreeables combined make anything but an agreeable trip. At Frankston a stop is made for ten minutes, and the horses changed: the rest of the journey is very soon accomplished. When we reached the Point we had refreshment, and a short look about us. The place was full of people. Every hotel was crowded out. People were compelled to sleep in their own buggies for want of accommodation. But this only occurs once a year, during the winter the hotels are without a visitor, and the place all-through is deserted, the shops not doing any business worth mentioning. After a very short interval we were again in the coach, and on our way to Dromana. We passed at the base of Mount Arthur, and gazed at its rugged outline towering up to the clouds. A grand spot it is, quite a favorite place for picnic parties, from both Schnapper Point and Dromana, but little known to Melbourne people. But as time rolls on, and the travelling accommodation improved the place will be quite as much a favorite for holiday rambles as Mount Macedon. We reached Dromana a little before dark, and put up there for the night. The next morning we started across the country to Hastings, a distance of about twelve miles. The land crossed is splendid for gardening, and some of the finest fruit that reaches the Melbourne market is grown there. A large portion of the land is taken up by selectors, but the soil is unfit for farming, consequently it is very unprofitable for that purpose. A thick scrub covers much of the land, and if it were not for the bush fires, which occur every summer and destroy a large portion of it, the land would be almost uninhabitable. We enjoyed the cross journey capitally, the kangaroo, wallaby, and nearly every description of Australian

bird abound on every hand. The roads were rather rough, but as we were on a pleasure excursion, and in no hurry we did not grumble about them. We reached Hastings about eleven o'clock. The population of Hastings is mostly fishermen, and nearly all the fish consumed in Melbourne comes from Hastings. We hired a boatman to take us across to Phillip Island, and were soon crossing Western Port Bay. The beach along Western Port Bay is a capital one. Shells are to be found in great profusion. When the tide is out you can drive a buggy along the sand, which is quite hard, for miles, and a better drive a king could never wish for.

At Cape Schanck the coast is very rocky. The sea constantly rolls mountains high against the huge cliffs. To look from the heights above, and see the waves come rushing in, filling the caves and chasms below, and casting their spray on every hand with a noise like thunder, is enough to shake the nerves of the strongest. There are treacherous rocks in every portion of Western Port Bay, and boating is very dangerous, except to the boatmen who know the place so well. Already two ships have been wrecked attempting to call at Phillip Island.

We reached Cowes, the township of Phillip Island, in due time. The township comprises two hotels, and a few scattered houses. A few years ago a good number of selectors took up land on the island, and tried to make farming pay, but they had to give up,—the price they had to pay to get their produce to market swallowed all the profit. Every year, about the middle of November, flock after flock of seabirds visit the island, and deposit their eggs in the sand, the heat of which hatches them. The people on the island make a general search in the sand for the eggs, and thousands of them are shipped for the Melbourne market, and sold as duck eggs, to which they bear a great resemblance both in appearance and taste. The snakes too, which are the pest of the island, also make away with a large number of the eggs, and in walking along the beach great care has to be exercised for fear of stepping on some of the reptiles, as they lay half buried in the sands in quest of the eggs. There are large flocks of wild duck on the island, and many large swans which are very tame. We spent the first two days in fishing and shooting in the

vicinity of Cowes, but the third day we made a circuit of the island, a distance of about thirty miles. The snakes kept us in a perpetual fright; there seemed to be no end to them. One of our party after being nearly bitten three times sat down on a rock and refused to move another inch, and it was only after a deal of persuasion that we could get him to resume the journey. We completed the circuit of the island before sunset, and thus ended our last day on the island. Two or three days

can be very well spent there by pleasure seekers, and as the place becomes better known, it will probably be largely patronized, and greatly improved. A Melbourne publican, with a shrewd eye to business, has purchased large allotments of land on the island, believing before long that it will be a favorite watering place. We started back home next morning early,—first to Hastings by boat, and from there to Melbourne by coach,—well pleased with the manner in which we had spent our Christmas holidays.

Mercury and Weekly Courier. Saturday 21 December 1878

AUSTRALIA DAY BARBEQUE



1926 DID NOT START WELL ON PHILLIP ISLAND

PHILLIP ISLAND IN THE NEWS

PHILLIP ISLAND OUTBREAK

Brigades Formed by Visitors

(From our Special Representative)

COWES, Wednesday – A bush fire has broken out on Phillip Island.

The north wind is driving the flames in to timbered areas and several homesteads are threatened.

There is great excitement at Cowes, which is crowded with holiday makers. A fire-fighting party has gone out. The island is enveloped in a screen of dense smoke.

The fire, which started at Newhaven at 11.30 this morning, is raging on a two miles front.

In response to urgent messages Constable Caldwell visited the boarding houses and organised a band of between 180 and 300 firefighters. They proceeded to Newhaven in relays of cars.

Strenuous efforts are being made to save the homestead of Mr. J. B. Cleeland.

The Herald. Wednesday 27 January 1926

NEWHAVEN. Wednesday. - With a strong north wind blowing, a bush fire broke out this morning a few miles from Newhaven, and spread rapidly towards the homestead of Mr. John Cleeland, known as Wollamai. At one time it seemed as if it could not be stopped, but the main road served as a break. The fire burnt right to the edge of the road, and several telegraph poles caught alight. Word was telephoned to Cowes and Rhyll, where every available car brought men to fight the fire. Some 150 men rushed to the scene, and about 4 p.m. the fire was under control.

The fire had a frontage of about two miles, and extended over about 200 acres, burning though scrub, consisting mostly of ti-tree. At one place the fire crossed the road between Forests Caves and Wollamai, but the breaks that were burnt ahead by the fighters checked its course.

The Age. Thursday 28 January 1926

FIRE-FIGHTERS AT PHILLIP ISLAND



A group of weary fire fighters at Newhaven resting after their efforts to suppress the bush fires.

The Herald. Thursday 28 January 1926

PHILLIP ISLAND SAFE

300 Fighters Protect Homestead

(By Our Special Representative)

NEWHAVEN, PHILLIP ISLAND. Thursday. - The bush fire which swept across Phillip Island along a two miles front from west to east yesterday is extinguished.

More than 200 fighters from guest houses and homesteads united to quell the flames. Messrs. Rhyll and Ventnor, farmers, rushed in motor car across rough tracks to Mr. J. B. Cleeland's homestead, which was threatened yesterday.

The fire started at 11 a.m. yesterday. Word was sent through to Cowes before the connecting telephone line was burnt through. The wind was blowing strongly from the north, threatening Newhaven and the Boys' Home when the Cowes contingent, under Constable Caldwell, arrived.

The fire almost reached the pine trees around Cleeland's homestead. The surrounding hedge was burnt and acted as a fire-break. At this moment the wind changed to a south-westerly, and might have been fraught with serious consequences. Suddenly, however, it dropped, and the tired fighters went home. Mr Cleeland said this was the worst fire ever seen on the Island.

A small fire has started in a swamp, but it not likely to be dangerous.

Smoke was so thick yesterday morning that the steamer Genista lost her way and had to lay to until the haze cleared.

The weather now is clear and cool and windy. During the night the fire, seen from the mainland, was supposed to be threatening the Bass settlement and Woolamai. Communication was interrupted.

The Herald. Thursday 28 January 1926

BUSH FIRES

The worst fire since the one which practically swept over the whole of the central portion of the island, occurred on Sunday. Starting from a camp near the stone quarry in Mr. Donald McKenzie's paddock, and fanned by the strong north wind, the fire soon made great headway, gathering in volume as it went. Residents of Cowes and others went out to endeavour to fight it, and when it left the road into the grass paddock of Mr. Vaughan, the beaters were soon able to extinguish it and so keep it from spreading in that direction, but as it made headway in a southerly direction it reached some dense ti-tree scrub on the Cowes-Ventnor road, it gained sufficient volume to leap the road into Messrs. Davidson's property, and getting among the bark and other small dry wood fallen from the larger trees, it made headway towards the Davidson's house. Here the workers concentrated their efforts, and after a severe fight, succeeded in saving, but a shed was destroyed.

As a precaution to prevent the fire spreading, and in case of a change of wind sweeping back on to the township, a fire-break was burnt along the west side of the main road, as well as round a cultivation paddock of Mr. Hughie Kennon, in which was situated a stack of hay. Similar precautions were taken to protect Mr. Jimmy Roberts' place, near which the fire did at one time cross the main road into Mr. Charlie West's property, but before it could secure a hold it was checked. Men worked all through Sunday afternoon and evening, and some well up towards midnight, but when the wind moderated somewhat toward 9 o'clock and later changed to the south-west, the fire was well in hand and confined by the breaks that had been burnt along the Ventnor and main road.

On Monday afternoon individual trees only were burning, but a heavy downpour of rain would be welcome.

The destruction of fencing was the greatest loss experienced by Sunday's fire.

As one stood on a vantage point above Cowes on Sunday evening and looked round to the various points of the compass almost in every direction fires were to be seen. Practically the whole of the Mornington Peninsula, as we could see it, extending from Flinders in the west along the summit of the range, was a series of fires, while in the north in the direction of Hastings, another fire was going. Then, turning to the north-east, the major proportion of French Island seemed ablaze; flames could be seen leaping into the air, and then from behind the dense pall of smoke, high into the sky, rose the lurid glare of fires in the hinterland. Then over in South Gippsland country, along the great southern line, fires were in evidence, while to the south and south-west the fires on our own island were much in evidence. Every now and then, as a fresh mass of ti-tree scrub would become ignited, immense masses of flames would be seen, coupled with clouds of dense smoke.

Frankston and Somerville Standard. Friday 19 February 1926

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/>

MORE FREE INTERNET SITES

Current newspaper obituaries:

<http://tributes.heraldsun.com.au/> (about 2008 >)

Herald Sun (Victoria); Courier Mail (Brisbane); Hobart – The Mercury (Hobart); Townsville Bulletin; Geelong Advertiser; The Daily Telegraph (Sydney); Cairns Post; Gold Coast Bulletin; N.T. News; The Advertiser (Adelaide)

<http://tributes.theage.com.au/obituaries/theage-au/> (about 2011>)

Click on 'advanced search' link. Select 'Australia – Victoria' for the following papers:

The Age; Ararat Advertiser; Ballarat Courier; Bendigo Advertiser; Hepburn Advocate; Stawell Times News; The Border Mail; Warrnambool Standard; Wimmera Mail-Times

Change the 'state' for obituaries from numerous interstate papers, or change the 'country' to view overseas obituaries.

Bendigo (Sandhurst) Historic Rates Index

<http://glcrates.ncgrl.vic.gov.au/>

NEW IN OUR LIBRARY

Loney, Jack	Clipper Lightning in Geelong 1862-1869
Shillinglaw, John J.	Historical records of Port Phillip. The first annals of the colony of Victoria
Le Cheminant, Marion	Nyeimiland and its neighbourhood
Malone, H. J.	Buffalo 1894-1983. Incorporating a short history of South Gippsland
Goding, Alison	This bold venture. The story of Lake Tyers House, place and people
Watson, Catherine	Copping it sweet. Shared memories of Richmond
Moorhead, Leslie	Between the bays. Mornington Peninsula
Archer, A. W.	Ravensthorpe then and now
McDonald, Ronda	Gold in the Gascoyne
Tomlinson, Carmen	Call it Seaford. The memoirs of Carmen Tomlinson
Gaskell, Phillip	Morven transformed. A highland parish in the nineteenth century

GENEAPALOOZA



BY ESTO FRIGUS

WWW.BITSTRIPS.COM