

# Reflections

Newsletter of the  
Phillip Island and District  
Genealogical Society Inc.

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## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### 16 September. A.G.M. 2 pm

We will have several committee positions vacant, so please consider joining the committee and helping to support your group. The monthly committee meetings are friendly and are a chance to express your ideas.

A barbeque will be held prior to the meeting. Bring your partner, meat and drink. Bread, salad, tea and coffee provided.

### 7 October: Trove 1.30 pm

An essential genealogist's tool is our wonderful free online research portal, Trove, part of our National Library.

Our speaker is Heather Arnold, President of the Koo Wee Rup Swamp Historical Society and previously Local History Librarian at Casey Cardinia Libraries. She will be speaking on discovering your family history using Trove.

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## BASS COAST HEALTH SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUP

We were delighted to welcome a group from Bass Coast Health on 2 August. A brief discussion was held on the difference between the local historical and genealogical societies. Then we researched family members of the group and provided them with photos and information to take home. Committee member, Linda, even discovered that she was related to one of our visitors!

A delicious morning tea was enjoyed by all.

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The September 2022 issue of 'Ancestor' has what appears to be a comprehensive article on 'Researching Australian First Peoples ancestry'. Worth looking at if you have First Nation ancestors.

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Ancient Egypt was inhabited by mummies and they all wrote in hieroglyphics. They lived in the Sahara Desert and travelled by camelot. The climate of the Sahara is such that the inhabitants have to live elsewhere.

School Boy Howlers (source unknown)

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## FLOOD HERO

Gail Wade

My 3<sup>rd</sup> 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*. 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 Sheahan's 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.




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## FREE INTERNET SITES

- Ireland                      Virtual record treasury of Ireland    <https://virtualtreasury.ie>
- Kirkcudbrightshire (Scotland)    Gatehouse Folk - then and now. Gatehouse of Fleet, Girthon, & Anwoth    <http://www.gatehouse-folk.org.uk>
- Glasgow (Scotland)    The Mitchell Library    The Mitchell Library  
<http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/libraries/venues/the-mitchell-library>
- also:    The Mitchell Library - photographs of streets, buildings & people The  
<http://www.mitchelllibrary.org>
- Scotland - Cemeteries    database of burial grounds in Scotland.  
<https://www.safhs.org.uk/burialgrounds.php>
- Great Britain Newspapers    British newspaper archive  
<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/search>
- Brighton Cemetery    Brighton Cemeterians. (subscription required)  
<https://www.brightoncemeterians.org.au>
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## 24 June Brick Wall discussion

The afternoon was very well attended, and everyone had a chance to discuss their research or any other issues in a friendly environment. Many handy hints and interesting experiences were discussed and afternoon tea enjoyed



### THE DASH

By Linda Ellis

I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend. He referred to the dates on the tombstone from the beginning...to the end.

He noted that first came the date of birth and spoke of the following date with tears, but he said what mattered most of all was the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time that they spent alive on earth and now only those who loved them know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not, how much we own, the cars . . . the house . . . the cash. What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.

So think about this long and hard; are there things you'd like to change? For you never know how much time is left that can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough to consider what's true and real and always try to understand the way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger and show appreciation more and love the people in our lives like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect and more often wear a smile . . . remembering that this special dash might only last a little while.

So when your eulogy is being read, with your life's actions to rehash . . . would you be proud of the things they say about how you spent your dash?

Found by Elaine on facebook

## THE STORY OF OLD ELIZA

Pamela Rothfield

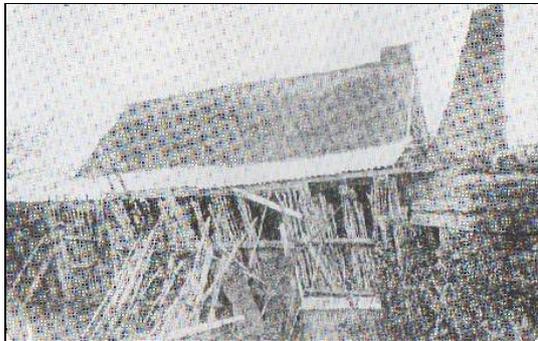
Phillip Island and District Historical Society

Coghlan Road on Phillip Island derives its name from a notable island inhabitant, Eliza Coghlan, who garnered significant media attention in 1910 by achieving the remarkable age of 113 years, thereby purportedly becoming the oldest resident in the British Commonwealth at the time.

Eliza Coghlan's origins trace back to her birth in 1797, in Westmeath, Ireland, to her parents Joseph and Catherine Cochlan (alternative spelling), who were engaged in farming. It is probable that she arrived in Port Adelaide, South Australia in 1855 aboard the vessel Thomas Arbuthnot. Remarkably, at the age of 68, an age when many contemplate retirement, Eliza embarked on a new chapter by assuming the role of a housekeeper for a local farmer named James Duffus in Kyneton, shortly after he became a widower.



Around eight years later, in 1873, James Duffus, then approximately 50 years old, acquired 141 acres (57ha) of land at the junction of the main Phillip Island Road and Rhyll-Newhaven Road. On this property, he erected a simple wattle and daub cottage. Eliza, who was likely around 76 years old at the time, joined him in this modest dwelling, which was situated within a fledgling island community.



Describing Eliza Coghlan as a resilient individual may even fall short. In her 80s and 90s, she thought nothing of traversing 8 kilometres to Cowes, carrying substantial loads such as turkeys and other produce for sale. When questioned about her preference for walking over riding, she humorously retorted that "A servant must not drive with the Master!"

Eliza remained industrious, serving as a housekeeper and aiding James Duffus, whom she considered "her master," on the farm where horses and cattle were kept. In an incident while attempting to capture a horse in one of the paddocks, she sustained a broken leg. Astonishingly, despite her age, estimated to be in her eighties, she managed to crawl roughly one kilometre through underbrush and grass back to the cottage to attend to her own injury.

For most of her life, Eliza enjoyed robust health and maintained her mental faculties, save for her hearing, until around 1900 when, at the venerable age of 103, she endured the effects of a stroke that somewhat slowed her down. A decade later, Eliza passed away unexpectedly in the Rhyll cottage, reaching the impressive age of 113. Numerous newspapers widely reported her demise in 1910, hailing her as the oldest individual in both Australia and the British Empire at the time.

Eliza's departure deeply affected James Duffus, leading him to relinquish his Phillip Island land a few months later. Subsequently, he returned to England, where he passed away two years later at the age of 88. James had stipulated in his will the installation of a fitting headstone and railing, valued at £20, on the grave of his housekeeper, Eliza.

While Eliza's longevity is celebrated, her recognition among official British Supercentenarians remains elusive due to the absence of modern verification standards, such as Irish birth records which were held at the Public Records Office in Dublin, but were tragically destroyed in a devastating fire in 1922. The title of the longest recorded living individual in the British Commonwealth is held by Charlotte Hughes, who passed away in 1993 at the age of 115 years and 228 days. Nevertheless, for Phillip Islanders, 'Old Eliza' shall forever remain their cherished Island Supercentenarian, and the hope persists for another name to someday join their illustrious list.

Eliza Coghlan, aged 114, said to have been the oldest woman in Australia, has died at Cowes. For forty years, until she became unable to get about, she acted as house-keeper to Mr. James Duffus, who is now 86 years of age. The old lady was in full possession of her faculties, except hearing, until the last. Residents of Cowes remember "Old Eliza," as she was called, a woman of 70, when they were little children over 40 years ago.

The Australasian (Melbourne). Saturday 12 February 1910

#### ELIZA COGHLAN.

MELBOURNE, February 9.  
Eliza Coghlan, aged 114 years, who is said to have been the oldest woman in Australia, died at Cowes. The old lady was in full possession of her faculties, except hearing, until the last. She spent an active life, and a few years ago thought nothing of walking to Cowes, 5 miles distant, carrying a load of turkeys or other produce for sale.

Week (Brisbane). Friday 11 February 1910

### 19 August Family Search

On August 19 we were fortunate to have a representative of Family Search, Jenny Harkness, speak to a group of 29 people, including visitors from the Wonthaggi Genealogy group. She explained the history of Family Search, how to add your family to the global tree and how to access records. Those present felt it was a very worthwhile afternoon.



## PHILLIP ISLAND IN THE NEWS

### COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITY

**It may not be generally known that it was a council responsibility to see that no unseemly behaviour occurred on the public beaches particularly at San Remo and Cowes.**

*At Cowes, public baths were built during 1891 where members of each sex could bathe at certain times, as no mixed bathing was allowed. So rigidly were these regulations enforced that permission had to be obtained from the police for men to enter the baths to go to the assistance of a woman bather in danger of drowning. West Rocks at Cowes was set aside for ladies' bathing and East Rocks for men. Matters seemed to get out of hand when by-law No. XI was found necessary to be introduced in 1910. The public were not allowed to bathe in the sea for a distance of 1/2 mile of each side of the baths unless clothed in a neck to knee costume of close texture, the penalty for offending if caught was 10 pounds. At San Remo, part of one beach was reserved for ladies' bathing only. A hut donated by a Mr Morey, who owned the Kilcunda Coal mine workings was erected by the council for use as a bathing box.*

Tourist paper (date unknown) 1970's

### PHILLIP ISLAND

Sir: Adverting to your article on Phillip Island (14/10/44), the island is one of the few localities in Victoria where returned fighting forces personnel with requisite rural experience can be expected to make a success of farming on small holdings under natural conditions. There is still ample room for 100 new settlers on Phillip Island, provided they are encouraged to work under the co-operative system to offset excessive cost of production. If the deplorable misdirection and failures after World War One are to be avoided, water should be first conserved to irrigate land before new settlers are called upon to overcome inadequate rainfall and hazardous seasonal conditions which have hitherto ruined so many disillusioned triers. Good merino woolgrowing areas which are inflated in value would have been subdivided decades ago if the soil and climatic conditions had been conducive to closer settlement.

—H. J. GARDENER  
(San Remo).

The Argus. 18 October 1944

### TELEPHONE TO COWES.

Telephone communication between Cowes (Phillip Island) and the remainder of the Australian network will be facilitated as soon as investigations have been completed by the Postal department. The deputy director of postal services (Mr. J. C. Westhoven) said yesterday that it was proposed to lay a submarine cable across Westernport Bay from the Mornington peninsula to Phillip Island. Inquiries had been made in England for suitable cables and tests had been made. As soon as the cable was obtained the line would be connected with the Melbourne trunk line service.

The Argus. 31 October 1929

During the rebuilding of the Cowes Hall, Mrs. Smith, "Garage Tearooms," has kindly lent a room for dancing on a Saturday evening, when many enjoyable evenings have been held.

Frankston and Somerville Standard. 0 October 1924

### 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.