

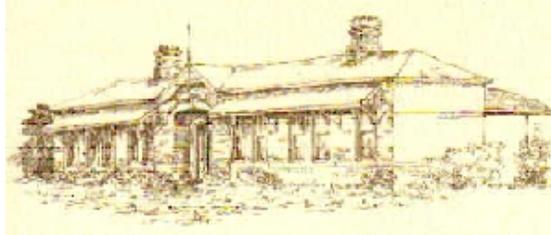
Historical Happenings

Special items in our newsletter:

Special Dates for your diary

Current Happenings

Catherine McPherson - oldest
buried person in the Ararat
Cemetery - read her story
and her connection to
Digby



Casterton Community Museum

Special Dates for your diary

Hello all,

At the last general meeting the following dates have been flagged for some events for the rest of the year.

Sunday November 9th

Working bee at the Museum from
10am to 12noon.

Next meeting – November 19th 7pm

at the Glenelg Inn (note not the RSL)
Put your thinking caps on for next
years calendar of events to be
formulated at this meeting
See you there!

Sunday 24th November – Grand
finale of the Womens Suffrage with
our exhibition part of the display
being held for the public at
Parliament House Garden

Casterton New Cemetery Mapping Project

Meets the 1st and 3rd Saturday of the
month from 10am to 12noon

**Note: Not meeting on the 1st
November.**

**Last meeting on 6th December for
the year , recommencing 7th
February 2009**

Sunday December 7th

Re scheduled State School Trip to
Strathdownie and Wilkin area. Meet
at Railway station at 10am.

Wednesday December 17th

End of year dinner at the Merino
Hotel, 7pm.

Looking For..... Research requests

Any information on
Joseph Shaw drowned at
Sandford in 1857 aged 25
years. Buried in the
Casterton Old Cemetery.

Any information on Anne
Cassidy/Ann Aleisha
Gilding possibly
Eleanor Jane "Lena"
GILDING, b. 1867
Casterton, dau of James
Edwin GILDING and Ann
CASSIDY.

Any information on the
property "Glen Muir" of
Dunrobin

**If you have information
relating to the above
please contact**

Jan Lier

jan.lier@bigpond.net.au

or

0432774314

Current Happenings

Shift to the Visitor Information Centre.

Meetings will take place with the
Glenelg Shire Council in November
and December to discuss the move
of some of our paper based
products so that they can be
accessed 7 days per week.

Will keep you informed on the
progress of this through the
newsletter.

Kelpie Interpretive Centre

Remains ongoing with \$25,000 being
allocated by the Glenelg Shire Council
for a business plan. Issue remains with
Victrack owning the land and either
selling or leasing the property so that
the centre can be built. Discussions on
this issue will continue with the hope
that the Business plan can provide an
avenue for the fruition of the KIC

How one thing leads to another!!

“Catherine McPHERSON, lost in bush nr Digby, age 104y in 1881”

It started at the Digby History Expo when our distant member Noel Boyle from South East Family History Centre sent us an extract from a newspaper article and had me drooling to know more!

And more I found!

This truly is one of those amazing stories where you ask a question, it leads to an answer and comes just in the nick of time to help solve a mystery and add to a collection of stories being told by the Ararat Genealogical Society.

A MUST READ STORY with the help of our members Noel Boyle & Daryl Povey

by
Jan Lier

The following article is from "The South Eastern Star", 19th April 1881

The "Oldest Inhabitant"
Under this heading the Spectator has the following - "Arrested as a vagrant, aged 104, was the police report with reference to Catherine McPHERSON, a poor, decrepit old body, who was found wandering about in the bush near Digby a few days ago, and who was taken charge of by the guardians of the peace and lodged in the Hamilton lockup on Monday. The Police Magistrate visited her in the lockup, and elicited the following facts - She was born in the Highlands of Scotland in 1777. After spending somewhere about three quarters of a century in her native land she came to this country, experienced many vicissitudes of fortune, and finally settled in the neighborhood of Digby, where she took up her quarters with a married son-in-law. The latter, however, had the misfortune to break a leg, and is now an inmate of the Hamilton Hospital. The old adage that "misfortunes never come singly" was never more truly exemplified than in the case of the centenarian under notice. Shortly after the removal of her son-in-law to the hospital, her daughter-in-law died, and the old woman who had reached Shakespeare's "last stage", was left in the hut with several small children, who had no protector. As might be expected, the poor old creature was not equal to the task of undertaking any such responsibility and, indeed, did not attempt to do so. On the contrary, being half insane, she left the cottage, and took to wandering about in the bush night and day, until she was arrested on a charge of vagrancy. How she survived the constant exposure to the elements, at her wonderful age, is a mystery. Another strange fact is, that notwithstanding her long residence in Australia and intercourse with English people, she could speak nothing but Gaelic, and her statement had to be made through an interpreter. She was sent to the hospital where she will receive the best attention for the remainder of her days."

Eager to find out more about this lady, I forwarded the article onto Daryl with the thought that he might have some additional information on her. And true to his form, he came back very quickly with a possible ID with a death at the age of 111 years of a Catherine McPherson in Ararat.

Well, this really got me intrigued, what a ripe old age to live to considering what she had gone thru in 1881 at 104 years of age!

So to satisfy my curiosity, I emailed the Langi Morgala Museum in Ararat in search of some answers - Was this the same lady?, and if so, how did she end up in Ararat?

Surely someone should know something!

In the meantime, Daryl was working away at the family line and had put together the tree of this lady which can be found online at

<http://www.ballaratgenealogy.org.au/digby/family/nicholson.htm>

A few days passed and an email arrives from Marion McAdie from the Ararat Genealogical Society with an answer to my questions.

"Your email to Langi Morgala Museum, Ararat has been passed on to our group. We are "doing" Catherine in our yearly cemetery walk as the oldest person buried in the Ararat cemetery. What luck to receive your info on her as we were dragging our feet for information. Although we sent for her death cert. it said she was single. but we believe it to be the Catherine from your article. She died in the Asylum here 11/3/1889 age 111 yrs. from Is. of Skye No further info. Her admission warrant is at the PRO, North Melb. but we have not been able to get a copy of them. They might give us a bit more info. Anyway The Ararat Advertiser reported "Poor old Grannie as she was usually designated was admitted from Warrnambool district some years since being then 107. She was a Highlander, and could neither speak nor understand English"
Anyway thanks for the info we will be using a large bit of it in our write-up.



CATHERINE McPHERSON

1777 - 1889

On Monday, 11th March 1889, Catherine McPherson died at the Ararat Asylum for the Insane. The next day a magisterial inquiry into her death was held, and Dr. Bowe, who had conducted the post-mortem, told the inquiry that he attributed the cause of her death to be “disease of the brain and right lung”. Catherine was buried here on the 13th March, the oldest recorded person to be buried in the Ararat Cemetery (111 years).

Very little is known about the personal life of Catherine other than she was born on the Isle of Skye in 1777. She was admitted to the Ararat Asylum at the age of 107 years, from the Warrnambool district and at that time was reported to be

“ *A Highlander who could neither speak nor understand English*”.

Catherine spent the remaining years of her long life at the Ararat Asylum, where to the staff she was affectionately known as “Grannie”.

The Cemetery walk took place on Saturday 19th October at 2pm, and our member Daryl attended. The tour specifically targeted 9 graves and at each grave a talk was given on the the known life of the person and Catherine McPHERSON was one of the graves. Her grave was chosen because she was the oldest person known to be buried in the Ararat Cemetery. Mabel GIBSON, dressed in period costume, placed flowers at the foot of each of the 9 graves at the end of each presentation.

The cemetery walk booklet produced has been purchased from the Ararat Genealogical Society by the Historical Society for our archives.

Thanks Daryl for attending and for the enthusiasm to follow up the original story passed onto you.

Our Address

PO Box 48
Casterton 3311

Phone:

0432 774314

E-Mail:

janlier@bigpond.net.au

roscov@iprimus.com.au

If you have more stories like this one that you would like to share, send to Jan Lier, janlier@bigpond.net.au
Or
PO Box 48
Casterton 3311

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

[www.ballaratgenealogy.org/
casterton/historicalsociety](http://www.ballaratgenealogy.org/casterton/historicalsociety)

If you would like to contribute to this newsletter please contact Jan Lier for further information: Ph. 0432 774314 or janlier@bigpond.net.au

Casterton & District
Historical Society Inc.

PO Box 48
Casterton 3311

