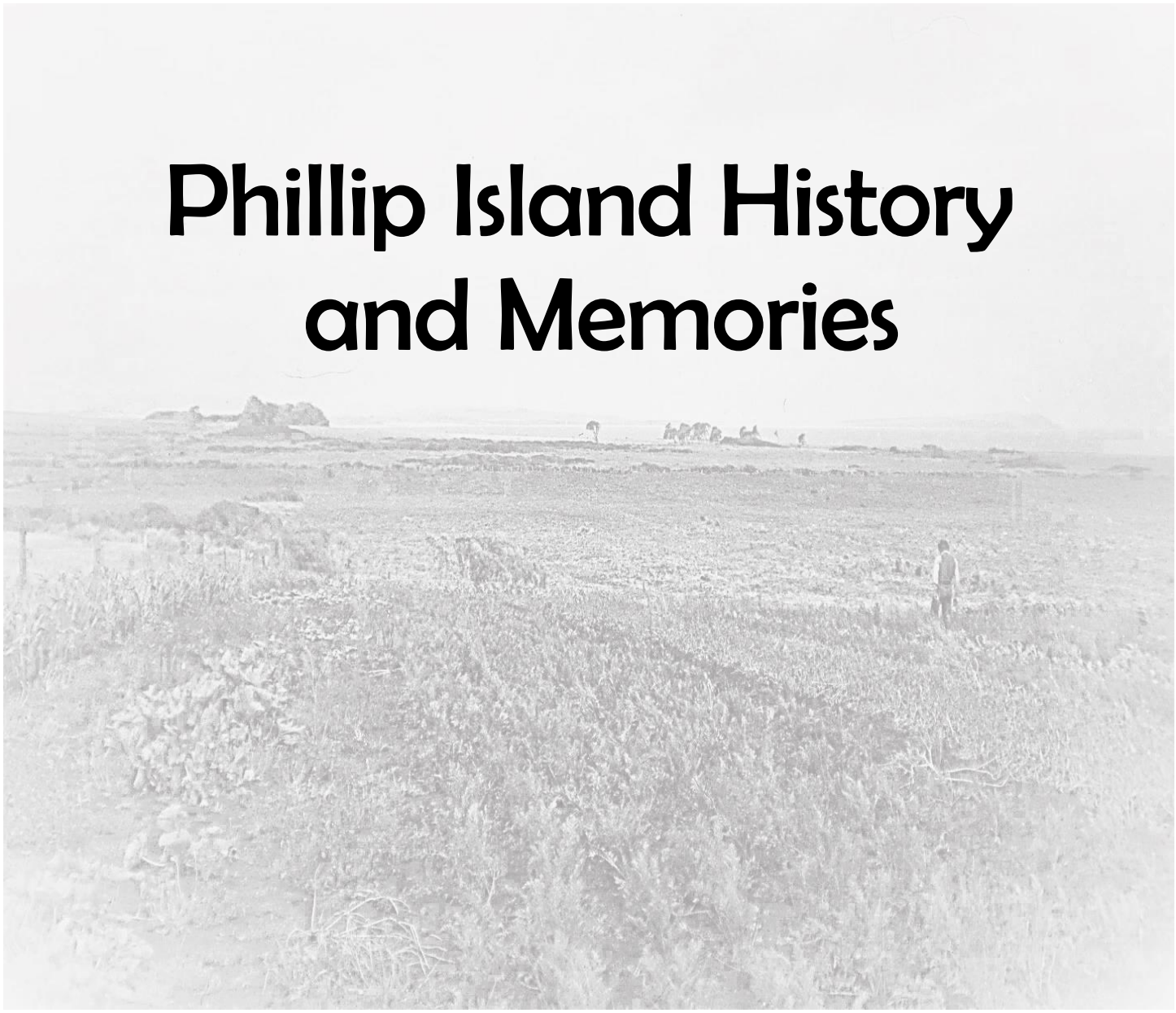
Phillip Island and District

Historical Society

EST 1941

Phillip Island History and Memories



A selection of talks and researched essays from the records of the Phillip Island and District Historical Society

Compiled and edited by Christine Grayden

Phillip Island History and Memories

A selection of talks and researched essays
from the records of the Phillip Island and District Historical Society

The material in this book has only been lightly edited. Most of the content is just as it was presented at the time of the talk or the researched essay. There may be more current research available, or opportunities for further research by our society members and others.

Phillip Island History and Memories.

Compiled and edited by Christine Grayden from the website: pidhs.org.au and other sources.

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and learn, the Bunurong people. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their Elders past, present and emerging. The Phillip Island and District Historical Society Inc honours Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people's unique cultural and spiritual relationship to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

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Part One

Social History



A Short History of Phillip Island Millowl

Essay by Christine Grayden, 2018, revised 2023.

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land, sea and water, the Bunurong people of the Kulin nation, and pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in our community today.

Phillip Island-Millowl is the smaller of two main islands in Western Port, Victoria, Australia. It is 26 km (16 miles) long and 9 km (5.6 miles) wide, with an area of about 100 km2 (39 sq miles). It has 97 km (60 miles) of coastline and is part of the Bass Coast Shire. The other large island in Western Port is French Island. Phillip Island is connected to the mainland via a bridge from Newhaven on the east coast of Phillip Island to San Remo on the mainland. A ferry service also operates from Cowes on the island's north coast to Stony Point on the eastern side of Western Port, via French Island.

Phillip Island was part of the homelands of the Yallock Bulluk clan of the Bunurong people for many thousands of years before European exploration of the area began. The Bunurong are members of the Kulin nation of Aboriginal people. In addition to Bunurong community, members of a number of other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations now live in this area.

The Boon Wurrung language names recorded by Europeans for the island have been noted as 'Millowl', 'Corryong', 'Corrong'. *Millowl* is preferred by local Bunurong people now. Prior to the arrival of Europeans into this area, the Yallock Bulluk came to Millowl in the summer months to feast on shellfish, fish, small marsupials and mutton birds (short tailed shearwaters). Ochre was available at several locations on Millowl and Churchill Island, (possibly known as 'Moonah Mia') and would have been used as body decoration during ceremonies. The first European explorers saw evidence of the existence of the First Nations people in the area, but did not often record coming into contact with them. However, sealers, who were in the area simultaneously to early exploration, did abduct women and girls from Western Port to the Bass Strait islands, and caused havoc amongst the Bunurong people.

The first European explorers to the area were George Bass and his crew in a whaleboat which they rowed and sailed from Sydney in 1798. Bass explored the western coast of Phillip Island on foot and, once back in Sydney, was able to make an 'eye sketch' of the bay, which he named Western Port due to its relationship geographically to Sydney. The sketch included most of Phillip Island. Port Phillip Bay was not discovered by Europeans until 1802.

The next English explorer to visit was Lt James Grant, who arrived in the *Lady Nelson* 1801. After exploring, mainly for fresh water and farming potential, Grant had his men clear an area on Churchill Island where Grant planted seeds of a wide variety of crop plants and vegetables given to him for the purpose by John Churchill, after whom Grant named this little island off the north east coast of Phillip Island. The planting of gardens by early representatives of colonial powers was another form of claiming territory.

Western Port and Phillip Island was then largely forgotten by Europeans, apart from whalers and sealers until 1826 which saw the scientific voyage of Dumont d'Urville, in command of the corvette *Astrolabe*, visit the port. The British feared a French settlement in the area as a result

of this expedition, and *H.M.S. Fly,* under the command of Captain Wetherall, and the brigs *Dragon* and *Amity*, were sent by Governor Darling to establish a British settlement. This was at present-day Rhyll and named Fort Dumaresq. Because of a lack of fresh water, this settlement did not last.

One story passed down through a family whose ancestor worked for J D McHaffie, Phillip Island's first leaseholder, relate how McHaffie set up his headquarters (and later built his house) alongside what is now known as McHaffies lagoon, to use for fresh water needs. A group of Yallock Bulluk were camped there and he 'told them to move on and go to Swan Lake'. From the rich middens in both lake areas, it is clear that the Yallock Bulluk used these areas extensively for millennia before the arrival of Europeans. Because of dispossession, raids by sealers and wattle bark collectors, disease, and disagreements with neighbouring groups who were also coming under huge pressure from dispossession, the original Bunurong were reported by Protector Thomas as vanished from the eastern side of Western Port by 1847.

The McHaffie brothers – John David and William – occupied Phillip Island under a license from the Admiralty in 1842 and farmed it as a sheep run. John married Georgianna in 1861 and they continued to farm the island until the sale by ballot of much of Phillip Island's land in town and farm lots in 1868-69.

When the island had been surveyed a few years earlier, four townships had been surveyed and two were named after those on the Isle of Wight in England, viz: Cowes, Ventnor. The other two towns were named Rhyll and Newhaven. The early settlers struggled with poor seasons, caterpillar plagues, lack of infrastructure including roads, and difficulty in getting their products to market. Many failed in the early years, and much of the land was bought up by a handful of wealthy families, until gradually being split up again in the twentieth century.

However, following the 1868 ballot, Phillip Island quickly became a desirable holiday destination, with two hotels and at least one home offering guest accommodation in the first year or two of settlement. Many guest houses followed with the boom years being from the 1920's to the 1950's. Trading vessels came with the opening up of land to selectors and the establishment of various industries around the bay, the main one being timber. The first locally owned vessel was the cutter *Alpha* built in 1841 by the owners Samuel Anderson and Robert Massie of Bass.

Jetties were built at Cowes (1870) and Rhyll (1877). The first permanent steam ferry service connecting Phillip Island with Hastings, and from there to Melbourne by coach, started in 1876. The railway was constructed through to Stony Point in 1889 and the first passenger train coincided with the first run of the ferry *Genista*. A punt service between San Remo and Newhaven ran from 1912 but it had been laying derelict for some time when a new service began in 1928. This operated until the first bridge was opened in 1940.

A few residential subdivisions for holiday homes date from the 1890s, but most were developed from the 1950s onwards. These include Summerland (now completely bought back by the state government for wildlife), Smiths Beach, Surf Beach, Red Rocks, Wimbledon Heights, Sunset Strip, Koala Estate and Woolamai Waters West and East. Many permanent residents now live on these estates and in Phillip Island's main towns. The permanent population is about 14,000, swelling to about 90,000 during the holiday periods and motor racing circuit events.

Motor sport commenced on a road course on Phillip Island in 1928 with the first Grand Prix, billed as a 100 mile race. The Grand Prix was run on the island's roads along with motor cycle racing, until 1934, when the Grand Prix governing body decided to rotate the race around the different Australian states. There was no more racing on the island until the 1950s, after the purchase by the Phillip Island Auto Racing Club of the current circuit site and building of a circuit after two public subscriptions raised sufficient funds. Motor racing was conducted on that circuit until the surface deteriorated and the track was closed. Len Lukey then bought the circuit in the 1960s and resurfaced the track, heralding a golden era of motor racing on the island with many greats racing here, such as Len Lukey himself, Jack Brabham, Peter Brock, Bib Stillwell, Leo Geoghegan, and many others.

By the late 1970s the track had once more deteriorated and went into decline until major work was carried out in preparation for the Motor Cycle Grand Prix, which was run on the island in 1989. Apart from a few years when the race went to New South Wales, the island has hosted the Grand Prix each year. The circuit also hosts the Superbikes, V8 Supercars, Shannon's historic races and various other events.

Originally the administration of Phillip Island was through a road board, and then it became part of the 'Phillip Island and Woolamai Shire'. After a hard-fought campaign, the Shire of Phillip Island was established in 1928.

Due to the amalgamation of shires throughout Victoria in 1994 Phillip Island was united with Wonthaggi Borough, the Shire of Bass and parts of other shires, to become Bass Coast Shire Council. Under the ward system of the shire, Phillip Island has two wards: Island Ward, and part of Westernport Ward, with three representatives for each ward.

Tourism began on Phillip Island soon after opening up for closer settlement in 1868-69. An advertisement for the Isle of Wight Hotel at Cowes in 1874 states: "Boats, buggies, horses, &c, always on hire for fishing and shooting parties". Horse-drawn 'drags' took visitors on excursions, especially to the Nobbies. Going to watch the penguins and shearwaters at night became popular from the 1920s, and the Penguin Parade was established as an organised tourist attraction in 1955. First managed by a group of interested locals and government researchers and officials, the Shire of Phillip Island took over the parade in order to gain funding for infrastructure work there. Summerland, including the Penguin Parade, was then managed by the Penguin Reserve Committee of Management during the 1980s-1996, and the Phillip Island Nature Park Board from 1996. Other nature-based tourist destinations managed by the Board include the Koala Conservation Centre, Churchill Island Heritage Farm, the Nobbies Centre, Cape Woolamai, Rhyll Inlet, Conservation Hill, Oswin-Roberts forest reserve, Swan Lake, and many of the island beaches , foreshores and other reserves.

However, koalas, introduced into Phillip Island in the 1890s and at various other times in the early-mid twentieth century, were the original top tourism feature until the Penguin Parade 'took off' in the 1960s. Koalas, now rare in the wild, were at various times so populous and easy to see in the many island Eucalyptus trees, that many were actually relocated to other parts of Victoria in the 1970s and 1980s. Due to the eradication of foxes on Phillip Island, Eastern Barred Bandicoots, which were in danger of becoming extinct in the wild in Victoria, are now regarded as threatened instead, because the introduction to Churchill Island then Phillip Island has seen their numbers blossom. This is the first time in Australia the population status of a marsupial has been able to be downgraded and taken off the 'in danger of extinction' list.

Rural land still covers much of Phillip Island. The main farming activity is grazing, with dairying and cropping as minor activities. Chicory growing was a major seasonal crop for most Phillip Island farmers from about 1872 until the industry died out on the island in the 1980s. Before mechanization, chicory growing was a back-breaking job, often involving being out in the paddocks in cold, wet conditions, hand-harvesting the chicory with a 'chicory devil' implement.

Several farmers have recently been diversifying into such enterprises as free-range eggs, olive groves, on-farm cafes, events venues, two wineries and farm stays as parts of the rural economy.

Phillip Island-Millowl has an active Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Phillip Island Nature Parks and Westernport Water have Reconciliation Action Plans and Bass Coast Health and Bass Coast Shire Council are also developing formal RAPs, while simultaneously implementing reconciliation actions. The Bass Coast community commemorates important Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island dates.

The island has a vibrant cultural and creative community, with many volunteer community groups covering a wide range of interests and services.

Phillip Island's early settlers - their way of life

Essay by Christine Grayden, 1993.

Prior to 1868, the McHaffies held a lease over the entirety of Phillip Island. On 3rd November, 1868, 132 lots, totalling approximately 7,284 ha (18,000 acres) were sold by ballot. The rest of the land (township areas of Cowes, Rhyll, Newhaven and Ventnor and 98 lots of approximately 0.8 ha (2 acres) to 16 ha (40 acres) around Cowes) was auctioned soon after. Whilst most of the lots were sold early, many were not occupied for many years and some – e.g. Ventnor township – were never taken up and are now public open space.

Settlement

In 1872 approximately 165 settlers held land on Phillip Island. By 1902 the number was no more than 50 settlers. In the 1860s and 1870s, Victoria had little transport between Melbourne and the potential wheat supplying areas. Settlers saw Phillip Island as being suitable for wheat growing and within easy boating access to the increasing market in Melbourne. Allotments, sold as fairly as possible via a ballot system, sold quickly to settlers from all over Victoria.

Generally they had little or no shelter when they arrived on the Island's scrubby shores after a four-day trek from Melbourne. They built wattle and daub huts. They fenced their few animals in with tea-tree, and shovelled shallow dams, then lined these with tea-tree. Tracks were corduroyed with tea-tree. Implements were forged by blacksmiths Messrs. Irvine or Kennon, or home-forged, such as those forged by Mr McGregor of Pyramid Rock, and then provided with

tea-tree handles. In fact, tea-tree was so widely used it became known here as 'Phillip Island Hickory'.

However, even the ready availability of these materials could not save the wheat from the caterpillars and the weather.

From the early influx of keen settlers, the 1870s saw a general exodus away from Phillip Island, the land being then largely divided between two major landholders – Cleeland and Harbison. Township areas were basically divided amongst six families: West, Richardson, Anderson, Vaughan, Kennon and Grayden, with the rest holding individual allotments.

Both Harbison and Cleeland raised horses, sheep and some cows – all prime stock. The remaining smaller landholders grew chicory and mustard. Some, like the McGregors, also had cattle. The remaining population comprised shopkeepers, farm hands, ship and house builders, horse breakers, or young men who worked on the Kilcunda to San Remo railway. Some, like the Kennon, Walton, Grayden and Richardson families, netted fish which were rowed to Hastings, then sent by horse transport to the fish market, at that time on the present site of the Flinders Street Station clocks.

Phillip Island's isolation and small population from 1869 until after World War I, meant that settlers received little Government attention, and could not even support their own council. Consequently, moving stock or a household was a major ordeal.

H E (Bert) Grayden's father, Charles, was one of the oarsmen who helped swim cattle across the Passage from Newhaven to San Remo. Bert Grayden remembered the spectacle well:

> They used to have a crush going down where the Newhaven boat ramp is now and the men in the yards would rope a few animals into this crush. When the boat backed in, they used to have a rope from the corner of the yard out to the rock called 'The Little Rock'. The men in the boat would hang onto this rope. They'd always have two holders: one for each beast. They'd open the crush. The cattle were as wild as dingoes and they'd almost invariably charge the holders. They'd go for their lives, race down and jump into the boat with the beasts in hot pursuit. While the holders jumped into the boat, the fellows in the boat would be pushing off. The beasts would make a lunge at the boat and down they'd go into deep water.

The ropes to the rock provided a 'race', whilst the beasts were roped by the horns and were towed across to a stockyard on the San Remo side. Because of the swift tide, the men had only a few hours between ebb and half-flood tides. The average crossing was of 40 – 50 cattle a day.

This anecdote clearly demonstrated the hardships faced by Phillip Island's early settlers, and the ingenuity and sheer hard work required to overcome the many problems.

Social Life

During the earliest days of settlement, scrub and the elements prevented outlying settlers from socializing. Mrs McGregor of Pyramid Rock did not bother going to Cowes for nine years after the family's arrival here.

However, for those closer to Cowes, 1870 marked the beginnings of the centre of Phillip Island's social life for many years – the opening of a church. St Philip's Church of England was the first church to be built and was 'officially' opened by Mrs McHaffie.



St Philip's Church of England, c.1920. Phillip Island & District Historical Society

The importance of Sundays in the week's social calendar cannot be under-estimated. Mrs A E McDonald describes a typical Sunday spent in the 1880s:

> I often think of the lovely time we had when Mr Nicholson was our Minister at the Church of England. We were all like a family, and we always attended services. Went in the buggy to morning service, then after dinner walked to Sunday School, and after tea went to Church service.
>
> Coming home with us there would be Allan and Jack McIlwraith, the Morrisons, and the Smiths, who lived with their uncle Mr Dixon on blocks 73 and 78, Jim Forrest and a few friends. They used to come to our house and sing hymns around the organ, then all leave at 10 o'clock.

Evening choir practice was another highlight of the week, providing prospective beaus a chance to escort sweethearts home. A little later, other denominations became established, including the Reorganised Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, the services for which were held in Jack Hall's barn, Ventnor Beach Road, then later moved to the Ventnor school.

The first Catholic Church was opened on 22 January 1933, although Mass had been celebrated in various venues from 1870. The first Presbyterian services were held in the open under a gum tree. The original Presbyterian Church was built in 1895.

Stan McFee Snr recalled another social activity associated with the churches: they were colloquially known as 'tea fights'. These were afternoon teas organized by church guilds, but due to the jealousy between the youth of Rhyll and Cowes (due to their taking inter-town sport so seriously), free-for-all fights generally followed, a good time being had by all! Team sports have been popular on Phillip Island since cricket teams became established in the 1880s. St Philips tennis court was the venue for social and competitive tennis from the 1890s. Bowls was first played on a special lawn at Rhylston Park, Cowes, from the 1890s.

Reflecting the great importance of Western Port and the sea routes to Melbourne and elsewhere, several Regattas were held annually. These were great occasions combined with athletic and novelty sports for all ages, fishing boat races, and pier-based competitions such as the 'greasy pole', where hopefuls had to somehow get to the end of a well-greased horizontal pole to retrieve a red flag from the end, and almost always ending up in the sea!

'Easter Monday Sports' were held as early as 1875. These were held in Cowes along the Esplanade, and at Ventnor, on the foreshore near the Mooring Beach (Anchorage Road). The sports ranged from Gentlemen's High Jump to Ladies Rolling-Pin Throwing. Spectacular events were also included, such as the Dray Race, where half the course was galloped in a dray, then the huge draught horses were swiftly unharnessed and ridden bare-back to the finish line. Lots of children's events were also held; usually run in bare feet. Other farm-related competitions, such as Sheaf Tossing, formed the prestige events of those days.

Other popular social occasions included 'Monster Picnics' held at various locations around the Island, annually after Easter. Picnics were also popular among courting couples and families, a sheltered beach providing a break away from the toil of the farm.



Guests from Hollydene Guest House ready to head off to their annual picnic.
Phillip Island & District Historical Society

Very little prompting was needed for early Phillip Islanders to get together for a dance or celebration once a few roads had been defined through the scrub. During the 1870s, a chef from London named Francis Bauer established the name of the original 'Isle of Wight Hotel'. In 1889, it was described as "a picturesque Swiss-looking house with its peaked gables, long galleries and verandahs…and such gardens".

The 'Isle' was the venue for many a crowded good night, including a banquet given by John West to celebrate the opening of the Island's first kiln in the main street of Cowes.

Prior to halls being built, some adventurous young people made a clearing in the scrub near what became the Boomerang Caravan Park in Thompson Avenue, and danced there to tunes of Jew's harps, played by the Misses Violet Jeury and Miriam West. The need for a dancing teacher was fulfilled by Mr Alex McLardy Snr., from 1888. Dances became extremely popular for many years, the halls being crammed, refreshments served and dancing to the music of squeeze-box, fiddle and broom-a-tin-za until well into the morning, when horse-drawn vehicles would be filled and the horses would find their own ways home.

Possibly the biggest social event of the year was mutton bird egg collecting. Groups from all over the Island and the Mornington Peninsula would camp at Cape Woolamai and spend the week 'egging'. This they did by hooking eggs out of burrows with plaited wire, or collected eggs from the surface of the colonies. The collected eggs were stored in pickling drums, and were an extra source of food and income for Phillip Islanders. During April many Islanders would also brave the gales to collect young fat mutton birds for food and sale. ***Interference with the birds and their rookeries is now illegal.***

Family Life

Bert Grayden recalled how when he and his brother and two sisters were young children they were like 'piccaninnies', roaming the Island together with, especially, the Kennon children, until they were old enough to work in the chicory paddocks. Phillip Island was then "mainly scrub and a few huts in clearings" and the children survived no end of scrapes whilst their parents worked hard to keep holdings and large families intact.

Typical of the times, early Phillip Island settlers had large families. For example, during the 1870s Solomon West had 8 children, John West 8, Burton 8, Gall 8, Morrison 10, Richardson 11, Smith 13, McFee 10, Kennon 11. The Kennon children's 'pet' names read like the characters of a Victorian novel: Bill, Hetty, Huey, Sissy, Florrie, Lizzie, Emmie, Edie, Ruth, Beatie and Maggie.

Phillip Island had no resident doctor until 1910. Home nursing and midwifery were relied upon. For more thorough medical attention, a doctor had to be rowed from San Remo, or the patient had to be boated to Hastings, or later to Stony Point, and then to Melbourne and hospital by coach and/or train.

Sometimes, as in the case of Mrs Winnifred Pickersgill, wife of Churchill Island's first farmer Samuel Pickersgill, the woman in labour could be the only adult at the birth of a child. Her grand-daughter recalled the story of how "when father was born, grand-father was away working (probably shearing). Only the children were there, so grandmother attended to her babe as best she could, then heated some water and drank it."

If a death occurred, the coffin had to be taken to the cemetery (surveyed in 1870) in very difficult circumstances. A child, Mary Smith died in 1870. Because the cemetery was not then officially opened, her father had to sail to Hastings, walk to Mornington to obtain the right to make a grave, then walk and sail home again. He then had to carry the coffin on his shoulder through the scrub for two miles, as no track existed, and dig the grave and bury his small child. We can scarcely imagine his thoughts and feelings as he doggedly set about these tasks.

Others were buried on the family holdings. A child of the Furze family is believed to be buried under the bend of the main Phillip Island Road at the Five-Ways cross-roads.

Large pioneering families meant that many chores could be shared out. The Berry family was one of the many that left Phillip Island in the 1870s. Between them they travelled the stock to the Eastern Passage, then swam them from Newhaven to San Remo. They boated a dray and cart over, then, with Mr Berry driving the dray, Mrs Berry the cart, the girls and the cows, they set off for Avenel – 150 miles away!

Generally on the farms, the older boys would help in the fields, the next oldest would do heavy chores such as chopping wood (remember they used a lot of wood in those days). Both older girls and boys helped with hand-milking the cows and separating the milk from the cream. The girls or wives churned the cream to make butter, while the girls would help mother in the house, with small children, with washing, and with never-ending sewing and mending. And even the younger children could feed the 'chooks' and collect the eggs each morning.

Homes

When Phillip Island was first opened for settlement many of the first influx of settlers built wattle and daub huts whilst trying to make enough money to import housing materials.

Some of the wealthier residents built substantial homes. Harrisons built 'Innis Howen' *(Island Home)* in 1869. Cleeland's 'Wollomai House', begun in 1869, was thoroughly established in 1889, when it was described as "a country home made beautiful by garden, orchard and fernery".

Mr Robert Gall arrived from Melbourne in March 1869. He waited two days for materials, and within 14 days had built a substantial weatherboard house for his family. Mr Gall was a builder and timber-worker who kept a diary and detailed accounts. In July 1869 he charged £2/10 (two pounds ten shillings) to build a parlour chimney; £3 (three pounds) to build a kitchen chimney and 1/- (one shilling) per yard for lathing and plastering the parlour, kitchen and bedroom of a new home. All of this work left change out of £20 (twenty pounds, or $40).

Nevertheless, many of the first settlers never did build substantial dwellings, and after most left during the 1870s, their huts were quickly demolished by weather and wandering stock.

More settlers arrived near the turn of the century. In about 1900, when Charles Grayden moved his family from Newhaven to Ventnor, quite a few families were settled on 80 acre blocks between the Nobbies and Cowes. Bert Grayden remembered Pat McGrath and Pat Phelan, neighbours near Swan Lake; a two-roomed cottage near the corner of Lyall Street and Ventnor Beach Road; Gillespies, who farmed where Justices now have a dairy farm on Ventnor Road; Harris's 'The Pines'*;* Joseph Hall's adjoining Saltwater Creek; McGregors at Pyramid Rock; and Harrisons, of 'Innis Howen'.

Once roads were defined and scrub cleared, houses and their gardens were more visible. 'Avondale'*,* which became *Iona* in Thompson Avenue was new in the 1890s, whilst 'Tallawalla', built around the same time was a showpiece in Church Street. 'Rhylston Park' was also built in that era. This property was owned by Mr J Vaughan, who was sociable and imaginative as both a farmer and host, and this house reflects his personality.

Probably, more than anything else, the homes of the early settlers were indicators of the sliding scale of wealth on Phillip Island at that period.

Schools

After Phillip Island was opened up to closer settlement, the first schools were small private affairs. R A McIlwraith recalled the first school as being run from a hut on the beach at Rhyll by a Mr J Cheyne, who later moved to the Back Beach area. A Mrs Winning also had a school of

some 30 pupils in a cottage near five Ways. This was known as 'Gillian's School'; an old well still marks the spot, set back from Coghlan Road. A school-house built in Newhaven during the 1880s was run by a Mr and Mrs Thompson, highly educated folk from England. The building was so small that the Thompson's daughters had to convert their sleeping quarters into a school-room every morning and back to a bedroom in the evening. The establishment could not afford a clock, so the 20 or so students were taught to read a sun-dial. School hours were a bit chaotic on cloudy days!

St Philips Church of England building was also used as an early school from 1873 onwards by a Mr John Houston, one-time business-man. Mr Brook and Mr Shepherd also taught there at various times. A Miss Welch also ran a small school near the corner of Settlement Road and Thompson Avenue. Cowes State School (on site of Cultural and Community Centre in Thompson Avenue) opened in 1872, due to the large numbers of children in the area, many of whom rode or walked up to seven miles to attend.

The Rhyll Mechanics Institute (Rhyll Hall) served many purposes over the years, including church services and social functions. But for years it operated as the Rhyll school, with most of the students being from the McFee and other early settler families of the district. Rhyll School did not open until July 1891. Stan McFee Snr recalled how, when he started school there in 1894:

> We had a half time school then, with Rhyll and San Remo. Rhyll til Wednesday dinner-time, the rest at San Remo. I had to go to San Remo with the teacher. Some of my older brothers would pick me up at Newhaven Pier and take me home in the horse and jinker. We went over on the *Genesta*, which ran through the bay from San Remo to Stony Point. We'd often come back with father when he had been to council meetings (Woolamai Shire at Dalyston: Phillip Island was included in this Shire at the time). Charles Grayden Snr used to row us across in his small boat. He'd be rowing, and he always had a sharp knife in his belt, and he'd look at us kids and touch the edge with his thumb. I can remember my father saying: 'Now then, Grayden, that's enough of that…you frighten the life out of these kids'!"

Bert Grayden also went to half time school at Newhaven until third grade and remembers that the teachers would "whip the hide off you" for any mischief.

Many children lived outside the distance limit of compulsory schooling, and so had very little formal education. Others were taken out of school during chicory digging season, or were unable to make the journey during weeks of seasonally rough weather.

While Samuel and Winnifred Pickersgill's children were educated by a ticket-of-leave man (former convict) at home, their two children Lilly and William, were employed by the McHaffie's as housemaid and stable-boy respectively. Mrs McHaffie attended to their education, and it was so thorough that William was later able to educate his own daughter, Elizabeth Agnes, who was always kept home to look after the smaller children.

At Ventnor, prior to the State School opening in grand style in 1923, school was held in Ventnor Hall (now demolished) from 1914-23. Prior to the hall being built, Ventnor children who were able to attend school, walked, or were driven in a dray to Cowes school by a jolly singing German.

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Samuel Jabez Pickersgill memoirs of Griffiths Point 1870s and 1880s, Part 1.

This talk was one of 17 broadcast on South Gippsland community radio station 3MFM during 2014 and 2015, with the assistance of a Local History grant from the Public Records Office of Victoria.

Here is the first part of what Samuel Jabez Pickersgill wrote down of his memories from his early life. We hear about Samuel's brother Will and his wife Jennie and their heartbreaking struggles as early settlers.

I was born at Fiddler's Green, so called by the old bay fishermen because they could always rely on getting fish they referred to as fiddlers in their nets when fishing there. So at Fiddler's Green at San Remo, then known as Griffiths Point, I arrived on the scene on September 22nd, 1866. My parents, (Samuel and Winnifred Pickersgill) after six years at Churchill Island, having failed to acquire the right of occupying same, had lost their home to a Mr Rogers. My father was advised several times to select but he would not bother about it.

Mother had made a comfortable home on the little island. It is I think about 160 acres or so. Three of my sisters were born there: Louisa, Kate and Annie. Priscilla was born on French Island. The oldest sister Elizabeth was born in England and Robert William Pickersgill, the eldest of our family, was born in Melbourne.

We lived only a few years at Fiddlers Green, then went on to the Bass where there was a small settlement at that time. My brother Walter was born there and shortly afterwards, the family settled down in a home on land father had selected, 163 acres fronting the ocean directly opposite Cape Woolamai. It was a lovely spot overlooking the bay and island on one side, and the ocean on the other. At that time Griffiths Point was very well timbered with she oak trees and manna gums and black wattle. As the land was taken up and fenced, most of the occupiers (who were as a rule hard up) went in for log fences which was the start of the destruction of the timbered hills.

My first recollection of anything at Griffiths Point is our first arrival at the new home. I remember sitting up in the old cart behind the old bay horse Jock with a switch in hand to hurry him along.

Some year later, in 1878, my brother Robert William – known as Will – fell in love with Jennie McDonald of Stockyard Creek (now known as Foster). He first met her at Yanakie station, then owned by Willie Millar. Yanakie was originally taken up by McHaffie after he lost the lease of Phillip Island. Will met her while he was shearing for Millar who had taken over from McHaffie. She was a lovely little girl, fair with platinum hair. Her people were farmers. I remember that her brother Tom, a tall, weathered giant, brought her to Griffiths Point for the marriage.

I was about 13 and Will was 25. Will and his bride lived at the old farm with us until his house was built. The old farm was in two blocks eighty odd acres each. Will was supposed to get one of them. There were at that time a number of unoccupied houses at Grantville, built of hardwood from an adjacent mill. Will bought one of them – a four roomed place complete with brick chimney, all for two pounds, pulled it to pieces, loaded it on a bullock wagon. He brought it to the farm block, all for another two pounds. No shortage of houses in those days. It was soon rebuilt. Father was very handy with tools and they were very comfortable in it for a year or so.

Jennie was expecting a baby and was having a very bad time in labour. Mother decided that it was beyond her and that she must have a doctor, as soon as possible. At that time the nearest doctor was at Cranbourne, forty miles away. No telephone or telegraph those days, or any means of communication at all. So Will must ride and ride fast. So off he went in frantic haste. At Bass he borrowed a fresh horse from Jack O'Meara, an old friend, and rode on through Lang Lang. At Caldermeade estate he got another fresh horse from McMillan the owner, a good one too, that carried him to Cranbourne. When he found the doctor and told him what he could about the trouble, Dr Eltham would not opt to have anything to do with a trip like that. Will was very much upset and pleaded with him. The doctor said "Well if you are prepared to give me fifty pounds before we start and find a buggy and a pair of hoses, I will think about it."

Fifty pounds was a great lot of money in those times. Will said "I can't give you the money now, but I shall see that you get it later on." Doctor would not agree to that. After some little time he said "On second thoughts I do not care to go at all. I have patients here and can't leave them. The best thing you can do it go to Hastings. There is a doctor there. Get him to go across the bay by boat."

What with worrying about his wife and thinking of how she was suffering, Will must have been very upset and disappointed about the doctor's refusal. So after a few minutes thought, he decided to go to Hastings. So he mounted his horse again and off he went. He knew a man and his wife is Hastings. A Mr and Mrs Barclay, both very old friends. So he went to them in his distress. They were both at home, but, before he could tell them what was the matter, he fainted for the first time in his life. He'd had nothing to eat since he left home. That and the worry was too much for him.

After they brought him around and gave him some stimulant and he had told them why he was there, they said "Doctor has been on the spree for the last week, he is not fit to see anyone. If he is fit at all I will take him and you over in my boat, but I'm afraid it is useless, but come along and we will see him." So off they went. A housekeeper came to the door of the doctor's house saying that he had not been out of bed for days: drunk and dead to the world. They had a talk to the housekeeper and told her all the facts. She was a woman and in sympathy with them. They all talked the matter over and came to the conclusion that the only thing to do was to

bundle the doctor up and carry him to the boat. Mrs Barclay was I believe quite enthusiastic about it. And so they started across the bay with him.

It was unfortunately a very calm day so no wind at all. Barclay said “No good taking the big boat, we will have to take the skiff and row over”. Will said the doctor seemed quite unconscious of what was happening, as if he was in a state of torpor. They made him comfortable with rugs and cushions in the stern of the skiff and set out, Barclay and Will rowing and the Doctor lying on his back facing them. At times he would open his eyes and stir about a bit, but taking no notice of anything.

After a couple of hours or so he became violently sick and, after a while, appeared to be a bit brighter. It is I think about 25 miles from Hastings to San Remo, and, before the end of the long row, the doctor seemed to make a quick recovery and began to take stock of his surroundings. Will told us afterwards that he would never forget the look on his face and the flitting expressions passing over it. He said “My God, where in hell am I?! What are you men doing with me? Are you going to drown me or what?!”

Both Will and Barclay wore beards and must have looked rough and very determined men for anything. However, he at last recognised Barclay and was reassured when they explained matters to him. He behaved very well and did not blame them for what they had done. In fact he decided that they had probably acted in the best way for him, breaking him off his spree. I believe he was a good sort of chap, only for his fondness of whiskey.

In the meantime the baby had been born and everything was OK. The doctor went back next day per SS Eclipse and Will helped Barclay back with the skiff and returned the borrowed horses.

The baby had been born during the night after Will had left for the doctor. So in the morning I was told to saddle up my pony and ride along the main Melbourne road until I met them to give Will the good news. I was expected to meet him in a few hours. So off I went. I had never been further than the Bass township from Griffiths Point. After leaving Bass the road ran along the bayside at the foot of hills through scrubby country unfenced at the time. The track got too rough to follow and I had to make a new one through the scrub. When I got as far as Lang Lang, I began to think I had missed them on one of the bypasses through the scrub. However, I went on until I got to Tooradin. I had then travelled about thirty eight miles, so decided to turn back and head for home.

When we at last arrived home both the pony and I were tired and hungry. They had given me no lunch in my pocket and when I told them how far I had gone and seen nothing of Will and the Doctor, father said “I have a good mind to belt you from here to Tooradin”. I thought that rather tough after a ride of 75 miles. It must have been a good old pony though for she carried me along quite merrily, especially coming home.

Jennie and Will’s marriage was a love match, but as things turned out, very tough on them both. Up to Will’s wedding all he earned during that time went into the old home. When he married and settled on the block held by father, it was with expectation that it was to be his. Owing to some reason it did not turn out that way.

After a year or so he selected land up near Lang Lang, heavily timbered and only middling country. Somehow or other he built a house on it. He and Jennie and their family lived there for a few years under very hard and cruel conditions. They started absolutely from scratch. Not a penny behind them. Will working day and night. Mr Cox, the racing man of Moonee Valley, had taken up a lot of land in the neighbourhood. Will worked for him in the daytime and put in most of the night trying to clear his farm. It was hopeless from the start. Three other children were born there at great risk to Jennie's life. During one of Will's longer absences from home, the younger children were taken gravely ill.

Bob the eldest boy was at that time at his grandfather's house at Griffiths Point. There were no near neighbours and no way of getting word to their father. The children seemed to be getting worse. Jennie was frantic, not knowing what was best to do with no Doctor anywhere near. She knew there was one at Griffiths Point, so she decided to pile rugs and blankets in the old trap they had, yoke up the horse, make the children as comfortable as she could and start out for the grandparents' home at Griffiths Point and the Doctor 30 miles away. Poor girl, she had a dreadful time trying to attend to the poor sick kiddies and urge the slow old horse along.

Before she got there one of the children died. It was Diphtheria they had. Another died at the old home. Jennie herself, with the dreadful time she had gone through and the worry and pain of watching her child die, was almost dead too when she got there. She must have been rather a wonderful person to do what she did. Times were hard those days for anyone on the bread line, trying to get a start on the land, unless they had money to back them up.

They put in a few more years on the farm called 'Cherry Tree', trying hard to get a start. My brother after getting a lease of the land, borrowed money from the insurance companies on that security and, for the time, got some relief.

Jennie was going to have another baby. A nurse was engaged to attend her on the farm, but no Doctor was available. The baby was born dead and in a few hours afterwards Jennie was dead also. Flooding had set in. No doctor being there, she had no hope.

Starting off as they did, sadly they had no real chance of success.

Memoirs of Samuel Jabez Pickersgill, Griffiths Point, 1870s and 1880s part 2

This talk was one of a series of 17 broadcast on South Gippsland community radio station 3 MFM during 2014 and 2015 with assistance from a Local History Grant of the Public Records Office of Victoria.

In this the second part of Samuel Jabez Pickersgills memoirs, written in his old age in the 1950s about the early days of Griffiths Point, we hear about shipwrecks, misadventure, the horrors of diphtheria and unusual characters of the time.

Samuel continues:

My brother Will and his wife Jennie were like many others who took up land in the 1880s. Most of the selectors were struggling to keep going, trying to earn a few pounds wherever they could and clearing up the farm in what spare time they had between whiles. There was no way of getting any surplus they might have to the city market, no local demand, no export of any produce or meat either. Frozen meat was not thought of at the time, separators were unknown and milk for cream was set out in large tin dishes and the cream skimmed off for butter making.

I remember Mother sending casks of salted butter in small wooden tubs to Melbourne for sale. Captain John Lock of the ketch *Swan* used to arrange the sale of same for her. On his return trip from the city he would invest the money it brought in groceries or whatever she wanted. Captain Loch was well trusted by the old residents and always did his best for them. Butter never brought much of a price, sometimes as little as three pence a pound. Most people had plenty of beef from the wild cattle run though. You only needed a rifle and a horse. The cattle were the descendants of the a few that were left at Settlement Point many years previously.

In the early 1890s there was an outbreak of diphtheria at Griffiths Point. Captain Clarke who then had the SS Genista, carried the mail from there to Hastings. The Captain had married Constance Grant, our neighbour. They had a family of five. Two of the children contracted diphtheria – a boy and a girl. Most of the residents were very afraid about the risk of contracting it. Mother was very good in sickness and did what she could to help.

There was a Doctor living there at the time, but he could do nothing to save the children. Great sympathy was felt for the Captain, who was a great favourite. There was a daily ferry service across the bay and the captain used to rush home every day after arrival to see his son and daughter. They were ill for a considerable time before dying. The boy died first and three days later the girl died. The Doctor insisted on her being buried at once. The whole little township was scared of infection and no one favoured opening up the boy's grave to receive the second body. It fell to my lot to do it.

It was a dark night and I had to work on my own by the light of a hurricane lamp to get the grave ready, then get the horse and trap and help the poor old Captain fix up the coffin and help in any way I could.

Mrs Clarke, the mother, was very worn out and very distressed over losing her two lovely children. The Captain and I drove up to the cemetery. No one else appeared on the scene. The father tried to read the burial service with me holding the light for him, but he was too upset, so I had to complete that part of it. It was a rather trying time and I felt a quite upset myself and could not get it off my mind for quite a time.

The opening of the grave was a dreadful experience, very disagreeable in the dark, for the hurricane lamp was not one of the best. Mother had given me a cloth soaked in Eucalyptus and a bottle of same to sprinkle over my face. There was a smell of corruption from the grave that I never forgot. The poor old Captain was sobbing all the time and I felt very sorry for him. But we finally finished the gruesome business, which I will never forget.

In the early years there was quite a few shipwrecks. Some years before we came to the farm, a small ship loaded with potatoes and palings from Tasmania for Melbourne, was driven ashore close to the quarry. She just missed striking the rocky headland on either side. She swept in on an even keel, bow first, at the only spot where there was any chance for her survival.

The early settlers were shaking hands with each other, saying “Plenty of spuds and palings, they will never get her off”. But much to their disgust a tug came from Melbourne, and at high tide they were able to pull her off without any damage.

She was resting on a level sandstone bottom. At low tide a track for the tow was cleared of large boulders and, when the tug made fast at high tide and put on the pressure, the spuds and palings passed, much regretted by the sorrowing settlers. The cleared track through the boulders is still plainly to be seen.

Some years previously there had been a vessel lost on the rocky coast near Bore Beach and some lives lost. The vessel was a total loss. The captain’s wife, who was accompanying him, was lost amongst others. It was very early days before I was born. The name of the ship I remember was *John Mussey*.

The *Moroki* was a sailing ship, a barque bound for Melbourne, with one thousand tons of coal. During a storm in the strait she tried for the shelter of Western Port Bay, but, for some reason, probably not knowing the Eastern passage very well, she struck the end of the sand bar near the channel entrance close to Cape Woolamai. She became a total loss though there were no lives lost. The hull of the ship with one thousand tons of coal did not break up, owing possibly to the action of the waves, but worked its way completely out of sight in the sand. No portion of the wreck was ever seen washed up on any shores, so it must still be there. I have seen at varying times water worn lumps of coal on the beach below our farm. Many times I have thought they may have been from her.

When I was a boy in the 1870s I often heard from the proprietor of a hotel right on the ocean cliff at Kilcunda, when the coal mine there was being worked, speak of a massive anchor that was to be seen at the foot of a certain high part of the coast not far from the hotel at low tide. There must at some time been a ship wrecked there, but there was never a vestige of wreckage to be seen and no-one ever heard of any, so it must have been ages ago.

I do not remember anything about the bore being put down on Bore Beach, so it must have been in the very early days. It seems unaccountable why it was put there at sea level at the foot of those hills and on the exposed ocean. A man named Walsh was in charge. There were no coal seams showing in the face of the rocky cliffs nearby. It was a private company affair. After some considerable work was done and the drill was down something over 1000 feet, the shareholders insisted on an enquiry into things. Walsh was to have the rods drawn so that they could view the latest core and what it showed. But there was a convenient accident while the rods were coming up and they crashed to the bottom again and they are still there – 1000 feet of them.

During the time it was working, two men named the Hayes brothers were washed off the rocks while fishing. One was drowned and the other was badly hurt and later died. Both were buried on the cliff nearby. There used to be a headstone over the grave, but it was weathered away by

the action of the salt spray on the sandstone. It WAS well carved, by one of the other workers on the drill.

Walsh the manager took up some land near the main road. A nice place. Built a house on the rising ground and he and his aristocratic wife lived there for a number of years. Madam Walsh said that when Richard Walsh courted her she was a fine dashing young woman in Glegg. “And now look at me, Richard Walsh, Look at me!”

Mother and I went over at times to their house with butter and milk and oft times heard the sound of pots flying about. I believe Madam was a good shot with the saucepan. Evidently Walsh had made money out of the bogus coal company and for a long time he never seemed to do anything. He eventually sold a portion of his land where the house was and built a hut in a small paddock he had fronting the bay. Walsh, now evidently poorly off, took the contract of carrying the mail to Kilcunda from San Remo daily. Shortly after he was found dead on the road. I do not remember what became of Madam, doubtless she went back to Ireland.

A certain amount of the foreshore below the little township has disappeared owing to the action of the tides. I remember when as a small boy seeing the remains of a house that had been eroded away. It had been at one time occupied by the Davis family. It was built long before I was born, close to the water’s edge, right opposite Bergins’ store.

About the same time two men were oystering in the bay and beached their lugger for the night. It was a very cold stormy night and to help keep warm, they kept the fire going in a fire pot in the cabin of the lugger. They were found dead in their bunks next day, having been smothered by the fumes from the pot. There was no public cemetery those days and they were buried on the foreshore opposite where the post office was built much later. The name of one of the men who died in the lugger that night was W Biglow.

In those days there were quite a number of men oystering in Western Port Bay, sending their oysters to Melbourne per Stony Point.

The stone for building a bank in Melbourne was quarried out of stone from the back of our farm and taken across the farm on sledges cut from the fork of a tree and drawn by bullock teams to the edge of the channel where it curves in close to the bank near the bridge. At that particular spot the vessel could be close to the beach. By the use of some gear rigged up on the ship the stone was hoisted and swung on board. There were no jetties in those days. Where the stones were quarried and dressed the curving track that was cut into the hillside can be plainly seen today. It must have been a terrific heavy haul to get the stone to the top of the hill from where it was dressed. Those responsible were not very mechanically minded or they would have had some easier method. There is still a huge dressed block of stone lying on the beach some distance from where it was quarried . It was evidently too heavy for the team to shift. Over two tons I should say.

Griffiths Point seemed to have had a queer attraction for drifters. There were always two or three living in camps in sandy hummocks under the great Banksia trees – “honey sacks” we used to call them in those days. In the flowering season they used to be alive with wattle birds feasting on the honey in the yellow cones and telling the world all about it. They are very noisy birds. Brush-like tongues may have something to do with the noise they make.

Peter Currie, one of the hermit bachelors, was found drowned on the sand bar, said to have fallen out of his boat. Frankish was also drowned in the channel. His body was never found, but his boat was.

Peter the Hermit, a Russian Finn and the hairiest man I have ever seen, lived half his time at Cape Woolamai and was said to be a Russian Professor. I believe he used to surprise people at times on the few occasions when he cared to talk. He just disappeared.

Jack Sykes, an old chap who lived in a little hut near the school was burnt to death with his hut one night.

Living was cheap those days. Fish were to be had for the catching at almost any time, and a man camping did not spend much on clothes by the look of them.

Probably they all had their reasons for living quietly away from the rush and bustle of life. They added to all the fascinating characters that lived in those days at Griffiths Point.

Growing up on Phillip Island: Childhood Memories with Cherry McFee, 90 years old

One of a series of 17 talks broadcast on South Gippsland community radio station 3MFM during 2014 and 2015 with assistance from a Local History Grant from the Public Records Office of Victoria.

Cherry McFee: The joy of growing up in beautiful surroundings, growing up in a country environment with the sea on three sides of our farm. The long, hot summer holidays when I spent hours swimming and exploring the beaches with my brothers and sisters. The summer nights when we hunted the large black beetles which flew about at night.

I remember the kerosene lamps my mother lit at dusk, and the moths and insects attracted to the light on the windows. I remember the lovely feeling of being tucked up in bed at night, listening to the wind sighing in the big gum trees at the bottom of the garden, the gentle lap of the tide on the stony beach, the plaintiff cry of the curlew and the call of the black swans. I recall when the garden was bathed in moonlight with the moon shining on the water like a long silver road.

The fun and fights of growing up in a family of five children. The companionship of playing cricket with my father and brothers. Our early school days which never seemed to end with a five mile journey to the Rhyll school in the spring cart and our faithful pony Nancy. Upon reaching school Nancy was unharnessed and left to roam at will, feeding on the roadside. At 3 o'clock each afternoon Nancy would be seen wending her way back to school as she knew her day's work was not done until she had brought us home again.



The McFee children with their mother on the Cowes beach
McFee-Eddy family collection

I remember wonderful parents. My mother was always there with our evening meal ready for us. When we were very young, after a hard day's work on the farm, my father always found time to read us a bedtime story.

The horse riding which we all adored. We learnt to ride early as my father put us on a pony at the age of four years. The thrill of helping dad, who was the drover on the island, round up the cattle and take them to Cowes. The fun and excitement of getting the cattle down the pier and onto the ferry *Killara*. Upon reaching Stony Point, my father, brother Malcolm and Jack Cleeland would drove the cattle to the Dandenong market, returning next day.

Christmas Day each year spent at my grandparents' home at Rhyll, where all the McFee families gathered. I can picture the large dining room with the enormous table, my grandfather carving the traditional Christmas turkeys and my grandmother serving vegetables from huge dishes.

I recall the kitchen set apart from the house with a covered walk-way where my grandmother prepared and cooked such delicious meals. The scrubbed table and bench tops, the huge stove, the smoke house where the bacon was once cured, the wattle and daub apple house where the fruit and vegetables from the garden were stored.

I remember the thrill of Excursion Day to the Zoo, which Mr Sambell ran once a year. As departure time of the ferry was 7 a.m. from Rhyll, this meant early rising and leaving home with the horse and buggy before daylight. The joy of the trip to Stony Point in the ferry "Alvina" and the excitement of the journey to Melbourne in the train. My father always arranged to meet an old friend, Mr Pritchard, who lived not far from the Zoo. Mr Pritchard always gave us two shillings each to spend. How cross I would be when arriving home tired, to find that my sister Kathie, who was more frugal than I, had more money than when she left home and I had spent my last penny.

I recall the picnics to the ocean beaches with my cousins. My father would harness the old white horse, Prince, in the dray and we set off to one of the ocean beaches. The sandwiches

and delicious apple cakes my mother made for these occasions, the billy tea, the fun of rolling down the sand-dunes, swimming and playing cricket on the sand.

The farm animals which we all loved, the small foals, the calves, the pet lambs, the pups and kittens, the magpie with the broken wing and our faithful dog Booze. If a stranger came Booze would always push his way in so that he was between the stranger and the children. How devastated we were when Booze went missing for more than a week. One morning he arrived home with a rabbit trap on his leg, he was severely dehydrated and the wound was fly-blown. My mother nursed him back to health, dressing the wound each morning. Booze would wait until sundown when the flies had gone then he would tear off the bandage and lick the wound. This was the pattern until he recovered. Many a tear was shed when Booze left this world at a great age. We had a number of dogs following Booze but none were as faithful.

I remember the thrill of our first car which was a second-hand Dodge, with mica windows and a running board on both sides, with a tool box attached. The fun of my father learning to drive. The condition of the brakes would certainly not have passed a roadworthy test today! When my father wanted petrol he usually drove two complete circles around the bowser at the garage before the old car came to a halt, much to the amusement of the attendant.

Our next car was an Oldsmobile, which gave us great joy. How thrilled we were to find the windows wound up and down and one did not have to shout to be heard above the engine.

Then came the Second World War years with the young local boys, including my eldest brother, joining the forces. My father, together with the older men, joined the V.D.C, short for Voluntary Defence Corp. They were issued with ill-fitting uniforms and a rifle. Their task was to man the beaches along the south coast of Phillip Island. The men were on a roster system leaving at dusk and returning home at dawn.

At one stage there was a rumour that a Japanese submarine had been sighted near Wilson's Promontory. This was quickly hushed up by the authorities. On one particular night the men on duty saw what looked like a number of black heads bobbing in the water quite close to shore. They immediately thought it was the Japanese from the submarine. They were all ready to shoot when they realised they were crayfish pots set by a local fisherman earlier in the day.

During the war my father was still driving the old Dodge car. With petrol rationing he ran the car on kerosene and had some magic formula to mix with the kerosene. One morning when he was ready to come home from the night watch the car would not start. The men were teasing him for driving such an old bomb. My father said to them "You just watch". He got out of the car and dropped a handful of mothballs into the tank, he got back into the car and away he went!

Looking back on my childhood I realised although we lacked some of the luxuries of life, we were richly endowed by being a close knit family with the love of wonderful parents.

Our Lives of Sport with twins John and Laurie Dixon

One of a series of 17 talks broadcast on South Gippsland community radio station 3MFM during 2014 and 2015 with assistance from a Local History Grant from the Public Records Office of Victoria.

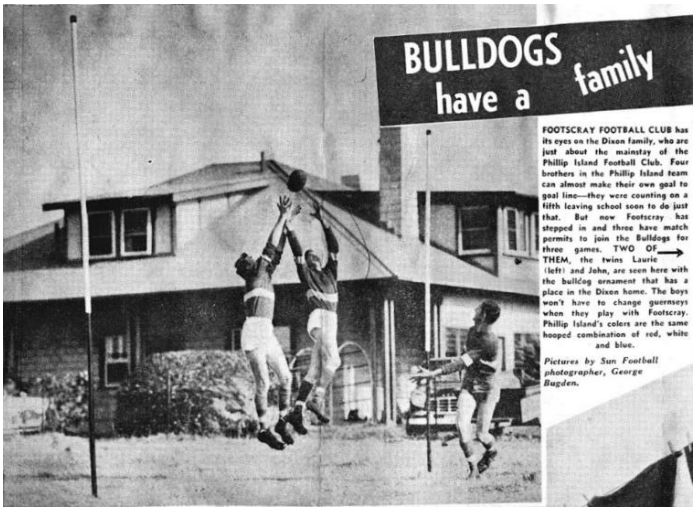
Twins Laurie and John Dixon remember their years of playing sport for Phillip island:

John remembers... Our father Rex came from a family of seven children. There used to be three football teams on Phillip Island: Ventnor, Cowes and Rhyll. Dad was a wonderful footballer. Hawthorn wanted him to go and play for them, but his dad Garnett died in his fifties and his mother Biddie died at 48, leaving seven kids. They lived first at Surf Beach and went barefoot to school at Rhyll by horse and jinker and picked other kids up on the way. Then they moved to Ventnor, where dad's family put in a tennis court and a half cricket pitch. They also had a billiard table. You could say they were a very sporty family.

At 13 and a half years of age, dad was hand shearing up to four to five hundred sheep with his brother. They had lots of draught horses and used to strip crops for the other farmers. They were the only ones who had a binder and chaff cutters. They also had Shetland ponies, both for breeding and riding. If they wanted to go to Cowes they just jumped on their horses and rode there. The girls in the family left home to work. Bob, Frank, known as 'Snow' who was a POW for three and a half years, Bill and Rex ran the farm and ended up milking cows.

Our parents Rex and Mollie Dixon had five children: Don, Laurie, John, Winston and Howard. We were always very sporty. Dad put a tennis court in at our place 'Otira' in 1950. We used to lay matting down in there and practice cricket. We've had two test cricketers play on that court: Gary Cozier practiced with us once a week. In his first test innings against the West Indies he made a century. Dean Jones played tennis on our court. So did Paul Roos, the AFL player.

We also had goal posts set up and we'd spend hours having shots for goals and goal kicking competitions. The five of us played football for Phillip Island. Four of us played together for several years. We played full back, centre half back, centre half forward, full forward and ruck. Recently Garry Fenech counted up all our games and counted 700 between us all. Don played 200 games himself. Injury stopped me from playing.



BULLDOGS have a family

FOOTSCRAY FOOTBALL CLUB has its eyes on the Dixon family, who are just about the mainstay of the Phillip Island Football Club. Four brothers in the Phillip Island team can almost make their own goal to goal line—they were counting on a fifth leaving school soon to do just that. But now Footscray has stepped in and three have match permits to join the Bulldogs for three games. TWO OF THEM, the twins Laurie (left) and John, are seen here with the bulldog ornament that has a place in the Dixon home. The boys won't have to change guernseys when they play with Footscray. Phillip Island's colors are the same hooped combination of red, white and blue.

Pictures by Sun Football photographer, George Bugden.

A newspaper cutting showing three of the Dixon footballers practicing marking at home in Ventnor at the time of their recruitment into the Footscray Football team. Dixon collection.

The most memorable player for Phillip Island was Bob Watson. We reckon he was the best player that was ever on Phillip Island. He played with Geelong seconds from 1951-53. He came from Dimboola and wanted to go to a country club, not to the city, so accepted Geelong. When he was playing for Phillip Island he kicked 102 goals in 8 games. He was a huge drawcard, and all the locals would turn out to watch him play. He still comes and stays in Ventnor with us. He was an all-round wonderful footballer. He was always full back in inter-league games but also played full forward. One match the island wasn't going so well so he went into full forward. He kicked 2 goals 7 in the first quarter and 17 goals 2 in the next three quarters! Bob took the most sensational mark standing on a player's shoulders. We were younger then, but we did play a few games with him.

Roger Wagner was a brilliant footballer. Jack Cummerford was a wonderful footballer too. He kicked 24 goals one day. Hughie Stoppa was outstanding, playing in the centre. He would get the ball and never stop. He'd be going as fast at the end of the game as at the beginning. He should have been the league best and fairest at 17 but he cut his foot and missed some games. But he was Best and Fairest with Phillip Island five times.

We were bits of high flyers. I played centre half forward and Laurie full forward. If the island score was down a bit they'd put us in the ruck. We only won two flags, in 1962 and 1964. One premiership game we lost by 2 points, and another about 1965 we lost by 3 points.

Laurie was a bit of a dirty player, so one day we swapped jumpers. We are twins of course so we got away with it. Laurie wore my number 18, which was my number, and I wore Laurie's number, number 10. We did this because the other team may have been after Laurie. But we both used to get some attention because they put some dirt into us and we reacted.

I also have two boys: Scott and Barclay. They are sportsmen also. Barclay has been in seven premiership teams, the last two with Old Collegians Wesley in the A Grade Amateurs, Melbourne.

Laurie remembers: We were shearing at one stage, and shearing and football is not a good combination. We were physically buggered before we got to the game.

The grounds in those days were shocking! Especially in a wet winter. The change rooms were also shocking. In Kongwak the cattle used the change rooms too! The showers weren't too good at any of the grounds. At Inverloch there was a dam nearby and you could jump in there and get a wash.

Our mother Mollie used to look after all the footy jumpers. She'd wash them, mend them, hang them to dry in the shearing shed. When she went to the footy there was always four or five of us playing. We got a big double page write-up in the Sun in 1959, which also had a photo of mum hanging up all of the jumpers.

Our dad Rex was at every working bee. When they originally carved the Cowes ground out dad worked with horses and scoops to level the ground. Where the tennis and netball courts are now used to be big sand dunes covered with scrub and we used to go in there as kids and play in there. The dunes were bulldozed around the mid-1950s to make way for the courts.

I won goal kicking in the league with 75 goals in 1958, and through that got an invitation to train with Footscray. Teddy Whitton was the coach. I did no good, but John and Winston went to play there on permits. John only played one game in the seconds and got kicked in the knee and couldn't play any more for them. We played against Richmond, and when I grabbed one of the fellows he thrust his fingers straight at my eyes. It was a shocking day.

I was terribly homesick. I used to ride a motor bike up on Thursday nights for training, played on Saturday and came straight home again. It was virtually 100 miles from the island to the Footscray ground. It wasn't much fun, and Footscray were the wooden spooners that year too.

Dad built the tennis court because of having five boys. They played competition tennis for five years every Saturday on our courts, because there just wasn't that many courts on Phillip Island. There was some terrible sportsmanship though! Us boys would belt balls at each other....two blokes would get onto one....it was shocking!

Tennis was big back in those days. There were four teams in Cowes – Maroons and Blues and two others – San Remo and Newhaven had teams. There would be three men and three women in each team. Heather and May Webster, June Stephens, Elaine Williams and Aileen McGuiggan were all good players. There were some memorable matches here. There are great facilities in Cowes today compared with our time.

Then we started playing cricket for Ventnor in about 1958. We'd practice in the tennis court and if you hit the fence on the full you were out. That taught us to keep the ball on the ground so we didn't get caught out. We won 8 premierships in the last 11 years. I think there were three comps – Phillip Island, Blackwood and Outtrim. We'd go as far as Korumburra to play cricket. They all feared Ventnor. Dr Ben Weiss was captain for four years for four premierships, took a year off, went back and got another premiership. His motto was "Whatever you make, we'll make more".

I opened the bowling for 20 years straight, and John opened the batting. Our brother Don opened it sometimes. We had some great mates. Ben was the only doctor here and at 11 a.m. Saturday he would be off! He had a big Jaguar car and the police knew if they saw a Jag flying hard it was the local doctor and to let him go. Ben still visits us. He was a bloody good bat. A very attacking and consistent batsman. He came in after the first wicket down. But I was very much a hit and miss guy, and would come in about 6th or 7th. I'd take risks, but I didn't concentrate as well as John.

John remembers... Laurie got 8 for 27 in one grand final. A few times he would get 5 for 25. We loved Country Week cricket. Laurie's best batting performance was 142 in a semi-final at Newhaven where he hit 14 sixers and 9 fours. But our team got beaten on the last ball of the day by one run! They lost the ball that day and three of us went down next day and found it in the scrub, so it's a souvenir.

Laurie remembers... John was a good opening bat because he didn't take risks and he could concentrate really well. You don't take risks, especially in a final. John opened for 20 years. He loved fielding and did a lot of wicket keeping. His highest score was 145 not out in a Grand Final. We were playing Kilcunda-Bass at Rhyll on a stinking hot day. They made 366. We had them 9 down for 256 and the last 2 put on 110. They thought they were going to thrash us but we ended up with five for 408, and they refused to come back for the last day.

Another memorable game was playing against a team that hadn't lost one game all year. We got them out for a low score. In the wash-up we won outright in the second innings by nine wickets!

All the Grand Finals we played we always batted second because of Ben's motto: "Whatever you make, we'll make more". We always chased runs.

In the old island competition we remember going into the fifth day in a Grand Final. When we played against Rhyll, no matter what I bowled, Malcolm McFee and Jimmie Osterlund would just block it.

Players in the Ventnor side included Bob McRae, Don McRae, Gerald Jeffery, who was the captain, his dad Bob Jeffery, Chris Stone, Noel Nichol, George Regos, Geoff Burrell. There was also Dennis Jeffery, Brian Ide the school teacher at Ventnor State School, Harry Harris and Barry Toovey. We made a lot of good friends far and wide out of cricket.

John remembers.... At the same time we were playing sport so hard, we were working hard on and off the farm too. We've been farming all our lives. Shearing, fencing, tractor work, carting hay. In our younger days we used to do a lot of work cutting trees with cross cut saws and tree pullers. No dozers or front end loaders – they couldn't get heavy machinery across the old bridge. When we were shearing with Alan and Robert Cleeland, our best year we shore 40,000 sheep. We shore at Shetland Heights, Glen Forbes, French Island, even up to Broadford to shear sheep that had been burnt in a fire. We were also in a shearing team in Western Australia in 1961 for a season. I also did some shearing in New Zealand.

John concludes... We loved our sporting careers, especially the cricket. We met lots of terrific friends that way. We still have great mates from football also.

Laurie concludes... We enjoyed our careers. It was good playing with my twin brother. It meant there was always someone to practice with and play for the team.

History of the Phillip Island Band Rotunda

From application to have the rotunda placed on the state Heritage List 23 April 2010

The Phillip Island Band was formed in 1923 with a £50 grant from the Phillip Island and Woolamai Shire Council. Apart from a brief period in recession, the band continued until World War II. It went into recess for the whole of the war, due to members serving in the forces, or being required for essential services. The band reconvened in 1948 and operated continuously until it was disbanded in 1967.

During the early years the band practiced and performed in various venues, many of which were shared by the numerous other organisations on Phillip Island at that time. As a result of the difficulty this situation caused, the members decided to build their own band room, which

became the Cowes Band Rotunda. In the same year in which the Cowes Band Rotunda was built – 1935 – the Anglican Parish Hall was also built to fulfil the need for accommodation of organisations for events. This was also the year the Phillip Island Masonic Lodge was established, and interestingly, the Rotunda, Parish Hall and Masonic Lodge branch all survive; in the case of the former two, despite having been built by voluntary labour during the Depression when quality materials were beyond the means of this relatively poor farming and tourism community.



Phillip Island Band, 1932. Phillip Island & District Historical Society collection

Only the applications for Bandmaster in that same year, 1935, survive from the earlier band, but these are themselves a collection of major figures of Victorian band history. However, hundreds of documents survive from after WWII including:

- Correspondence
- Bank statements
- Accounts payable and invoices
- Account books
- Score sheets from band competitions
- Programs, etc

These documents form a substantial archive of band history and together with the Cowes Band Rotunda itself, represent an important aspect of Victoria's cultural history. Brass bands were, and still are, a major feature of many Victorian communities. The Society is fortunate to have both our document archive and an original building in good condition to represent a period of this history.

The Cowes Band Rotunda differs completely from other extant rotundas and bandstands listed previously and illustrated on the Heritage Victoria website. Sturt Street Ballarat East Bandstand (VHR Number HO106), Beach Street Band rotunda (VHR Number H1735), Titanic Memorial

Bandstand (VHR Number HO105), Catani Gardens Bandstand (Catani Gardens VHR Number H1805), Warrnambool Botanic Gardens Bandstand (Warrnambool Botanic Gardens VHR Number H2090) and Walhalla Bandstand (VHR Number H1315) all have partly or fully open sides, and apart from Walhalla Bandstand which is mounted on a frame and Beach Street Band Rotunda which is on a brick platform and both are approached by a staircase, all are single storey. All have more than four sides. None appear to be form-work concrete and certainly none appear to have a brick domed roof.

Whilst the Society members do not pretend to be experts in band rotundas and bandstands, our members are widely travelled and do note older buildings as they travel around. None has seen anything resembling our Cowes Band Rotunda anywhere else in Victoria.

The band members decided on an enclosed design because they needed an all-weather venue in which to practice. They opted for a square design because that was the least complicated for volunteers (many of whom were farmers or worked in shops) to build under supervision of their bridge building supervisor turned newsagent, 'Big Jim' Hyslop. The roof proved to be a problem for the amateurs to build, so they asked Harry 'Brickie' Bennell to build it, assisted by band members.

As Laurie Dixon said:

> We used to hear the old band members talk about how they built the Rotunda. The bottom part is all concrete form-work. They'd build one section, then they'd go back and do the next section until it was finished. It was all done by hand – no cranes to help in those days. It was very hard work!
>
> When they were building the Rotunda they had no idea how to build the dome. So they went and saw 'Big Jim' Hyslop who had the newsagents and had been a bridge builder. He had a big pushbike, and used to have a little dog in a basket on it. He worked it out for them. Harry 'Brickie' Bennell built the dome, assisted by band members.

The floor of the second storey originally had a covering of bitumen paper to make it more waterproof.

Both the unique design and method of building – readily available materials and volunteer labour by band members – were indicative of the isolation of Phillip Island in 1935. Of course other parts of Victoria were also isolated in 1935, but Phillip Island is the only *island* as far as we know that tackled a problematic (for those days) project such as a concrete and brick band rotunda. There was no bridge in 1935, and everything came by sea. So the band members built with what they had, or what they could easily get, and what they could afford as the world crawled out of the Depression era. We think they did an amazing job, all things considered.

However, the open top floor design proved to be a real issue, as recorded in Band Secretary Rupert De La Haye's letter to the Phillip Island Shire 20th October 1954:

"(b) Band Rotunda needs quite a sum of money spent on repairs to keep out water downstairs, which comes in by the bucket full from the top floor..."



Band rotunda prior to upstairs windows being put in place

While the band members maintained the Rotunda as best they could, even painting it inside and out, by 1962 the Band had accumulated enough funds to glass in the top of the Rotunda to prevent the water problem. Local joiners Alf Towns (a band member) and Frank 'Snow' Dixon inserted the windows which were fitted with pad-bolts so they could be removed for play-outs to enable the sound to more effectively reach the audience gathered below. Having the Rotunda closed-in upstairs when the windows were in place meant that the Band could also *practice* upstairs which was more spacious than the downstairs area, which was used for storage of the music library and music stands, etc. It was an ingenious arrangement and a wonderful solution to the various problems the Band faced.

There can be no doubt that the Phillip Island Band and its Rotunda were extremely important to the lives of Phillip Islanders and the thousands of visitors who holidayed there every year. The correspondence records contain scores of letters from organisations which were assisted in their fundraising efforts by appearances from the band, or by collections taken up during band play-outs. In one year alone (1947/48) the Band donated £447 divided between the Red Cross, Phillip Island Progress Association, Warley Bush Nursing Hospital, and the Phillip Island Shire Council for lighting and improvements to the Cowes Recreation Reserve.

The correspondence records also include a letter (unfortunately in very poor condition) from the Shire Council thanking the Band for playing for the Governor, Sir Rohan Delacombe on his visit in 1953, and a letter from "A Music Lover on Holidays", 1959 thanking them for the enjoyment they gave.

Furthermore, the Band enjoyed the full support of the community, both through donations by members of the community, and funding from the Council, which also subsidised the Band by charging a token annual rental for the Rotunda (which sits on Council managed land).

Whilst the Cowes Band Rotunda has not been used for its original purpose since 1967, it has been used for tourist purposes – firstly as a storage for the fair ground proprietor who operated in the immediate vicinity for many years, and now as a ticketing office for the ferry service – and this is not ideal for a building for which we are seeking State Heritage Listing, it is an advantage to the Rotunda to be occupied and used in some compatible way which has not markedly altered the structure. This use has ensured that its maintenance has continued and it is not subject to vandalism because it is monitored by police and Council by-laws officers. A

large sign on the north face of the building states: “Victoria Police. This area is under video surveillance. National Community Crime Prevention Program. Bass Coast.” This has proved to be very effective in stopping problems.

The understanding of the building by the public is enhanced by the placement of a plaque by this Society on the south eastern wall of the building in 2003 which states:

To commemorate the construction
of the Band Rotunda in 1935,
By members of the Phillip Island Band,
with the support of the community.
Plaque erected by the Phillip Island Masonic Lodge No.512
and the Phillip Island and District Historical Society 2003.

Part Two

Journeys



The "Killara" leaving Cowes.

A Journey to Phillip Island, 1860s

Speaker: Christine Grayden gave an illustrated talk on a trip from Melbourne to Phillip Island made by a Ray Tovell in 1869. Christine read out Tovell's account of the trip, and illustrated it with a Power Point showing scenes from that time of places and people along the way.

Ray Tovell had accepted an invitation from William Harbison, a timber merchant of Bay Street Brighton, and a Councillor in the same municipality of long standing, to spend his Christmas holidays at Phillip Island, much of which was owned by Harbison. The island at that time was practically uninhabited and Tovell, feeling that his holiday under these circumstances would be an exciting one, duly set off for the 'Bull and Mouth' to join the conveyance that would carry him for the greater part of the journey.

I have not been able to trace any original of Tovell's manuscript, nor work out when he wrote these memoirs, but I guess at about 1900, given that he was a young man when he made the journey, and he speaks of the amount of development that had gone on since then.

At the Bull and Mouth, Tovell was introduced to 'Old Bill', also known as 'Warrigal Bill'.

Tovell takes up the story:

"As we left the 'Bull and Mouth' the coach was speeding on its way towards Hastings, with the horses appearing just as anxious to move as the driver. The journey had already been delayed by an over-indulgent passenger (a well-known popular sportsman of past years). Bill's patience finally became exhausted and in a voice of harsh words representing "all aboard!" and to the cracking of whips amid which was the call of the ostler to "drag the cow aboard Jack and put him in the boot, or, by cripes, I'll go without him." The attendant knew Bill meant what he said and the command was quickly executed. Thus with a further crack of the whip accompanied by an "all clear" from Jack, the leaders started off on hind legs and the journey had begun.

"Some short delay occurred at Prince's Bridge, owing to the fact that its roadway was too narrow to permit our passage and the traffic was against us. "Bad luck," said Bill, as he cleaned the flies off the restless leader's ears with his whip without touching the ears. For Bill was the expert driver of that time, south of the Yarra. "That cursed tollkeeper will be our next stop I suppose, and that near side 'un is pretty green and gets dirty with 'er 'ind legs at times," grunted Bill

"Two bob dropped to the ground of the tollkeeper opposite the Grammar School and saved delay, and although St Kilda Rd was only a single track, and rutty, we had at least begun to settle as we passed through the gate and started off for Mooney's Hotel to water our horses, as an equally thirsty gent in the boot uttered protestations.

"Bill refused to permit the thirsty gent to escape from his compartment confinement and at Dickens Street, Elwood; he was restricted to a flask of water from the East Brighton Creek, known as Elwood Swamp. This was an introduction to what we were to encounter further on along the journey.

"Plunging through mush and slush along the main road where offal, waste meat and drain from the old slaughter house harbor, with many unscriptural maledictions by Bill on his horses, we crossed a little creek, the only opposite one by the sea, and where four or five houses of Elwood

stood before us, amongst them 'Elwood House', the old home of the late Hon J G Dogherty, some twenty acres or more surround it, and are now largely contributory to the little township.

"Our journey to Brighton Beach was uneventful after we got the signal of "cease firing" and were permitted to cross at the Elwood butts, the Rifle Range of the early days; and although St Kilda Street was imperfectly constructed, we duly arrived safely, and I doubt to the satisfaction of our sweating and tired team, it being the end of their section of the journey, to be picked up again on the return trip. Foxalls Hotel (the Royal Terminus) was only a small one. The blacks were on one of their wandering trips from the Mordialloc Reserve and were fairly numerous.

"All aboard" and the next section to Mordialloc had begun. There were no houses practically, until Mordialloc was reached except for two inns. I observed some time ago a correspondent writing about the destruction of the tea-tree, but never was there any between Brighton and the Retreat Hotel; the tea-tree there was planted later. The track through the sand was negotiated by the skill of "Old Bill" in handling his team, and he cursed frequently – the overlapping boughs caused no little concern, and frequently snakes basking in the hot sand did not quite agree with the necessity of our horses holding the narrow track. The coastline now and then was different, but we kept fairly close to the sea.

"We stopped at the first turn-off to drink our thirsty horses from a spring on the cliff, of which there are two, and a cupful was equally accepted by ourselves. As we rested, Bill told us of a swamp close handy, and loading our muzzle guns, we waded through the bordering reeds. My hand swept back at a large tiger snake as we lay stretched between two divided tussocks; the separation haunts me still! We left the wild ducks alone, although in future times, I subsequently shot many a duck and snipe in the swamp, which is now covered with houses. The blacks gave great trouble and stole the horses, so Mr Ebden built a high stockade to lock the horses up at night. Balcombe Road is named after the late Mr Balcome who held quite a large area in this locality, which he sued for his stock travelling along the Mornington Peninsula.

"When we reached Beaumaris, it was necessary to turn eastwards as we had a passenger for Cheltenham and mail was aboard. Cheltenham Township consisted on one hotel and a blacksmith's shop; the proverbial bank of New South Wales had not yet arrived. Our journey to Mordialloc was uneventful and as we passed Rennison Hotel, we were greeted with a waving of hats, as the arrival of the mail coach was quite eventful; the same excitement was caused when we arrived at Bloxidge's (the Bridge Hotel), where we were timed to stay the night.

"We boys slept the sleep of youth all right, and took some stirring up at daybreak, and with a hot cup of coffee to awaken us we were on our way to Mark Young's Hotel at Frankston for breakfast. (Can I say it Just shows that waking up in the morning with coffee is nothing new!)

"In the time I am writing about, Carrum was a huge swamp, the backing up of the waters from the Dandenong Hills, and having no exit bar the Mordialloc Creek, which blocks the water, spread itself, and over an area bounded by Frankston and Mordialloc through what are called 'Bangham Holes', right to Dandenong Township, which was frequently subjected to submergences. This was the condition we had to face and in addition the back country had been ablaze and was still burning. A quarter of a mile took us into the swamp with one wheel in the water, and very doubtful at that, our driver having a job to keep the horses from leaving the track, within the swingle bars area, and cracked at the whip as he brushed aside overhanging tea-tree branches. Old Sol was just showing his blood red nose on the horizon.

“Bronze-winged pigeons, innumerably, flew in all directions; black ducks and swans, and all kinds of swamp birds left their resting places along the banks and flew to safety, while a number of native companions stood out in relief on a small island, dancing their quadrilles (a peculiar habit of this bird), silhouetted in the rays of the blood red rising Australia sun.

“As we neared the half-way house (later called Carlyons), a small inn, we found to our concern that water had found an opening to the sea and was pouring across the road, and as quick-sand generally accompanies this conditions, things looked only medium. Bill looked doubtful and got off his box then waded in to survey; he gazed at the expanse of water, then back at the coach and said: “We’ll risk it; let them have a blow first, they need it.” Meaning they needed a rest to stop panting.

“Our intemperate passenger in the meantime, like the swamp, seemed to have gone into liquidation and had refused to pay his fare. “My chance now,” said Bill. “Hey there George Washington – your fare! We don’t run this concern for nix; your fare or you goes into the bloomin swamp”.

He paid his fare.

“Bill then drove towards the running water and we got through all right, although the water did come into the coach. One of our leaders went down in the middle, and as this practicality took us out of the swamp proper, the rest of our journey with the exception of crossing Kananook Creek, was uneventful

“Soon the beaming face of a genial Mark Young and the prospects of breakfast made us cheerful, and once the morning meal had satisfied our severe appetites, we were in anticipation of the last section of our journey.

Mark Young’s hotel, Frankston

“From here to Hastings the road was good in comparison. Wallabies frequently crossed our path, and one big ‘old man’ kangaroo, evidently a stray from the hills, appeared. He waited until Bill cracked the whip, “No mail today,” shouted Bill, who then explained to us “He’s the postman who takes the mail to the fishermen; them fellows who they say deserted from a ship as come to Western Port Bay and landed at Settlement Pint.

“At Hastings we took a little steamer for Phillip Island, where we were met by a bullock dray. “

So that is the end of Tovell’s adventurous journey to Phillip Island from Melbourne in 1869, but remember that after his holiday, he has to get back home again!

"Phillip Island" from the Age, 1888

This article, which was read at the February 2017 general meeting by Christine Grayden, comes from the *Melbourne Age*, 10 March 1888. It was titled 'Phillip Island' from a series 'Picturesque Victoria' by Telemachus:

There are three visits which must be made on Phillip Island – one to the Pyramid, already made, another to Cape Woolamai, and the third to the Nobbies, at the other end of the island. And all that is worth seeing in each of the journeys these involve, for reaching the Pyramid its greatest breadth is crossed; it is indeed fairly divided by the Pyramid Road, and the halves are bisected by the road to the Capes. The hotels provide vehicles – stout and substantial wagonettes – with rather plough horned cattle, for the roads are heavy in places, and the packing of the carriages when a big party proposes to move out is a work of art.

The Nobbies Road lies nearest to the western shore, skirting a fine, round hill, the finest building site, I think, on the island, where Mr Richardson purposes to stay til he makes his last shift; and the township of Ventnor, which at present is nothing but a pleasant valley by the sea. Some wretched people have, I believe, been planning a township down there, with every acre subdivided into eight blocks, and streets and lanes laid out, and an evident intent to have a Prahran-like slum or suburb there. I do not think they succeeded very well. I hope they never will succeed. I think it should be enacted by law that outside the township of Cowes, and of Newhaven, perhaps, a less quantity of land than five acres should never be sold. One might imagine that nobody would be so foolish as to buy a quarter of an acre in such a place as Phillip Island, but it is hard to set a bound to the possible limits of human folly in the way of land speculation.

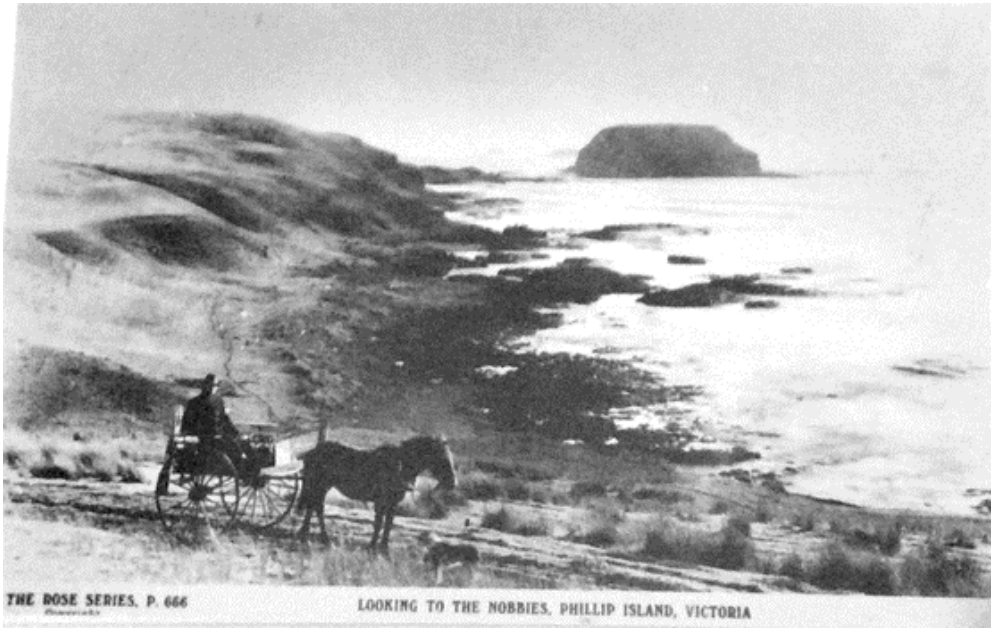
When the racket was at its height in New South Wales (and if that is regarded as fever heat in suburban and rural blocks, we are just at a normal temperature), I rode out once to the Nepean Water Works, and five and twenty miles from the city we came on a sale board and evident alignment of pegs in the middle of a box forest. No fair prospects around, no sea or mountain view, no railway station within eight miles. "What is it?" I asked, and got the reply, "Suburban extension; they tried a sale here last week." "And was anything sold?" "Oh, yes, a good many lots, but the prices did not get over two shillings six pence per foot, the depth was small, you see, not more than 120 feet". A depth of 120 feet, and 25 miles from town; who but a maniac would think of making such a purchase? There is room, perhaps, for a half dozen more places at Ventnor, but nobody desires or requires a town there today.

The free, open, breezy character of the place seems one of its chief delights. There is no forest, only a few stunted gums and honeysuckles, with the ti-tree in the hollows, making pleasant cover for the rabbits and hares, and the deer, which they say still remain, but are not easily seen. We mistook many dead boughs amongst the bushes for antler tips, but saw never a burst through the scrub. Yet accessible game was seen in one spot, which is known as the Green Lake. It is in appearance more of a swamp than a lake, and is better describes perhaps as a long serpentine lagoon lying amongst low hills a half mile from the Nobbies Road. A little money has been expended in building a dam, but something more is required in this way if it is seriously proposed to store large quantities of water. There are fine opportunities. The judicious expenditure of a thousand pounds would create, probably, a large and permanent fresh water lake. There is deep water now along the centre of the serpentine channel, and innumerable ducks and teal swimming there, not easily scared apparently, and within easy shooting

distance. I do not understand how it is they were not scared away years ago, and if this betrayal of their breeding place should bring down on them an army of Cockney sportsmen, the lamentations and condemnations of all my feathered friends will fall heavily on my head.

But we are nearing 'the Nobbies', another name which has at least one unfortunate repetition on the coast. Mariners will never recognise but one Australian headland as the Nobbies, and that is at Newcastle in New South Wales. These (Phillip Island) hillocks beyond the cape are appropriately named, of course. There is no difficulty in understanding the reason why. They are actual knobs of land left in the deep water, rounded hummocks with water-worn sides and grass-covered caps – remnants of a long unbroken cape which in some remote eld stretched far out into the sail-less seas. They are seen now distinct and apart, and apparently of another order of formation, just beyond the mainland, and we approach them under somewhat peculiar circumstances. A day or two ago a fire swept over the whole breadth of the inland cape, and left it black and bare and permanently blasted, it might well be supposed. For there is no timber growth out here, and the innumerable charred tussocks are like hearse-plumes.

Wherever the shore is seen the rocks are black, and the whole surface of the sea is blackening, for the morning, which had broken sultry and close, the last of three days of northerly weather, is about to be purged with a 'buster'. There is an ominous blackness out on the horizon, a moan rather than a roar in the waves, that surge about the caves. Two big steamships making down the coast, coal-up and head out a bit to get a safe offing. There is a blow coming, and rain with it probably, and the cape is bleak in a southerly and bad for picnicking. But the waves that even the coming of the wind seems to move, marvellously increase all the glory of the coastline, and looking eastward there is a half mile of coastline where rocks seem met as for torment far out in the waves. A dozen miniature capes of basalt running out from the cliff face, are washed, and frayed, and torn, and carved into innumerable fantastic forms. The indigo waves roll up to their outer feet now and break sullenly, and leap aloft in sheets of foam. In a quarter of an hour they will be coming in like squadrons at a charge, crested ridge upon ridge.



The road to the Nobbies, in background
Phillip Island & District Historical Society collection

The big steamships are almost hidden in their own smoke clouds now, for the gale has not yet reached them. Inside their track a flock of mutton birds is seen skimming the water in swift, methodical flight. The mutton birds make their home on these rocks, but will have nought to do with any rock that is attached to the mainland. Penguins come here too. The Nobby cape, indeed, seems to be a natural home of the penguin. Poor, innocent, harmless creatures. Almost as foolish in their habits as the ostrich in his notions of concealment. They scratch out little holes beneath the tussocks or lumps of cushion bush, and roost and lay their eggs and incubate there, visible at times, and accessible to any cur or biped of curious instincts desirous of adding to his day's outing a little meat of slaughter. It is pitiful to see the numbers of these poor creatures lying dead about the cape and the rocks; killed wantonly, ruthlessly, savagely dragged out of their holes and clubbed or hunted to death, just for 'sport's sake'. I wish some sportsman, who is also a gentleman and a bit of a Christian, and nature worshipper also, would write a little book on "what is sport and what is not". It might do good in the world. Particularly if legislators would take it as an axiom that slaughter that is not sport is crime, and should be punished accordingly.

But hypocrites we are in this way! It seems to me now a sin to be punished with stripes for any man to pull a penguin out of its nest, and laugh while a dog ravels out its entrails, and I believe that my instincts in that matter are right; yet I can join the clergymen down below in murder of another sort without any feeling of disgust or prick of conscience. There are anemones down on the rocks there, tens of thousands of them visible at the low tide. But they are fast shut up and we desire to see them open. Do you know how to persuade a sea anemone to open himself? It is done with a limpet. Take a stout knife and detach a limpet from the rocks, cut him out of his shell – never mind his squirming, he cannot shriek or yell. Take his little bit of writhing substance in your finger and thumb and place it fairly on an anemone's nose. Stand away then for a moment, and let him get the smell. He is a hungry creature – greedy indeed. He begins to open, he discloses all his glorious gorge of mouth and throat, enfolds his victim in his beautiful arms and sucks him down. And then your sport and reward begin. The whole tribe of anemones has smelled and would be fed. You may work away at your limpets if you will, and they will take them from you eagerly and quickly as pigeons take barley-corn.

But the storm is up now, and the anemones are quickly buried in foam. The smoke canopy is torn away from the ships, they begin to pitch through the white water, big combers come right up on the seal rocks, and strike the outer Nobby with hammer-like blows. The blowhole (it is but a cavern, no orifice on the cliff serving as a trumpet) answers to each shock with a hollow roar, and the driftwood fire roars furiously around the billy in the shelter of 10,000 ton blocks of basalt. The rain comes with a hiss but the projecting basalt shelters us and appetite is very keen, and picnic fare very good, only the driver is concerned a bit about the poor beggars of horses, tied to their nose-bags amongst the burnt tussocks atop of the cliff. We reach them alright, however, and they warm themselves rattling home; but it should be said that a storm at the Nobbies is not an ordinary or even a frequent event. Thirty-nine days out of forty a picnic party might go down in the morning and feed anemones and gather shells and look at the penguins and listen to the blowhole til evening, and then drive home in a mellow twilight without a fear of any chill.

I stayed for a moment on the cliff and faced around at the fury of the storm. It was to notice a black channel between the two outer Nobbies, not more than fifty fathoms broad and about a third of a mile from the shore. (here I believe he is talking about Seal Rocks as being the two "outer Nobbies") It has an historic interest. On a wild day, of a bygone year, a Green's ship was

beating off this coast, and had got in far too close for safety. She would certainly indeed have left her bones on the rocks but for the pluck and luck of her skipper. He could not clear the outer rock and seeing the narrow channel of apparent bold water, through which, however, no ship had ever sailed before, sent her at it, his own hand on the wheel and every man on board waiting for the shock. But she found twenty fathoms of water beneath her, and came through gallantly into the open bight beyond, and got about there and made out to a fair offing and up to Sydney.

Mr McHaffie watched the passage from the cliffs. Mr McHaffie was squatter king, reigning alone here in early days. “Shall we drive down to the old homestead? It is near to the area.” We did, and chanced on one of the patches of Australian pathos there, which like the true Australian poetry, are happened on in strange places. The old homestead lies near to the sea, in a sheltered hollow. Pines have been set all about it, and (outside) the pines, she-oaks, and the wail of the one answers the sigh of the other now, and their shed needles mat all the ground beneath; a double row of yuccas within the pines and the remnant of lawns and flower beds and arbours and grottoes. Remains, also, of a fair old home of the old colonial sort, a long verandahed front, with a score of doors opening into as many rooms; remains of an aviary in one corner, of a fernery in another; remains, indeed, everywhere of a beautiful, cultured, artistic, secluded life; remains, relics, nothing but relics, the ruins of the old order which, so far as our colony is concerned, has utterly passed away. It has all been lived through here. There is the old wool shed and mustering yards and the stables. Squatters of the Geoffrey Hamlyn sort used to sit here under the verandah; good sort of people from town would come out and stay with them a while. A good lady, still resident in the district, but not in the island, tells me tales of a long-ago, when the worthy old Baron, who has reigned so long over our botanical departments, was very much down at that homestead on the island, and not on matters of purely scientific research. The garden was all fairly ordered then. It seems almost like resurrectionist work to try to re-people it now, to bring back the living and the dead, and imagine them here as they used to be.



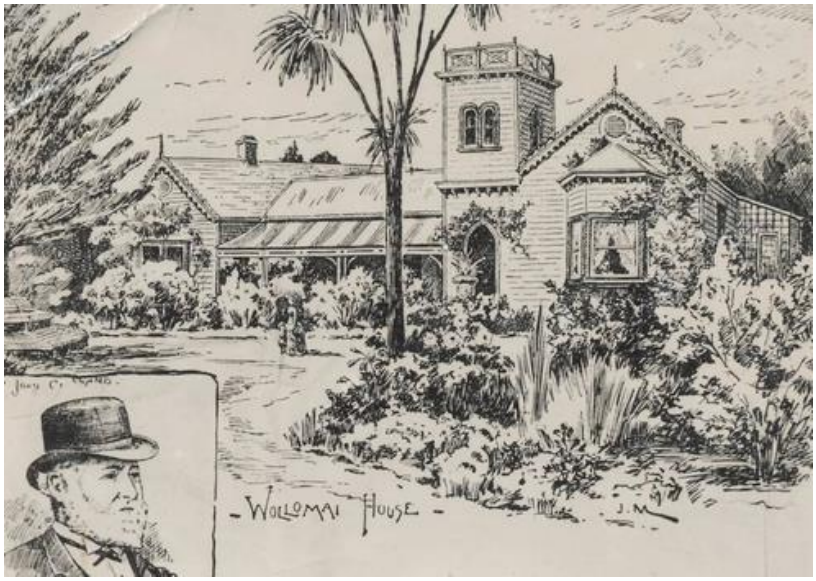
McHaffie homestead. Phillip Island & District Historical Society collection

“All are scattered now and fled; some are married, some are dead.”

So the oaks seem to say in their wailing, and the sea makes answer to them lapping on the shelly beach yonder. The old order has to change, of course, but I cannot see that any good whatever was wrought by the change which ruined the occupation of the one squatter of Phillip Island. The land was given up to selectors first, and their huts remain, and their tumble-down fences and the thistle-covered fields. They came and went, labouring much in vain, and making little profit for themselves or others, and the estate which was divided amongst them is again being consolidated by two proprietors, one of whom is well known in connection with sport while the other is not renowned for liberality or public speaking.

It seems to me that the bulk of the island will never do more than keep 20,000 sheep and serve as a sanatorium for the city, and that farming, accept on a few exceptional patches, is folly and madness. It seems to me, also, that those in whose hands the disposal of the public lands and the settling of the people were placed should have seen this a quarter of a century ago. But it is a melancholy fact that nobody seems to have seen or heeded the order of our land settlement, that the most important, perhaps, of all our foundational concerns has been allowed throughout Australian history to run absolutely "amuck".

There is a house of another sort on the other side of the island – 'Woolomai House' to wit, the residence of Mr John Cleeland, proprietor for many years of one of our good old Melbourne hostels and winner of a Melbourne Cup with his horse Woolomai some thirteen years ago. We can get round to that house and to the Cape beyond by the road across the other half of the island, or by the good little boat, *Vixen*, running round to Griffiths Point and calling at need at Rhyll and Newhaven. Griffith's Point, another aspiring watering-place, is the cape of the mainland opposite Woolomai. It is the central township of the shire, the seat of government, indeed, and backed up by a good fattening and agricultural country, may become a village of some importance. Rhyll and Newhaven have also promise of a prosperous future, and have already suffered some assailments from the min**u**te subdividers. They lie pleasantly to the sea, are backed by good sound building country, good enough for gardens and orchards, and healthy in all seasons of the year.



Captain John Cleeland and Cleeland House
Phillip Island & District Historical Society collection

Woolomai, the Cape, is high and bold and bleak, and practically cut off from the island by a sandy isthmus, across which travelling can never be very easy. As many another true lover of all

sorts of good sport, I can never get away from the memory of that brave racehorse when standing by or thinking about that Woolomai Cape. Over there on the long sandy beach he was trained, pacing up and down, and listening on windy mornings to the roar of the waves, little thinking, probably, of that other roar which should one day greet him when the wave face on the Hill flashed round on his turn into the straight, and the ever-increasing shout swelled to his single name.

Another place of interest on that coast is Churchill Island, but this is not a public resort. Mr Alderman Amess secured Churchill Island all to himself and has fixed his residence there, and lives a fine, free, hospitable life in as pleasant and healthful a situation as could be found in the world. The tide races past him down the eastern channel, fresh breezes from the ocean and shore bring him perpetual instalments of health, and no matter from what quarter a too fierce wind may come, one side of his island estate will always be sheltered. Only I should imagine if ever the Russians should come, these island homes would be at a discount.

Visitors to the island will be content to gather shells at Woolamai, and to return to Cowes by coach or boat, and it will be many years to come probably before many folks take to picnicking or the establishment of summer residences on the eastern mainland, though to the sportsman by sea or shore there is much to observe there. Good bold water for sailing, and in the Powlett and Bass Rivers, abundant fishing and shooting.

Gippsland mountains, also rising inland, offer practically unlimited scope for enterprise and adventure of the usual Australian sort. Far up at the head of the bay there is also the scene of a great enterprise of a near future in the draining of the vast Koo-Wee-Rup swamp. Its turgid waters creep down the sluggish river now, some day they may be drawn off by a broad and deep canal up which fishermen may sail or pole, amongst rich fenland farms and as busy and prosperous a patch of agriculture as the colony will know. But that, like the Isle of Wight towns, on the old Phillip Island, is amongst the things of the future. There is little to take any adventurer up into that extensive bight of the port now. He may be very well content to take departure, and may farewell at Cowes, and steam away to Hastings by the seagrass meadows, with flocks of black swan feeding, and up the deep blue channels with the porpoises following and frolicking about the bows, and to pass between the nets of the fishermen, catching with scraps of practical fishing talk, bursts of “marvellous manifestations” and “wonderful outpourings” and other wild talk peculiar to consecrated cobblers and converted fisherfolk. He will have to hang about Hastings from half to three quarters of an hour waiting the convenience of the coach people and will be lucky, having arrived at the wharf at eleven, if he catches the half past three train at Frankston, fifteen miles away.

Part Three

People



Euphemia Henderson, Phillip Island botanical collector for Ferdinand von Mueller, and artist. The Lady Painter of Wildflowers and the Government Botanist

A talk given by Maureen Matthews to the Phillip Island and District Historical Society in Cowes in June 2022

I would like to tell you about an accomplished wildflower artist who lived and worked on Phillip Island in the mid-1800s, and also talk about her romance and friendship with Ferdinand von Mueller.

Euphemia Henderson was the sister of Georgiana McHaffie, wife of John David McHaffie. John and his brother took over a lease of the whole of Phillip Island in 1842 for the grazing of sheep.

John and Georgiana must have been well off, because they also had a house in St Kilda, to which they escaped in the colder winter months to attend the theatre and concerts and enjoy the social life of Melbourne. John had known Ferdinand von Mueller for many years.

Euphemia Ethel Elizabeth Spencer Middleton Henderson was born in 1822 in Valparaiso, Chile. She was one of at least five children born to James Henderson, a captain in the Royal Navy, and mother Catherine, nee Black. She was baptised in Fife, Scotland, on the 8th March 1822.



A studio portrait of the young Euphemia Henderson. From Collecting Ladies: Ferdinand von Mueller and Women Botanical Illustrators, written by Penny Olsen

Euphemia spent her earlier years on a family estate on Guernsey, and later on the Isle of Man. Euphemia arrived in Australia in 1853 with her architect-artist brother, John Henderson. She worked as a governess, and when not working she lived with the McHaffies on Phillip Island.

It seems likely that Euphemia, as Georgiana's sister, might have met von Mueller while staying with the McHaffies at St Kilda.

Euphemia painted watercolours of the beautiful wildflowers growing on Phillip Island. She often brought the plants and paintings to Ferdinand von Mueller to be identified. He was the Government Botanist and had established the National Herbarium of Victoria. He was also the first director of the Melbourne



Botanic Gardens. One of Euphemia's wildflower floral/botanical artworks.
National Herbarium collection.

Von Mueller was born in 1825 in Rostock, a sovereign state of Germany. Five of his brothers and sisters had died in childhood, and when he was nine his father died of tuberculosis (consumption). Another sister died when he was 19, also of consumption.

Mueller was a good scholar and not long before his mother's death in 1839 she arranged for him to be apprenticed as a pharmacist. He left home when 14 to study pharmacy. This involved the study of botany and he collected plants, making many scientific contacts.

In 1847, just before he and his two sisters sailed for Australia, Mueller was awarded a Ph D for his botanical thesis.

Once in Adelaide he quickly found work in pharmacy. In 1852, lured by the goldfields, he moved to Victoria. In 1853 Lieutenant Governor Charles La Trobe appointed him the first Government Botanist of Victoria.

Mueller moved into the Gardener's Cottage in the Botanical Gardens and established the Melbourne Herbarium. He also began a series of botanical explorations of Victoria.



Ferdinand von Mueller. National Herbarium collection.

He explored the Buffalo Ranges, then went to the upper reaches of the Goulburn River and across Gippsland to the coast. The neighbourhoods of Port Albert and Wilsons Promontory were explored, and the journey of some 2,400 kilometres was completed along the coast back to Melbourne.

He later explored the Victoria River and other portions of North Australia. He found nearly 800 species in Australia new to science. Many of the plants in the National Herbarium of Victoria were collected by him.

Von Mueller appealed for helpers to collect plants and send them to him for identification. He wrote to Australian newspapers, saying: “The world of plants is particularly fitted to attract the attention of the fair sex, who admire the beauties of nature and attend them with womanly care and anxiety.”

And since women could not get paid work in their chosen profession, they had leisure time for doing unpaid work for him!

“What trouble would it be to collect and preserve flowers, and enclose in an envelope to their destination? How many ladies might devote a few leisure hours to this pursuit?”

Although he might not have paid the women for their labor, he did promise to acknowledge their contribution, and 12,000 of his letters to and from his women collectors survive.

Through her love of plants Euphemia formed a friendship, then a romance, with von Mueller, which began during one of his visits to the McHaffies on Phillip Island. Euphemia had read Byron to him. They had walked to "their rock", where he had proposed and she had accepted.

"Beloved bride", he wrote to her on his way home to Melbourne in the autumn of 1863, "Could these days of immeasurable happiness, which you instilled in me, but have extended! But it is perhaps best as it is, – for in the ardour of my love, so suddenly kindled, I could not help following you constantly and stretching out my arms to touch the talisman".

He looked forward eagerly to her visit to Melbourne in the following month. She arrived in April for the winter, staying with Georgiana and John at St Kilda. She sewed a Danish flag for von Mueller as the city celebrated the marriage of the Danish Princess Alexandra to the Prince of Wales.



A later studio portrait of Euphemia Henderson. Phillip Island & District Historical Society

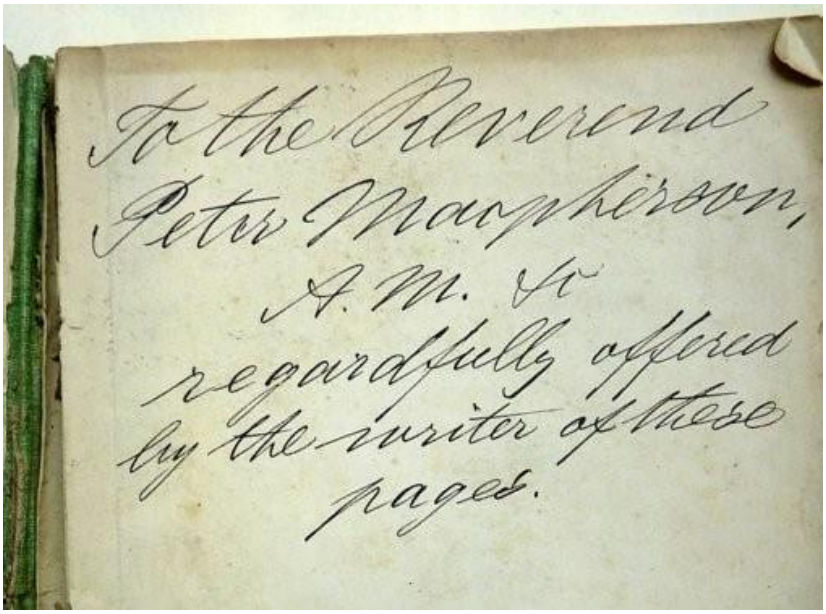
He introduced her as "my fiancé, a greatly talented and enlightened Scottish lady". He wrote to her often that winter, but by August his ardour had cooled and he then addressed her as "My Dear Miss Henderson".

The reason, it seemed, was that he had come to believe that marital bliss depended on the blessing of children, and Euphemia was 42 years old. He was 38. He also informed her that he suffered from ill health, and it would not be fair to burden her with his care. It was a fact that many of his family relations had died of consumption. His message was delivered by a respected Melbourne doctor, David John Thomas, not by von Mueller in person. Euphemia was not convinced of his earnestness when she wrote to him, so he wrote to her in reply:

> Though you regard in your letter the reasons, which I frankly communicated through Dr Thomas, as absurd, I can only say they are purely based on the laws of life and nature, and were ladies aware of the doctrines of medicine many matrimonial engagements in advanced life would never be carried out and the hopes of many a house never blighted.

Euphemia and Ferdinand continued to exchange letters, and she marked his birthdays. She sent him plants until 1869, when the McHaffies moved to Yanakie in South Gippsland.

In November 1863 he had sent to her as a conciliatory birthday gift a davenport made of Australian woods and carved with a kangaroo and an emu. In one of its secret drawers Euphemia hid for 40 years his letters to her, disclosing them just before her death.



Example of von Mueller's handwriting. He was an extraordinarily prolific writer of letters. A major project is underway at the National herbarium to analyse and publish his letters.

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, in partnership with Australian and New Zealand designers and manufacturers, had created a collection based on Euphemia's paintings.



A display at the meeting of placemats designed using Euphemia's floral paintings. Photo: Ellen Berryman

The Euphemia Henderson Collection includes plates, place-mats, coasters, prints, greeting cards, notebooks, pocket mirrors, bed linen, clothing, wallpaper and table lamps. The pieces are available online at various outlets.

Royalties from the sales of the Euphemia Henderson range were directed towards the Royal Botanic Gardens scientific research and conservation projects.

Along with her wildflower artworks, 44 letters from von Mueller to Euphemia survive, and are held in the State Botanical Collection at the National Herbarium of Victoria. Euphemia died of gastroenteritis in Kew in 1907 aged 86 years. Von Mueller died aged 71 on 10th October 1896 and is buried in the St Kilda cemetery.



Ferdinand von Mueller's grave monument, St Kilda Cemetery.
Photo: Alan West. Phillip Island and District Historical Society collection

In 1867 he had been granted in Germany an 'Order of the Crown' entitling him to use Von in his surname, indicating nobility.

In 1871 he was granted a baronetcy by the King and Queen of Wurtenburg, a state in South-west Germany. BARON was a hereditary title, which may have made him wish for an heir.

Harry Jenkins, Boer War and WW1, dentist, adventurer, owner of Churchill Island 1936-63

March 2015 Christine Grayden gave a Power Point talk about Harry Jenkins, who owned Churchill Island from 1936-1963.

Harry Jenkins was born in 1883 in Abbotsford. His WWI record was later to describe him as a "natural born British subject". At the age of 18, in 1901, he enlisted in the 2nd Regiment, Scottish Horse as a trooper to fight in the Anglo-Boer War. It seems likely that Harry was of Scottish descent and an expert rider, in order to be recruited to this regiment.

The 2nd Scottish Horse, under Colonel Benson, "speedily became one of the best corps in the country". In July they captured wagons and horses from Viljoen's Commando and captured a large number of armed Boers and were praised by Kitchener. In September at a farm called Brakenlaagte, they came into a conflict with a force under General Louis Botha and were involved in the unsuccessful defence of an artillery battery. Two companies lost 73 officers and men including Colonel Benson.

War service was perhaps something of a gap year for Harry and its seems likely that on his return, he enrolled in Dentistry studies, either at the Melbourne Dental Hospital or the Melbourne University Faculty established in 1904.Perhaps Harry transferred his horse riding skills to motor cycles. We know that he competed and won in a motor cycle carnival in Sydney in 1910.

In this period Harry established his dental practice in Collins Street. He married Alice May Gahan in 1911. She was born in Collingwood Gahan in 1883 of a Scottish father so this may have been the network which brought them together. Their son Ted, (Edward Harry) was born in 1916.

In late 1916 Harry enlisted in the Australian Flying Corps, No.4 Squadron. He signed up at the Town Hall and he may have had hopes of becoming a pilot. However, it is clear that he had no previous flying experience as he was given the rank of private and promoted to temporary sergeant just before embarkation on the *RMS Omrah*on 17 January 1917. He arrived with his squadron at Castle Bromwich near Birmingham designated as an MT Driver.

He was promoted to sergeant on 1 July and posted to the AIF HQ in London for promotion to lieutenant in the Dental Corps. After this he served in a number of dental units in Britain and France and was promoted to captain in August 1918. Conditions in many of the dental units were quite primitive, operating in tents by lamplight. Harry visited Italy and came down with mumps, and was discharged in October 1919.

We have no further signs of Harry until the 1929 Australian Motor Racing Grand Prix in 1929. He came 4th overall and first in class D in a Bugatti Type 30. The race was won by Arthur Terdich in a Bugatti Type 37A s/c. The medal awarded to Harry is on display at Churchill Island. It should be noted that in 1929 he was 46 years old. Perhaps it was this competition at Phillip Island that later made him look to that area and buy Churchill Island.

Two years later, now 48, he was in London with Harold Jeffrey. They had sailed from Melbourne to England with the intention of purchasing a DH.60 Moth to make a holiday flight to Australia for resale. Instead they purchased the Desoutter, which gave them enclosed cabin comfort and dual controls. Jeffery was aged 41 years, a director of Dimmey's Department Store in Richmond, Melbourne and was a commercial pilot who had flown in the Australian Flying Corps over the Western Front in the World War I.

Vacuum Oil Company sponsored their trip in exchange for publicity articles in papers along the route. This must have been a huge adventure for the time, as many 'airports' must have been very primitive. Their route took them with frequent stops down through Europe, across the Middle East to India – where they stopped for nine days to go on a tiger hunt with a Rajah – down through South East Asia to Darwin and then down the Eastern Seaboard of Australia to Melbourne.



Flight route of the Jenkins-Jeffrey Desoutter flight England to Australia, 1932.
David Maunders, Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.

There they sold the plane to the founder of what became Ansett Airlines, and that same plane flew the Launceston to Flinders Island route as 'Miss Flinders' for many years, and is now on display at the Queen Victoria Museum in Launceston. (*Editor's note, 2023: now on display at Launceston airport.)*

Harry bought Churchill Island in 1963 as an interest for his son Ted who had been left a paraplegic after an accident – either through diving or through ice hockey we are not sure. Ted had many friends, especially through his interest in ham radio, and they visited him when

Harry, Ted and Ted's nurse Sister Margaret Campbell, were in residence on the island each summer.

During World War II, when most of Ted's friends enlisted for war service and ham radio was banned, Ted and Sister Campbell ran Churchill Island as a Shorthorn dairy farm. They milked for cream, and Sister Campbell had to carry the heavy cream cans, load them on the carryall of the tractor, drive them down to the boat, motor across to the end of Churchill Road, where Harry owned 10 acres and kept cars and a utility vehicle in a shed, load the cans onto the ute, drive them to the Phillip Island Rd, and lift them onto the stand for the cream truck to collect. Eventually this did not turn out as expected, so Harry sold all the Shorthorns in a clearing sale at Cleeland's property, and bought Herefords.

By 1958 it was obvious that a bridge would have to be built. Typical of Harry he bought an old pier from Port Melbourne and employed a contractor to build the bridge with those timbers. Disaster struck when the rotten timbers gave way and the contractor's tractor fell through to the mud, pinning him and drowning him in the mud. After some delay, Ports and Harbours finished the bridge with better timber.

In the 1950s Harry apparently made a lot of money by investing in a gold mine at Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory. The mine made £900,000 in the first few years of operation, but it is unclear how much Harry made out of the venture. Also around this time, Harry was an influential figure in the Australian Crocodile Shooters Club, and at one stage had a partner in the crocodile skin business. In the Churchill Island collection we have home movie footage of them in the Northern Territory, hunting and skinning crocodiles, drying the skins, and loading them in large rolled bales onto a boat for transport to Darwin. Christine showed an excerpt from this footage. She also showed a photo of a huge crocodile – approximately 6 ½ metres long – which Harry had shot on one of his shooting expeditions to the Northern Territory.



Harry Jenkins at left, with one of the larger crocodiles he shot during the 1950s. Churchill Island collection.

Life on Churchill Island during the Jenkins years was highly sociable, with lots of visitors, partying and firing the cannon every New Year's Eve. The household kept informal hours, rising late in the morning and partying til late at night. They had many friends in the local area, and both Harry and Sister Campbell were well known speedsters as they flew around in a Bugatti, a Riley, or other such expensive, fast cars.

At one stage they had turkeys on Churchill Island, and seemed to tolerate the locals helping themselves around Christmas time. Ted's friends eventually married and brought their own children down for weekends and Summer holidays, and many of those children still remember the wonderful times they had during the Jenkins era.

Ted died in 1960 aged 41, and Harry died in 1963, aged 80. He left Churchill Island to Margaret Campbell, which started a new era for Churchill Island.

With thanks to David Maunders for information on the early years of Harry's life, and his war service.

Local ceramic artist and charitable fundraiser Ina Davie



Ina Davie. Davie family collection

Julie Box gave a talk about local artist Ina Davie and she and Bob and Anne Davie brought examples of Ina's work to share with members. Julie commenced her talk by telling us of how she went to a garage sale at Bimbadeen because she and her husband Allan ran a second hand book shop in Warley Ave at that stage and they knew there would be some valuable old books at the sale. Julie arrived at 7.55 a.m. and another lady arrived at the same time. There they saw 12 flower paintings for sale, by Bob's mother Ina Davie. Julie told the lady that as a 16 year old student she had interviewed Ina. It turned out the lady was a lecturer in art history.

In the end, Julie spent all of the old book money on the 12 paintings, 2 figurines and a plate painted with flowers, all by Ina. Further, Bob gave her another plate.

Driving back to the book store, Julie thought "I've spent all the money on art, and Al is going to be very annoyed". She was concerned, as Al could be stern and give you a 'dressing down'. However, when she returned to the bookstore it transpired that a man had just been in and spent $100 on Phillip Island history books, so Al said he would go straight back to Bimbadeen to buy the books, which he did. Bob and Anne, running the garage sale, must have been thrilled that Julie and Al had turned up that day!

So why did Julie buy so much of Ina's flower art? Firstly, Julie has always loved flowers as she finds them so relaxing. She has Ina's flower paintings all the way up the passageway at home and they always give her a lift to see them. Secondly, because she had interviewed Ina all those years ago. As a year 11 art student she needed to write a paper about a Phillip Island artist by interviewing one. She was not allowed to do a sculptor. She was tossing up between Hector Goodall and Ina Davie, but her mother said "You're a 16 year old girl, and Hector's a bit wild and he's a drinker". So Ina it was.

Since Julie did not know Ina and Stan Davie, her father rang them and organised for the interview with Ina on a Saturday afternoon. There were set questions to ask, and the paper had to be about 3-4 pages long. Julie was a bit in awe of Ina, who was sophisticated, spoke well and dressed fashionably. Stan answered the doorbell.

Julie had known Stan from her childhood when she was in Wonthaggi Hospital with scarlet fever and he was in a room nearby. Julie was put in a ward with four older boys from St Paul's Home, who immediately they were all alone, stole Julie's dolls, including her special porcelain doll "Sally" (which she still has) and started tossing them around between them. Julie was calling out to the boys to be careful, which made them worse!

Suddenly Stan appeared in his dressing gown and slippers, with raised voice, saying "What's going on here? Who's throwing these dolls?" The boys were very scared and meekly gave up the dolls. Stan told Julie that if she ever needed him, to knock on his door. He told the boys: "I don't want to have to tell sister about you boys". That really scared them into behaving properly as the sister was very strict and harsh with the boys, smacking them each morning for wetting their beds.

When Stan answered the door all those years later, he said to Julie: "You're the scarlet fever girl, aren't you?" He introduced her to Ina, who was more than happy to talk to someone interested int her art. She showed Julie her studio. She used no easel, but a drawing board. She said she had been interested in art from an early age, and it was her best subject at school. After her family were adults and they no longer had the guest house, she was able to get back to her art.

A lady at Ina's church took china painting classes on white plates, and Ina found she had a taste and talent for china painting. She said "What I love about art is this...when you're concentrated on what you do you're totally relaxed and it gives you great joy."



Examples of Ina Davie's floral art. l-r: Ranunculus, oil on board; Roses hand-painted and fired on vase; Poppies hand painted and fired on plate.

As I was going out she asked me if I was going on to study art at university. I told her I couldn't because I was the sixth child in my family, who were only chicory farmers. However, seeing her studio was an eye-opener to Julie, as it made her see just how artists worked, which was something to aspire to. Her previous experience with artists was the Figuerola sisters, a Melbourne family who were very eccentric and avant garde. They came down on the ferry. They owned a big bluestone mansion in Kew. Alma Figuerola had a big artist's carpet bag from Florence – not to be found in Phil West's Cowes store! They influenced Julie to study art, but not after year 11, as she was neat, but not really talented.

Later in life Julie became involved in exhibitions and actually got into a Fine Arts course in 1981, but Al got the opportunity of a good job in Gippsland writing curriculum. Julie was unable to do Fine Arts by distance education and had to drop the opportunity. She did buy art books and continued to attend exhibitions.

After Julie got home with the paintings from the sale they sat unframed in the study until Al got the hydrangeas painting framed to encourage Julie to have the whole lot framed, which she did 15 years ago.

Julie then discussed each painting and each figurine, pointing out the good qualities of each, including the fine detail on the faces and flower features of the figurines. Ina obviously had a very steady hand, as attested to by the fine quality of her detailed work, such as the buttons on the coat of one of the figurines. Many of the flowers are painted in such a way as to 'jump out' at you with their liveliness.

Of the china plates, Julie bought the green one because it so reminds her of the green grass of her childhood home. The magnolia painting is in her bedroom, and she wakes up to see it each morning, with light streaming in through the window. In former years she collected landscapes, and Al preferred military and historic paintings. However, Julie has long been a fan of Ellis Rowan, who had stayed with the McHaffies, and has some of her botanical prints on the wall.

Julie pointed out the signature on Ina's flower paintings, where she signed her name by placing a dot above the "I" in most of them. Some just used "C I D" – Clarice Ina Davie – and a few were not signed, indicating that perhaps they had not been finished. Some are painted with thick application of paint, others not, indicating that Ina was happy to experiment with her style.

Ina actually contributed many thousands of dollars to charity through donations for sale of her china paintings. One exhibition of hers held over 200 pieces. Bob said how his mother's eyesight was failing as she got older, but she continued to paint and fired all her own work.

The Fascinating Residents of Churchill Island

Christine Grayden, curator of Churchill Island Heritage Farm, spoke about the fascinating residents of Churchill Island at the General Meeting, 2 July 2014

Prior to, and for some time after initial European colonisation, the Bunurong Aboriginal people visited Western Port's islands during the summer months and feasted on fish, shellfish, short tailed shearwaters (mutton birds) and various marsupials. There are numerous middens in Western Port. The Bunurong clan to occupy Phillip Island was the Yallock Bullock. There is a shell bed at Churchill Island but no archaeological investigation has been done there, so we don't know if it is a midden or a naturally occurring shell bed. It is believed that the Bunurong people occupied the area for at least 20,000 years.

The first Europeans to be resident full-time on Churchill Island were the Pickersgills – Samuel and Winifred. Winifred (Nealis) was an Irish famine orphan, at a time when the choice was emigrate or die in Ireland of starvation. She emigrated to Australia where she did domestic work before marrying Samuel. Recently Pickersgill family historians have found a record of Samuel being transported to Van Diemen's Land as a convict. After five years he escaped and after another few years was given up as dead by the government. In between times he changed his name several times, presumably to evade escape. He and Winifred lived on Churchill Island from 1860-66 but never owned it. The family story has it that Winifred worked hard to raise sufficient funds to buy CI but Samuel lost it in a card game. The more likely story is that he did not wish to contest John Rogers for the purchase of CI as it would have drawn attention of the law to Samuel. Winifred had three children while living on CI, including giving birth to one without any adult help at all.

Winifred and Samuel had both come from desperate, impoverished backgrounds, and were obviously determined that their children would not have similar travails. All of their nine children survived to be solid, honest citizens. We do not know where their domicile was on CI. They moved from there to San Remo, having farm land and a boarding house.

John and Sarah Rogers apparently lived simultaneously with the Pickersgills on CI for a few years. John purchased CI for £210 in 1866, and lived there until 1872 when they moved to

Muddy Creek near Warragul to establish model farms. While on CI, John grew many tons of potatoes and wheat which he sold locally and even in Melbourne. Cultivation of the islands was illegal at this time, but John Rogers did it anyway.

John Rogers married Sarah Jane Orr in May 1862 when he was 46 years old and she was 28 years old. Two of their three children, John Churchill Rogers and Charles Henry Baker Rogers, were born on Churchill Island. John and Sarah worked hard to create a good life for themselves on the island. They built cottages and planted flowerbeds, which Sarah laid out with paths surfaced using local shellgrit. The garden paths are still surfaced with shellgrit to this day. John and Sarah also developed an orchard, vegetable gardens and row of trees as wind-breaks. The two cottages built by the Rogers are still standing and remain some of the oldest buildings in the area today. Eventually Rogers had to mortgage the island to John McHaffie who sold it in 1872 to the famous Samuel Amess.

Samuel Amess (1826-1898) was the first of three Samuel Amesses to own CI, and certainly the most famous. He was a stonemason/builder who had many grand buildings, railways stations and bridges to his name. He was mayor of Melbourne when the Town Hall opened to great fanfare in 1870. Samuel did not want the councillors to get into an undignified spat over the costs, so paid for everything himself – a fancy dress ball for 2000 people and a cantata attended by 3000 people!

Samuel was a member of the Victorian Acclimatisation Society and imported many foreign animals to CI, including hares, rabbits, pheasants and skylarks. He also imported Clumber spaniels from England, especially bred to flush out pheasants. From Scotland he imported Highland Cattle. Early on he built the solid homestead still there today, lining the walls with insulating gravel, covered with boards, hessian and fancy wallpaper and ceiling paper. Samples of the original wallpaper were found during restoration in 2000, and were reproduced and used in all of the rooms.

The Amess family was one of the wealthier middle class families of Melbourne at the time. Apart from being an Alderman, he was on many boards and committees including markets, public works, health, Hackney Carriage, Melbourne Tramways Trust, Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works and the Melbourne Harbour Trust. He was also a devout and active Presbyterian. We can only imagine with this schedule how his wife Jane coped with the many social and civic functions they would have hosted &/or attended.

Although Alderman Samuel passed CI over to his son Samuel within ten years, he continued to be ‘Lord of the Manor’, hosting business and civic acquaintances for week-long sojourns spent hunting pheasants, rabbits and hares, playing billiards and also enjoying the company of his family and eventually grandchildren. The third Samuel to own CI fell on rough times, was delisted as a barrister and solicitor and declared bankrupt. He sold CI to another man famous in his time, Gerald Buckley.

Gerald Buckley, son of the founder of Buckley and Nunn drapery store, Mars Buckley, purchased Churchill Island in 1929 and employed brothers Bob and Ted Jeffery to run the island as a dairy farm. Known as a kindly man and philanthropist, Gerald was interested in the Big Brother movement which assisted young English migrants to settle in Australia, including helping Bob to bring out his brother Ted.

Gerald Buckley grew up in wealthy circumstances, was well-educated and studied wool-growing with successful results on his Western District properties, which included 'Narrapumelap', one of the state's leading Merino stations.

A thickset man with a passion for sport, especially boxing and horse-riding, Buckley never married. He went on to gain a wide reputation as a progressive pastoralist, horse breeder, expert rifleman and big-game hunter.

Bob and Ted Jeffery worked tirelessly to improve the property. They dug a large dam and built a dairy, and, in the early 1930s, won the Phillip Island Council's 'Better Farming' competition.

As the farm prospered, Bob and Ted Jeffery's skills earned the respect of Gerald Buckley and their friendship grew. During a visit in 1935, Buckley revealed that he planned to leave the island to the brothers. In a twist of fate, Buckley died that year before changing his will. Churchill Island was left to his English relatives who sifted through the contents and sold the island to Dr Harry Jenkins in 1936.

During the war years, Churchill Island became a haven for Melbourne dentist Dr Harry Jenkins and his family. Dr Jenkins bought the island to assist his wheelchair-bound son's rehabilitation. Ted had been paralysed from the waist down in an accident when he was sixteen. Ted's nurse Sister Margaret Campbell, or 'Aunty Jimmy' as she was affectionately known, welcomed a constant stream of visitors. The kettle was always on the boil and there was no end of delicious country food and warm hospitality.

Dr Harry Jenkins had led a colourful life as an adventurer, soldier, pilot, champion car and motor bike racer, big game hunter and successful Collins Street dentist. The Jenkins era was generally filled with fun and adventure. Visitors remember flounder spearing, swimming in the dam and firing the cannon each New Year's Eve. There was also plenty of hard work – milking the cows, rowing the cream to Phillip Island, tending the vegetable garden and maintaining the machinery. Churchill Island was a Dairy Shorthorn farm from 1936-1945, when Jenkins converted to beef cattle.

One of Ted's main interests was ham (amateur) radio. On Churchill Island an antenna was constructed and a room in the house set aside as his station. His call sign was VK3qk.

Before the first bridge was built, getting to Churchill Island was an adventure. Stock was herded across at low tide and goods were floated or rowed over at high tide. As the need for a bridge increased, timber from an old pier at Port Melbourne became available and plans were drawn up.

Work began in 1957, but disaster struck when the contractor's tractor slipped off the bridge and he was drowned. All work stopped. Eventually Ports and Harbours completed the bridge in 1959.

Ted Jenkins died in 1960, leaving Sister Margaret Campbell shattered. When Harry Jenkins died three years later, she grieved again, but he left her Churchill Island in his will, so she was able to stay on the island she loved until poor health forced her to auction the island in 1973, and move away to live with family until she died in 1979.

Margaret Campbell was born in 1907 in Ballarat. While nursing she cared for Ted Jenkins when he was in hospital following his accident. A close bond developed between them, and Harry Jenkins asked Sister Campbell to become Ted's private nurse.

Sister Campbell loved Churchill Island and helped built it into a thriving dairy, then beef farm, despite suffering from Paget's disease and spending many years lifting Ted, both of which left her chronically bent over. Despite her condition, she was an avid gardener, growing orchids and gloxinias in her greenhouse, and tending the garden after its restoration by nurseryman Peter Rawlins, who also built the original sundial. Many of Sister Campbell's plants are still to be found in the garden today.

'Jimmy' eventually auctioned CI, which was bought by Patra Orange Juice co-founders, Alex Classou and Nick Thyssen as a possible holiday location. Alex received a phone call from the Victorian Conservation Trusts Sir John Knott one day, inviting him to tea at the Windsor Hotel. There Sir John convinced Alex to sell CI to the government, and Nick agreed.

With the building of a cabin-style house away from the historic precinct, the manager Carroll Schulz and his wife Amy came to live there. Various employees and managers have lived there since, ensuring a permanent presence on the island for security at all times.

The Cleeland Family with Ted Jeffery

This talk given by Ted Jeffery was one of a series of 17 talks broadcast on South Gippsland community radio station 3MFM during 2014-2015 with the assistance of a Local History Grant from the Public Records Office of Victoria.

Captain John Cleeland – my great grandfather – sailed the South Seas as a trader in his early days. He came to Australia in 1850 and went to the Bendigo gold fields. We believe he was successful because in the early 1870s he bought a large parcel of land on Phillip Island. These properties were known as Shevasas – what is now Fishers Wetlands – Fletchers, Rennisons, Loves, Sunderlands. These with Woolamai – the home block – and Cape Woolamai, made up a very large parcel of land.

He also owned the Albion Hotel in Melbourne, the Western Port hotel in San Remo, and approximately 100 acres at Bass Landing. In addition to the land he had a fairly large stable of race horses including Woolamai, which won the Melbourne Cup in 1875, Shenandoah and Newhaven. Both had some success. Some of great grandfather's horses were stolen from Euroa by the Kelly gang and ridden to New South Wales. But they were never any good after that as they had been ridden too hard.



Captain John Cleeland enjoyed his later years at his home, Woolamai House.
Phillip Island & District Historical Society

My grandfather, John Cleeland, married twice, with three children from the first marriage: Eileen, Ivy and Reita who was my mother. After the death of his first wife he married Ethel and had six more children: Jack, Harry, Patricia, Marianne, Joan and Jim. Ivy became a nurse, and toured the world as a private nurse. Eileen lived and worked in Melbourne. Joan married a fisherman and spent her life in Lakes Entrance. Jim, after some time working in Melbourne, ran the Genoa Store in Eastern Victoria for many years with his partner Pat. Later he retired to Lakes Entrance.

The girls from John's first wife were schooled at home by a governess, which was unusual in those days. After their school days Eileen and Reita decided to open a tea rooms in Newhaven to provide refreshments to people waiting for the punt which operated to and from San Remo before the bridge was built in 1939. A Post Office was opposite, run by Olive Justice. Her husband Reg ran the punt. To help Newhaven get a hall and tennis court, my grandfather donated the land to build both.

Woolamai House – the home of the Cleelands – was always an extremely busy place. We spent time there during World War Two. They seemed to have a lot of friends and family coming and going. The big property was run mainly by Harry, Pat and Jack, and included Cape Woolamai. Captain Cleeland had Shetland ponies there. They were Anchor brand. John Cleeland continued with them. The Cleeland family eventually sold the cape very cheaply to the government because they wanted the place preserved.

They also milked cows for cream and delivered milk by jinker to people in Newhaven. And they grew chicory. They'd all grow chicory and help each other and dry it in someone else's kiln as they never had their own kiln. Chicory was not really a very big enterprise with the Cleelands. They did have a huge woolshed and ran a lot of sheep.

Each of the properties was passed to each of the family members as they got married or got older. My dad Ted and his brother Bob worked for some years on Churchill Island for Gerald Buckley. Then my parents got Woondooma, which means House on the Hill, in Churchill Road, now Island Bay Ranch.

When Harry Jenkins had Churchill Island he bought 10 acres from the property at the bottom of Churchill Rd, and that was where he kept his cars. I knew his son Ted Jenkins, who was a lovely fellow. He was a very keen ham radio operator, and built me my first crystal radio set. I remember his nurse Sister Margaret Campbell, known as Auntie Jimmie, used to make the most wonderful passionfruit Pavlovas, using the passionfruit they grew on Churchill Island. Harry Jenkins tried to get my dad to buy shares in the Tennant Creek gold mine, but dad thought it was too risky. It turned out to be a very wealthy mine!

Even though my grandfather farmed he always loved the sea. He spent a lot of time looking out at the water through this beautiful big brass telescope. He became quite friendly with the crews of the *Alma Dopel* and the *Julie Burgess*, which were trading ships. The Burgess family became good friends with the Cleeland family. When those ships came in, I would sometimes wake up in the morning and see them anchored out there and then I'd know it was going to be bad weather. Likewise if I woke up and they were gone, I'd know the weather was going to be fine.

There was a rocket shed at Newhaven which Grandpa looked after. He was also in charge of the Cape Woolamai light. The government body concerned would bring these big gas cylinders down. It usually fell to Harry to harness the sled and head up the top of the Cape to change the cylinders. Harry hated it, but anyone who went with him thought it was a great day's excursion.



John Cleeland at the Newhaven rocket shed, equipped for shore-based rescue for vessels wrecked close to shore. Phillip Island & District Historical Society

During World War II the authorities thought there was going to be a Japanese invasion and informed Grandpa that they would have to turn the light out. Harry said he'd do it the next day, but Grandpa said it had to be as soon as possible. So Harry had to ride up in the middle of the night to turn out the light and he was not impressed. He was worried that the horse would put his foot in a mutton bird hole.

Grandpa's other passions were his vegie garden and extensive orchard. With such a big family he needed a big vegie garden. In the orchard he had apricots, apples, chestnuts, walnuts, almonds, plums. Everything extra was bottled and put away for the year.

A lot of the Cape Woolamai flats in those days was covered in swamp tea tree, with only certain areas of grass. A chap by the name of Vaughan Crole bought a light plane – one of the first we ever saw on Phillip Island. Grandpa decided he'd built an airstrip. Vaughan used it a lot so the plane became another major interest for Grandpa. He wasn't a well man so didn't do much manual labour. It's been said that Vaughan flew his plane under the arch of the first bridge between the bridge and the water.

When I was about 8 years old I had to ride my bike on my way home from school in Newhaven to collect the bread and meat from Woolamai House once a week. Herb Parry was the butcher then, and had a shop on the corner of Chapel Street and Thompson Avenue. Wests had a bakery in Cowes too, and the butcher and baker would deliver to Woolamai House once a week, and I'd pick it up from there and ride home to Woondooma.

When living at Woolamai House, there were about 6 or 7 people working at the shed during shearing time: 2 shearers, one working penning up the sheet, one picking up the fleeces and skirting, one on the wool press, and a few others. The shearers would be there for the best part of a week, and they got a roast dinner in the middle of every day in the breakfast room at Woolamai House. Jack Love and Alan Cleeland were the shearers.

Woolamai was subdivided as Woolamai Waters in 1959, and that was the end of the farming there.

William. E. Thompson – one of our super citizens

By Julie Box and John Jansson

When driving into Cowes one of the first things that meets the eye is the impressive row of cypress trees that line the main street, known as 'Thompson Avenue'. These Golden Cypress pines have been a feature of the town for the past 100 years and continue to be a living testament to the efforts of one man.

W. E. Thompson, (William Eastwood), is one of Phillip Island's most notable figures. The contributions he and his family made to the community and to the life of the town in general, span a period of nearly forty years.

In 1955 it prompted the president of the Phillip Island Shire, Cr A. Jones, to pay tribute to Mr Thompson on his death at the age of 85:

"We might well remember Mr W. E. Thompson as a super citizen, and realise that it is very unlikely we will see his like again".

His ‘super citizen’ efforts included a lifetime of giving to other people, and in particular to various groups and charities in both the Melbourne and Phillip Island communities.

His connection with the island began in 1889, when at the age of 21, he and his father James travelled from their home in Brighton to take part in a shooting trip. They were among a party consisting of Messrs Moore and Carter. They were keen shooters and wanted to help rid the island of hares that were in plaque proportions at the time.

This visit was the start of a long and strong association with the island for William. It saw him return on many occasions, and to eventually, in 1912, build a family home in Cowes. Their home, in Chapel Street, was called ‘Talofa’. It provided a happy and comfortable residence for his wife Lucy, whom he had married in 1906, and his two daughters Lucy Ruth (b 1907) and Mary Ida (Molly b 1909).

These two girls were later to marry into two well-known island families – Sambell and Dixon, respectively – and to work hard in the community while raising families of their own.

In his working life W. E. Thompson was a founding director in a business that his father and partner, Leonard Chambers, had established in 1889, the Cyclone Woven Wire Fence Company. This enterprise continued to develop and grow, with cyclone wire fencing becoming a national and well used commodity. In 1925 the company named was changed to Cyclone Fence and Gate Company Pty Ltd, a name that aptly described its principal business activities.

In surviving the turbulence of the years and particularly those of the Great Depression, the demand for this product increased during World War Two when it was requisitioned to provide materials for military purposes.

In 1947, the directors formally registered Cyclone Company of Australia as a publicly listed company. Despite the workload this executive position demanded, W. E. Thompson always managed to find time to contribute to his local community, and in a variety of ways.

Contributing to Cowes

One of the most notable was his vision and care for the environment; an involvement that saw him taking a leading role in the greening and beautifying of Cowes. It began in 1912, and shortly after his arrival, when William Thompson decided to enhance the landscape of Cowes by organising the first planting of Golden Cypress trees, from the Esplanade to Chapel Street.

Their appearance added a charm and ambience to the town for the many visitors and families who frequented the island as their favourite holiday destination. One of the main entry points at that time was by ferry boat; and one of the first viewpoints when passengers stepped on to the jetty at Cowes was the welcoming sight of the pine trees.



'Main Street' Cowes before the planting of the Golden Cypress avenue
Phillip Island and District Historical Society

His efforts in the planting of trees continued over the following years and saw these pines extend down the main street of Cowes for a mile long. Other trees, namely the Norfolk pines, were also to appear around various parts of the island, where some continue to stand tall and strong today.

The popularity and appreciation of these trees can still be felt today and serve as a reminder of William's visionary skills.

"If you come into Cowes today you cannot imagine how dull and hard the town would look without these trees," said local resident and historian Julie Box. "The golden cypresses really soften the look of the place, and if they weren't planted there over 100 years ago, the whole look of Cowes would be very different. It is wonderful that the work of W. E. Thompson is being carried on today with the Cowes Community Group, and I am sure that he would be thrilled that this is happening," Julie said.

The newly formed Cowes Community Group has recently announced its Colour in Cowes project with the aim of brightening and enhancing the look of the town. By inviting the community to participate in this project and to share their ideas, this project, is in many ways continuing the good work and vision of W. E. Thompson.

In extending his philanthropic work on the island, William Thompson purchased a block of land and building in Warley Avenue Cowes, which he subsequently gave to the local community.

(Editor's note, 2023: Recent analysis of the hospital minutes shows that William's wife Lucy was the driving force behind establishing the hospital. William no doubt contributed the necessary funds.)

The resulting 'Warley Hospital' was opened in 1923 and provided general and specialist medical care for the whole of the island until its closure in 2008.

"This generosity in providing for the hospital made an extraordinary difference to the town," Julie Box explained. "I don't think people realise just how much he contributed to the community. He was both very generous and a successful business man," she said.

Five years later, in 1928, W. E. Thompson was elected to the first council of the new Shire of Phillip Island. His wife Lucy also became a councillor in 1931. In between times the Thompson family spent up to a period of six months volunteering as missionaries in the New Hebrides islands.

For a total of 38 years (until they left the island in 1950) Mr and Mrs Thompson devoted themselves to the welfare of the community with a measure of tireless service and substantial material gifts, which many consider to be unique to any country town in Victoria's history.

As well as their environmental interests, they played a prominent role in supporting the community sports oval, the state school, the welfare of the island's koala population, provided funds necessary for the establishment of the electric power station in Cowes, the erection of the cairn at Rhyll and generous contributions to the cause of the Red Cross during and after both world wars.

In being devout Christians, the Thompsons are remembered particularly for their financial and personal support to the St John's Presbyterian (now Uniting Church) in Cowes.

One of his many eulogies describes W. E. Thompson as a pillar of the church. It states that he was always willing to lend a helping hand in the building of this church and manse, and to offer material needs for the congregation whenever the occasion arose. On his death in November 1955, his list of beneficiaries included two hospitals and six religious missions. These were spread throughout the city and country.

As has been noted since, and on many occasions, the full extent of his kindness to the community and needy people everywhere, will never be fully known. Perhaps the most fitting accolade is the honour bestowed on William and Lucy by the people of Phillip Island in 1937.

On a beautiful sunny day the community gathered outside the Shire Hall to hear the island's principal thoroughfare officially named as Thompson Avenue. It was a unanimous decision that is still regarded as a genuine token of gratitude for this hard working and generous 'super citizen' and his wife Lucy.

William Eastwood Thompson – Time Line

1868 Born at Brighton, Victoria to James Thompson and Ruth Eastwood.

1889 William made his first visit to Phillip Island with a shooting party consisting of his father James and J. Moore and a Mr. Carter. They stayed at Solomon West's Block 101. They returned frequently in those early years.

Early Leonard Chambers entered into a partnership with William Thompson to

1890's manufacture beekeepers' hives and accessories.

1898 Chambers and Thompson purchased the Australian rights of a woven wire fence from the American Cyclone Fence Company, which they introduced into Victoria.

1906 Married Lucy Kruger Davidson at Niranda, near Warrnambool, Victoria.

1906 A factory in Franklin Street Melbourne was constructed and was added to in Swanston Street in 1913.

1907 Daughter Lucy Ruth born at Brighton. She was later to marry Albert Keaston Trenavin Sambell jun. of Ventnor.

1909 Daughter Mary Ida (Molly) born at Brighton. She was later to marry Laurence Rex Dixon of Ventnor.

1912 Thompson's Cowes home 'Talofa' was built in Chapel Street by Brunswick builders Ewen& Findlay. The Thompson family moved to Cowes and William continued on as a director of Cyclone.

1912 William organized the first plantings of cypress trees in Main Street, from The Esplanade to Chapel Street.

1917 William left for the New Hebrides for six months with builders George and Harold Ewen to do missionary work for the Presbyterian Church. They built a manse and hospital at Vila.

1923 Warley Hospital opened in Warley Avenue Cowes in a building purchased and given to the community by William Thompson.

1928 William and Lucy and daughter Ruth spent five months in New Hebrides on missionary work.

1928 William Thompson was elected to the first council of the new Shire of Phillip Island.

1931 Lucy Thompson was elected as a councillor of the Shire of Phillip Island.

1933 William and Lucy spent six months abroad in the New Hebrides on missionary work.

1937 The Island's principal thoroughfare was named Thompson Avenue as a token of gratitude for William and Lucy's service to Phillip Island.

1950 William and Lucy returned to Melbourne to live at Caulfield.

1952 William died at his home 1 Fosbery Street, Caulfield, leaving most of his estate of £164,158 to charities involved in church mission work.

1968 Lucy died at Armadale, Melbourne at the age of 88.

William Eastwood Thompson and the Cyclone Woven Wire Fence Company

(Ref. Boral's First 50 years. Boral website: https://www.boral.com/history)

Cyclone was formed in the early 1890s, when Leonard Chambers entered into a partnership with William Thompson to manufacture beekeepers' hives and accessories. They also imported and distributed queen bees, to improve the existing strain of Australian bees.

In the mid-1890s, Chambers read a small advertisement in an issue of a US beekeepers' journal that proclaimed the merits of a manually operated machine able to weave wire fencing directly onto previously erected fence posts. Envisaging the scope for such a fence in Australia Chambers contacted the manufacturers, Lane Bros, who had established the Cyclone Fence Company in the United States. Negotiations to secure the Australian rights were successfully carried out by mail and Cyclone Woven Wire Fence Company was established in Melbourne in 1898. Initially all the wire and pickets had to be imported from the United States as the Australian steel industry was non-existent.

Cyclone Pty Ltd was incorporated in 1914, just before World War I; soon afterwards the company, like many manufacturing businesses, experienced difficulties, particularly in acquiring supplies of raw materials. Deliveries of imported goods were extremely unreliable and the prices high – wire cost an exorbitant £7 (7 pounds) a ton.

In 1925 the company changed its name to Cyclone Fence and Gate Company Pty Ltd, more accurately reflecting its principal business activities. It survived the 1930s Depression without trading at a loss and in 1937 secured the Australian agency for tubular scaffold fittings manufactured by London and Midland Steel Scaffolding Co.

With World War II, Cyclone, with its expertise in the wire industry, was quickly requisitioned to provide supplies for military purposes. The wartime demands stretched the capabilities both of the company's plants and personnel to their limit. Consequently, by the time peace was declared in 1945, Cyclone's civilian trade had totally dropped off.

In 1947, after obtaining advice from the stockbroking firm Ian Potter and Co., the directors formally registered Cyclone Company of Australia as a publicly listed company. The new capital in the company was offered to the existing thirty shareholders and to the general public on a two-thirds to one-third allocation. Shares were offered to the public at an issue price of 1 pound with a premium of 1 pound and were eagerly sought.

Cyclone Pty Ltd.

The Cyclone company was described in 1903 as having purchased the Australian rights of the Cyclone woven wire fence in 1898 which they introduced into Victoria. This was immediately before the vast expansion on this site. Smith's Cyclopaedia of Victoria of 1904 described the new firm as follows:

> These fences rapidly found favour throughout the States, and in order to meet the steadily increasing demand it has been necessary to add continually to the firm's already extensive business. Among the numerous lines taken up is the Wellman automatic elevating gate, which may be opened by persons on horseback or driving -without the slightest difficulty. Crimped pickets used in conjunction with the Cyclone wire fence are made on the premise by a powerful machine, through which the wire is passed to obtain the necessary crimp. … A branch business has lately been established in Pietermaritzburg on the same lines and dimensions as the Melbourne house, and the

> firm intend shortly to open in Johannesburg and at Port Elizabeth. Some thirty hands are constantly employed in the Melbourne establishment, and the firm is represented throughout the country districts by some hundred agents, who assist in the erection of the fences, … An enormous business is transacted yearly by the firm, … the firm enjoys an extensive connection throughout the Commonwealth and abroad.

The firm pronounced in 1907 that they provided 'Fences for the Suburbs'; a Cyclone woven fence kept dogs and cattle at bay and was artistic as well. Cyclone Pty Ltd was incorporated in c1914-15, just before World War One. However, like many manufacturing businesses dealing with house and farm construction, the Cyclone company had great difficulty with the lower demand and the firm's name had changed by 1927 to Cyclone Fence & Gate Co. and by 1948, to the Cyclone Company of Australia. The firm was an icon in farm and domestic fencing but eventually became associated with chain wire security fences.

(Ref. Statement of Evidence & Report to Planning Panel,

RMIT University Buildings 37, 39 & 81.

Lovell Chen, Architects & Heritage Consultants.)

The Miller Family – Early Settlers On Phillip Island

Robert Miller was born in Crief, Perthshire in Scotland in 1822. His wife Flora Miller (nee McInnes) was born in 1826 and came from the Isle of Islay off the west coast of Scotland. Shipping records show that they left England with three children on the ship *Merlin* on 31 July 1860. It would seem that the family may have spent perhaps some years in Canada after Charles was born in 1853, until just after Ellen was born late in 1859. Quebec is inscribed on Ellen's headstone in the Thoona Cemetery as being her birthplace, yet she is listed on the passenger record for the *Merlin* as Ellen Miller – infant, which indicates she was less than one year old in July 1860. The *Merlin* arrived in Melbourne in October 1860 and Robert & Flora soon had more children to add to their family. Isabella 'Bella' was born in 1861 in Melbourne, followed on 25 October 1862 by John, who sadly only lived for 3months, dying from severe diarrhoea on 18 January 1863. Elizabeth 'Daisy' was born at the same house in Capel Street, Hotham in 1865.

Robert Miller is known to have been a Carriage Builder in Scotland and no doubt used his building skills to find work in Melbourne to support his growing family on arrival, until he decided where they would settle and what he would then do to earn the money required to support his family of seven.



The Miller Family
Phillip Island and District Historical Society

By 1868 new land was being subdivided throughout the state of Victoria, and ballots were open for nomination to be allowed to purchase a property for farming. In 1869, Robert and Catherine (now 18) nominated for the ballot for land on Phillip Island and were successful, Robert selecting Lot 21 on the north side of Watts Road and Catherine selecting Lot 6 on the western side of a nearly circular bay not far from her fathers' land. The bay became known as 'Kitty Miller's Bay' and the road leading to it from the north as 'Kitty Miller's Bay Road'.

Like many of the settlers who came first to Phillip Island, the Miller family found conditions very hard as time passed and the Island was hit by years of severe drought, making a living farming became more and more difficult without any underground water supply and no rain, and they were unable to stay. Robert, son Charles and daughter Isabella applied for land at Lake Rowan in central northern Victoria in the mid 1870's. They were fortunate to be granted farmland there and to then relocate around 1876 to Lake Rowan with their sheep, to begin farming new land with a good water supply.

Kitty stayed in Melbourne with her new husband James Walker who worked as a butcher in Hotham. There are family stories and photos of the Miller family in the Lake Rowan/Bungeet area for the next 20 or so years. During this time, they came to know the Justice family, and their daughter Isabella, met and married David Charles Justice. He is recorded as being a blacksmith, but from all reports from those who knew him, he was skilled in many trades. After the death of their infant daughter, Flora in 1891 at Lake Rowan, 'Bella' and David came back with their other children to Phillip Island, to establish a home and a new life together. Bella's father, Robert Miller, whose wife Flora had died at Lake Rowan in 1896, followed and returned

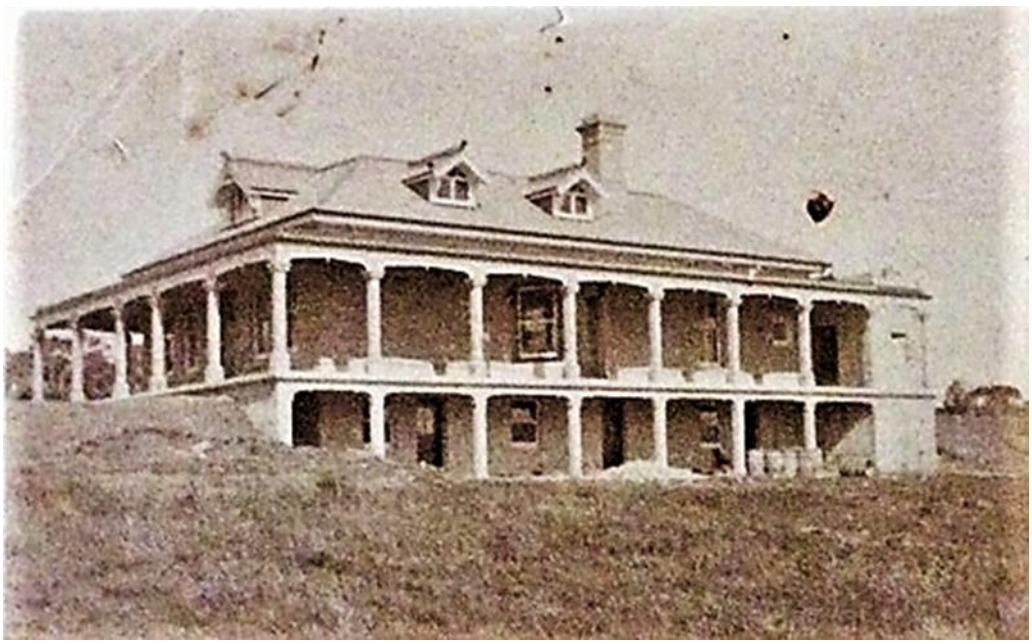
to the Island with his youngest daughter Elizabeth 'Daisy' Miller and they lived with Bella & David here until Roberts death in 1912. Robert is buried in Phillip Island Cemetery at Cowes and the inscription on the headstone of his grave acknowledges Flora's death.

Catherine Miller was also known as 'Kitty' and 'Kate'. Though she seems to have been well known as one of the pioneers of the Island, she did not live on Phillip Island for very long at all. Arriving when she was just 18, and according to family information, she worked as a school teacher while she lived on the Island. She married at 20 years, when she moved back to Hotham with her husband James Walker. She visited often and brought her young family to holiday with her sisters 'Bella' & 'Daisy', and their cousins and Grandfather while he was still alive.

Kitty's husband died suddenly from pneumonia in 1885, he was only 35, and left her with five young children, the youngest only 6months, to raise on her own. At that time, she already worked as the Assistant Registrar of Births, Deaths & Marriages in West Melbourne and was not only the person who reported her husband James' death but also signed as the Assistant Registrar who filled out and signed the death certificate. Kitty finally settled in a house in Barkly Street, Footscray where she lived until her death in 1917. She was buried in the Melbourne General Cemetery with her husband James and other family members. Her children and grandchildren have continued to have contact with family still living on Phillip Island, where many of the Justice family descendants still live.

Part Four

Places



Beachside Cottage, San Remo and the characters who lived there

Miranda Sage of San Remo gave a talk in May 2017 about her house *Beachside Cottage* and how its history relates to the history of San Remo.

Miranda and Albert Sage bought Beachside Cottage in 1996 from Ray and Judy Dickie, who were using it for holiday rental. The Sages turned it into a B&B, adding bathrooms, and finding Baltic pine floors under the old carpet. They found old newspapers in the wall, including a fragment dated Saturday July 10, 1909. They realised the cottage must have a wonderful history and began researching.

The cottage had been owned by two dentists and a dental technician – the latter, Betty Bindley, practicing illegally once her dentist father had died. The dental chair, spittoon and equipment for making dentures were still in the house when Miranda and Albert viewed it before purchasing, but not there now. Rob Maclellan told them that it was customary for families of women about to marry fishermen to pay for the woman's teeth to be removed and a set of Betty's dentures made as a wedding dowry, as the fisherman would not be able to afford that expense in later life.

A spherical well was located in the garden and the fishermen and others who lived in the next door caravan park used to get their drinking water from it in the 1960s and 1970s.

A dentist named Jack Thompson and his wife Nora bought the cottage in 1925 from the Bergin family. The cottage title was a small section of the Bergin property that went from the Back Beach almost to the pub, most of that land was marshy and boggy. The cottage probably started as a two room dwelling in the 1880s with extra rooms being added by Thomas Bergin in 1890 when he was refurbishing his San Remo Hotel. A sleepout was attached in 1909 and this was the source of the intriguing scrap of paper.



Beachside Cottage, early twentieth century. Miranda Sage collection

Jack and his wife Nora, a grazier's daughter, both contracted Spanish influenza in 1919, which left Jack with Parkinson-like symptoms and eventually he could no longer practice dentistry. They therefore made a permanent move to live in their holiday cottage in the 1930s~~*..San Remo*~~.

They had two sons, John and Kenneth who had enjoyed their younger years at San Remo. Their son John was a successful ABC journalist, writer and poet. He had one son Peter, the film critic, and an adopted son Jack Thompson, the actor.

In 2009 Miranda and Albert were sitting having lunch when they saw an elderly man taking photos of the cottage. This turned out to be Bob Cochrane, who had come to the house as a little boy with his sister Betty (Mason) from the 1930s-1944. Their aunt and uncle were Nora and Jack Thompson. He had many stories about the Thompson family. Nora Thompson called the cottage 'El Nido' – the nest.

For some time a group of artists, the Max Meldrum group, and those from Montsalvat, used to camp in the tea tree beside the cottage. Miranda showed a photo of the cottage with a white tent in the tea tree, which was the artists' camp. She also showed a painting of the artists' camp by Percy Leason. The artists stayed in the 1930s and 1940s and bathed naked in the sea, much to the horror of the Methodist camp nearby!

Betty Mason, as a child, once spent three months in the cottage with her mother. Betty had been ill and the doctor recommended that she be let 'run wild' for a year to restore her vigour. As part of her therapy at the cottage she remembers bathing in a big tin bath of warmed sea water.

Rob Maclellan remembers sitting outside Bergin's store on a big granite grinding stone a relic from the Bass mills and listening to Jack Thompson's stories.

After corresponding for six years Miranda and Albert made a special trip to Sydney to see Betty in 2016. Betty had photos from the cottage from the 1920s until the 1940s, which Miranda has now put in a special album. Betty remembered the golf course next to the Cottage with its red felt flags to mark the holes, and sand boxes for the tees. The photos include one of her brothers teeing off. The wandering cows used to eat the red flags. In one section of the course the balls would be hit over the edge of the cliff and the green was on the beach, this hole was known as the 'Spion Cop'.

Betty has written beautifully about her experiences. She spent a lot of time on the local beaches including Shelly Beach and collected many shells and even 'Aladdin's Lamp' brachiopods. Betty has returned the shells to San Remo as a gift to Beachside Cottage. Miranda will take the collection to the Shell Museum at Inverloch for review to see if there are any varieties that are no longer found locally. Betty also remembers picnics at Bore Beach. Her father and grandfather used to shoot rabbits in the area. Miranda would like to put Betty's writings into a small book.

Miranda wondered how Nora and Jack Thompson came to have their holidays in San Remo. Rob Maclellan told her how his grandmother used to hire a train to bring down young people from Melbourne Grammar schools for summer at their San Remo property. There they had a shed known as 'The Rat House' to store all the necessary food such as bags of flour and sugar that had been sent down from Maclellan's store in Melbourne. They burnt a fire in the fireplace 24 hours a day to keep ahead of the rubbish! The young people staying at the Maclellan's property had responsibilities – the girls had to write long letters home to ensure there was enough mail going through the San Remo Post Office to keep it open, the boys were

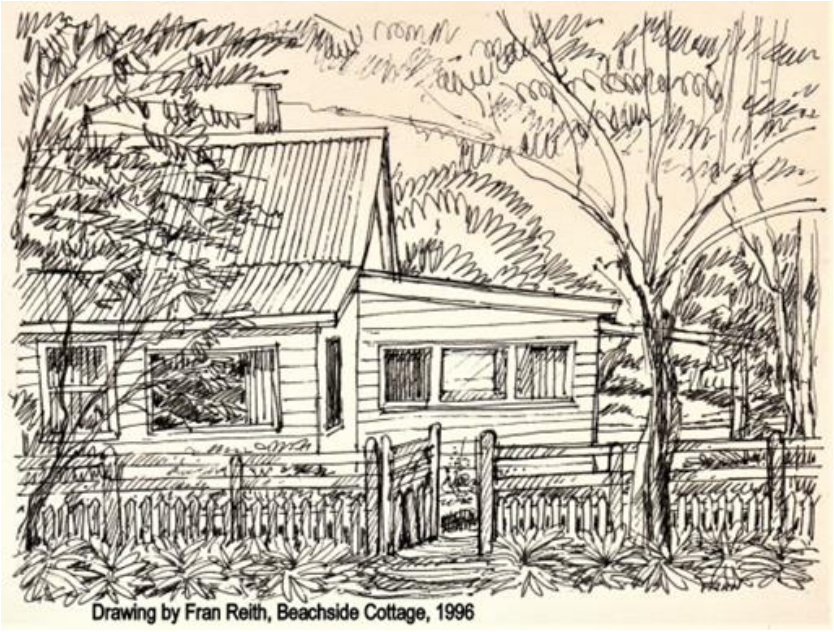
excused the long letter and allowed to write envelopes with a note. Jack Thompson's father had taught at Melbourne Grammar so maybe that was the connection.

Betty recalls that during the war the Army camped among the tea tree at San Remo and left a terrible mess. They were patrolling the cliff tops.

The Cottage was sold in the 1940s to Bindley, a dentist who bought the cottage in his daughter's name, Betty Bindley. Miranda has been unable to find a copy of this title transfer as yet. The San Remo community was scandalised that when Betty's father developed dementia, instead of looking after him, she placed him in care at the Sleeman Wing at the hospital in Wonthaggi. It certainly was frowned upon for spinster daughters not to devote their life to caring for aged parents. After her father died Betty Bindley eventually married three times. Her first husband was ~~*to*~~ Skipper Fleming, a local who was a founding member of the Newhaven Yacht club and incidentally only had one leg. Skipper was ~~*become*~~ Betty's handyman. Miranda said that someone once told her the cottage was referred to as 'Skipper's Cottage'. Skipper Fleming was an artist and a studio was built in the grounds of the cottage. Betty's second husband was a Mr Jenkins and finally she wed Tom Cole who had been ~~*was*~~ mayor of Oakleigh. Betty Cole once came into the paint shop where Miranda's sister Fran worked in Oakleigh and was delighted to hear the garden was being restored.

Julie Box commented that she had been taken to Bindley the dentist when she was small, and he had a large bulbous nose which was like looking at the 'craters of the moon'. She also said that the Max Meldrum artists had an exhibition titled 'Misty Moderns' of San Remo paintings. One of the artists wanted to set up a gallery and studio space at San Remo.

On purchasing the property Miranda took her mother, Vivian, to visit the cottage and garden. Viv told Miranda that she felt the cottage garden had come under the influence of garden designer Edna Walling. Betty Mason was able to confirm this as she remembers her Aunt Nora saying that 'Edna Walling says never have a straight path from the front gate to the front door'.



Beachside Cottage drawn by Miranda's sister Fran Reith. Miranda Sage collection.

Miranda showed a remarkable map that Betty had drawn from memory of the layout of San Remo township of 70 years ago. Miranda also brought books with a connection to San Remo and the cottage, photo albums and a photo board for the members to look over.

Death of two boys at Seaside Garden Home for Boys, Newhaven, Phillip Island

At the general meeting in April 2016 Joe Fairhurst spoke about the secret terrors of the Seaside Garden Home for Boys, Newhaven.

Until 1933 the Seaside Garden Home for Boys was under the control of the Superintendent William Baye. Joe has been researching the home and Baye for the last 20 years, especially in regard to the deaths of two boys under Baye's supervision.

Joe first heard the story of one of the boy's deaths when working with Offshore Theatre on a production at the St Paul's boys home chapel. On opening night he took a group of dignitaries on a backstage tour of the choir loft, when he suddenly felt a knife of ice through hip and shoulders. Someone said "Don't worry, it's just Danny; he haunts the chapel". Joe had a background in journalism, so naturally wanted to know more and started his research then. 'Danny' was actually Rex Simpson.

Joe discovered that it was actually very difficult to research the boys' deaths, as many official records had apparently been burnt in a 1933 fire, and other information was hidden under layers. He went to the newspapers of the day, where he read the details, which he found very hard to cope with.

William Henry Baye, the supervisor, was born in Adelaide and came to Melbourne with his parents in 1900. They were greengrocers. He had made a mess of his schooling in Adelaide and was working as a market gardener when he met his wife Elizabeth in 1905. He went to work at Tally Ho Boys Village as a teacher – he got the job because of his gardening skills which the village emphasised.

Once Baye got the job at the Seaside Garden Home for Boys he began planning punishments. He was a Eugenicist, and believed that boys only ever feigned illness and were 'malingering'. He was greatly influenced by Melbourne University's Professor Richard Berry, (with whom he formed an alliance in 1924-25) who believed he could predict whether a boy would become a criminal or a girl become a prostitute by measuring their heads. He was obsessed with skulls and after he left, over 400 skulls, including 300 Aboriginal skulls, were found in his University rooms. At that stage Eugenics was quite popular even among powerful people such as the Rockefellers, who believed that by selective breeding, all the ills of humanity could be bred out. (Nazism was an extreme example of Eugenics, and saw the end of its popularity.)

As an example of Baye's methods, Joe told us about a boy who ran away from the home and was found in Cowes by the constable, who contacted the home and offered to bring the boy back. Baye said he would get him instead. When he arrived in Cowes he tied the boy to the back of the jinker and made him run the 10 miles back to Newhaven. Baye claimed he did not know the boy was blind, and anyway, he said the horse was a Clydesdale and couldn't go very fast.

If boys showed signs of illness or unwillingness to submit to discipline, Baye would strip them and make them stand in the cold outside the dining room and watch the other boys eat. He kept a fat leather strap on the wall of his office and often used it to belt the boys.

Baye tried many devious means to take over Newhaven school, which he overloaded with the boys from the home. Due to their propensity for stealing boats they were a real headache to the head teacher. Also, in order to stop the boys from running away, Baye would send them to school without shoes, and in some cases, without trousers.

Some years ago a crying woman from Wonthaggi phoned Joe to say she was the Great Aunt of the boy Baye had killed. Joe was confused until she said she was Freddie's Great Aunt. Joe had been researching the story of Rex, and did not know about Freddie. Then he discovered the story of Freddie. Ernest Alfred (Freddie) Smith was born in 1914 in England. His father Percy was gassed in WWI and died. Freddie and his mother Gertrude came to Australia and Gertrude married a Gibbons. Gibbons resented the fact that Freddie was so attached to his mother, but the boy was an angel of a child.

During a world-wide outbreak of encephalitis, Freddie contracted the disease but was not diagnosed. The effect it had on him was to reverse his character and he became a real problem child, setting fire to haystacks and swearing. Gibbons took him to Berry who said he was malingering and had him sent to Baye in 1926. There Freddie broke a window and ran away. Baye found him at the Newhaven jetty, took him back, where he belted him, stripped him and doused him with water. We believe now that he also hit Freddie with a cricket bat. He left him and came back an hour later, when he found Freddie dead on the floor. This was Saturday p.m. Freddie's body was examined by a doctor with an inquiry by a JP only. There was no inquest. Freddie was buried in the afternoon of the inquiry. His mother wasn't told for 4-5 days after, and was never told where Freddie was buried. Joe found the grave in 2002 and the remaining relatives were able to place a marker on the grave and have some closure.

The boy Joe originally set out to research was Rex Simpson. He was a ten year old serial truant when he was sent by the courts to Baye. This was not unusual, as even 4-5 year old boys were left at the home by their parents. The court gave the family a choice – either the father went to gaol or Rex went to the home. Baye earmarked Rex for punishment straight away. Joe showed us newspaper photos of Rex which clearly showed a 'cheeky' faced child, which was like a red rag to a bull to Baye.

Rex contracted tetanus. He could have done this by a number of means as the boys were sent shoeless to work in the gardens before school, and they also cleaned out the horse's stable. The symptoms of late stage tetanus began showing on Monday morning when Rex fell at the gate and couldn't get up. Baye rushed out and belted him, then dragged him to his feet and told his friend Sydney to get him to school. There, Rex's limbs started to get stiff and he couldn't sit at his desk.

On the Tuesday Rex did go to school but was sobbing so much that the teacher Sunderland said he'd had enough and told Sydney to take Rex home and make sure Baye got the doctor. But Baye only dragged him back to school, where there was a slanging match between Baye and Sunderland.

Baye then dragged Rex back over ditches and forced him to walk to the farm. Rex fell over twice, when Baye took him back to the home. The deputy Hamilton later swore he saw Baye take Rex into his office and belt him.

On the Wednesday Rex fell over on the doorstep and fell onto his knees, when Baye belted him four times on the backside with a cricket bat. Baye then asked the boys for a pin and jabbed it into Rex's leg. Rex was a tough boy who wouldn't show Baye any pain or fear, and didn't cry out, even though it must have been agony. Baye then took Rex into his office and forced him to bend his leg and put his heel to his bottom. Rex apparently cried out, but Baye later claimed he did not.

On Thursday Rex was stiff as a board and couldn't get up. Baye and his wife Elizabeth put a shirt on him, and Baye jabbed the back of his leg with a knitting needle. He then made Rex stand against the wall in the dining room and tried to force porridge into his locked jaws. Baye went to a meeting in Melbourne, and still hadn't called a doctor. Rex lay on a couch all day getting worse. Finally Dr Maclaine was called and said to get Rex to Wonthaggi Hospital immediately. There he was seen by Dr Sleeman, who worked on Rex for three hours, but the boy died on 16 November 1933. Sleeman had seen the bruises and cuts all over Rex's body and refused to sign the death certificate. Hamilton told Sleeman that Baye had done it.

On returning to the home, Hamilton stormed into Baye's room and shouted "Murderers" at Baye and Elizabeth.

Baye was tried twice, and both times resulted in a hung jury. His defence barrister, the blind and brilliant Maxwell, was considered to be the best barrister in Australia, and Joe wonders how Baye managed to afford his services. Maxwell was successful in discrediting the witnesses, especially the boys from the home, whom Maxwell told the jury were nothing but thieves and liars, so how could they be believed.

Baye was sent for a third trial, but the Attorney General, Menzies, was asked to grant a nolle prosequi (a formal notice of abandonment by a plaintiff or prosecutor of all or part of a suit) which he did, meaning Baye could go free and could never again be tried for Rex's case.

Baye died ignominiously and in poverty in Bairnsdale with a bout of influenza in 1955. Elizabeth died in 1954 in Kew Asylum, where Baye had placed her. She was apparently tormented by the deaths of the two boys and died horribly in the asylum. Baye sent his nephew to identify and claim Elizabeth's body.

Unfortunately, Baye's lack of education and his obsession to cure 'malingering', tarnished the whole idea and operation of the Seaside Garden Home for Boys.

Joe concluded by showing us a letter he found which implicates the director of Education of the time, James MacRae, Kearnan MLC and Isaac Cohen, Minister for Education, in a cover-up of what had actually happened at the home.

Rex had been one of ten children. Tragically, his mother died in their cottage backyard three days after seeing Rex's body in the morgue.

Olive Louise Justice (nee Grayden) and Olive Justice Place, 70 Chapel Street Cowes

Christine Grayden wrote this essay to inform the public about Olive Justice and the origin of Olive Justice Place in Cowes.

Olive Justice was a granddaughter of original 1868 settlers Charles Grayden and Margaret (nee Larkie). Olive was born in 1895 and lived at her parents' farm in Anchorage Rd Ventnor until moving to Melbourne to work. She married Reg Justice of another pioneering Phillip Island family. They moved to Newhaven where they bought 'Ocean View' guest house which Olive renamed 'Ferry Lodge', which catered for up to 14 visitors. She also offered guided motor tours of the island and was one of the first women on the island to get a driver's licence. Certainly she was the only woman doing guided motor tours.

Reg operated a punt taking cars across the Eastern Passage until the first Phillip Island bridge opened in 1939. June Cutter, author of *Guesthouses on Phillip Island*, was a friend of Olive's and included an account of Olive's time living in Newhaven with Reg and running 'Ferry Lodge' in the book. During the early 1950s Olive, Reg and their son Roy moved to what is now Olive Justice Place, 70 Chapel Street Cowes, where Reg had a blacksmith's shop in the 1920s, and Reg built a house there with Roy's help.



The house that Reg Justice built for Olive, Roy and himself. 70 Chapel Street, Cowes. Now the location of 'Olive Justice Place'.

Olive Justice collection.

There was room enough on the block for Olive's magnificent garden and for the hot houses where her son Roy, groundsman at the Sunseeker Hotel (cnr Justice and Church Streets), grew potted

plants for charity street stalls. They also had many fruit trees. Olive took in guests over the summer to Easter period each year in a large room with a view in the upper storey of her house.



Olive Justice, circa 1941. Olive Justice collection

However, Olive went blind from glaucoma in her early 70s and Reg and Joyce having died, Roy cared for her until his death in the house in 1992. Olive then needed to go into care, first in Melaleuca Lodge and then in Warley Nursing Home.

But the house was left as it was while she was alive and her nephew Keith Grayden regularly took her out in a wheelchair and pushed her home for a cup of tea. I looked after Olive's affairs while she was in care. My uncle Keith and I spent many hours with her, and she often expressed her wishes for the site. During her time living there she had been approached many times to sell the site for development and despite the large sums she was offered, she always refused. Development was most definitely not what she envisaged for her home site. She frequently told me that she wanted it as a small park with a facility where mothers could breastfeed their babies in privacy and pleasant surroundings, where people could get out of the weather without having to go to a cafe if they could not afford it, and where gardens would flourish for everyone's enjoyment, as hers had done.

Olive died in 1995 aged 99 years, a much-loved islander whose life echoed many aspects of the twentieth century history of Phillip Island. She is buried in the Phillip Island cemetery. The Bass Coast Shire area was at that time under the control of the Commissioners, and Commissioner Bill Power, who had spoken to Olive about her land while she was still alive, was keen that her wishes be fulfilled and that the council should buy the property. The purchase of the block was done in rather drawn-out negotiations with Olive's solicitor and the council eventually paid $250,000 for the land – a very reasonable price, even at that time. Olive's and Roy's combined estates were willed to the Salvation Army and their representative told us that the proceeds would be used in the building of a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre.

Over time the house and sheds were demolished and much of the garden removed. The land then quickly became an unofficial car park, as overflow for Coles which was then in the current Aldi building on the south west corner of Thompson Avenue and Chapel Street, and parking for the local real estate and retail businesses. It was then surfaced with blue metal and basically taken over as a car park.

At one stage the council formed a community committee to come up with firm ideas for a consultant to design a community space there, and a plan was actually drawn up and went to council. However, the committee and the plan languished because of opposition from the local businesses who are using the land for car parking. Bass Coast Shire Council decided to sell the land in line with a policy at the time to dispose of land that had not been identified for a specific purpose. But this plan hit a hitch when local real estate agents, many of whom used the car park on the land, refused to list it.

Locals complained that decisions were being made in Wonthaggi that were detrimental to the island, and renewed calls were made for the island to secede and have its own council again. In 2012 the new team of councillors voted to suspend the sale and review the decision to sell the land. Meanwhile it continues to be used as a most unattractive car park in the middle of Cowes. Olive would have been horrified at any ideas to develop the site for commerce, as she always felt that the location of the block in the heart of the town made it perfect for a lovely small community facility in line with her wishes and having a feature garden which visitors would fine memorable. She definitely never dreamed of her much-loved home becoming a sealed car park or a multi-level car park building proposed several years ago by a local business owner, or just another building in Cowes.

Update, 2023: Olive Justice Place is now an official pocket park where the Justice house stood at 70 Chapel St, Cowes. A large wall mural, seating, picnic tables, paving, artificial grass, container shelters and landscaping combine to make this an interesting, low-maintenance and relaxing little park in the middle of the busy town.

Phillip Island's National Surfing Reserve, July 2013

July 2013 Guest Speaker: Graeme Clauscen spoke about the Phillip Island National Surfing Reserve.

Graeme is historian for the Woolamai Surf Life Saving Club, (WSLSC) and is involved with surfing history as well. Phillip Island now has the only National Surfing Reserve in Victoria. The first of the four Phillip Island Reserves was opened at Cape Woolamai on 16th March, 2013, and the other three: Cat Bay, Smiths Beach and Summerland were launched on 1st June 2013. However, it was a long process to get there!

National Surfing Reserves (NSR) are ‘iconic’ places of intrinsic environmental heritage, sporting and cultural value to a nation. NSR embrace all peoples to enjoy, understand and protect

special coastal environments of universal value to the surfing world. A surfing reserve does not attempt to exclude any user group.

Formed in Sydney Australia in 2005, National Surfing Reserves is a voluntary collaboration dedicated to recognising iconic surfing sites in Australia and assisting NSR sites globally. Self-funded and non-political, the National Reserves Group (NGR) comprises experienced individuals from across Australia to facilitate NSR nominations and management processes.

A committee comprising representatives from the Department of Primary Industry, Phillip Island Nature Parks (PINP), Bass Coast Shire Council (BCSC), Phillip Island Boardriders Club and Woolamai Surf Life Saving Club met for 18 months to get everything in place. Sally O'Neil from PINP and Eleanor McKay from BCSC did the public relations and administration for the committee. The main sponsor was Bendigo Bank, which gave $10,000 towards plaques ($1000 each) and other costs.

Graeme showed many classic surfing shots at some of the main points of action at the main beaches – e.g. David Fincher at Woolamai, Graeme 'Dogga' Luke at Woolamai, Laurie Thompson at Woolamai, Glyndon Ringrose at Express Point, Laurie Thompson at Express and Nikki van Dijk performing a characteristically impossible manoeuvre on a big wave!



Graeme showed many photos of the ceremony on 16th March, including the Welcome to Country; the WSLSC crew tipping in to do all manner of jobs for the day; the official party, including Ken Smith MLA, Matt Jackson, PINP CEO, Brad Farmer, National Surfing Reserve, Alan Bawden, BCSC CEO, Mayor Cr Clare Le Serve and Minister Ryan Smith; and BCSC and c/ee member Derek Hibbert carrying the surf board provided by Bendigo Bank and signed by all VIPs and c/ee members on the day, which Graeme had brought along for members to view.

A special tea shirt and book were printed for the occasion and Graeme brought a copy of each to show. He also brought a scrap book of cuttings of local surfing events and identities, including of the PI NSR.

Scattered throughout his presentation, Graeme had included historical photos of surfing on Phillip Island from the 1930s at Summerland. Eric and Merle Clapton were pictured with 'boards' that were really just rectangular slabs. A group of young men, including James Mounter in 1935-36, were pictured with slightly more shaped boards, but still rather long

compared with nowadays. One photo of two surfers showed one in a football jumper, which was standard wear before wetsuits came along.

One photo showed Ian Hammond, Ventnor School teacher, with a very long board at Summerland beach with Beveridge's house on the horizon.

Also included was a copy of the poster for the first Phillip Island surfing competition held by the Phillip Island Boardriders' Club, which showed a photo of two surfers pointing out the challenging waves pounding in, with the wording: "Reward of $100 for the surfer who can win a contest in surf like this...Phillip Island Boardriders Club present their Open Invitational Contest to all Progressive Surfers!"

Conditions at Cape Woolamai were very primitive when the WSLSC opened their first club house, which was a Nissan hut. Graeme showed several photos giving a good idea of the problem with sand build-up, especially in the car park and on the road, before the ten year revegetation program 1974-84, which was led by Keith Grayden for the entire ten years.

Steve Parker was the Bunurong representative on the committee, and is a mentor for many young Indigenous surfers. Graeme showed a slide of Steve with his beautiful hand-painted boards:



The younger generation of surfers and surf life savers were also included, with photos showing the successful female crew in competition, and the Newhaven College surfing group who assisted on the day of the first launch, serving the guests morning tea.

Graeme concluded with photos of the unveiling of the last three parts of the NSR: Dave Fincher unveiling the Plaque at CAT BAY with Zena Archibald President P.I. Boardriders Club; Graeme (Dogga) Luke unveiling the Plaque at SUMMERLAND with Graeme Burgan PINP, and Steve Demos unveiling the Plaque at SMITHS BEACH with Geoff Owens P.I. Board riders Club

Past and present of Scenic Estate Conservation Reserve, Phillip Island

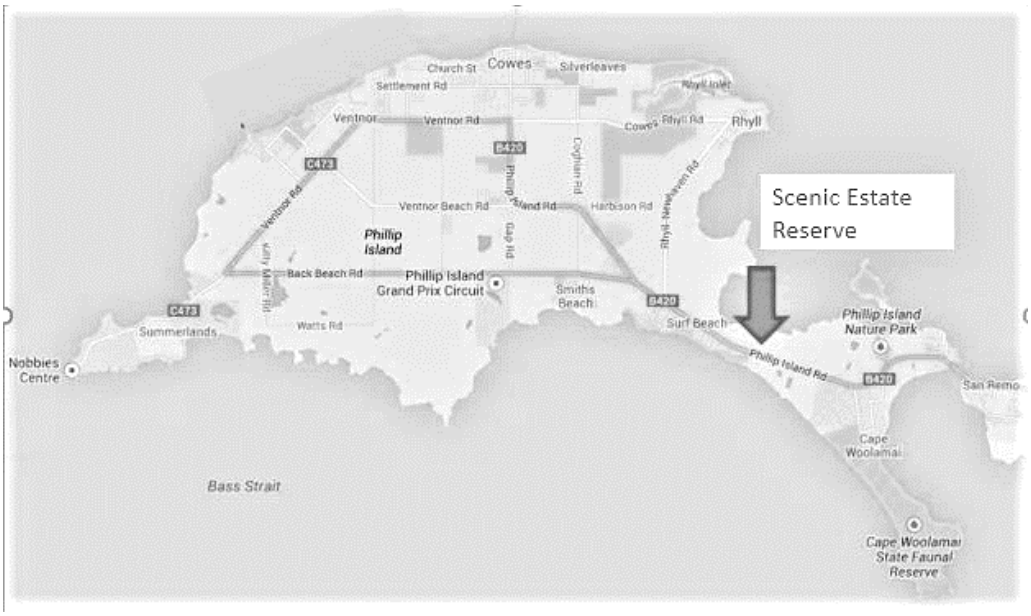
John Eddy, coordinator of the Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve, gave an illustrated presentation. Speaker at General Meeting: March 2017

1. What is it? Where is it?

SER is the new 28 hectare (70 acres) Conservation Reserve on Phillip Island, in the area formerly known as “Chinamen’s”. Its purpose is the conservation of some very significant native vegetation, and to allow the public to enjoy the natural environment. It was created by a partnership of Bass Coast Shire Council, Phillip Island Nature Parks, Parks Victoria and Regional Development Victoria, and is located on the north side of the Phillip Island Tourist Rd opposite Forrest Caves.

2. Geology

Like most of the Island, the Scenic Estate Reserve area has volcanic origins extending back about 50 million years. The nearby cone-shaped hill suggests it was a volcanic eruption point. The weathered remains of the lava and ash form the coastline today. Most of the present day reserve is an alluvial basin, which was inundated by the sea over 100,000 years ago. Sea level then fell, rose again to slightly above present day levels, then receded. Evidence of a beach level just over half a metre above the present one can be seen on the SER coast.



3. Pre-Settlement Vegetation

Consisted of mostly Swamp Paperbark Scrub, with Moonah Woodland along the coast (Seddon 1975). There was little or no grassland.

4. Aboriginal Visits

Bunurong people were frequent and regular visitors to the south coast of Phillip Island but probably only occasional visitors to the bay coast in this area. A 2014 survey as part of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan uncovered 2 small artefacts on the foreshore, quartz chips probably use as scrapers. Hence the site is a designated 'Aboriginal Place' but of low significance.

Editor's note: archaeological evidence is difficult to find on Phillip Island-Millowl farmland due to the long history of soil cultivation. Given that at least one whaling ship was seen at Swan Bay – adjoining Scenic Estate Reserve – collecting moulting, flightless swans, and swans were a common part of Aboriginal diets, the Bunurong would almost certainly have used one of their variety of swan hunting methods to hunt moulting swans at Swan Bay. It is therefore safe to assume the Bunurong did make use of the Scenic Estate Reserve area before European colonisation. The area is still regarded as an important part of Bunurong Country.

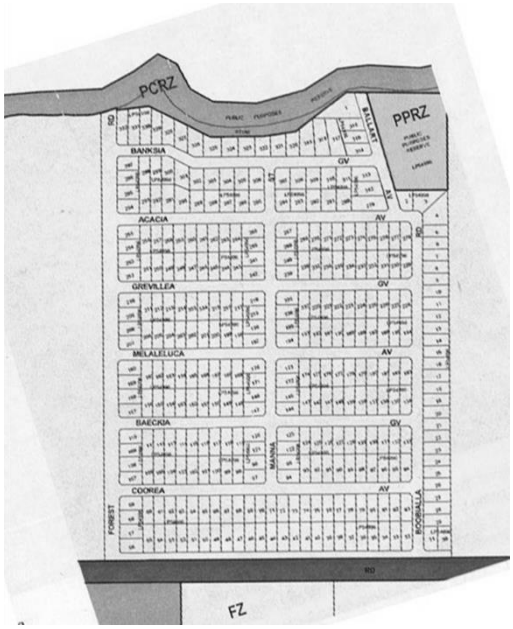
5. Closer Settlement

In 1868, Phillip Island was divided into many small lots. SER now occupies half of the original Lot 150, which was 140 acres. We are indebted to local schoolteacher and long-time resident June Watkins, a member of the Forrest family, for recording her recollections of the area in 1999. The first owner of Lot 150 was John Love, from Scotland, who with his wife, built a wattle and daub hut on the block, farmed there, and had a garden. When Mr Love died, Mrs Love moved back to Scotland. In 1883, Capt. John Cleeland acquired the land and grazed sheep there. June, as a child, remembered the block being "covered in Teatree".

6. The 'Heritage' Years – 1950 to 1959

In 1950, Cleelands split Lot 150 into two, and sold the western 70 acres to Arthur Heritage from Longwarry. He came with a dairy farming background, possibly also in forestry. June Watkins, Sue Chambers and Ted Jeffery all have good recollections of this period. Arthur and his wife Myrtle built a simple wooden house right on the edge of the foreshore, with a substantial vegetable garden inland, and established a dairy farm on the property. They were keen fisher folk, and constructed a slipway across the shore for their small dingy. Remains of the house chimney, slipway posts, pipeline and dairy shed gutter are still evident today.

Except for some of the coastal Moonahs, a saltmarsh area in the north east corner and scrub along the western boundary, the whole block was cleared for the sowing of pasture. After the larger scrub was bulldozed, smaller patches ploughed in, Ted Jeffery remembers having the job, as a 16 year old, of discing the whole block prior to sowing of the pasture. The farm was judged by others to be a 'good farm' and grew good hay in the higher paddocks. However, by the end of the 50's, small dairy farms were becoming less viable, and Heritages decided to sell up.



7. Birth of Scenic Estate

In 1960, Heritages sold to a Mervyn Frank Falls, and the 70 acres was quickly subdivided into 332 blocks, with road construction starting in January of that year. The saltmarsh area in the north east corner was set aside as a Public Purposes Reserve. The development was also known as 'Holiday Isle Estate' and blocks were marketed overseas, particularly in Hong Kong where many blocks were sold. Hence the locals referring to it as 'Chinamen's'. Some Phillip Islanders also bought blocks. Eventually, most of the blocks were sold.

Scenic Estate subdivision map, showing grids of streets, small blocks and a public recreation reserve in north east corner which was actually for drainage. However, the estate could not actually be drained due to the topography.

Planning scheme map.

8. Quick Descent into Limbo

The late 1950's and early 60's was a time of 'subdivision madness' on Phillip Island. Alarmed at the rapid decline of the rural landscape, the State Government of the time, via its Town and Country Planning Board, placed an Interim Development Order over the Island in 1961. This prevented further subdivision, and controlled the issuing of building permits. Because of the low-lying , swampy nature of most of Chinamen's estate, it was deemed too wet to build on. Many irate owners expressed their frustration, and several tested the resolve of the Council and the Government by constructing holiday shacks on their blocks, but were soon directed to remove them. The situation was not fully clarified until 1983 when Scenic Estate was finally placed, by the State Government, on a list of subdivisions that were inappropriate and never to be built on.

9. Decades of Infamy, Mistreatment and Neglect ....

The roads of the Estate remained open to the public, and people could legitimately access the coast for picnicking and walking. However, the site soon became notorious for illegal camping, rubbish dumping, wild parties and drinking and drugs. One local sporting club had a regular fundraiser on Sundays when a barrel was on tap, and that part of the coast became popularly known as 'Bottlenecks'. Broken glass certainly became a feature, and June Watkins recounts

how she picked up, over a period, enough glass to fill four 44 gallon drums, which Council staff removed for her. In later years, dirt bikes and 4 wheel drive vehicles took to the roads on the estate and created their own tracks through the scrub, damaging vegetation and creating large compacted and rutted areas. Dismayed conservationists and other locals frequently voiced their anger to Council and in the press, but little action was forthcoming.

10. ....and Regeneration!

Despite the mistreatment and disturbance over these years, an amazing thing was happening over the old estate. The farmland was slowly reverting to bush again. Gradually, native grassland took over from pasture, and Swamp Paperbark Scrub encroached on grassland. Even the Moonah Woodland strengthened its hold. Three aerial photos covering the 40 years from 1969 to 2009 graphically illustrate this.



Car bodies strewn along the Scenic Estate Reserve coast, adjoining the marine national park. Phillip Island & San Remo Advertiser

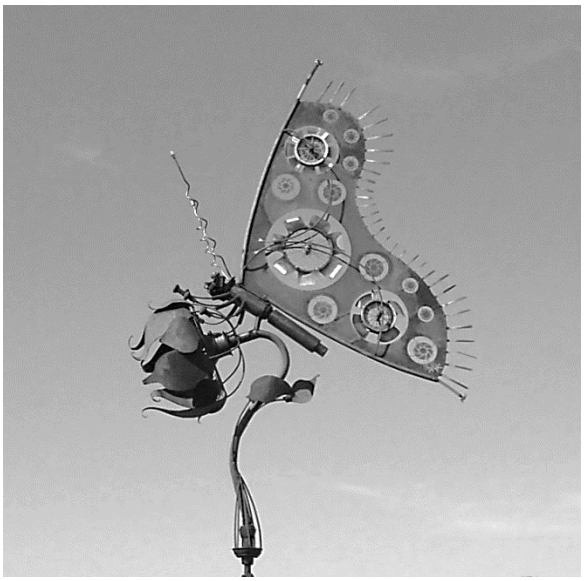
11. A Resolution Slowly Emerges

The creation of the Churchill Island Marine National Park in 2001 – 2003 was probably the catalyst for ending the impasse. The Park abutted the coastline of Scenic Estate, and a major clean-up of rubbish, including many old, dumped cars on the beach, was required. This demanded a cooperative effort between Parks Victoria, Bass Coast Shire Council and the Phillip Island Nature Parks, paving the way for clean-up efforts to be extended over the rest of the estate. A vegetation survey of the area by the Landcare Network in 2012 revealed that the regenerating native vegetation was of very high conservation significance, and by this time the Council, gradually over some years, had acquired title to a majority of the blocks. Together with the continuing public outcry over environmental damage and safety issues, the stage was now set for decisive action. In 2012, with police support, the Council finally locked up the old Chinamen's Estate.

12. Creating a New Conservation Reserve

In April 2013, Bass Coast Shire Council formally set aside all the Council-owned blocks in the old estate as the 'Scenic Estate Conservation Reserve'. Diana Whittington was the Council staff member responsible for the project. Many truckloads of rubbish were carted away, and in 2014, a Landscape Design Master Plan, and a Cultural Heritage Management Plan were

produced. Funding of $300,000 was received from Regional Development Victoria, with the Council contributing $73,000, and smaller contributions from Phillip Island Nature Parks and Parks Victoria. During 2014/15, infrastructure included: tracks, wetlands, boardwalk, picnic shelters and a viewing platform were put in place, carefully designed to avoid blocks still in private ownership. Weed and rabbit control was undertaken, and the iconic Butterfly sculpture erected in the carpark. On 1st July, 2015, the new Conservation Reserve was finally opened to the public. The official Opening, by the then Minister for Environment, Lisa Neville, was celebrated on 3rd March 2016.



Butterfly sculpture by 'DAK', David Alexander Kopelman, Scenic Estate Reserve
Photo: John Eddy.

13. Formation of a Friends Group

The Bass Coast Shire Council initiated the formation of a Friends group for the new Reserve, seeing its role as assisting with management, facilitating the visitor experience and acting as a channel for community ideas and feedback. The Phillip Island Conservation Society agreed to auspice the Friends group. At a public meeting on 1st Sept 2015, the Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve (FOSER) was officially formed, with John Eddy appointed coordinator, and a small committee endorsed. The formation was marked by an official Launch by the mayor, Cr Kimberley Brown, at the Reserve on 1 Nov 2015.

John then showed a number of slides illustrating the activities of FOSER, and some of the wildlife to be found in the Reserve

Historic Houses of Phillip Island

At the general meeting 6 February 2013, John Jansson gave a Power Point talk on Historic Houses of Phillip Island.

The first house shown was *Woolamai House*, built in 1869 for Captain John Cleeland as shown in a watercolour of the time. Photos were shown illustrating: changes to this house over time, both front and back views, painting on the walls, the entry hall with mounted deer heads (probably shot on Phillip Island), the slate roof, Gothic arch front door, and the taxidermed birds that were donated to Churchill Island.



Woolamai House. Phillip Island & District Historical Society

The next house was *Rimutara*, built for W T McFee in 1883. Meaning 'Pleasant Island' in Maori. One photo showed the back of the house when used as a Post Office and a wattle and daub building with 'Pride', the horse. William Richardson's cottage was built in 1887. This building still has the original shingles under the iron roof. Family members were shown, and views inside and around the house. The lounge room had Baltic pine lining boards and was mainly used when the minister called in on Sundays.

Glen Isla was built for Robert Anderson in 1887, including house, shed and stables, and a fernery with very fancy lace work. His family lived there while he travelled weekly by ferry to his plumbing business in Melbourne. John showed slides of the interior as it is now including many original features such as fireplaces and stained glass windows. The society had the museum in the kitchen of the house when Lunns owned it. The current owners have done a lot of sympathetic restoration.



Glen Isla. Phillip Island & District Historical Society

Rhylston Park was built for Joseph Vaughan in 1887. It is a solid brick house and had a number of brick outbuildings. The bricks were brought by sea from Melbourne. Vaughan had a bowling green on the north side. The lounge room and other main rooms have pressed metal ceilings and the original marble fireplace. The current owners were fortunate to be able to purchase several of the original furniture items back from the family now in Mossman NSW. What was originally a laundry was used by Richie Betts when he owned it as a slaughterhouse in the 1950s. The outside toilet was brick with a slate roof.



Rhylston Park. Photo: John Cook, Phillip Island & District Historical Society

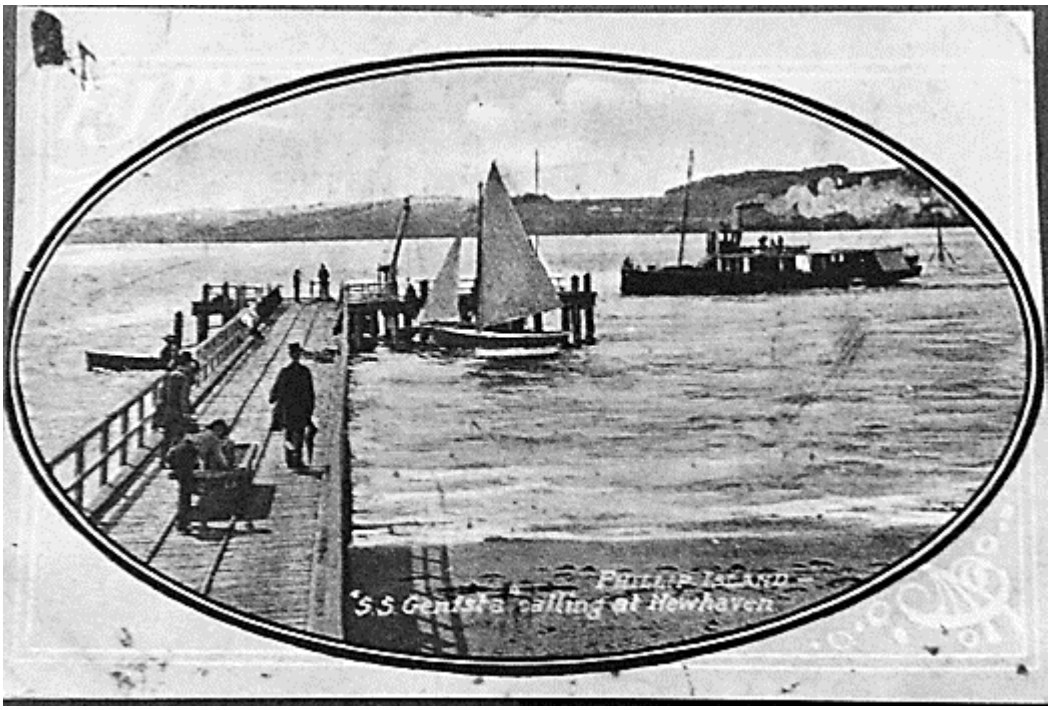
Cowan Brae was built by George W Ewen, John's grandfather, in 1914-17 for his retirement. It is the house now called Genista House next to Narrabeen. John's grandparents retired there in 1946. He showed the plans for renovations and extensions. The Ewans had an outstanding vegetable and flower garden and orchard. The Lilly Pillies and Irish Strawberry remain, and because of their shading, have changed the garden markedly.

Trenavin Park was built of concrete bricks by the Stoppa brothers for A K T Sambell in early 1930s. John showed slides of how the house was decorated in the 1980s while Oswins owned it. Upstairs is described as a 'rabbit warren'.

Some of the houses that have been lost include: *Broadwater* built for the Henty family 1890s, lost 1960s; *Hollydene*, W Kennon built in 1909, lost 2000s; and *Talofa*, built for W E Thompson by Ewen and Findlay, renamed *Windsor House*, built 1911 and used as a guest house from the 1950s, lost 1960s.

Part Five

Maritime



S. S. Ventnor - the mystery lying under the Rhyll beach

John Jansson, 2020.

The original name of this vessel was *Oscar,* built in Footscray in 1874 for Carlton and United Breweries. Bought by Phillip Island and Western Port Steamship company in 1922 for carrying cargo. *Ventnor* had reached the end of her working life by 1923, and was tied up abandoned alongside the *Genista* on the dolphin. Local ferryman Charlie Richardson, who had salvage rights, pulled it up on the beach with the right tides and weather and dismantled it. The planking was used as railings around his cow shed. Some planks are still stored privately.

From the Victorian Heritage Register entry:

> ...prior to arrival (to Phillip Island), served for many years on the Yarra, sometimes towing small sail craft of the Bass Strait 'Mosquito Fleet', but more often carrying a cargo of beer from the Little Dock by Spencer Street to the Gem Pier at Williamstown. Her speed was about six miles per hour. The Ventnor arrived on Western Port about 1921. Her job was to carry cargo to and from Phillip and French Islands and by doing so she received the title, Mail and Passenger Steamer. The Ventnor had her own steam winch; not a very agile one, but capable of useful lifts which could be handled much more rapidly than the wharf hand cranes. Cargo from Phillip and French Islands comprised mainly of chicory, sea-grass, wattle-bark and occasionally cattle. That to the Islands was usually, as could be expected, general in every sense - groceries, beer, diesel fuel, petrol, timber, sheep, etc.
>
> (Woodley, *Western Port Ferries – Past and Present*, p105)

When the plans for rebuilding of the Rhyll boat ramp and enlargement of the parking area were released recently, it was realized that they were prepared in ignorance of the historic ferry remains that are buried in the sand near the boat ramp. Heritage Victoria was notified and they are going to employ a maritime archaeologist to do a site assessment prior to the commencement of any works.

This is the story of the cargo ferry *Ventnor* ex *Oscar* buried in the sand at Rhyll:

The cargo steamer *Oscar*, 29 tons, 73 feet, was built at Footscray for Carlton & United Breweries in 1874. She had a scow hull, (flat bottom with hard chines). She was owned by a Mr. White of Footscray in 1877. *Oscar* carried beer barrels from Little Dock on the Yarra River to Williamstown and at the same time she could tow up to three ketches between Little Dock and Port Phillip.

Oscar was bought by the Phillip Island and Western Port Steam Shipping Company in late 1922 for carrying general cargo, and re-named *Ventnor.* She ran at the same time as the larger ferry *Genista* which carried mainly passengers.

Ventnor commenced running in early January 1923 under Captain Jack Jansson with engineer Ian Barton and deckhand Frank Jansson. There was accommodation on board for the master but not for the crew who had to sleep in one of the railway carriages at Stony Point Station. She proved uneconomic as she lacked a condenser to convert the steam back to water. The only place she could get water was on the Stony Point pier which meant she had to lay there overnight to fill up. After seven months Captain Jansson couldn't run her at a profit so he was

replaced by Captain Leonard McFee who was given a three months trial but also failed. She was then laid up at Rhyll and was acquired by Charlie Richardson who pulled her up on the beach west of Dorward's slipway. He dismantled the deck and sides leaving the bottom, stern post and rudder. Gradually the sand built up over her leaving only the stern post and rudder visible. They were removed around 1980. Her bow lies buried near the children's playground and her stern is on the seaward side of the sea wall.

John Jansson, 2020



Stern post and rudder of Ventnor, 1950's, only part. Removed in 1970's.

Photo: John Jansson collection

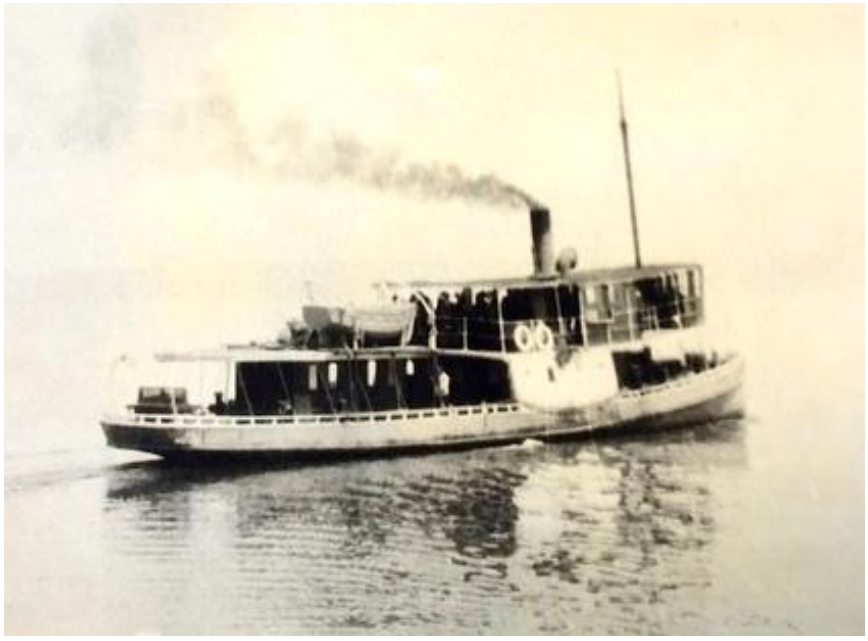
Ferry *Genista*

Essay by John Jansson, 2020

The *Genista*, 83 tons, 80/91x19.5x7.5 feet, ON 93522, was built in 1886 at Lavender Bay, Sydney at James Halstead's yard under the supervision of William Dunn. Her owner was Mr. Henry Carter Perdriau Sen. formerly of the Balmain Steam Ferry Company. Her overall dimensions were 96x19.5x5.4ft draft. Her engines were of the compound surface condensing principle, of 25 hp., and were made by Perdriau, West and Co. of Balmain. The cylinders were 10 in. and 18 in. diam. respectively with a 15 in. stroke. She originally had two masts and had no wheelhouse.

She was launched on 25 July 1886. An advertisement placed in the Sydney Morning Herald on 11 September 1886 has the *Genista* for sale or charter, light draft, steams 12 knots. Perdriau

and Co., 18 Erskine-street were the owners. She was registered at the Custom House on 29th September and was used initially on the daily Gosford-Sydney run until late June 1887.



Genista leaving Cowes pier, 1917.
Phillip Island & District Historical Society collection

On 20th May 1887 the Sydney Harbour steamers *Genista* and *Leveret* collided near the entrance to Circular Quay. *Genista* was towed by the *Leveret* to Blue's Point where she sank on a sand bank. *Leveret* unloaded her passengers and was taking in water so was also taken to Blue's Point where she sank alongside *Genista*. *Genista* was working on the Watson's Bay run and was under charter to the South Shore Ferry Company. From July 1887 Genista was available for picnics, harbor excursions, fishing parties etc. She was back under control of Perdriau from October 1888.

The *Genista* was bought by the Western Port Bay and Flinders Steamship Company from Henry Perdriau. She left Sydney for Western Port on 29th July 1889 under command of Captain George Aistrope. (He also brought the *Vixen* down in 1887.) She arrived in Western Port on 1st August.

Genista's maiden voyage on Western Port was on 12th December, chartered by a group from various Melbourne Insurance offices.

The final stage of the Stony Point train line was completed and the Melbourne to Stony Point train service began on 17 December 1889 coinciding with the first passenger run of the *Genista* from Stony Point to Cowes and San Remo.

The Argus of 22 February 1890 has an advertisement for a steamer to Cowes, San Remo, Settlement Point and Tenby. *Vixen* went to Settlement Point and Tenby, and *Genista* did Phillip

Island and San Remo. The Settlement Point service was withdrawn on 6 April 1891 and in December the *Vixen* was chartered for six months to the Yarra Steam Ferry Company for work on Port Phillip.

Sometime in the 1890's the mizzen mast was removed and the wheel house was built.

John Blake Cleeland's diary records the *Genista* being taken to Hastings for an overhaul on 11 October 1897 and 13 November 1898.

The *Genista* ran aground at Tortoise Head, French Island on 13 September 1899, and was still aground on the 15 November.

The ship *George T. Hay* lost sails and was driven into Western Port by the gales on 28 April 1901. It was these same gales which drove the barque *Artisan* ashore near Cape Paterson. The *George T. Hay* was towed out from the Eastern Passage by the *Genista*.

The Age reported:

> During the terrific gale of Saturday 6 February 1904 the tide in Westernport Bay rose 13 feet. At Queen's Ferry it reached the houses, and at Grantville it flooded gardens near the beach. The steamer *Genista*, running between San Remo and Stony Point, broke her lines from the San Remo pier, and was washed up on to the sandy beach. She was successfully floated off when the tide rose.

Captain George Pearce Clarke of San Remo died at Amherst Sanatorium on 27 March 1904. He had been master of the Western Port ferries *Eclipse, Genista* and *Vixen* as well as Captain Lock's schooner *John and Elizabeth.* Captain Andrew McLeod replaced him.

On 12 November 1905 the steamer *Queenscliff* broke down 9 miles WSW of Cape Woolamai in a gale owing to bursting of the high pressure cylinder. She managed to sail close to Cape Woolamai from where Captain McLeod was able to tow her to a safe anchorage with the *Genista*. The captain telegraphed the agents for a tug to tow her to Melbourne.

The ferry company owner Edmund Edmonds Smith died at Cowes in April 1914 and the ferries *Genista* and *Vixen* and the punt *Maggie* were advertised for sale in the Argus on 25 July but they did not sell.

Sometime between November 1908 and 1917 the wheelhouse was rebuilt in front of the foremast.

Captain Andrew Robertson McLeod resigned from the ferry service in 1915 due to ill health and he was replaced by James Leathen Clarke, son of a previous master Captain George Clarke. McLeod died at San Remo on 21 February 1916. He had been master of the *Genista* for 12 years. Clarke left for the 1st War and he was replaced by Captain Claud Philip Kerr in August 1916.

The ferries were again advertised for sale on 28 September 1916 and the *Genista* only was bought by civil engineer A K T Sambell.

Captain Claud Philip Kerr died on the *Genista* at Stony Point on 9h September 1920 at the age of 40. He had been in command for 4 years. Captain Johan (Jack) Jansson was working as mate on the *Genista* and took over as master.

Bill Kennon's 30ft. passenger boat *Puritan*, of Cowes took over the run when the *Genista*, was on the slip. Her first run was on 31 July 1921 and the wind shifted to the west during the trip back to Cowes, drenching passengers.

The ketch *Helen Moore* commenced running from Melbourne to Cowes and Rhyll on 5 April 1922 relieving the *Genista* of much of the cargo.

The *Genista* was beached at Stony Point on 11 April 1922 to fit a new propeller which should have increased her speed to 10 knots.

The steamer *Plover* was leased from the Melbourne Harbour Trust by A. K. T. Sambell, from 22 December to help the *Genista* over busy summer period. She was also leased the following summer. Her master was Len McFee. There was a boom in tourism during the 1920's with 12,000 people carried on the Genista during 1923 and 25,000 on the ferries in 1926. Repairs were done to the boiler of the *Genista* during January 1925.

The former pilot vessel *Alvina* was bought by the ferry company relegating the *Genista* to a secondary role. During July - August 1925 both ferries were used in Port Phillip to take passengers out to see the visiting American Fleet.

The *Genista* carried building materials (bricks) between Stony Point and Newhaven for the Newhaven Boys Home during May 1927. The *Genista* was converted for use as a passenger and car ferry between San Remo and Newhaven from November 1928. There is doubt whether it was used for this purpose as a small punt was bought from Charles Newman in December. This only carried two cars.

The *Genista* was run on Cr. G Dorward's slip at Rhyll for overhaul in June 1929, the third vessel to be docked on the slip.

The *Genista's* last job under Captain Len McFee was transporting drums of petrol from the tanker *Vincas* to the Stony Point Jetty beginning on 14 November 1932. The *Vincas*, of 4,368 tons, carried 2,000,000 gallons of petrol for the Pacific Oil Company. She was set up as a floating oil terminal and did not move from the mooring as she was serviced by other tankers.

Genista was then moored on the inside of the dolphin and work began dismantling her. The local fishermen bailed out the water for a while but gave up and she eventually sank around 1935 at the dolphin on the edge of the channel. Part of the vessel was exposed at very low tides until 1966 when Ports and Harbours removed the boiler and used explosives on the wreck to flatten it.

The Wreck of the Coramba, 1934

Account of a talk given at the general meeting of 2 November 2011 by Des Williams, who spoke about the *Coramba*, the crew members and the finding of the wreck.

Arthur Woodley launched Des's book on the wreck of the *Coramba* for the 50th anniversary of the wreck in 1984. Des showed a photo of various people at the launch including Jack Dowling, who was son of the *Coramba's* captain. Neither Arthur not Jack lived to see the wreck found.



Coramba with load of wool
Phillip Island & District Historical Society collection

The *Coramba* came to Port Fairy through the Belfast and Koroit Steam Navigation Company which set up the shipping line because they were tired of the high prices charged by the Hentys. Their first ship was the *Casino*, which became known as *Cassie*. The *Cassie* sank on 10 July 1932 with 10 lost including Captain Middleton. After chartering a few ships the company bought the *Coramba*, a tough, solid ship of 50 metres long. It was built by Scottish ship builders in 1911 and was mainly for cargo, having only room for 2 passengers.

Coramba was used in rivers and so had two propellers to more easily turn in those conditions. There were cranes on the masts to load and unload. She arrived at Port Fairly in 1933. Des showed a slide of her leaving Port Fairly with a massive (and illegal) cargo of wool, late 1933. She competed with the railways so every load counted.

In 1934 the bridge was closed in, making conditions on board a lot more comfortable for the helmsman.

On 29 November 1934 Captain Dowling looked at the barometer and decided it was not good weather to be sailing. He was heavily loaded with wool and Nestle condensed milk and was due to leave Warrnambool. He telegraphed head office but the reply was this: "If you leave now you would beat the storm to the Port Phillip Heads". This turned out to be one of the worst storms experienced in Victoria. Thirty four people were killed, 17 of them on the *Coramba* which lost all crew. This was not just a tragedy for the individuals involved, but for their families, as most were breadwinners and this was still in the Depression.

The first signs of the wreck were found by Bill Mallory, then a boy, as he rode to Berry's Beach. He reported finding wreckage to Constable McGrady who said "You're dreaming". However, McGrady then started getting reports of a missing vessel and went to look for himself. Various objects were washed up: the ship's bell, lifebuoys, and alarm clock, rudder from a lifeboat. Seaweed was piled 2 ½ metres high on the beach, with bodies amongst it.

Des showed a slide of some of the *Coramba* crew in times before the wreck. Their ages ranged from 19 to 55 years. Only five were not married. Captain John Dowling had wanted to get his Pilot's Licence so that he could be at home more. He had a loving relationship with his wife. The family has the last letter he wrote to her on Friday 23 November 1934.

Robert Wishart, the second mate, 55 years old, was one of four washed ashore. His wife had died two months before him and they left a child. George Madden, cook, left four children. Timothy Byrne, aged 24, was found in the kelp and is buried in Footscray cemetery. Bobby Bellairs, who had survived the sinking of the *Casino*, had nightmares about drowning. He very nearly did not make the voyage as he had lain down to have a sleep at his home in Warrnambool and nearly missed the sailing. His mother had woken him.

Arthur Murphy, 32 years old, left five children. Henry Jenssen, the donkey-man (who attended the boilers and engine) was 51 years old.

Of the relics surviving, the bell is mounted at Port Fairy museum, and the lifebuoy and other relics are at Portland.

Not long after the sinking, famous helmet diver 'Johnno' Johnstone used the *Hollydene* to try to locate the wreck. They dragged half a mile of rope and snagged a wreck in 35 m of water a couple of miles off Kitty Miller Bay. Des has been searching for the *Coramba* for 20 years. This year a 'Technical' (deep water) diver Peter Taylor of Southern Ocean Exploration decided to try and find the *Coramba.* He had been through records of the Navy mine sweepers of WWII and found three targets in the Phillip Island area.

Des showed a slide of the three positions variously suggested by Johstone, Arthur Woodley and Peter Taylor. They were all well apart, with Peter Taylor's position well of Cape Schanck and ten miles from Flinders. Wreckage had been found from Cape Woolamai to Berry's Beach and empty beer kegs had even washed up at Rye.

On 29 May 2011, Peter Taylor, the other divers from Southern Ocean Exploration, Des and crew left on the MV Action from Yaringa Marina. A boat with two divers had gone on ahead to dive on the location and if a red buoy was sent up, Peter and Des would know there was a wreck below. They were happy to see the red buoy, so their divers went down, passing the other two divers still decompressing.

Each diver carried one cylinder of Nitrox, two of Trimix for their twenty minutes on the wreck, and oxygen for decompression. They also had cameras and compasses for getting a reading, though in the end all three got different readings due to the effects of the depth of 22 feet.

The divers sent up a red bag when they found the two props to indicate to Des that this was likely to be the Coramba. They filmed the ship in three sections, apparently due to being shattered by depth charges from the mine sweeper during World War II thinking the wreck was

a Japanese submarine. They were able to film what was left of the stern, bow and mid-section, funnel, bollards, the boiler, some portholes and the two propellers.

On 27 June 2011 James Parkinson's crew from Professional Diving Services dived again on the wreck and took more film footage. It is hoped to make a documentary using the two lots of footage. Meanwhile, Des and Peter Taylor are collaborating on writing about the *Coramba* and the finding of the wreck.

The Cape Woolamai Granite Quarry

Account of a talk given by Mike Cleeland at the General Meeting 2 March 2011 about granite and the Cape Woolamai Granite Quarry.

Mike started by showing a piece of Cape Woolamai granite. Every granite is different. They're like fingerprints. Cape Woolamai granite is different to Wilson's Promontory granite and Mount Martha and Tynong granite. Every granite has its own personality and chemical make-up, as each is like a solidified soup with different ingredients.

Cape Woolamai granite is distinctive in its reddish-pinkish colour whereas Wilson's Promontory granite is lightish colour. This is because Cape Woolamai granite is relatively uniform with biggish crystals of pink feldspar with a high potash content, while Wilson's Promontory granite has calcium rich feldspar. Granite consists mostly of quartz crystals and feldspar crystals.

How does all this come about? The centre of the earth is blazing hot – about 8,000°. The earth's interior is not stable, because of the heat at the centre which is attempting to get out. Hot liquid is coming up, across the surface where it releases its heat energy and cools then goes down to that level again. It's like snail racing though – it's not happening any time quickly.

The surface of the earth is covered by tectonic plates and they are constantly moving. Even as you sit here you are moving northwards. Australia is still splitting away from Antarctica. When two plates collide there are three things that can happen:

1. Slide sideways along each other

2. Buckle and crumble up as in the Himalayas and Papua New Guinea

3. One can go under the other – subduction.

With subduction there is quite a bit of frictional heating and as the lower plate gets deeper into the earth there's a lot of heat there anyway, so when the plate gets down about 30 km it starts to melt. When rocks melt they become lighter and rise – blobs of liquid hot rock forming and they rise up through the surrounding rock. If they rise far enough up to the surface they can even form a volcano which shoots off liquid lava up to the surface.

The plates are colliding in quite a few places around the world today: Japan, the Philippines, the Rocky Mountains, the Pacific Plate is going underneath America and Canada and that's forcing things like Mt St Helen's – various quite explosive volcanoes.

Subduction is a bit like a 'lava lamp' where the blobs of oil rise up in the other liquid. If one of those blobs of liquid rock gets half way up through the surrounding rock and doesn't get any further and sits there and cools down, it turns into granite. So granite is a symptom of this whole process of plates interacting with each other.

One example shown of Cape Woolamai granite had an inclusion in it. The technical word for this is 'xenoliths'. 'Xeno' means strange, as in 'xenophobia', and 'litho' means rock. There is a type of granite at Wilson's Prom called 'xenoliths granite'. But they're quite rare in Cape Woolamai granite which is why it's preferred rock for quarrying because it's very even. The xenoliths are pieces that have fallen in from the outside. Pieces of the existing rock have fallen in from the roof and sides when the granite was molten and they get incorporated in the liquid mix like peas in pea soup. Then the whole lot turns solid. We can use these xenoliths to determine what sort of rock was there before the granite came up from deep down.

All this happened about 360 million years ago, according to the radioactive dating. There are about 150 outcrops of granite like that at Cape Woolamai scattered all over Victoria, and they're all about the same age. That's no coincidence; they were all caused by the same occurrence of some sort of plate going underneath Victoria. Didn't happen before and it has never happened since, at least here in South Eastern Australia.

Gliddon, 1968 edition, p.77:

> A granite quarry was opened at Cape Woolamai in 1891 by Chambers and Clutten of Melbourne to supply stone for the Equitable Buildings in Collins Street. Captain Broomhead commanding this vessel (*Kermandie*) was in charge of transport arrangements at the beginning. The loading of these huge blocks of stone took advantage of the rise and fall of the tide which here is sometimes eleven feet. The vessel would be brought in on high water to the jetty built of granite to a point that revealed the tramline when the tide was out.

They would dig the blocks of stone out of one place and tram them around a couple of hundred metres on these trolleys – a bit like the coal skips at Wonthaggi – and there they would load them on the boat.

> The trolleys on these rails brought stones from the nearby quarry to the ship's side where a jib crane lifted them into the hold of the waiting vessel. When the return of high tide had refloated the ship the weighty cargo was conveyed to Little Dock at the foot of Spencer St Melbourne and stores for Phillip Island were loaded for the return trip. The voyage occupied two days and the load of stone shifted was about 50 tons.

The quarry only operated for two years: 1891 and 1892. It is not a big quarry. There are at least three or four places where they quarried but in total they only took out less than enough rock to fill this room. It seems they abandoned it half way through and there would have been heaps of rock ready to go so people would have helped themselves like they did in Wonthaggi when

the State Coal Mine closed. Cape Woolamai was a relatively small-scale, slow, hand-tools type quarrying.

From Gliddon again, p.137:

> The Cape Woolamai granite has been used as a building stone in Melbourne. In the days when natural rock was the fashion for facing buildings it was found that the Cape Woolamai granite had many qualities ranking it amongst the best for such purposes. For standing up to the destructive effects of weathering this stone is particularly good. It does not contain substances that decompose readily to produce acids and unsightly ironstones.
>
> Although the colour of the Cape Woolamai granite varies from light to dark pink the polished stone is quite pleasing in appearance. It is handsome, weather resistant and ornamental, much darker in colour when polished than when left in the dressed but unpolished condition. Moreover it gives an extremely fine polish with relatively little work. Another useful property of this granite is its low capacity for absorbing water.

It was handy that it was right on the beach and you could get shipping in there and transport it to Melbourne successfully. When you're at Cape Woolamai quarry site you can often see rusted remains of the equipment used to split the hard granite into blocks of manageable size.

These remnants are the evidence which tells us how the granite was actually quarried. Rows of holes were drilled across the rock, about an inch in diameter, possibly by hand percussion drilling although as John Jansson notes, power driven drills had been developed by that time. Each hole was then filled with a 'plug and feather' to split the rock. This consists of two pieces of iron similar to a pipe cut in half longitudinally, placed into the hold, then an iron chisel 'plug' pushed in between the 'feathers' to prise the rock apart.



Cape Woolamai granite quarry
Phillip Island & District Historical Society collection

Once a row of holes were filled with plugs and feathers, the plugs would be hammered with a heavy hammer until the rock split. One of the interpretation signs at Cape Woolamai states that

wooden dowels were pushed into the holes and used to split rocks open, working on the principle that the wood swelled when soaked in water. No evidence can be found at the site today to support this view, whereas several rusted sets of iron plugs and feathers can still be seen in position.

Evidence can also be seen, particularly at the quarry site adjacent to the former Aunt Sally Beacon, of the use of explosives to break out large rocks. Drill holes nearly two inches wide and radial cracking patterns in the rock show clearly that explosives were used when needed to work on selected blocks of granite. So while various aspects of the quarrying operation have been documented in Gliddon and elsewhere, the new information presented here tonight is the confirmation of the use of plugs and feathers, and explosives, in the workings at the site.

I would also like to quote John Jansson's letter on the subject of the Cape Woolamai quarry:

"There were seven vessels used for carrying Cape Woolamai granite for the first contract for the Equitable building in Melbourne. 49 trips were made by these vessels from 27 May 1892 to 26 April 1893 with a total weight of about 2,000 tons of stone delivered.

The second contract was for 18 and 19 foot length blocks of around 14 tons used for columns etc. This stone was ready for transport in May 1893 and four possible trips were found to June 1893. The first trip on 27 May 1892 was done by the schooner *Tyro* belonging to local mariner Captain Lawrence Henderson. Henderson had been running the schooner *Tyro* for sawmill owner Alexander Stewart of Queensferry since 1877 and had bought it following Stewart's death in 1888. He also owned the schooner Little Angelina and ketch *Kermandie*. He bought the *Kermandie* around the same time as the Tyro. In the mid-1890s Henderson built a sawmill, and the general store at Bass Landing, where he settled at his property called 'The Landing'. He also ran a salt works for a while on French Island.

Another vessel used in this trade was the ketch *Gertrude*, 35 tons, with Master Captain Andrew Hannah. On its third trip it left Cape Woolamai on 26 June 1892. In Port Phillip the cargo shifted while changing tack in rough weather, forcing the vessel onto her beam ends. The vessel then ran aground on Swan Point. It was later re-floated and repaired. A court of marine inquiry found the master guilty of failing to adequately secure the cargo with timber props.

"The *Little Angelina* did 30 trips from Cape Woolamai. The *Kermandie* did eight trips from Cape Woolamai under O J Broomhead. On the ninth trip another master Andrew Hendrikson took over, leaving Cape Woolamai on 7 December with 37 tons of granite in the hold and a block of ten tons on the deck. She proceeded to San Remo where she took on a cargo of wool. Bad weather forced her to shelter at Rhyll. She left Rhyll on 10 December against advice to stay due to threatening weather. Unfortunately the lessons of the *Gertrude* were not learnt as again the granite was not properly stowed. It is likely that she suffered a similar fate with the cargo shifting, causing her to sink.

"Stone blocks were split by drilling a row of one inch diameter holes about four inches depth and eight inches spacing. Steel plugs were inserted and steel feathers (wedges) were driven in to split the stone. It is not known whether holes were drilled by hand or were done with a compressed air drill. Compressed air drills were used on the Victor Harbour breakwater granite (South Australia) in the 1880s. About 50 men were employed at the granite quarry and a similar number at Messrs. P Finn and company's polishing workshop in La Trobe Street, Melbourne.

"The stone was used for the bottom level walls and the columns of the Equitable Life Assurance building in Melbourne which was commenced in 1892 and opening in 1896. The upper levels used grey Harcourt granite.

"The *Little Angelina* did another trip in 1896 and 1898. This granite was probably for monumental use as it is recorded that Finn and Co had used Woolamai granite for this purpose some years prior to the start of the quarry.

"When the Equitable building was demolished in 1962 some pink Woolamai granite was apparently kept by Whelan the Wrecker as in later years blocks were obtained from there for some of the monuments erected on Phillip Island. The Cape Woolamai granite was probably much more valuable than the Harcourt grey granite and so was kept for re-use."

References: *Argus* newspapers of 1892, 1893 and 1896.
Diary of shipping movements in Cleelands Bight and San Remo kept by John Blake Cleeland.
Scrap Book kept by John Blake Cleeland.
Victorian geology excursion guide/editors Ian Clark, Barry Cook, G C Cochrane (technical editor)

Shipwrecks of the Phillip Island coast

John Jansson gave this talk at the general meeting held on Wednesday 5 February 2014.

Members were joined by many members of the public and a large group of students and staff from Flinders University maritime archaeology course. Some of the newspaper reports on wrecks described were as follows:

"Total Wreck of the *Levin Lass*"

> We have to report the loss of the brig *Leven Lass*, 184 tons, Robert Nichol, from this port, bound to Melbourne, she having sprung a leak at sea, which the crew were unable to subdue. The captain, with the hope of saving the crew and cargo, made for Phillip Island, Western Port, where she drove on shore. A great part of her cargo was saved. No hands lost, but the vessel is a total wreck. The Leven Lass left Hobart Town on the 24th ultimo with the following cargo :- 150,000 feet timber, 4,000 palings, and 8 hogsheads ginger beer bottles."

(*The Courier* (Hobart), Monday 18 December 1854)

> *The Titus*. News has been received that the steamer which ran into Flinders on Friday was the German collier *Titus*, bound from Newcastle to Melbourne, laden with coal. When she ran in the sea was running unusually high. She anchored about a mile off Cowes pier, but dropped her anchor too close to the land, not making sufficient allowance for the fall of the tide. The result was that with the ebb tide she slightly grounded. The efforts made to float her were unsuccessful, and she now lies aground

> half way between Cowes and the Flagstaff Hill, her stern is afloat, but amidships the vessel is resting on a sandbank. The only people now aboard her are the Captain's wife and her child, and a crew of 22 men. The Captain came on to Melbourne to arrange for assistance from a steamer and to obtain lighters. At present the Titus is not making any water, but it is feared that unless she is quickly lightered there is danger of her being strained. Her crew by latest accounts were removing the cargo from amidships to endeavour to float her off.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, Tuesday 31 July 1883)

The Kermandie 1883: Built at Hospital Bay, Huon River by Thomas Inches. 39/32 tons, 65.8 x 8.5 x 5.2 feet.

1888: Registered to Lawrence Henderson of Western Port.

1891: Under command of Captain O. J. Broomhead. Work commenced on granite quarry at Cape Wollamai to supply stone for the Equitable Life Assurance building. A stone jetty was built and heavy cranes were set up.

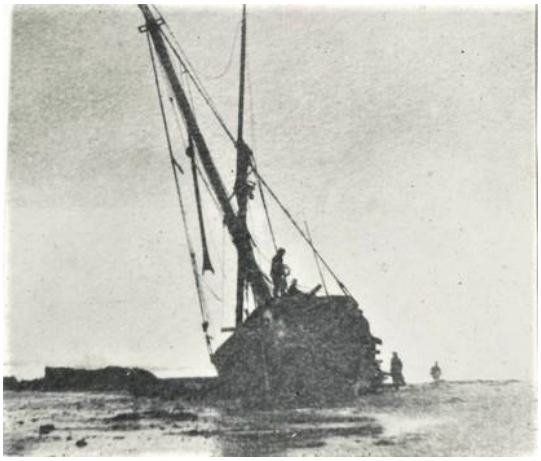
1892-93: 49 shiploads taken away in first contract in seven different ketches and schooners, a total of 2000 tons.

The *Kermandie* under new master Andrew Hendrikson left Cape Woolamai on 9 December with a load of granite in the hold and one large piece on the deck. She also picked up wool at San Remo. The weather was bad and she called in at Rhyll for shelter. The weather was still threatening and against advice from locals, the *Kermandie* left Rhyll for Melbourne on Saturday afternoon the 10 December and was never seen again. It was feared she had foundered in the severe gale Saturday night. It was suspected the granite cargo had shifted due to inadequate stowage, causing the vessel to capsize.

A similar occurrence happened to the ketch *Gertrude* in June 1891. She left Cape Woolamai loaded with granite and in Port Phillip a squall hit her and the granite shifted forcing her onto her beam ends. She was beached at Swan Island and later refloated.

1876-77: Schooner *Tyro* 53 tons, 75 x 18 x 6.5 feet, ON 74662, built by sawmill owner Alexander Stewart on the beach at Queensferry, Western Port.

c.1888: Sold to Captain Lawrence Henderson of Queensferry and later of Bass Landing.

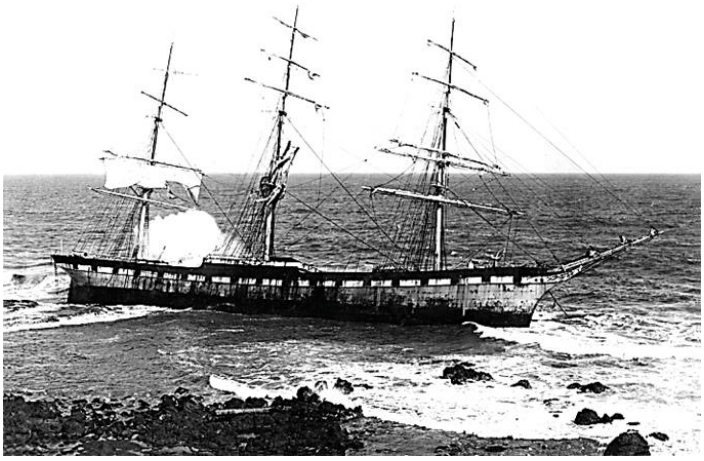


Tyro
Phillip Island & District Historical Society collection

Jan 31 1906: Beached near Ventnor after rolling from heavy swell caused her to spring a leak. She was unable to be got off. Her cargo of timber from the mill at Bass Landing was sold.

"Wreck of the Speke" Feb 21,1906 : MELBOURNE, Feb. 23.- Particulars of the wreck of the ship Speke show that the disaster happened about 3.30 yesterday afternoon, when a fierce south-west gale was raging. The scene of the wreck is near Kitty Miller's Bay. The coast is rocky, and most dangerous, but by miraculously good fortune all hands were saved excepting Frank Henderson, who was drowned when one of the ship's boats smashed, against a rock. The crew numbered twenty-six. The vessel missed stays in the tempest, and despite every endeavour crashed on the rocks. Two boats were put out, but both were smashed. The men managed to get a line to land, and the crew got ashore. The second mate readily followed a request by the captain that he should go over the side and carry a lifeline ashore. He got on to land, and passed the line round the rocks, but none of the men would venture to pass along the line. Captain Tilston said it was necessary to hearten them, in view of the most imminent danger of all being drowned. "I led the way," he said, "and the remainder followed. I wanted to be the last to leave the ship, but I felt it my duty to give the men a necessary lead. When the vessel struck the seas dashed over her as high as the top-gallant mast. If the men had tried to get ashore at night, we should have been in a dangerous plight indeed, and I am afraid would, have had a sad death roll."

(*The Brisbane Courier*, Saturday 24 February 1906)



The Speke soon after stranding.

"Difficult Salvage Work":

> COWES, Tuesday.-Mr. W. Kennon, of Cowes, who purchased the wreck of the *Speke*, which went ashore at Kitty Miller's Bay two years ago, has been successful in recovering the cable and anchors. He has had to incur considerable expense. A punt had to be constructed and conveyed from Cowes to the Back Beach, where it has lain for eighteen months waiting for favourable weather. The operation was attended with considerable risk, and could only be attempted with a smooth sea. About eleven tons of cable have been recovered, besides the anchor, which weighs two tons.

(*Argus,* 23 January 1908)

The salvage crew were known as 'The Suicide Crew' and comprised: S. Kennon, W. J. Kennon, J. B. Cleeland, W. McFee, J. Thompson, J. Walton, D. Justice.

Heritage Victoria administers both the 'Victorian Heritage Act 1995' and the Commonwealth 'Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976.'

The majority of Victoria's shipwrecks are protected by a 75-year rolling date or by individual declaration.

Heritage Victoria is the agency to contact for any permits for access to protected zones or proposed investigation or disturbance of shipwreck remains.

Heritage Victoria's maritime heritage program involves intensive research, site survey work and the active promotion of shipwrecks through underwater trails, pamphlets, books and exhibitions.

Following John's talk, Bill Jeffery from Flinders University gave a short talk on the camp being held on Phillip Island for the maritime archaeology students and invited members of the society and public to join them in the evenings for their lecture series at Anchorage Caravan Park, Ventnor.

Western Port Trading Vessel Owners

Presented by John Jansson, 2017.

Robert Massey and Samuel Anderson of Bass	1841 – 1843
W. J. McHaffie of Phillip Island	1856 – 1865
Captain John Barnard Lock of Rhyll	1850's – 1908
Captain Alexander McLachlan of Williamstown, Queensferry and French Island	1870 – 1885
Thomas Thompson of French Island	1872 - 1886
Alexander Stewart of Queensferry	1877 - 1888

D. C. Jones & M. W. Woodley	1882 - 1883
J. T. Paul of Grantville	1886 - 1888
Captain Alexander McLeod of Newhaven	1877 – 1880
Captain Andrew McLeod of Newhaven	1884 – 1904
Captain Lawrence Henderson of Queensferry and Bass Landing	1888 – 1920
Captain Johan August Jansson of Rhyll	1888 - 1920
Captain Erik Fridolf Jansson of Rhyll	1908 - 1917

Industries of Western Port

1801 Sealing starts
1835 Wattle barking starts
1835 First of the squatters taking up runs around Western Port
c. 1840 Bay fishing starts from King's Creek (Hastings)
1848 First of salt works around bay at Bass River
c. 1850 Timber milling Stony Creek (Shoreham)
1854-1868 Boatbuilding at Sandy Point
c. 1856-1860 Oystering settlement at Fishermen's Point (Rhyll)
1856-58 Sandstone quarrying Griffiths Point (San Remo)
1871-1909 Coal mining Kilcunda
c. 1872 - Timber milling Grantville
c. 1872 - Timber milling Bass River Sawmill (Queensferry)
1880s Timber milling Woolamai
1890s-1951 Stony Point base for crayfish ketches
1891-1893 Granite quarrying, Cape Woolamai

Some of the trading vessel owners

Capt. John Barnard Loch

Born 18 December 1833, Middle Barton, Oxfordshire, England. Five of the family of eleven children migrated to Australia.

Married 6 May 1857 Christ Church, Geelong

Employed to transport oysters from Western Port to Geelong in the cutter *Gannet*.
Had settled at Rhyll as daughter Martha born there in 1861, the first white girl born on Phillip Island
Moved to Melbourne soon after and returned to Rhyll when Island was opened up for settlement.

Died 8 August 1908.

Capt. Alexander McLachlan

Ketch *Clara* built at Sandridge by Henry Warneke in 1870 for Alexander McLachlan of Williamstown. Sold to Thomas Thompson in 1872 with McLachlan staying as master.

Schooner *Martha* built by John Legg at Williamstown in 1877 for Alexander McLachlan of Williamstown.

Trading to Western Port and Gippsland Lakes.

Marries his third wife Flora McLean 14 October 1882 and they moved to a farm on French Island.

Schooner *Martha* sold to W. Cowper and Partner June 1885.

McLachlan died at the Alfred Hospital 16 Oct 1890 from injuries he received from a young bull he was transporting to his property on French Island.

Alexander Stewart

Born 1832
Commenced sawmilling operations at Glen Forbes early 1870's.
Built jetty at Queensferry and completed tramline to mill in 1876. Built the schooner *Tyro* at Queensferry 1876-77. Owned the French Island Salt Company.

Captain Lawrence Henderson employed to run *Tyro* from 1877.

Stewart's Bass River Sawmill closed in 1886 as it had not been making money for some time. Building 15 ton steamer to trade in Western Port in 1887.

Died 13 April 1888 at Mornington.

John's talk was interspersed with newspaper articles from the times, such as:

***Argus*, 22 April 1922**

> COWES. - On Monday Captain Lawrence Henderson died at his residence, 'The Landing,' Bass. For nearly 40 years Captain Henderson had been associated with the shipping of Westernport, having been at one time the owner of three schooners trading here. One, the *Tyro*, was wrecked on the Island at McHaffie's beach, where her remains are still visible. The *Angelina*, renamed the *Woolamai*, still trades in Port Phillip bay, while the *Kermandie* was lost with all hands during a gale while on her way to Melbourne with a cargo of red granite from Cape Woolamai for the Equitable Life Building at the corner of Collins and Elizabeth streets, Melbourne. Captain Henderson had other business interests in the bay, having being proprietor of the salt works on French Island, as well as owning a sawmill and store at the Bass River.

PHILLIP ISLAND – IN MEMORIAM.

Capt. J. A. Jansson, Rhyll.

> "On Sunday afternoon last an In Memoriam service for the late Captain J. A. Jansson was conducted in the Public Hall, Rhyll, by Rev. Jas. Raff, of St. John's Presbyterian Church, Cowes. Hymns were sung suitable to the occasion. The preacher based his sermon on Heb. 6.19: "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul," and during the address referred to the faithful life of their departed friend, who, at the age of 66 years, entered into the "Haven of Rest."
>
> "The late Captain Jansson had been associated for more than 40 years with the maritime life of Phillip Island, serving first as a young man under the late Captain J. B. Lock, who owned and sailed a number of craft in the early days of settlement in Westernport Bay. Later Captain Jansson acquired vessels of his own, trading between Phillip Island and Melbourne. The late Captain Jansson was respected by all who knew him. He showed great consideration and thought for others, and exercised a personal supervision of any goods entrusted to his care. The sickness he suffered from in his last days was born with Christian fortitude and patience, and his end was peace. The preacher extended the sympathy of the congregation to the bereaved widow and family. 'Abide With Me' was sung as a closing hymn."

(*Frankston & Somerville Standard*, 30 November 1928)

Ferries in Western Port

John Jansson spoke about the history of ferries in Western Port from 1872 to the present time at the General Meeting, April 2 2014.

The first ferry to operate the Cowes run was paddle steamer *Sarah* 17/11 tons, 54.3 x 11.4 x 5.4 feet, ON 31889, built by Peter Tainsh, Port Albert, Victoria, 1869. Converted to screw steamer 1874. An advert on 6 Jan 1873 stated:

> "Cowes (Phillip Island) by COACH and STEAMER. – COACH leaves Cobb's office for this delightful watering-place on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, at 7 a.m., connecting with steamboat (*Sara*h) at Hastings, and returning from Phillip Island on alternate days. Return tickets at reduced fares. On and after Monday, December 23, the above coach will leave Melbourne daily. Special coaches can be arranged for. ROBERTSON and Co., Proprietors." (Last advert. until *Eclipse* starts 1 Nov 1876.)

The next was Iron screw steamer *Eclipse* 28/19 tons, 69 x 10.1 x 5.3 feet, 16 hp, 60 passenger, ON 64802, built by David Forman, launched at Yarra Bank Road, Emerald Hill, Melbourne. Bought by Western Port Steamship Company. Shareholders:- Samuel Amess (of Churchill Island), John Cleeland, J. Robertson, John & Solomon West. Manager, Henry Fowler Norton.

The Ferry *Vixen* 34/23 tons, 58.8 x 15 x 5.6 feet, ON 93531, built at Lavender Bay, Sydney in 1886 by James Halstead, was a ferry in Western Port from 1887-1917.

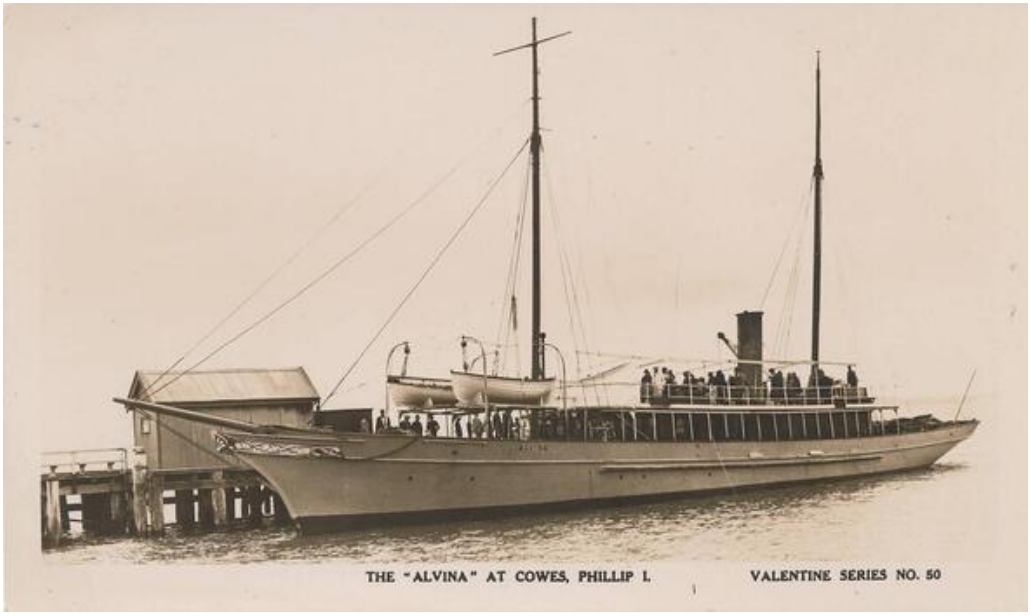
Ferry *Genista* 83 tons, 80/91 x 19.5 x 7.5 feet, ON 93522, built at Lavender Bay, Sydney in 1886 by James Halstead under the supervision of William Dunn for Mr. Perdriau. Used initially on the daily Gosford-Sydney run until late Jun 1887. *Genista* served in Western Port from 1889-1932. The *Genista* featured in several instances of rescuing other vessels in distress, such as on 12 November 1905:

> Steamer *Queenscliff* broke down 9 miles WSW of Cape Woolamai in a gale owing to bursting of the high pressure cylinder. She managed to sail close to Cape Woolamai from where Captain McLeod was able to tow her to a safe anchorage with the *Genista.* The captain has telegraphed the agents for a tug to tow her to Melbourne.

The *Vixen* had a sad ending: *Vixen* was under tow to Melbourne by tug *Sprightly* when off Cape Schanck she was found to be taking in water. They headed back to Rhyll but the *Vixen* sank off Cowes. Topside seams had opened up whilst sitting on her mooring at Rhyll for around two years and had taken in water while under tow. Her remains were found by Heritage Victoria and MAAV divers in Feb 2014.

The cargo ferry *Oscar*, renamed *Ventnor* on arrival here, had a short run from 1923-24 but was laid up as being too expensive to run.

Steam yacht *Alvina* 194/132 tons, 148/138.8 x 20.2 x 11.7 feet, ON 92050, built 1887 at Calshott, near Southampton, England by Oswald Mordaunt. Operated as the island's ferry from 1925-1938. The *Alvina* was a fine looking vessel, as can be seen in this photo:



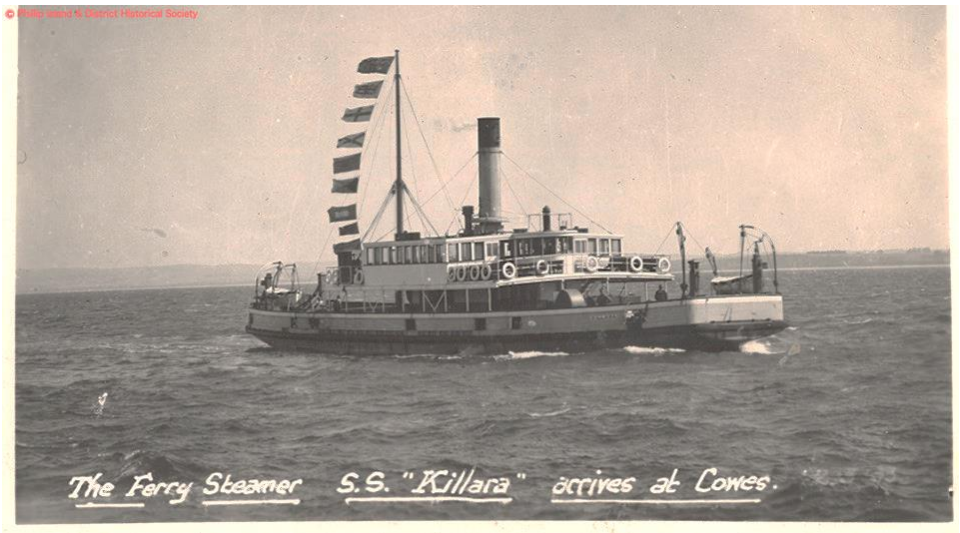
Phillip Island & District Historical Society collection



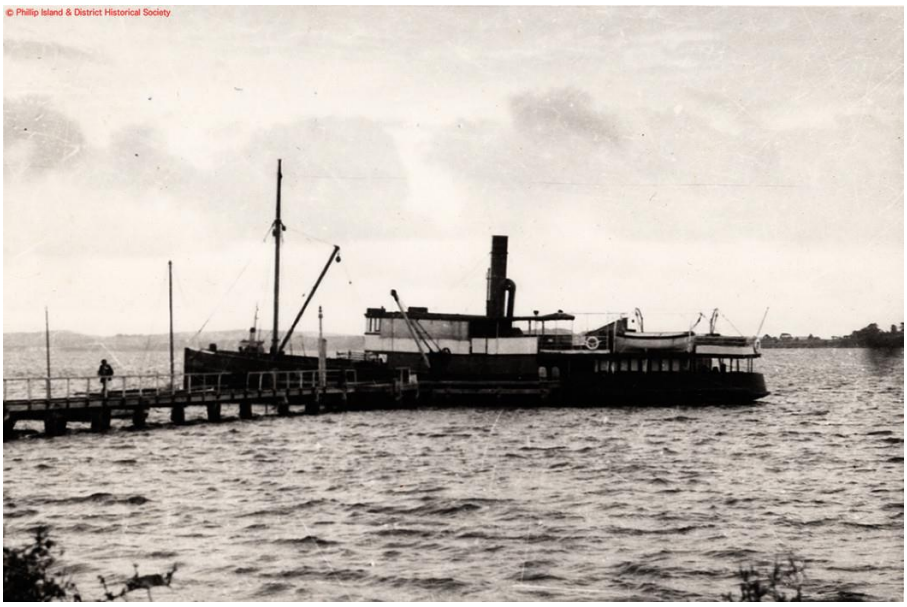
Extremely high tide at Rhyll, 1920s. Captain Jimmy Clarke at right. Alvina Ferry tied up at end of jetty, in danger of mounting jetty if the tide gets much higher. Photo taken by Charlie Richardson. John Jansson collection

Ferry *Narrabeen* 239/98 tons, 110 x 26.8 x 9.2 feet, ON 150164, built at Mort's Dock, Balmain by Drake's Ltd. for Port Jackson and Manly Steamship Co. Used for cargo carrying between Woolloomooloo and Manly. Was used in Western Port from 1928-1932. She was sold to Tasmania, and eventually wrecked on Goose Island, Bass Strait, on 24 November 1958.

Vehicular ferry *Killara* 309 tons, 131/145.5 x 38.5 x 11 feet, ON 125222, 38 vehicle capacity, built by D. Drake Ltd, Balmain, NSW for Sydney Ferries Limited for the Milson's Point - Point Macquarie run. Launched 26 August 1909 and expected to be in commission in six weeks. She served in Western Port from 1933-1943. Biggest day for the *Killara* was the car races in 1937 when 7,000 day return passengers were carried. An observer estimated that 3,000 souls packed themselves aboard on the first return trip.



Ferry *Reliance* 158 tons, 112 feet, built at Port Esperance, Tasmania by J Heron. Used in Western Port from 1943-1946, including having the honour of bringing the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester to Phillip Island on an unofficial visit on 28 November 1945, returning the same day.



Reliance. *Phillip Island & District Historical Society collection*

*Westernpor*t (ex-*Mildred*) bought by Phillip Island and Western Port Steam Shipping Company, arrives from Newcastle after an eventful voyage under Captain James Clarke in 1946. By Dec 1948 the Westernport was to be sold and the Phillip Island and Western Port Steam Shipping Company was being wound up. Captain Norman Hegarty, owner of ferries in Sydney and Lakes Entrance was approached to bring his ferries at Lakes Entrance to Western Port, as Phillip Island would be without a ferry service over the busy summer season.



Ferry Westernport

Phillip Island & District Historical Society collection

The first replacement ferry was the *Sunrise Star* which arrived in December1948, but being a single decker was unsuitable at the jetties and returned to Sydney September 1949. Next was the Ferry *Estelle* 85/58 tons, 79.9 x 20.3 x 7.5 feet, ON 171236, built at Brisbane Water by Gordon Beattie in 1927. She also arrived in December 1948 and ran here for ten years.

Possibly the best-known ferry for the second half of the twentieth century was the *Eagle Star*. Ferry *Eagle Star* 57/30 tons, 72.7/80 x 17 x 8.2 feet, ON 171230, 300 passenger, hull only built at Brisbane Water by Gordon Beattie for N. D. Hegarty and Son in 1936 and arrived in Western Port in 1949 where, apart from a stint in the 1950s as a fishing boat, she served as ferry until 1978, when she sank off Cowes on 31 Dec 1978.



Eagle Star, 1947. Phillip Island & District Historical Society

The *Jeremiah Ryan*, a catamaran, arrived from Brisbane to replace the *Eagle Star* on 10 January 1979. It proved difficult to get passengers on and off so she was replaced by the *James McCabe* on 21 January. *McCabe* was 64 feet, built at Hobart in 1973 by Sullivan Cove Ferry Company and ran for three months. From June 1979 the old-fashioned ferry *Ku Ring Gai II* commenced on the Western Port run. She was built as the Wangi, 43/29 tons 62 x 17 feet, ON 171257, built at Berry's Bay in 1924 by W. L. Holmes & Co., North Sydney.

This beautiful ferry was burnt in suspicious circumstances on 9 April 1980, and after breaking her mooring and smashing up on the rocks at Beaumaris, her remains were burnt on the beach in 1981.

Next came the *Southern Contessa*, 60 tons and 60 feet, a speedy vessel built in 1977 for the Rottnest Island run. She saw service in Western Port from 1980-81.

Ferry *Matthew Brady* 128/137 tons 65 x 23 x 8 feet ON 355401, built at Hobart by Sullivans Cove Ferry Company in mid-1972, saw service here from 1981-1992. She transported many Moto-GP fans along with *Western Port Adventurer, Big Cat*, and *Thunder Bird* from Lakes Entrance, for the first Grand Motor Cycle Prix 1-4 April 1989. On 8 July 1992 *Matthew Brady* caught fire while returning from Cowes to Rhyll. She was run ashore near Silverleaves but was a total loss.

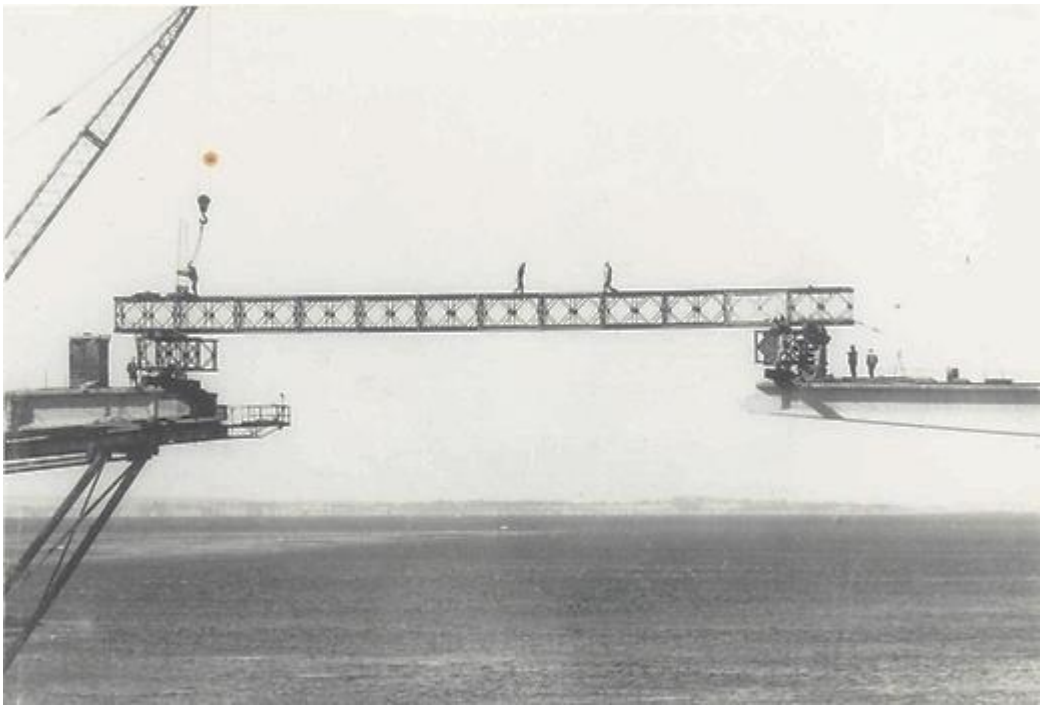
Ferry *Bay Connections* I, 48 tons, 46.9 feet ON 854849, hull built in South Africa and finished off in Fremantle in 1994 was a sleek catamaran. Owner John Dickie of San Remo, operated from 1994.

The final ferry in the story is *Kasey Lee* 18.5 x 7.0 m. built at Rippleside, Geelong by Australus Catamarans for Bay Connections in 1998. She commenced service as a tourist excursion vessel in Western Port in that year and is still running.

(*Editor's note*: ferries in service since John Jansson gave this talk in 2014 are not included here)

Part Six

The Two Bridges



The Two Bridges

A Paper written for the Phillip Island & District Historical Society 1983, revised 1992 by Marcia E Tanswell.

Pre-bridges

Early settlers brought stock and supplies from, and transported their crops to Melbourne by sailing ship, a hazardous journey from Western Port to Port Phillip Bay and back. Individuals could also sail or row to the Mornington Peninsula and be carried by coach to Melbourne.

After Koo Wee Rup swamp was drained, coaches and later motor vehicles, were able to reach Griffith's Point (now San Remo). From here, Mr Charles Grayden rowed people across The Eastern Passage to Newhaven. Stock had to swim across – from 1908 to the 1920's.

The Punts

In 1929, Phillip Island was reached by a two-car punt, plying between San Remo and Newhaven; an unsatisfactory crossing which by 1938 had been replaced by a six car punt. A large ferry taking 36 cars and 400 passengers also ran between Cowes and Stony Point.



Reg Justice tows punt across Eastern Passage, c. 1930. Olive Justice collection

The Cowes ferry made one trip per day, except at peak holiday time, and the punt ran as required during daylight hours only. These poor facilities cost travellers 10/3d per car and 2/6d per person. In addition, the approaches to the punt were so bad that vehicles had to be driven at times through fast flowing salt water. The economic justification for a bridge was obvious and in 1938 it was decided to build a bridge between San Remo and Newhaven.

This ended a long struggle from 1935 headed by Mr Richard 'Dick' Grayden who had talked of a bridge since the early 1920's. Pressure from locals through 'The Bridge League' and an overwhelming vote at a meeting in Cowes, attended by the Premier Mr A A Dunstan, decided the matter.

In 1936 a branch of the Victorian Country Party was formed on Phillip Island, Mr R A Grayden, President, and Mr Rupert T Harris, Secretary, to bring greater pressure on the Government to build a bridge. At the first meeting Mr Harris, who subsequently gave unstintingly of his time, limited finances and travelled many times to Melbourne, moved that all in the Party's power be

done to persuade the Government to build a bridge. In April 1939 the first pile was driven. Twenty months later, on Friday, 29 November 1940, the Premier Mr Albert Dunstan cut the ribbon and declared the first bridge open.



Group on first bridge under construction. Dick Grayden holding plans, Rupe Harris beside wearing hat. Phillip Island & District Historical Society collection.

The Suspension Bridge

In 1938 funds were limited and the engineering problems of bridging the channel between Phillip Island and the mainland were tremendous due to the depth of water, strong tidal conditions and need for a clearance for fishing vessels to pass under. It was therefore decided to construct a suspension bridge, to cater for loads up to six tons, which could be built for an outlay of about £50,000 ($100,000).

Work started in November 1938 on a bridge 1,765 feet long and 18 feet wide (approx 538 m x 5.4m) between kerbs with no footway, but with six pedestrian refuges along its length. The 500 ft (152.4 m) long suspension span crossed the section of deep and fast tidal water which would otherwise have entailed costly foundations.

The main cables used were second-hand from the North Shore Bridge, Sydney, and the second-hand cable hangers from the Tramways supported the wooden decking.

By 30 June 1940, anchors and temporary trestles for construction purposes of the Newhaven approach, piers, suspension span towers and most of the decking on approach spans to Newhaven, plus 75 sheets of plans were completed, for £32,683 ($65,366) for the year.

When erecting the steel towers for the suspension cables, they had to be guyed with cables across the main span and back due to movement of up to two feet (60cm) at the top, until the main cables were finally loaded with the dead weight of the suspension span.



Phillip Island suspension bridge
Phillip Island & District Historical Society collection

It was not the general rule but some piles with tapering sides penetrated less than those with parallel sides.

Opened by the Premier, Mr Albert Dunstan on Friday, 29 November 1940, the suspension bridge gave good service, but its load limit caused some difficulty – as passenger buses had to off-load their passengers to walk the 1/3 mile across, while the buses drove across unloaded. Stock too, could only be taken in limited loads, though evidence showed this was not always observed.

Statistics

The bridge was designed by Country Roads Board (CRB) staff under M G Dempster, MCE, Bridge Engineer CRB of Victoria. Mr C A Masterton, MCEA, MIE, Australia, was responsible for working out detailed design – 75 sheets. Austral Otis Engineering Company Limited was the contractor with Mr I J O'Donnell, BCEA, MIE, Australia, in charge of field construction until called up for active service in World War II, in 1939. Mr O'Donnell later became Chairman of Victorian CRB, 1963 – 1971. (Country Roads' Board is now Vic Roads)

When built, it was the longest single span of any construction in Victoria and a most picturesque scenic attraction of Phillip Island.

(Demolition of this highly picturesque bridge after opening of the new Phillip Island Bridge will be touched on later in this paper.)

The Existing Bridge

Due to the limited finance for construction of the old bridge, use of so much second hand material, loading of only six tons gross on two axles in each lane, and rapid increase in weight

and density of road traffic since the end of the 1939-1945 war, consideration was given to constructing a more modern bridge.

CRB traffic count in March 1960 was 635 vehicles per day, whilst in December 4,730 vehicles per day, and up to 6,263 vehicles per day. Permission for eight ton loads to cross the bridge was given and even heavier loads were believed to be crossing.

When, in 1959, one of the end hangers supporting the deck from the main cables in the suspension span broke at the lower end and the sea, air and tides had taken their toll from foundations upwards, the decision was made to build a new bridge.

Alternative Routes for bridge placement

As Cowes was the main centre on the Island and Melbourne (45 miles north – 72 kms) the main source of traffic, three feasible routes were considered:-

a) Via Somers. Most direct route (48 miles – 76.8 kms) involving three mile (4.8 kms) crossing over the sea which because of potential deep water port area, would require high level bridge over the main channel.

b) Via Stockyard Point and French Island. This route is 70 miles (112 kms), would give access to French Island, still involves three mile (4.8 kms) crossing over the sea in shallower water requiring provision for fishing vessels only.

c) Via San Remo – Newhaven, the present route with length of about 84 miles (134.4 kms)

It is interesting to note that after site investigation, the site chosen was that suggested by Mr Richard Grayden for the first bridge in 1938.

Site Investigations

These included the following:-

1. Hydrographic survey.

2. Underwater inspection of the channel and sea bed.

3. Seismic traverses.

4. Core boring at each shore line.

5. Penetrometer soundings.

Due to special conditions an additional loading was proposed for design of bridge piers to allow for a boat colliding with a pier.

Many features had to be considered right down to the annoying little bump felt by motorists as they enter and leave a bridge – this has been eliminated.

Description

Finally, it was decided to build the bridge of reinforced concrete and prestressed concrete 2,100 feet long (630 m) with a central 200 feet (60 m) navigation span flanked by 150 feet (45 m) anchor spans and 100 feet (30 m) approach span on each side. The bridge is 28 feet (8.4 m) wide between kerbs with a 5 foot wide (1.5m) footway. Navigational clearance at high tide is 40 feet (12 m)

Beams in superstructure:-

80 Pre-tensioned 'T' beams each 100 ft (30m) in 16 approach spans.

5 Pre-tensioned 'T' beams each 92 ft (27.6m) in suspended main navigational span.

10 Post-tensioned segmental beams each 204 ft long (61.2m) spanning anchor spans and cantilever approx. 50 ft (15m) into the main navigational span.

Large quantities of concreting used:-

Roadworks – Pavement 8 inch (22cm) base course, 6 inch (15cm) fine crushed rock, top course and 1 inch (2.5cm) asphalt surface.

Contractors

The contract for construction of the bridge was awarded to John Holland & Company Pty Ltd., in April 1966, who elected to work from a temporary steel bridge.

Foundation and superstructure: spread footing, cylinders or piles used according to ground conditions which generally consisted of basaltic clay. Special arrangements were made to counter corrosive effect of salt water. The piers are reinforced concrete portal frames with sloping column legs.

The suspended span, with 92 ft (27.6m) long beams, has a pre-stress of 775,000 pounds (1,705,000 kg) in each beam. Handrails of aluminium. More detail of coffer dams, beams, piling and cylinders may be supplied upon request.

Five sub-contractors and material suppliers were used.

The bridge was officially opened by the Hon. M V Porter MLA, Minister of Public Works, on 21 November 1969.

Cost: $3.25 million.

It is interesting to note that its designer, Mr Tom Russell, has been chairman of the Country Roads Board since 1978.



Second Phillip Island bridge under construction.
Photo: Country Roads Board

Demolition of First Bridge

A contract was let to demolish the suspension bridge. Despite local rumours it was not re-assembled in Adelaide or Japan. Due to the original use of so much second-hand material (mentioned earlier) and the effects of the elements, not a great deal was worth salvaging.

What could be was sold, and it is of interest to note that some of the metal and decking was bought or acquired by local people. Pieces of metal cable still reappear at the Phillip Island Shire Tip where a lot was buried. The Shire purchased steel girders – devils to work with – which were used for structuring at the Shire Depot. Islanders found many uses for the old wooden decking, including tables and chairs and a small bridge across a waterway at the Phillip Island Golf Club.

The worst part of the demolition for locals was the continuous blasting out of the old foundations. Before each detonation, a boat with a man standing in it with a loud hooter, would travel up and down the San Remo beaches warning people to leave the water for fear of broken ear drums and/or death.

Many fish died. Others were frightened away from the area and fishing conditions did not return to normal for at least two seasons.

Old World Beauty has gone: replaced by streamlined modern practicality!

The First Phillip Island Bridge

In 1936 a branch of the Victorian Country Party was formed on Phillip Island to bring greater pressure on the government of the day to build a bridge. Mr Richard A Grayden was elected President and Mr Rupe T Harris was elected Secretary. Mr Harris moved at the first meeting that all in their power be done to persuade the government to build a bridge. Both Richard Grayden and Rupe Harris subsequently gave unstintingly of their time and limited finances - travelling many times to Melbourne - until this became a reality.

In November 1938, after three years of persuasion from residents and others, the government, with the co-operation of the Country Roads Board (CRB), decided to build a suspension bridge to link the island with the mainland. Owing to the depth of the water, tidal conditions, and the need for a 40 foot (12 metre) height clearance for fishing boats, a suspension span of 550 feet (165 metres) was incorporated in the structure. The design allowed for a load capacity of 6 tons. The cost was to be about £50,000 Australian (50,000 pounds – $100,000).

Work began in November 1938 on a bridge 1765 feet (c 500 metres) long, 18 feet (5.4 metres) wide between kerbs. There was no footway but six pedestrian refuges along its length. The suspension span crossed deep and fast tidal waters eliminating the need for costly foundations. The main cables were second hand from the North Shore Bridge in Sydney, and tramway cable hangers supported the wooden deck.

The bridge gave good service but the load limit caused difficulties - some larger passenger busses having to offload and ask passengers to walk across. Stock transport was also limited. Rumour suggests also that some heavy loads were transported in the dead of night!

By June 1940 anchors for a temporary trestle were completed, piers in the approach spans to the Newhaven end completed for a total cost of 32,683 Australian pounds (c$65,000). Seventy five sets of plans had been drawn for the project. Substantial support was needed to erect the steel towers for the main suspension cables as they swayed up to two feet (600mm) at the top before being loaded with the weight of the suspension span. Experiments showed that concrete piers with tapering sides resisted further penetration into the clay and sand by up to

40% more than those with parallel sides. This only applied under certain conditions, not as a general rule.

Bridge design was by CRB staff under Mr M G Dempster, CRB bridge engineer; drawings by Mr C A Masterton, MCEA, MIE Australia. The engineer in charge of field construction until the outbreak of World War II (when he was called up for active service) was Mr J O'Donnell, BCE, AMIE Australia. Resident overseers in control of the work were E S Wilson and J Baker. Contractors were Austral Otis Engineering Co. Ltd.

The Second Phillip Island bridge

A new 640m/2,100 feet long concrete bridge linking Phillip Island with the mainland at San Remo was officially opened on Friday 21 November 1969 by the Hon M Porter, MLA, Minister for Public Works. The new bridge replaced the old suspension bridge constructed in 1938. The cost of the second bridge was $3.25m. The Country Roads Board felt this was justified due to many factors. The bridge it replaced was constructed when little finance was available and could cater only for loads up to six tons. Cables from the North Shore Bridge, Sydney, and cable hangers to support the wooden deck from the Victorian Tramways, all came second hand.

Rough weather and strong tidal currents took their toll on the old bridge from the foundations upward. Traffic density had increased following the 1939-45 war, creating a real need for a wider and stronger bridge. The CRB annual road count in March 1960 was 635 vehicles per day. In December 4,730 vehicles per day with a maximum of 6,263 vehicles per day, a number of which were large tourist buses which were obliged to drive across unloaded whilst the passengers walked the third of a mile across. Heavier loads, therefore, needed to be catered for, and rumour has it they were going over at times. So when, in 1959, one of the end hangers supporting the deck from the main cables in the suspension span broke at the lower end, comprehensive examination was made and it was decided to build a new bridge.

The length of the second bridge and the difficult nature of the crossing which combines a large tidal range with fast currents posed many interesting design problems. Cowes, near the middle of the northern shore of Phillip Island is the main centre of the island, and Melbourne the main source of traffic. Alternative routes proposed for the new bridge were:

Via Somers, direct route (77km/48 miles from Melbourne) with a three-mile crossing over the potential deep water port area required high level bridge over main channel.

Via Stockyard Point and French Island (113km/70 miles) giving access to French Island, but still involving a three mile sea crossing in shallower waters requiring provision for fishing vessels only.

Via San Remo-Newhaven, the present route with a length of about 135km/84 miles from Melbourne.

The first two proved too costly. The present crossing at the Narrows is the shortest distance between the mainland and the island. This site, east of the old bridge, has less tidal turbulence

and for many reasons considered more suitable. It is of interest to note that this present site was the one suggested for the first bridge by Mr Richard Grayden who had talked about it in the early 1920s. Indeed he had thought of it because of his knowledge of tides and depth of water since rowing passengers across the Newhaven-San Remo passage from about 1908.

Preliminary investigations for the crossing included the following:

1. Hydrographic survey
2. Underwater inspection of the channel and sea bed
3. Seismic traverses
4. Core boring at each shore line
5. Penetrometer soundings,

as well as provision for additional loading of bridge piers in case of a boat colliding with a pier.

The contract for construction was awarded to John Holland & Co Pty Ltd in April 1966, who elected to work from a temporary steel bridge. So began the tremendous task of building a reinforced concrete and pre-stressed concrete bridge 640m/2,100 feet long, consisting of a central 61m/200 foot navigation span flanked by 46m/150 feet anchor spans and 30m/100 foot approach spans on each side.

The bridge is 8.5m/28 feet wide between kerbs with a five foot wide footway. Navigational clearance height at high tide is 12m/40 feet. Five sub-contractors and/or material suppliers were involved before completion of this beautiful bridge.



The two Phillip Island bridges before the suspension bridge was demolished.

Part Seven

The Environment



Penguin Beach, Summerlands

History of the Penguin Reserve and Surrounds 1920s and 1930s

These memoirs of the late Raymond Grayden were presented as one of a series of 17 talks broadcast by South Gippsland community radio station 3MFM during 2014 and 2015, with assistance from a Local History Grant from the Public Records Office of Victoria.

Surprise and experience are where you find them. Pat's Gully and surrounding area appeared as a wasteland in which nothing good or interesting was visible. The only good things offering were a superb view of a rugged coastline and a beautiful beach, fronting the habitat of the Little Penguins and also Mutton Birds (Short tailed Shearwaters). The whole land area had an unfriendly appearance, traversable only be horse drawn carts and wagons. The sand dunes forming the backdrop to the surf beach revealed evidence of aborigines having visited there.

This evidence took the form of cooking areas (middens) were large numbers of sea shells, abalone and others, along with many stones and also flint-stone implements were found not commonly known in any parts of Phillip Island at that time. All edible herbage was eaten by rabbits and a number of cattle, the owners of which were not easily identified at times.

The first development was the formation of the Summerland Housing Estate. This was mid-1920s – the result was one private home. In those times we little knew that each evening at dusk, a simple happening so natural yet so remarkable would, when made known to the public, create a wave of interest extending worldwide.

Phillip Island severed its municipal ties with the mainland of Victoria, Joseph Grayden being one of the first nine councillors of the new Phillip Island Shire. No public viewing of the penguins took place prior to March 1928. The first access road to the area was built late 1927. Known to locals as 'Pat's Gully', it was visited by means of horse-drawn vehicles by people trying the rock fishing. This occurred prior to the access road. In 1926 the nautilus shells were appearing in numbers on the beaches.

I visited per horse-back the beach which became the scene of the Penguin Parade. I found a few nautilus shells and gazing over the deserted beach in the approaching light of dawn, I little knew that 40 to 50 years hence there would be thousands of people viewing the nightly arrival of the penguin flock. On one Easter Sunday night it was reported that more than 7,000 people had been present to see these remarkable birds. This occasion would have been in early 1970s.

The first settler to occupy the land from Swan Lake Reserve to the Nobbies area was Patrick Phelan who cropped and grazed. Phelan lived about 200 metres west of the present Penguin Parade car park. He was known to a number of Ventnor area settlers and they exchanged visits. There has been very little recorded of Phelan's life and habits during his occupation.

Prior to the construction of an access road to the beach which became the penguin viewing area, no persons visited that portion of the coastline because of the difficulty of access. A number of farmers with horse-drawn wagons ventured along the cliff tops gathering driftwood which came ashore in varying quantities. Some ships bringing immigrants in early 1920s from Great Britain had temporary cabins on upper decks which were thrown overboard after clearing

Port Phillip Heads on the return journey – resulting in a harvest of driftwood for the Phillip Island farmers.

Following the demise of Pat Phelan, the area was acquired by Mr A K T Sambell, who owned Trenavin Park property nearby. In mid 1920s the economy of Victoria was buoyant enough to encourage speculation in land sales. Mr Sambell and partners formed the Phillip Island Holiday Development Company. Early 1926 saw two surveyors working on the land between the access road and Mandeville Road (near Shelley Beach) establishing a network of roads and housing lots. The so-called access road from Cowes – then Nobbies Road – to the penguins' nesting area was named by Mrs Eleanor Sambell as St Helens Road. Mr Sambell's company laid down a 9-hole golf course; the present Penguin Parade car park was the first fairway and putting green. A jetty was built nearby with a view to transporting people who wished to play golf or visit the wonderful surf beach where the penguins had their nests.

Many local people visited the area to try the surfing at this previously inaccessible beach, which proved such a beautiful place to spend some time. The company also constructed a dwelling house to house holiday makers and serve as a gold club 19th hole for tired golfers. This building was adjacent to where the present Penguin Parade complex is situated. It was first built by a local man, Mr Henry Sykes & Son & Nephew. About three years later, in 1931, the guesthouse was enlarged to house approximately ten people, the builder being Mr Vic McRae. The official opening of the lovely 9-hole golf course was quite an event, attracting about 12 visiting professional players to compete for the 540 guineas first prize provided by Mr A K T Sambell. The prize was divided between two players: Ernest Wood and Horace Boorer. The pay received by the caddies was four shillings for 18 holes.

The 9-hole course was laid down and maintained by Mr Rees Jones. Water was pumped from a spring at former Green Lake, now known as Flynn's surfing area, and reticulated from a large holding tank on a dune nearby. The jetty with its access cutting through the high ridge of and adjacent to the 2nd tee was used only a few times by the ferry *Narrabeen*.

The guesthouse, dominating the landscape only metres from where the Parade buildings now stand, attracted many professional people from the mainland. To name just a few: Miss Edna Walling (garden designer), Miss Gilman Jones (Principal of Church of England Girls Grammar School, Melbourne), Miss Edith Noall (Secretary of the English Speaking Union), a Professor Gunn and Sir Thomas Blamey. The first manageress was a Miss Weir, the next being Mrs Mills and husband William, who hired boards for body surfing at sixpence per board. This was year 1932.

The public viewing of the penguins would have commenced early in 1928. Mr A H Bert West has been credited with having initiated the first organised sightings. Bert West discovered the penguins when he was 14 years of age – he was rabbiting and lived in Phelan's cottage when he heard the penguins calling out. Bert obtained a motor car and a few years later a Hudson Tourer. By 1931 there would have been about 8 passenger-carrying cars, taking people to see the penguins coming in each evening, as well as privately owned cars. The first motor bus used was a ten passenger T Model Ford – owned and driven by my uncle Charles Grayden. Charles used to entertain the people while in transit by singing to them. He had a very fine light baritone voice.

The Summerland Housing Estate, west of St Helens Road, resulted in only one house being built. A small holiday cottage on the highest point overlooking the coastline to Cape Woolamai. The road around the coast to the Nobbies was privately formed by Mr Sambell's company. Bert West spoke of early problems relating to crowd control, of people treading on the nesting areas, there being only tracks through the marram grass and other vegetation.

Bert accepted responsibility for overseeing the nightly viewing and made suggestions regarding crown control and provision of certain amenities. A small admission charge was made, although administration rested with the Shire at that time.

There being no electricity available, the Service car drivers had long torches to shine on the marching penguins. When the waters of Swan Lake reached flood level, the excess water flowed through the Pat's Gully area to the sea. When this occurs hundreds of eels may be seen going to the sea to spawn. It is believed that the young eels (elvers) return to the lake but the adults do not.

Access to the beach was possible in the early days by motor vehicles. Some members of the Victorian Light Car Club took part in a Sunday morning frolic on the half mile of hard sand, resulting in one Austin 7 overturning and emptying its contents, tools, etc, onto the sand.

I recall some happenings on the now-famous beach. In the year 1933 a cycling club was formed at Cowes, sponsored by Mr A Odlund's cycle shop. The club staged a cycle race along the beach, the winner was Peter Forrest. On the journey home to Cowes, one rider – my cousin Victor Brooker – fell from his cycle and fractured his collar bone.

Tragedy struck early December 1934 when the ship "Coramba" foundered in Bass Strait during three days of stormy weather. Seventeen seamen were lost and the Summerland beach was covered with kelp and other debris to depths of up to six feet, taking weeks to disperse. Another minor anecdote concerns my uncle Charles Grayden who dived into the surf while wearing his spectacles and lost them. The first notable rescue of a swimmer took place in March 1934, when a man from Melbourne was rescued from drowning by an island girl, Nola McFee. This was affected while about 40 spectators looked on.

Those of us who remember the earlier days of Phillip Island look back with gratitude to those who made a contribution to laying the foundations of future developments, this being the control and conservation of that which is the heritage of future generations

Mary Potter (nee Anderson): San Remo and District Nature Notes, 1918

Manuscript typed by Christine Grayden and annotated by Dr Peter Dann, 2015. *Dr Dann's notes in italics on current status and names of birds and animals*

Introduction

Written by A D Hardy inside the front cover of Mary Potter's nature notes exercise book:

"The following notes from memory have been set down by a lady who spent most of her life in the neighbourhood of San Remo but somewhat reluctantly (set down). The assurance of the communicator that the notes would be gladly accepted by the Field Naturalists Club without the Contributor having any Scientific Knowledge or that the appearance of such notes might induce other old residents to follow the example was the deciding factor and, with only slight editorial treatment, this addition to our knowledge of the fauna of the San Remo, Bass River and Phillip Island district is placed on record."

Mary's notes:

Land animals and birds:

Kangaroo (grey) (Grey Kangaroo): Used to be very plentiful all through the district, but since settlement have gone further back. *Common along coast and in Bass hills.*

Brush Wallaby: Have not been seen at San Remo for years, but it is believed that there are still a few round the township of Woolamai at the back of the Bass.

Brown Wallaby (Swamp Wallaby): Used to be very numerous in the scrub near the mouth of the Bass River, but they have quite dis-appeared. *Plentiful.*

Padymelon (sic) (Tasmanian Pademelon): Used to be in great numbers on the Anderson property some years ago. They seem to have contracted some disease, for they died in hundreds and are now extinct in these parts.

Kangaroo Rat (Long-nosed Potoroo or bettong?): Never very plentiful in the district.

Bandicoot (Southern Brown or Long-nosed Bandicoots both possible): There were plenty of these in this neighbourhood at one time but since the scrub has been cleared away they have practically disappeared. *Rare in the district but still on Mornington Peninsula and northern Western Port.*

Mouse-like Marsupial (Feathertail Glider): ……..feathered tail: My mother got a specimen of this little animal from a Mr Peters who lived at Corinella and made a living collecting birds and other

animals. It was about the size of a small mouse and had a feathery looking tail. I never saw another like it. *Gone from district.*

Koala: Were very plentiful whilst the country was heavily timbered, but have dis-appeared since the gum trees died out. *Occasionally one or two are seen in the isolated trees.*

Grey Possum (Common Brush-tailed Possum): Years ago this possum was very numerous everywhere and was very destructive in the orchards. There are still a good many to be seen. *Plentiful.*

Red Possum (Mountain Brush-tailed Possum/Bobuck?): These were never so numerous as the grey. They had smaller ears and shorter fur. They seem to have quite dis-appeared.

Ringtail Possum (Ring-tailed Possum): I have often found their nests in the tea tree scrub both along the bay and the ocean beach. There are a few there still. *Plentiful.*

Grey Squirrel (Sugar Glider): Between 30 and 40 years ago these pretty little animals could be seen on moonlight nights flying from one tree to another. They have completely dis-appeared. *Gone from district.*

Flying Fox (Grey-headed Flying Fox): Used to come down here in great numbers in the early autumn when they apples and pears were ripe but still not stay with us all year. *Occasional visitor.*

Bats: We often have these little bats flying about at night and come into the house. They seem to live in colonies as on felling a hollow tree quite a number flew out.

Dingo (Dingo): Were plentiful 60 years ago, but became scarce as the country got more settled. Were very destructive killing sheep and young calves.

Fox: Only came to the district of late years, but have since become very numerous and make their burrows particularly along the sea cliffs.

Platypus: Never very numerous, but have seen them in the Bass River. They make their nests in the bank just above the level of the water. *Rare in Bass River.*

Porcupine (Short-beaked Echidna): These are still to be found in the paddocks where there is timber or scrub. *Plentiful.*

Seal: The principal home of these animals is the Seal Rocks off the SW end of Phillip Island. The fishermen are very much against their protection as they follow the shoals of fish and break their nets.

Water Rat (Water rat)-: Have seen them about the banks of creeks. They are larger than an ordinary rat and have a white tip to their tail. *Relatively common.*

Field Mouse: We used to see lots of these small mice when the crops were being cut.

Wombat (Common Wombat): Have only once heard of a wombat being killed near Kilcunda. A few had been found back in the hills towards Gippsland. *A few occur in the district.*

Birds

Wedge tailed Eagle (Wedge-tailed Eagle): I only knew of one nest in a tall tree above Anderson station. A pair built there for several years, leaving each year after their young were reared, returning the following season to re build their former nest. They often came here in the spring and attacked the young lambs. *Breeding pairs on Phillip Island and in the Bass Valley.*

Brown Hawk (Brown Falcon): We were never fortunate enough to find a nest, but since the rabbits increased these hawks have increased also. Summer is the best time to see them. *Breeds in the Bass Valley and on Phillip Island.*

Swamp Hawk (Harrier) (Swamp Harrier): The first nest I ever found was on Phillip Island crossing from Newhaven to the ocean beach. It was built of sticks on top of some broken down scrub and contained three white eggs. Since then I have seen their nests at San Remo when the crops were being cut. *Common on Phillip Island, much less common in Bass Valley. Breeds on Phillip Island and may migrate across Bass Strait via Phillip Island.*

Whistling Eagle (Whistling Kite): Since the timber has died out these birds have become very scarce. *A few pairs on Phillip Island and in the Bass Valley. Increases in numbers on Phillip Island in some years as the shearwaters are fledging.*

Sparrowhawk (Australian Goshawk – likely as now common in the Bass Valley, although Collared Sparrowhawk a possibility although now rare in the district): Had a good many about Netherwood and they were very daring, attacking the fowls and carrying off the chickens.

Kestrel (Nankeen Kestrel): These pretty little hawks are rapidly dis-appearing since there are less dead eucalypts to provide them with nesting holes. *A few pairs on Phillip Island, much less common in the Bass Valley.*

Kestrel (shy) (Nankeen Kestrel): There is another kestrel, but it is a very shy bird (possible confusion caused by slight sexual differences in kestrels). Its colouring is much the same and the eggs have the same markings as the other variety. We only once found a nest in the spout of a dead tree.

Sea Hawk (Osprey) (Osprey): I have seen these occasionally about the ocean beach flying usually at dusk. Never saw a nest. Rarely seen in the district now but reported by many early visitors to Phillip Island and along the Victorian coast.

Blue Hawk (Fish Hawk) (White-bellied Sea-eagle- likely, although surprising that they were in great numbers): Used to build along the cliffs of the ocean beach from San Remo to Kilcunda and were in great numbers there. *Now breeds on French and Phillip Islands – approx. three pairs*

Black-faced Falcon (Peregrine Falcon): We found a dead crane in a paddock partly eaten which we thought was the work of foxes, so we poisoned the remainder and next morning on going to

the spot found to our surprise 2 black faced falcons lying dead close to the crane. *Breeds at a number of sites on Phillip Island.*

White Hawk (Black-shouldered Kite?): Back as far as Kilcunda. Odd pairs were to be seen, but never a nest. Not common but a resident pair breeds on the Anderson Peninsula and lower Bass River. *Also breeds on the western end of Phillip Island.*

Disc-faced Owl (Barn Owl): Seen in scrub, at evening after sitting on the fence posts. Nests very difficult to find. Seems to be a winter visitor only these days.

Boobook Owl (Boobook Owl): Never found nest, but often found them sheltering in scrub and they were often heard round the house at night. *Breeds around Ventnor but relatively uncommon.*

Mopoke (Tawny Frogmouth): Found many nests and often saw these birds lying along the branch of a tree. Rare in district now. *I don't know of any Phillip Island records.*

Cockatoo (White) (Sulphur-crested Cockatoo): Years ago plentiful, but nested further back in the ranges. Came down in great numbers when the wheat was getting ripe. *Uncommon on Phillip Island, a pair bred at Ventnor for a few years. Small group lives in Bass.*

Cockatoo (Black) (Yellow-tailed black Cockatoo): Came occasionally and were regarded as a sign of stormy weather, but on the Lower Tarwin they could be seen plentifully in the old days. They were particularly fond of the seeds of the black wattle. Rare on the island but appeared in hundreds in the aftermath of Black Saturday fires. *Regular visitor to pine-trees in the Bass Valley.*

Gang Gang (Gang-gang Cockatoo): They dis-appeared with the timber but 6 or 7 years ago some were shot about the Bass River. *Rare on Phillip Island and in the Bass Valley.*

King Parrot (King Parrot): Still about the Bass and used to come about the orchards and sometimes destroyed the potato crops. *Occasional visitor to Phillip Island and Bass Valley.*

Lorry (perhaps another lorikeet but unsure what species- possibly Musk or Scaly-breasted; in some areas Crimson Rosellas used to be referred to as "Lorrys"): These were in large flocks some years ago, but are very scarce now.

Rosella (Eastern Rosella): Came in later years, apparently from Hastings district, first to Phillip Island, and then to San Remo. *Common breeding bird in district now.*

Lorikeet (impossible to know what species but I wonder if we could get another reference to them re going to Scotland: These pretty little birds used to be with us for a good part of the year. Have found their nests in dead timber. Reared four young ones and took them to Scotland where they lived for some years.

Blue Mountain (Rainbow Lorikeet): These came down from the ranges in the late summer when the fruit was ripening. We used to shoot them and make them into a pie as they are very good eating. *Now an abundant breeding species on Phillip Island, less common but increasing in the Bass Valley.*

Grass Parakeet (Blue-winged Parrot- likely, unusual that in small groups but these were possibly breeding pairs): I saw these beautiful little birds when riding in the paddock at Netherwood and also on the plains near Cape Patterson, but I never saw more than a pair or so at a time. *Regular visitor to Bass River mouth and river flats often up to 100.*

Swamp Parrot (Ground Parrot): I never remember seeing these birds at any time. *Rare everywhere now.*

Another Lorikeet (Purple-crowned Lorikeet): There was another small parrot which was probably the purple crowned lorikeet which followed the flowering of the gums. They never stayed with us very long. *Rare in the district.*

Wading birds

Blue Crane (White-faced Heron): Are still plentiful along the coast and on the river flats. They come all over the paddocks as soon as we get the autumn rains and eat a great number of white grubs.

Nankeen Heron (Nankeen Night-heron): These handsome birds were only occasionally seen as they came about at night. I only once knew of a nest in a tall tree on the banks of the Bass River. *Now roosts on the Bass River, at San Remo and maybe Rhyll. Nearest breeding at Yaringa as far as I know.*

Bittern (Australasian Bittern): They only came here when the season was very dry up north. *Same as now – very rare.*

Native Companion (Brolga): Years ago I have seen these on the river flats and a swamp near the Powlett River during the summer. *No records for last 40 years in this area.*

(indecipherable) Were numerous about the Bass River and at Newhaven where they used to nest.

Stone plover (this could be a number of species including whimbrel, curlew and red-capped plovers etc.): Have often seen them along the shore of Western Port Bay. A very shy bird.

Landrail (Buff-breasted Rail).: These usually nested in crops or coarse grass. I have often seen their eggs or young in stubble. *Making a come-back in recent years in the district. Maybe responding to fox control.*

Grebe (Either Little or hoary-headed Grebe): We came across plenty of their floating nests made of water weed? in the water holes, and watched the little birds diving. *Both found breeding on freshwater in the district and Hoary Headed Grebes occur in numbers on the bay in winter.*

Little Coot (Eurasian Coot): We often saw the young birds along the river, but never found their nests. *Occurs at times on Swan Lake, Fishers wetland or at the racing track.*

Swimmers

Black Duck (Black Duck): Many to be seen on the swamps and water holes. *No change. Common on Bass River.*

Teal (Chestnut Teal): These were abundant all across the bay to the mouth of the Bass River. They made their nests in the bracken at the foot of an old tree. *Common breeding bird in the district.*

Wood Duck (Wood Duck): These only visited us in a dry season. One year when there was a drought at Bairnsdale and Sale they came to us in great numbers. I heard of a nest being found in a tree at Inverloch. This species had disappeared from the district but has made a resurgence in the last 30 years. *Breeding widespread.*

Musk Duck (Musk Duck): These large birds were to be found on Western Port Bay, but never in great numbers. *In large numbers in the bay in winter and breeds at PI racing track.*

"Big" Duck (Mountain Duck) (Australasian Shelduck): These handsome birds were with us for months at a time and frequented the flats at the mouth of the Bass River. We never found a nest. *Still in large numbers at the mouth of the Bass River. Probably breeds on French Island.*

Black Swan (Black Swan): I have seen at low tide the mud flats on Western Port Bay alive with black swans. There great breeding ground was on French Island and swamps round the bay. I have seen the little grey cygnets on the beach below Netherwood. *No change.*

Scratchers:

Lyre Bird (Superb Lyrebird): There were numbers of these shy birds all through the hills in the scrub. I used to hear them whistling in the early morning, but they are very scarce now which is probably due to the advent of the fox. *Gone from the district.*

Quail Stubble (Stubble Quail): These were found everywhere in the early days. I daresay the foxes destroy a lot of their nests. *Occur in summer in hay paddocks, very common on French Island where no foxes.*

Quail painted (Painted Button-quail): This variety was always very scarce. I only remember twice finding their nests with 4 beautifully marked eggs in each. *Uncommon but often seen around Rhyll Inlet.*

Quail Brown (Brown Quail): Many were seen all over the paddocks long ago, but now are very scarce. Their nests were frequently found in the long grass.

Ground birds

Ibis (Straw-necked Ibis): They only came to us during the summer when it was very dry up north. This I think was the Straw-necked variety. *Everywhere.*

Ground Lark (possibly Richard's Pipit): These birds nested everywhere in the paddocks, but are fast disappearing on account of foxes and men with guns. *Common.*

Bush Lark (Singing Bushlark): This bird was always very scarce in these parts. I have not seen any of them for years. *No longer in the district.*

Perchers

Kookaburra (Kookaburra): These quaint birds are disappearing very fast since the dead timber has been cleared away. There are still a good many in the timber on Phillip Island. Still on the island and in the Bass Valley.

Magpie (Australian Magpie): Are still plentiful and nest in the pine trees round old homesteads when other timber is scarce. *Plentiful.*

Grey Currawong?…….. Have not seen any at San Remo for some years, but they are still at Newhaven, Phillip Island. Though very destructive in the orchard, they do a great deal of good to the farmer by eating great quantities of grass grubs.

Mudlark (Magpie-lark): I remember when the first pair of magpie larks came to Bass, it must have been nearly 40 years ago. After that they appeared more frequently and used to build their mud nests along the creek in the Netherwood paddock. *Plentiful.*

Bell Bird (Bell Miner): Numerous in the tall timber at the Bass and it was lovely to hear their tinkle tinkle in the early morning. *Gone from the district.*

Whip Bird (Eastern Whipbird): These birds were heard much and seen very little. Their little stick nests were very hard to find. *Gone from the district.*

Leatherhead (possibly friarbird): Lots of them to be seen in the fruit season and they disappeared before the winter.

Red Wattlebird (Red Wattlebird): Nests were common in the Eucalypts and these birds were constantly shot and eaten, as their flesh is considered a delicacy. *Plentiful.*

Brush Wattle Bird (Little Wattlebird): This variety frequented the banksias along the sea coast, and were not so troublesome to orchardists. *Plentiful.*

White-fronted Honeyeater (probably Yellow-winged/New Holland honeyeater or Crescent honeyeater- former plentiful now, latter very rare in the district): This variety was found occasionally in the banksias at San Remo and in the same trees along the back beach.

Spine-billed Honeyeater (Eastern Spinebill): I have often seen these beautifully coloured little birds sucking the nectar from the fuchsia (sic)and gladiolus flowers in the Netherwood garden. *Relatively common particularly in winter.*

The white cheeked honeyeater was common there also (possibly White-plumed honeyeater). *Plentiful.*

Bronzewing Pigeon (could be either Common or Brush Bronzewings both on French Island but otherwise rare in the district) Plenty of these years ago in the scrub. They were very fond of feeding on the native cherry.

"Slaty Grey" (Wonga)(Wonga Pigeon): Not many in this district, but more common about the river Tarwin. *Gone from the district.*

Finches

Wax-Bill (Red-browed Finch): This little bird was to be seen in flocks feeding on the ground, but have not seen any for some time. *Relatively common on Phillip Island and in the Bass Valley.*

Sparrow (House Sparrow): These are to be found everywhere and prove themselves a great nuisance to farmers. *Plentiful.*

Pardalote (Spotted or Striated Pardalotes- both common in the district now): I found nests of these in the cliffs along the inner beach.

Brown Tits (Brown Thornbill): Fairly numerous. Often found their nests in the outer trees of a tea tree scrub. *Plentiful.*

Yellow-tail Tit (Yellow-tailed Thornbill): Very common and built very often in the pine trees round a homestead. *Common.*

Wrens

Blue headed wrens: (Superb)(Superb Fairy-wren) Plenty of nests to be found in the sword grass and they were very tame. *Plentiful.*

Scrub wren (brown) (White-browed Scrub-wren): We found their nests along the sea coast in the tea tree scrub and only a few are to be seen now. *Plentiful.*

Field Wren: Used to be common at one time but do not see them often now.

Emu Wren (Southern Emu-wren): Long ago they used to be on the flat part of Netherwood and also at Cape Paterson. I never see them now. *Still persist in small numbers at the mouth of the Bass River, used to be at Rhyll.*

Red (sic) Warbler (Reed Warbler): I never saw any of these birds at San Remo, but they were in the reeds on the Bass & Tarwin Rivers. *Plentiful along the Bass & Tarwin rivers*

Grass Warbler (possibly Golden-headed Fantail Warbler): Are very scarce in the district now but used to place their nests in crops and long grass. *Occur in a few places on Phillip Island and in the Bass Valley.*

Swift (Spine-tailed Swift): In Autumn they used to arrive before a storm and often flew quite low, but did not remain long. *Occur in much the same circumstances now.*

Marten (Tree Martin): They used to come for the nesting season, but did not stay with us very long. They placed their nests in holes in trees. *Relatively rare in district now.*

Wood Swallow (probably Dusky Wood swallow): Were very plentiful in the summer and as soon as they arrived began building their nests. Are not nearly as numerous as they were. *Uncommon now.*

Redbreast (Scarlet Robin): This pretty little robin stays with us all the winter and leaves for its Summer home early in the Spring. *Relatively uncommon.*

Flame Breast robin (Flame Robin): Like the scarlet breasted only stays with us in the winter. *Relatively common winter migrant*

Yellow Breast Robin (Yellow Robin): This variety were never very plentiful. They used to nest in the tea tree scrub below Netherwood, but have since dis-appeared owing to the scrub having been cleared. *Still occur on Phillip Island and in parts of Bass Valley.*

Caterpillar Catcher (White-winged Triller?): Only came to us of late years. As soon as they arrived (about November) they began to build their small neat nests. If their nests were destroyed they at once started to build another nest and quite close to where the first nest had been. They were only to be found in the timber and left as soon as their young were reared.

Azure Kingfisher (Azure Kingfisher) : This small kingfisher nested in little holes in the dead timber. Was very shy. Have not seen any for some time. *There are still a few on Phillip Island. Rare in district.*

Parson Bird (Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike): This is the name given by bushmen to the black-faced cuckoo shrike. They come to us in the early summer and begin building as soon as they arrive. They make a very shallow nest on the dead limbs of trees. *Plentiful.*

Pallid Cuckoo (Pallid Cuckoo): Is a very early spring visitor and is very fond of depositing its eggs in the nest of the wattle bird. *Still occurs in the district but not common*

Bronze Cuckoo (Shining Bronze-cuckoo): This is the Little Bronze cuckoo and usually arrives before the pallid. It usually chooses the nest of the yellow-tailed tit in which to place its small dark brown egg. *Still occurs in the district.*

Bronze Cuckoo (Horsefield's Bronze-cuckoo): This is the narrow billed bronze cuckoo and is not nearly as plentiful as the other one. It often places its egg in a wren's nest. *Common.*

Fantail Cuckoo (Fantail Cuckoo): This is a somewhat later arrival but it stays with us till autumn is quite over. It usually chooses the nest of the black and white fantail. *Common.*

Restless Flycatcher (Restless Flycatcher): This little bird could be found all through the district. They built both in the timber and in scrub. *Rare.*

Fantail Flycatcher(Willy Wagtail): Plentiful everywhere and were particularly common about old gardens and orchards. *Plentiful.*

White shafted Fantail (Grey Fantail): This tiny bird was numerous all through the tea tree scrub. They generally came in great numbers into the garden just before rain after the insects. *Plentiful.*

Rufus Flycatcher (Rufous Fantail): Only odd ones to be seen in the scrub. I never found a nest of this species. *Rare in the district.*

Satin Bower Bird (Satin Bowerbird): Used to be very plentiful everywhere but are fast disappearing. There are still a few to be seen in the vicinity of the Bass River. *No longer occurs in the district.*

Shore birds

Snipe (Latham's Snipe): They were much more plentiful some years than others and they never stayed long. Their favourite hunting ground was the flats at the mouth of the Bass River. *Uncommon in the district now.*

Oyster Catcher (Sooty Oystercatcher): They used to be numerous on the ocean beach, especially about the Tarwin river. I never saw a nest. *Relatively common on ocean shores.*

Oyster Catcher (not red leg)(Pied Oystercatcher): The pied oyster catcher was not as plentiful as the red legged one, but seen occasionally on the rocks at low tide. *Relatively common in Western Port.*

Hooded Dotterel (sic)(Hooded Plover): Mostly to be found on the ocean beach and I have found lots of nests at the mouth of the Powlett River. Sometimes even below high water mark so many must be destroyed in that way. *Increasing on Phillip Island.*

Little Sandpiper(Red-necked Stint probably): To be seen late in the autumn just before they migrate. *Relatively common.*

Gulls

Pacific Gull (Pacific Gull): These used to come into Western Port Bay just before stormy weather. They never nested on the rocks there. *Plentiful.*

Silver Gull(Silver Gull): These nested in great numbers on Cape Wollamai (sic), but not so much now owing to disturbance from tourists and others. *Plentiful.*

Tern(Crested Tern): These are known there as Sea Swallows and I have seen them flying about in the Eastern Passage between San Remo and Phillip Island. Like the Gulls they came in for shelter before stormy weather. *Plentiful.*

Mutton Bird(Short-tailed Shearwater): They only come to Phillip Island as they are never known to nest on the mainland. *Plentiful.*

Gannet (Australasian Gannet): The fishermen say they take an immense amount of fish. The crayfish boats bring gannets' eggs in from the islands when they return to San Remo and the fisher folk eat their eggs. *Plentiful.*

Cormorant, Black(probably Great Cormorant): These may be seen sitting on the rocks in Western Port Bay watching for fish of which they devour a great number. *Plentiful..*

White-breasted (French Island) ??(probably Little Pied Cormorant) This variety forms large rookeries in the Mangroves on French Island. *Plentiful*

Pelican (Australasian Pelican): These were very numerous at one time in the Bay, but have dis-appeared of late years. The last pair I saw was in 1918 at the back of Churchill Island. *Still present around San Remo and Churchill Island.*

Ring Eye (Grey-backed Silvereye): In the winter these were very useful eating up all kinds of small insects and blight, but unfortunately took more than their share of fruit during the season, such as grapes, figs and cherries. They were very numerous before the tea tree scrub was cleared away. *Plentiful.*

Tree Creeper (White-throated Tree-creeper): Plenty of these could be seen long ago especially in the black wood trees, but they seem to have quite dis-appeared. *Gone from the district.*

Emu (reported)(Emu): My uncle Hugh Anderson has shot emus on the Bass flats before the gold rush, but they soon dis-appeared. I have never seen one in the district. *Gone from the district.*

Thrush(Grey Shrike-thrush): The Harmonious or Grey Shrike Thrush were very tame in the garden. I used to put pieces of fat up in the branches of a pear tree and they would come at once and eat it up greedily. They are still quite plentiful. *Plentiful.*

Thrush (Bassian Thrush): this variety was always very shy. They built beautiful nests in the thickest scrub, but were never very numerous.

Butcher Bird (Grey Butcherbird): There seemed to be two varieties of this bird as they were so differently marked. They were very daring and would kill canaries which were hanging in a cage on the Verandah. They have a beautiful note. *Plentiful.*

Ibis (White Ibis- likely as Straw-necked referred to by name earlier): They only come to this district when there was a drought up north. They were mostly to be found on the Bass river flats and at the mouth of the Powlett river. These were the black and white species. *Plentiful.*

Spoonbill (Yellow-billed Spoonbill-probably, surprising no mention of spoonbills being around all year. i.e. Royals): Very scarce. One summer when it was very dry in Gippsland a few came to the district. *Relatively uncommon but a few on Phillip Island in most years.*

White fronted chat (White-fronted Chat): These pretty little birds arrive in the early spring. They nest in long grass or rushes. Are to be seen in flocks in the early autumn before they go away for the winter. *Plentiful.*

Reptiles

Tiger Snake (Tiger Snake): There were never very many of these. *Common in Bass Valley.*

Black Snake (Red-bellied Black Snake): Not at all plentiful. *Rare in bass Valley.*

Brown Snake (Brown snake): rare.

Copperhead (Lowland Copperhead): Most numerous here and were often killed about the garden and house. *Plentiful.*

Whip Snake (White-lipped Whip Snake): Often seen when harvesting. They were brown with lighter colour underneath and very active. *Rare in Bass Valley.*

Whip Snake (?): Of an orange yellow colour and rather rare.

Goanna (Lace Monitor): Used to be very numerous and would take chickens and eggs, but have disappeared with the timber. *Occasionally one seen at Grantville.*

Blue Tongue Lizard (Blue-tongue Lizard): This sleeping lizard are still plentiful and come about the houses and eat fallen fruit also strawberries. They would drink milk from the cat's saucer. *Plentiful.*

Frilled Lizard: I never saw one of this species.

Little Lizard (Bloodsucker)(?): These were to be found in the old log fences. They were very dark with a blue tongue.

Little Lizard (Common): Are still very common about the homesteads.

Starling (European Starling): Are very destructive in the orchard and are driving all our native birds which build in holes away from the district. *Plentiful.*

Minah (Indian)(Indian Myna): These were never seen at San Remo but were on Phillip Island at Mr McHaffies' old homestead. *Plentiful.*

Bullfrog green(possibly Growling Grass Frog): to be found in great numbers in the dams or lagoons. *Rare.*

Little tree frog(probably Ranidella signifera): Rather scarce. *Plentiful.*

Tree Frogs (Green tree-frog): Plenty of these especially in the grape vines. *Plentiful.*

"Yabby" (ruby crayfish): To be found in the mud at the mouth of the Bass river and fishermen used them for bait.

Sea Crayfish: Found in numbers anywhere along the coast as far as Cape Patterson.

Dragon Fly, Butterflies; moths; Beetles ,etc. Not identified by even common names.

Headings with little or no content:
Scorpions
Centipedes

Tarantulas
Red money spider

History of some environmental issues on Phillip Island

July 2016 general meeting Speaker: Christine Grayden gave a presentation on the history of some environmental planning issues on Phillip Island.

Christine was speaking as a long-term member of the Phillip Island Conservation Society Inc which was established in 1968 and has been taking action in support of the Phillip Island environment ever since.

PICS started in 1968 due to a proposal to have a **marina in the Rhyll Inlet**, which some people (including the councillor who owned the land and wanted the marina) regarded as muddy and mosquito-ridden. Nowadays we understand how valuable the area is environmentally, for both fauna and flora, with over 30 different types of vegetation and many species of birds present. PICS was able to galvanise the public into protesting, including newspaper articles by well-known naturalist Graham Pizzey. The council eventually knocked back the marina under huge public pressure.

The developer then proposed a **stock car racing circuit** on the land. When council decided that would be too noisy for nearby residents, the developer put the land up for sale. PICS members then quickly put down a deposit, securing the land, with the legals being done pro bono by another member. The Australian Conservation Foundation was asked to be a conduit for tax deductible donations toward the land purchase. About half the money was raised, and after intense lobbying to the government by various PICS members, the government agreed to take over the land purchase, and once finalised the land became a reserve, now known as 'Conservation Hill'.

The next issue discussed was **Summerland Peninsula**. Christine was on the Penguin Reserve Committee of Management which made the decision to buy back the Summerland Estate. This was because the urban pressures – traffic, dogs, cats, buildings – were resulting in a decrease of the penguin population. The conservation minister at the time, Joan Kirner, was very supportive as she was a firm believer in habitat protection being all important for the protection of species. She not only put money towards the start of the buy-back, but also towards penguin research, so more than the C/ee could have hoped for. The Minister and the Premier, John Cain, arrived at Summerland for the big announcement, and were met by placard-waving locals calling them "Nazis" and telling them to "Go Home", "Hands Off", etc. It was quite a shock to them, and John Cain declared he would never come to Phillip Island again. But eventually the residents and holiday-home owners came around, as successive governments of both persuasions continued to fund the buy-back, and home owners were getting market value for

their properties, allowing them to move to other parts of the island. The buy-back was completed in 2010.

Before the buy-back came the dusk til dawn road closure, so that rangers could prevent drivers from entering the reserve at night and running over scores of penguins each night. The penguins make use of the roads to preen, gather in groups and socialise before going to their burrows, so they were sitting targets for drivers, even if it was not the intention of the drivers to run over them. The move was not popular at first, but people eventually accepted it. Now, due to the buy-back and the road closure from dusk til dawn, thousands more penguins make the peninsula their home, leading to more penguins coming up the beach, more penguins breeding, and better visitor satisfaction.

The **Saltwater Creek canal-based** Hotel and Residential development was another in which PICS ran a campaign, this time in conjunction with the Ventnor Progress Association who auspices the Saltwater Creek Action Group, or SWAG.

Apart from completely urbanising what was farmland with waterbird habitat, this development would have involved high concrete walls going across the beach and out into the sea some 50 metres to keep the mouth of the creek open and the canal navigable for the residents' boats. This would mean the beach would be lost to users – many of whom were families – and that the natural flow of sand along the beach would be completely disrupted, causing erosion from Red Rocks to Cowes. This was on the advice of coastal geomorphologist, Eric Bird.

SWAG quickly gained membership and campaigned hard, using the media and goods such as car stickers and tea shirts, and guiding people to write letters to council and ministers of conservation and planning. Council was deluged, and eventually caved in, rejecting the proposal in a meeting reported in the local press as seeing a "SWAG of protest".

PICS members were eventually able to sit down with the developer and work out a compromise, where three rural residential lots took up the bulk of the land, with strips of urban development on two sides, and a creek reserve created. The whole plan is governed by an S173 agreement, signed by the council, the developer and PICS. It was a good outcome after all.

The Isle of Wight site has seen a number of inappropriate proposals, including a high rise hotel, all of which have been challenged by PICS and many residents. Since the fire destroyed the hotel, the site has been for sale, and we presume that the last permit has lapsed, so the whole process will have to be gone through again if and when the site is sold. There are a number of historic trees on the property, linked to Baron Ferdinand von Mueller.

Watch this space!

Another inappropriate proposal which was challenged by PICS at VCAT was the 506 two and three storey **units and golf course development** proposed for the paddock alongside the Grand Prix circuit. This would have created a township by default but with few amenities. In the end VCAT rejected the application due to the 'town' to be created being outside township boundaries, abutting the coast in a National Trust classified landscape, and being larger than the Smiths Beach township but with fewer amenities. This was something of a 'Samson and Goliath' win for PICS.

Rhyll Caravan Park used to be such a happy place where many friends congregated year after year. A developer proposed a multi-storey over-development of the site. A local group called 'Rhyll Raid' was formed of concerned residents and holiday-home owners, and together with PICS and others, fought the developer, not once but twice! Very little has happened on the site since the VCAT decision went against the development.

The Newhaven Boys' Home proposal was another example of over-development of a site. The developer wanted to partially demolish the Boys' Home registered buildings and create studio flats inside, construct 12 new two storey units and subdivide the rest of the land. This was the catalyst for the formation of the Newhaven Residents' Association, who went to VCAT along with PICS. PICS's concern was with the lack of consideration for the disposal of storm water, as the proposal was to simply run it all out into Western Port, in an area adjacent to a Marine National Park. VCAT rejected the developer's plans, and the land has since been sold to a consortium of internationals, and the registered building is basically being trashed. What is known as 'demolition by neglect' seems to be taking place there. BCSC is trying to address this.

Another campaign that PICS fought alongside the community was the **Vehicular Ferry** proposal to convert our relatively small jetty and picturesque jetty triangle into the terminal for a large vehicular ferry. While not opposed to the idea of a vehicular ferry, the community just did not want their precious jetty and jetty triangle ruined by the amount of infrastructure required. An action group was formed to guide the protest and in the end BCSC voted to NOT have the vehicular ferry at that controversial location.

The last development proposal Christine spoke about was that of the **Forrest Caves caravan park,** on low-lying land adjacent to the Forrest Caves dunes and on the main Phillip Island Tourist Road. The dunes are home to thousands of short-tailed shearwaters every season, and the beach is home to the endangered Hooded Plover, and a very dangerous beach as far as swimming is concerned. The land was so low-lying it would not have been easy to drain, or would have to have been built up. This recent proposal was for 286 sites, mainly the RAV short-stay market. There was much community unrest about this proposal, and in the end it was withdrawn by the proponent.

Christine said the time has gone when someone can say "It's my land, I'll do what I like with it," because we now know that development often has negative social, economic and environmental consequences. The community needs to be ever-vigilant to guard against inappropriate development proposals on Phillip Island.

Phillip Island's fur seals talk

Summary of talk given by Dr Roger Kirkwood at the general meeting, April 2010

Roger Kirkwood is the Mammal Biologist at the Phillip Island Nature Park (at the time of this talk, 2010) with a background in fisheries research and Antarctic research on penguins. He has

written two children's books: *Antarctica* and *The Emperor's Kingdom: Living on the Ice.* He studies the seals at Victorian islands, including Seal Rocks off Point Grant.

The fur seals of Seal Rocks are very like sea lions in that they are large, have the odour of sea lions, are thigmotactic (like to touch) and are benthic (bottom) feeders, but are typical of fur seals in that they have two layers of fur.

Seals appeared in Australian waters 3-6 million years ago, with the Seal Rocks species *artocephelus pusillus doriferus* arriving 18-12 thousand years ago. Fourteen thousand years ago Bass Strait did not exist and what is now Seal Rocks was a distance inland. However, seals were in the area and it is believed Aborigines hunted them for their blubber and skins, which are extremely warm.

While James Grant is credited with discovering Bass Strait in 1800 there was shipping in the area prior to him, as proved by the grounding of the *Sydney Cove* at Preservation Island in the Furneaux group in 1797. Seal Rocks was seen covered by seals by Grant in the *Lady Nelson* in March 1801.

In Sep 1801 Robert Campbell and his crew in the *Harrington* took 3000 skins and 2500 gallons of oil. By 1826 there were at least two sealers on Phillip Island taking 1000 skins annually from Seal Rocks. Seven sealers were operating in the 1840s, and in 1860 a boatload of skins is recorded to have been taken, with males being hunted for their reproductive organs.

The seal trade was enormously important to Australia's economy in the first half of the 19th century, with a 'seal rush' stimulating a ship building industry and seal fur felt hat industry. Australia 'rode on the seals' back' before whaling. Between 1800-1810, 130,000 skins were taken, but by 1830 it was down to 20,000 with virtually none left by 1860.

Sealing ceased on Seal Rocks in 1923, but was followed by a couple of culls by fishermen in 1934 and 1948 when up to 600 were shot. Seal Rocks became a State Faunal Reserve in 1975 and came under the Commonwealth Wildlife Act in 1975.

Taxonomy of the fur seals was very confused, beginning in 1802 with Baudin and not being clarified until 1971 by Repening and others.

Roger showed slides of old engravings and photos of sealing activity in Western Port and of seals and naturalists at Seal Rocks in the early twentieth century.

Research began there with Le Soeuf in 1925. In 1945 Fred Lewis from the Fisheries and Wildlife Division (F&WL) did counts and examined stomach contents. The really big research program was by Bob Warneke and his crew from F&WL between 1966-1991. They did counts, tagged pups' flippers, examined stomach contents, determined causes of death and recorded behaviour.

Roger showed slides of the research buildings, the flying fox between the main island and Black Rock, and the stone hut on east beach at the base of the main plateau, built in 1979. From 1997-the present the Phillip Island Nature Park has also carried on an extensive research program, doing counts, analysing scats for diet, tracking seals for their foraging range and

diving behaviour, looking at human interactions with the seals, and also doing hut maintenance.

There are 20 seal colonies in southern Australian waters: in Victoria, Tasmania, NSW and SA, with a total pup population of 21,882 in 2007. Victoria had 78% of the pups.

Part of Roger's job is to disentangle seals that have become trapped in human cast-offs, such as trawl and other netting, box strap, twine, plastic bags, rope, etc. He showed slides of the technique he uses to crawl on his stomach with a large net until close enough to the entangled seal to trap it in the net.

Roger also explained the seal tracking program which so far has included 25 juveniles, 13 adult females and 11 adult males. They stay on the Continental Shelf and mainly in Bass Strait and west and east coasts of Victoria. Some venture into NSW.

Diet has been recorded near monthly for 10 years from scat contents (fish bones, etc). Mostly the seals feed on redbait and jack mackerel, but also gurnard, red cod, barracouta, leather jacket and squid, depending on factors such as upwellings and currents.

Part Eight

Community services



Country Fire Authority talk - history and services

Guest Speaker: Rodney Beale, Phillip Island Fire Brigade: June 2013

Many Fires – from earliest settlement – Suppression "Do it Yourself" – *Isle of Wight - Burnt to the Ground* 1925

Phillip Island Bush Fire Brigade – Formed 1937 (Country Fire Brigades Board) – Phillip Island Bush Fire Brigade

1939 – Black Friday Fires

1944 – Investigation into above results in the Formation of the Country Fire Authority of Victoria to replace CFBB

1945 – CFA Phillip Island Rural Fire Brigade

1983 – Ash Wednesday Fires

Old definition of Urban and Rural

Fire Brigades:

Reticulated water in town = Urban

The Rest = Rural)

1999 – Phillip Island Urban Fire

Brigade formed by reclassification from Phillip Island Rural Fire Brigade

2003 through 2007 – Major Campaign Fires

2009 – Black Saturday Fires

2010 – *Isle of Wight - Burnt to the Ground* (My first Major Fire on the Island after arriving in April 2010)

2 December 2012 – Phillip Island Fire Brigade 75th Anniversary

2013 – Major Fires during Summer Period - another long campaign

Phillip Island Fire Brigade has progressed from a 'Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade' to a Professional Brigade with a significant Urban and Rural risk profile in line with the changing times and demographics for this area. **Note however that service is still provided by Volunteers with support by CFA paid staff.**

Training and equipment has evolved - From: Basic pumps and lines (hoses), branches (nozzles) and bushfire and basic structural fire-fighting using Tankers, knapsack sprayers and bushes, shovels, beaters and rakes used by volunteers with little or no formal training

Now, the current situation with extensive modern equipment and formal training starting with a recruitment process which has a checking for suitability as a Volunteer Fire fighter and then minimum skills program (and a 6 month probation). After successful completion of this the Fire fighter continues with progressive up-skilling via Australasian Standards training and practices to advanced Bushfire Fire-fighting skills, Structural Fire Fighting skills, Driver Training, Urban Fire-fighting, Use of Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus (CABA), Hazardous Materials incidents, Thermal Imaging, Leadership skills, Incident Management training – Crew Leader, Strike Team Leader, Sector Commander and other roles, First Aid including Defibrillator and Oxygen training.

The brigade currently has:

1. Type 3 Light Pumper ISUZU diesel, crew 6 – 1200 Litres of Water, 3000 Litres/minute Pump, extensive structural fire-fighting (4 sets CABA), Class A and B Foam) search and rescue and other incident equipment.

2. Type 3.4D Tanker HINO - (3000 Litres of Water, 4WD Diesel) - Diesel Pump 700-900 Litres/Minute – (2 Sets CABA), chain saw, Class A Foam, and bushfire fire-fighting equipment. Crew 6

3. Slip On Unit – Toyota 4WD Diesel – 400 Litres of water, petrol pump, crew of 2, with bushfire fire-fighting equipment.

4. Nissan Patrol 4WD Diesel FCV (Forward Command Vehicle) crew of 5 fitted with extensive communications equipment, with some fire-fighting equipment.

NOTE: All vehicles have portable lighting, first aid, analogue/digital radios, (mobile and portable), defibrillators, and the pumper and FCV also carry Medical Oxygen. It must also be pointed out that the brigade gratefully acknowledges the support of the local community, the Phillip Island service clubs and community organisations

Current issues:

The population explosion on the island. Ignorance of Council by-laws , the CFA fire regulations, and the Traffic Act (by new and existing residents and visitors).

Traffic on the island. Roads blocked by tourist and event traffic, as well as changes to roads. Isolation due to geography, delayed support.

Obtaining and retaining volunteers (a Victoria wide issue). The change in work and personal requirements.

The modern complexity of fires and incidents.

OHS Issues with current fire station, awaiting a new fire station to be built in 5 to 10 years, plus temporary fixes.

Aging fire fighters (the Baby Boomers) and the Gen X,Y,Z attitudes to volunteerism.

Workload on Volunteers – including servicing Brigade, Group, District, Region, State-wide issues and requirements.

What can YOU do?

Become a member of the Fire Brigade, we have Operational and Support members. Your skills and support are invaluable.

Be aware of Local and CFA law relating to fires and other potential incidents. NO BURNING OFF in built-up areas, other areas – permit from Council. (see www.basscoast.vic.gov.au and www.cfa.vic.gov.au)

Have a FIRE PLAN and practice it. (see www.cfa.vic.gov.au for details). Do not re-enter a burning building, you place yourself and others in danger and can interfere with the fire-fight. Make sure that you all gather at a safe place (e.g. front gate) so that the fire service can account for you.

Clearly mark your address – so that emergency services can easily find your location.

Clean up – and make sure that electricity meter box/switchboards are easily found, the same for gas and water (we will need to turn these off to prevent further damage).

Report all suspicious behaviour to Police 1800 333 000, you may be responsible for the apprehension of an arsonist.

Report All Fires/Incidents to CFA via 000- Note that you must stay on line and be prepared to give full address of incident/fire (nearest cross street), what is happening, are persons injured/ trapped/evacuated (how many), is the ambulance and police, required. Other agencies may be needed.

If you need to discuss matters with the brigade then come and see us at 117 Settlement Road Cowes – when we are in attendance, i.e. Tuesday evenings after 7:30 pm, Sunday Mornings after 9:30 am, or when the Station is open during the day.

Phillip Island State Emergency Service



Speaker: February 2015. Robyn Mylius, on the history of the State Emergency Services, Phillip Island Unit, and the various tasks and work they do in the community.

Robyn and her husband and four children moved to Phillip Island from Melbourne nine years ago. Robyn has just begun her 8th year as a Scout Leader, has been a volunteer with the CFA for 5 years, and a volunteer with the SES for three years. She volunteers because she loves learning new things, helping in the community and the network of mates she has.

One of the most important things for the public to remember is to call **132 500 for storm damage** or triple 000 for other emergencies.

An emergency is defined as an incident or situation that your personal resources alone cannot cope with – for example, storm damaged, burst hot water system, road crash, becoming trapped in a lift or structure, fire, injury.

In 1950 the Victoria Civil Defence organisation was created to provide a response to major emergencies in Victoria. It is still the agency responsible for flood, storm, tsunami and earthquake responses today.

By 1961 the Victorian Premier's Dept had a Civil Defence Office, and each municipality around the state should form a civil defence unit. In 1962 the Premier ensure that a State disaster plan was created to manage peacetime disasters after the disastrous fires in the Dandenongs.

Around 100 voluntary Civil Defence Units had been established across Victoria by 1972. In that year Parliament passed the State Emergency Services and Civil Defence Act to formally legislate its role.

1973 Civil Defence Organisation got its first headquarters at 31 Queens Rd Melbourne, and it was renamed the Victoria State Emergency Service, in line with other States.

1979 saw the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services created, the umbrella organisation for VicPol, MFB, CFA and VICSES. In 2005 VICSES was established as an independent Statuary Authority, governed by a Board and accountable to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

In 1979 Peter Alexander (jock) Welsh was the founding member of the Phillip Island SES unit and first Controller from 1979-1986. The Unit is located in Settlement Rd, next to the old Ambulance station and CFA station.

Unit Controllers have been: Ken Martin 1986-87, Dawn Hayes 1987-1991, Richard Paddle 1991-1998, Kevin 'Kojak' Haines 1998-2003, Ken Anderson AM 2003-05, Grant Harris 2005-08, Marcel Timmermans 2008-10, Simon Hosking 2010-11, Mark Ellis 2011-13, Robyn Mylius 2013-14 and Dianne Duncombe 2014 to the present.

Who are we? We are diverse, but have one thing in common: we want to help our community be safe. We are VOLUNTEERS – we do not get paid. We give our time and energy to train to learn and practice our skills, and attend what can be traumatic incidents for us as well as those involved in the emergency. We may be lucky enough to have employers that will pay us while we go out to incidents. We are tradespeople, hospitality workers, small business owners, supermarket employees, students, retirees.

What do we do? We provide an emergency service for the Phillip Island community, in conjunction with other agencies – ALL HAZARDS, ALL AGENCIES. This includes the Country Fire Authority, Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria, Bass Coast Shire Council, Red Cross, Dept of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (formerly DEPI), and any other relevant agencies, depending on the scale and nature of the emergency.

We drive the SAFETY FIRST message to all members.

Black Saturday and the following Royal Commission changed the emergency services landscape for the better. We now have the Emergency Management Victoria EMV in charge of all emergencies, rather than confusion and doubling up of various agency roles.

Our uniforms are made from Proban treated material, our helmets contain Kevlar and our boots are the same as 'Fireys' use for fighting wildfires, so we can assist at a wide range of incidents.

How do we get trained? Unit trains members weekly and ensures skills are maintained – General Rescue, Rooftop Safety, Storm & Flood, Working at Heights, then they are assessed by other Unit's assessors. We train with other Units (including CFA brigades) and that way we get to know them so we work better together at incidents. There is a number of other training courses which can be undertaken:

General Rescue to be an operational member. Storm & Water damage is next with a Working at Heights component optional. First Aid is mandatory and is done every year. Chainsaw is essential to storm damage work. Road Crash Rescue – perform extrications safely; Work Health

and Safety – essential for any further courses. Certificate IV in Training & Assessing – to supervise training of members. Land Search – how to search for missing people. Map & Navigation assists with searching or operating in bush. Manage Traffic at Operations keep our crews safe clearing trees near/on roads. Urban Search & Rescue Cat 1 to search for people near surface of structure collapse. Cat 2 MFB these teams go interstate/overseas to earthquakes etc.

As Controller I have also done courses with VicPol for Evacuation and other topics, and in Emergency Management run by SES but with many agencies represented.

How to become a member: You don't need any special skills, but have a willingness to help others, to train, and to know your limitations – i.e. if there's something you don't like or don't feel comfortable doing then you just say so.

Once you've signed up you must pass a Police check; you can't do any training or get your protective gear until then.

We have access to excellent Peer Support and counselling to help us cope with some of the traumatic incidents we are involved with.

What we do: Mostly Storm Damage, assisted by Shire and Ausnet crews. Fortunately, Road Crash Rescue is only a small part of our work. We provide lighting for events in the Shire like the Jazz Festivals at Ramada, and the Inter-church Council's Carols by the Bay in Cowes.

We support CFA, Police and Ambulance officers with fires, crime scenes and other incidents like searching for missing people and rescuing people. We sent a 'Chaps and Chainsaws' team to help Kinglake landowners cut up fire-damaged trees from their properties after the 2009 Black Saturday fires. For the Kerang Floods in 2011 we worked with the Army and the CFA to sandbag the power station. For the Orbost Complex fires 2014 we sent a Staging Area Manager for the night shift and our Controller went to two Fire Base Camps to provide logistical support.

We are also part of the Shire's Municipal Emergency Management Plan Committee.

Warley Hospital: In sickness and in health

Mary Whelan looks back on a century of health care on the island. Published on Bass Coast Post website. Used with Mary's permission. This essay is Part 1. The second part deals with the modern situation.

By Mary Whelan, April 19, 2018

IN 1798, when George Bass first saw Phillip Island, it was already inhabited by a few sealers. Much later came graziers, farmers, chicory growers and shopkeepers. Guest houses and schools were built, but there was no resident doctor and no hospital.



The audience listens to speakers at the opening of the new Warley Hospital in Cowes, 1 December 1962. Photo: Phillip Island & District Historical Society

Most illnesses were treated at home with home remedies passed down from mothers to daughters. In the case of serious illness or accident, patients were transported on basic stretchers to Cowes Pier to go by ship across to Hastings Hospital or to Melbourne, which was a very rough five-hour journey away. In 1910 residents tried to organise a link with the Bush Nursing Association and former nurses living on Phillip Island but the attempt failed.

In 1923 Mr and Mrs Thompson agreed to buy a building in Cowes, known as 'Buena Vista', for a hospital if the residents would undertake to furnish and equip it as a hospital. The house was then renamed Warley after Mr Thompson's family home in England.

The Victorian Bush Nursing Association (VBNA), which was founded at about this time, was overseeing a number of small bush nursing cottages which, as time went by, were converted to small hospitals. According to the association's printed handbook of 1926: "Bush nursing hospitals are private hospitals, owned and controlled by the Centres, available to all who need them, at fixed fees. They enable many cases of illness to be dealt with."

The inaugural Warley hospital committee sought donations to equip the new hospital and applied to the VBNA for affiliation and help with maintenance funds. June Cutter's *Sixty Years of Caring – The story of Warley Cowes Bush Nursing Hospital* records that affiliation was granted with the agreement that "if at any time the project was abandoned by the residents, the hospital should become the property of the Central Council of the Association".

Warley officially opened on 8 December 1923 with beds for six patients and an operating theatre with modern appliances, including a 600-candle power lamp.



The original Warley Hospital. Phillip Island & District Historical Society

Island families donated goods from very early on. The first Warley patient, Mr Harmon West, was admitted with a septic arm. During his stay he learned the hospital had to buy milk so he offered the use of one of his cows. This was gratefully received, as were preserves for the kitchen pantry and wood for the fires. The Alfred hospital and Red Cross Hospital donated beds and equipment. Children from the local school gathered eggs for the hospital. Local guesthouse owners and other businesses sponsored fund-raising events such as the hospital ball, garden parties, fetes, car raffles and tennis tournaments, all of which were well supported by residents.

Annual subscriptions from residents helped Warley to remain financially viable for many decades. About 60 per cent of residents held private health insurance (at a time when the state average was 50 per cent), which mostly covered the hospital fees.

The Warley model of care became woven into the fabric of the lives of locals. Annual memberships entitled them to a lower fee for hospital stays; fund raising involved a willing whole community; costs were contained and volunteers did anything that was needed, including being volunteer ambulance drivers.

Over time the hospital committee guided the extension of Warley so more patients could be cared for, then the construction of the new Warley building (opened in 1962), and the addition of a nursing home in 1980. The original cottage was relocated by Mr O'Donoghue to nearby Genista St.

Warley was a 'not for profit' private hospital serving its community. Pensioners were given a discounted rate for hospitalisation, and at times bed occupancy by pensioners was 38 per cent.

Warley was able to care for people at every stage of their life: from birth through illness and surgery, during convalescence and finally at the end of their life. An emergency department was staffed by nurses 24 hours a day with local GPs on call if needed; there was an outpatients service for patients who didn't require hospitalisation and a visiting outpatients service for patients discharged from hospital.

All these were made possible by constant fund-raising, careful management over five decades and only small increases in population.

In 1921 the population of Phillip Island was 858 people. By 1976 the population was 2340, an increase of 1482 in 55 years. Over the next decade the population almost doubled to 4350 people.

Numbers game

Suddenly, the community service model of care was fraught with problems. There was more use of the 24-hour service as well as the extra patients who presented in summer holidays. There was no funding for this or for the outpatients or visiting outpatients work carried out by the nursing staff.

In the early 1990s, a fee was introduced for patients attending the emergency department: $10 for members and $20 for non-members. Accounts were sent to the patient after their visit. The problem was that a number of patients didn't ever pay their bills, particularly visitors using the after-hours service in the peak tourist period.

The doctors did not charge the same level of fees they would have at a standard private hospital as Warley provided a community service for patients and some didn't have a lot of money to pay higher fees.

When the GPs were being called in a lot or had to be on call, they requested they be paid an 'on call' fee as paid by public health services. The Warley Board could not pay this. The doctors and the Warley Board requested assistance from the government but this 'on call' fee was never paid. With increasing use of the 24-hour service at Warley, busy local doctors were no longer able to be on call at night and over the weekend so new doctors were needed to fill this gap.

Medicare was introduced in 1984, adding the cost of the levy to those who also paid for private health insurance. As premiums rose, many chose to drop their private insurance and use public hospital services.

Nationwide the cost of medical professional indemnity insurance rose sharply, particularly for GPs delivering babies and visiting obstetricians. Fewer doctors were willing to provide this service, particularly in small rural hospitals. Dr Ian Wilson, a GP obstetrician at Warley, observed: “The government realised there would be a major problem and provided a subsidy for rural doctors which allowed them to continue this work.”

The expectations of maternity clients also changed. You needed private health insurance to have your baby at Warley but there were no hospital fees at Wonthaggi. All these factors contributed to a decline in births at Warley. Dr Wilson delivered the last baby at the hospital. By 2001, Warley no longer provided obstetric services. This loss was a blow to the community as families now had to leave Island to have their babies. It also meant the loss of a major source of funding and use of inpatient beds.

From the mid-1980s hospitals and aged care facilities had to be accredited. Warley's doctors and nurses always provided care of a very high standard; however, seeking accreditation was a significant cost that involved upgrading equipment and administrative processes to meet the standards required.

In the 1990s a change in patient categories reduced the number of days a nursing home type patient could stay in an acute bed.

Each change made Warley Hospital's financial position more precarious. A local group collected 1000 signatures calling for the Commonwealth to fund public hospital beds in the hospital, but to no avail. In 1990 a report recommended that five public beds be made available to Warley. This was rejected by both federal and state governments, although some funds were allocated for outpatient services. Two reports recommended that Warley increase the number of aged care beds, as there was Commonwealth funding for these beds, but Warley did not have the funds to expand further.

"In hindsight," says Greg Dean, a Warley Hospital board member, "every effort should have been made to become part of Wonthaggi, but Warley was part of us and us being Phillip island – very insular and parochial."

On 1 February 2005 *The Age* reported that Warley aged care had not met 22 of the 44 aged care standards. This was remedied in the next few months but prompted a review again in February 2007 where all standards were met. However, an unannounced visit in September found 21 instances of non-compliance. These were mainly due to policy, procedures and processes with no sanctions made against the facility, and all were rectified as required.

The end of Warley

Later that year, after two unsuccessful attempts to find a partnership for Warley's aged care facility, the board arranged to relocate the residents to 'Grossard Court' aged care accommodation, along with any staff who wished to move.

On 31 January 2008, 85 years after it first opened, the acute hospital closed. At the hospital's 85th annual general meeting on 30 September that year the president explained the series of events that had led the board to that decision.

With a debt of $1.9 million, the board had approximately $400,000 in staff entitlements to pay. The 13 bed licences were sold, and the bank sworn valuation of the existing properties was $3.3 million. "The board hopes to sell off some of the assets to service the debt, leaving some land and buildings with which to investigate the provision of health services to the community"

Warley was held in such high regard by the Phillip Island community that the loss is felt to this day. These are a few of the comments I heard from former patients and staff in researching this article:

- "It was incredibly sad, it was a facility we took for granted, and lovely to have a baby there, so convenient. Warley Avenue was such a vibrant street with a life of its own. When it closed it was like a ghost town." *Irene (patient)*
- "It was a wonderful midwifery team. There was great respect between the doctors and the nurses. You never knew what might happen on night shift. One evening I had a baby on the breast, a man with chest pain on the monitor and the doorbell rang, and when I opened it there was a man with a spear gun in his guts." *Jill (nurse)*
- "I worked at Warley for three months and used to think, when I was standing in the ward looking out at the wonderful view over the water, what a lovely place to be when you are unwell." *Marie (nurse)*
- "The nursing staff were a lovely bunch of ladies who were very supportive, well trained, very competent, always gave good quality care." *Bruce (surgeon)*
- "My dad had a heart attack and we took him to Warley. He saw Dr Wilson who wanted to send him to Melbourne. Dad said no, he wasn't going. The doctor said 'I've got a new drug but it might kill you'. 'I'll have that then,' says Dad. It didn't kill him." *Howard*
- "I remember having my tonsils out in the old hospital and Nell Forrest living there. My grandmother Evelyn Anne Jansson was the oldest resident on the Island in 1962 and so had the honour of cutting the cake at the garden party opening of the new hospital. My friend Bill Mitchell was the last patient in Warley." *John Jansson*
- "Great working there, the team work of the doctors and nurses made it really good." *Dr Ian Wilson*
- "Disappointment - we couldn't save the joint." *Greg Dean, Warley Hospital Board member*

Part Nine

Work



Some aspects of Phillip Island rural industries over the years

Farming on Phillip Island has seen many changes in land use since the first European arrival in 1842. Farmers continue to adapt as a result of local and global market demand. The first farmers found Aboriginal implements on their holdings.

Working horses

In the days before tractors, every farm had working horses, which require a lot of feed, including hay and chaff all year round. The Cleeland family had a large holding at Newhaven and were one of the first farming families, with mainly sheep grazing and horse breeding. Many descendants of the early families still farm on the island today.



Haymaking time, 'Heath Hill' Rhyll
Phillip Island & District Society

Landcare in action

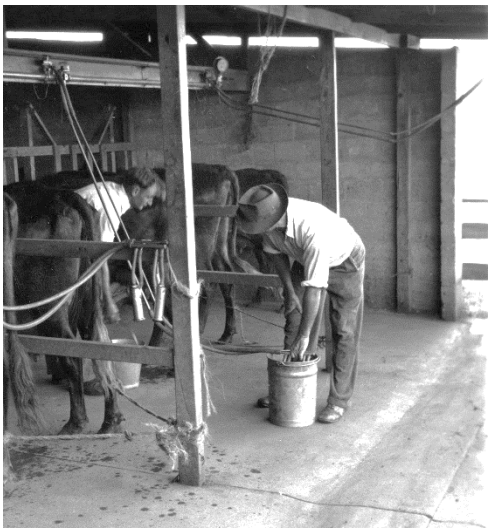
Phillip Island Landcare was one of the first groups to form in 1987. Since that time dedicated volunteers have removed weeds and planted thousands of indigenous plants from the local Barb Martin Bushbank. The landscape has been enhanced and provides shelter for wildlife.

The Chicory industry

Phillip Island farmers produced crops of chicory from 1869 until the early 1980s. Remains of some of the kilns can be seen today. Competition from cheaper overseas markets meant the end of the local chicory industry.

Dairy industry

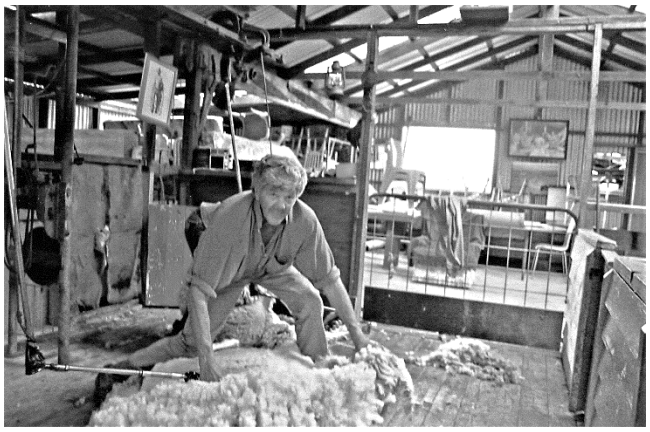
In the middle of the twentieth century there were dozens of dairy farms on the island. Milk was separated, the butter-fat sent to the mainland and the skimmed milk fed to pigs. Gradually over the years, the dairy farmers turned to other production and only one dairy farm exists on the island today.



Early machine milking, Phillip Island farm
Phillip Island & District Historical Society

Sheep shearing

In the 1960s and 1970s sheep grazing was very evident. The annual shearing season provided work for local shearers. A successful sheep stud of that time still continues today. The photo shows Laurie Dixon shearing at his farm in Ventnor.



Laurie Dixon shearing at 'Otira', Ventnor
Dixon family collection

Beef grazing

Dairying and sheep properties gradually turned to beef production as a result of less labour requirements and a more predictable market. Most of the cattle are the Angus breed for fattening and breeding.

Free-range eggs, honey, olive groves, wineries, farm stays, reception venues

Some farming-related enterprises have been developed as add-ons to the main farming activity, or as important stand-alone rural industries. Free-range hens are possible because of the removal of foxes on the island. Farmers have traditionally kept chickens for their eggs and bees for honey and crop pollination.

The Chicory Industry on Phillip Island

Reproduced from *100 Years of Chicory Growing at Phillip Island*, by Stanley Joseph McFee, chicory grower, Rhyll, Phillip Island, Self-published 1976

To the observant coffee drinker the word chicory may be familiar from the label on the Coffee Essence bottle, or a tin of 'Rickory'. However, the tiny and compact industry which supplied this commodity received little public attention, and this was understandable, yet despite its smallness the chicory industry had many interesting features.

Chicory was first grown on Phillip Island in 1870, and the first two or three years was shipped green and taken to Melbourne by Captain John Lock in his ketch, John and Elizabeth. In 1878, the first chicory kiln was built by Messrs. John and Solomon West, in Thompson Avenue, Cowes, near the Esplanade. A coloured photo can be seen in the Historical Society Museum, Cowes.

Owing to there being more chicory grown than one kiln could handle, a second kiln was built in 1880 by Mr Joseph Richardson. So important did the industry become that by 1920 there were at least 25 kilns erected on the Island.

In 1881, there were 231 acres of chicory grown yielding 960 tons (1 ton = 1.016 tonne). The anticipated return in 1883 was expected to be 1203 tons over all areas growing chicory in Victoria. The areas growing chicory and estimated returns were as follows:-

> Phillip Island 501, Avon 200, Bacchus Marsh 200, Bairnsdale 60, Romsey 164, Metcalf 24, Rosedale 12, Shepparton 40, Warragul 2 tons.

At this early time and up to 1885, chicory was harvested or dug out of the ground with picks. About 1884, Mr Duncan McGregor thought of the idea of making a tool with a blade 1½ inches – 4 cm – wide shaped like a spade which he called a 'chicory devil'. This implement was used until 1930. Then a single furrow plough drawn by two horses was used to lift the root of the chicory which did away with the hard work of digging every root. With mechanization the

crop was then lifted with a ripper attached to a tractor which made the harvesting of crops much easier.

Weather permitting the chicory seed was sown from mid-September to the end of October. Approximately 3 to 5 Cape Woolamai – 152 to 254 kg - of super-phosphate to the acre was disc or harrowed into the soil prior to planting. The standard variety of seed used was 'Brunswick'. The worst pests which had to be dealt with was the lucerne flea and the red legged earth mite which attacked the young plants as they appeared through the soil. The only way to ensure that the crops were given a good start was to scatter super-phosphate and lindane all over the sown area at the rate of 1 Cape Woolamai – 50.8 kg - to the acre.

The leaf of the chicory is dark green and the root resembles a parsnip. Harvesting commenced in mid-April or early May.



Cuppa time in the chicory harvesting paddock, showing large chicory roots, a bag of chicory with the digging implement known as the 'chicory devil' leaning against the bag.

Following the root of the chicory being dug out, it was topped, bagged and taken to the kiln to be washed. It was then put through a cutting machine which cut into slices. From the cutter it was carried on an elevator to the drying floor, which was a heavy wire gauze floor set about 10 feet – 3.4 metres – above a wood burning furnace. The heat, which for the first three or four hours was intense, was gradually reduced as the moisture dried out. The average time required to dry, what was known locally as a floor comprising approximately 50 bags of the sliced green root, was about 24 hours. Between 2½ and 3 tons of wood was needed to dry 1 ton of the kiln dried root.

After the chicory was dried it was bagged and sent to Melbourne to the Chicory Marketing Board for sale. It was purchased by the tea and coffee merchants, who roasted the chicory

again, and later put it through a kibbling machine which broke it into small pieces. It was then ready to be blended with coffee beans and made into coffee essence, or grounded into powder to be blended with coffee.

Chicory contains medicinal properties, relatively high in sugar and counteracts the drug caffeine in the coffee bean. Doctors and Dieticians spoke highly of its health giving properties.

The chicory industry reached its peak during the 1940's when over 75% of Australia's requirement was grown in the Western Port area. On Phillip Island, French Island and in Corinella and Grantville districts, there were 164 growers, who were partly or wholly dependent on this crop for their livelihood. A good annual rainfall, almost free from frosts and apparently some local soil peculiarity, made this area most suitable for chicory production. Some believed that proximity to the sea was an advantage in some way. The other 25% of Australia's requirement was produced at Rendelsham in South Australia, although production in that State was on the decline.

Chicory Marketing Board:

In 1934, when the price of chicory had fallen far below a payable price, it was decided by a majority of growers to form a voluntary pool and sell from the pool at £45 per ton. The merchants refused to pay this price and consequently not an ounce of chicory was sold for two years; by this time most of the growers were virtually insolvent.

In desperation three representatives were sent to Melbourne to talk to the Parliamentary Member, Mr Alf Kirton, MLA., who was most sympathetic. He mentioned the growers difficulties to the then Minister of Agriculture in the Dunstan Government, Mr Ned Hogan, who had brought a Bill down in the House titled 'The Marketing of Primary Product Act'.

Mr Hogan and Mr Kirton travelled to Cowes to meet and discuss the plight of the chicory growers. Mr Hogan explained the Bill to the growers and advised that a petition be presented to the Government declaring chicory a commodity under the Act. This was carried out and chicory became the first Primary Product to come under the Act.

In April 1936, the Chicory Marketing Board was constituted with two representatives from the growers and one Government Nominee appointed. All chicory grown in Victoria had to be vested in the Board. This scheme proved so successful that the South Australian growers also used the services of the Victorian Marketing Board.

At the first meeting of the Board, Mr Rupert Harris of Phillip Island was elected Chairman and held the office for more than 34 years, which spoke well for his ability and honesty of purpose.

Production of chicory in 1945 was 50 tons Phillip Island, 200 tons French Island and Corinella, 250 tons Rendelsham and returned £55 per ton to the growers.

In 1956 a request was made by the Phillip Island Shire Council that a road transport be allowed for Phillip Island chicory growers, owing to changed market conditions. The most vital one being a reduction of moisture content from 20% to 16%, quick transport from the kiln to the merchant was essential. Owing to the absorption of moisture from the air, and the root having

to be so crisply dried, breakage in transit had to be avoided as the size needed to be maintained for processing with coffee.

Over the years the farmers in the Rhyll area supplemented their income with the growing of chicory and at one time there were at least six kilns operating. By the mid 1970's one kiln was operating on Phillip Island with only a handful of growers. The last crop to be grown was at Rhyll by James McFee in 1987.

Today there are still a number of chicory kilns dotted around the Island and it is hoped they will be preserved as a feature and reminder of part of the Island's history.

Farming, Physiotherapy and Landcare with Anne Davie

One of a series of 17 talks broadcast on South Gippsland community radio station 3MFM during 2014 and 2015 with assistance from a Local History Grant from the Public Records Office of Victoria.

Anne Davie: My family has a long association with Phillip Island as my mother was brought here on holiday as a six year old by her parents in 1912. My family holidayed in Cowes after the war and we stayed at Yackatoon Guest House. My grandfather, James Joseph Blake, started the first of the famous New Year's Eve Parades, and used to teach swimming on the Cowes beach. It was virtually ordained that I should come to live on Phillip Island as my family had such a passion for the place.

When I was 14 we went to stay at Erehwon Guest House, and there I met the owner's son Bob Davie, when he offered me some bubblegum after a game of tennis. It was the start of our romance.

After I left school I went to University to do Physiotherapy. During the holidays I came to Phillip Island to work as a waitress at Erehwon.

We were married in 1956, the year of the Olympics in Melbourne. We were both just 21. I'd finished my degree and also finished my 12 months practicum. I think I was probably the first professional woman of any kind to live on Phillip Island. But the Phillip Island people didn't even know what physiotherapy was. Women didn't work, especially once they had got married, and especially not farmers' wives. Our lives were taken up with family, cooking a big lunch every day, an evening meal, lots of home baking and helping with milking the cows and feeding the pigs. I went shopping once a week, or goods were brought out on the mail delivery. Nowadays I'm in Cowes sometimes three times a day!

Bob and I were dairy farming when we started out. Bob had worked at dairying with John Gardener of Ventnor, so knew a bit about it. But there was no family history of farming on either side of our families. We learnt a lot from other dairy farmers. The farming community

was very strong, though there weren't many opportunities for socialising. We had herd testing, and there were Better Farming Awards as well.

But there wasn't much technical information about. We had a lot of swamp tea-tree and when we contacted the Department of Agriculture about it in the 1950s, they told us to plough it all in. We learnt later that that was the worst thing to do! That was long before the computer era – now there is so much information. But then farmers were very conservative about change. The current generation of farmers are much more innovative, which is really the only way to survive.



Bob and Anne Davie, 2021. Photo: Andrea Cleland

We had 80 acres at first, called 'Bimbadeen', which is Aboriginal for 'Place of good view'. We were dairy farmers until 1968. We'd separate the cream which the Archie's Creek Butter Factory truck collected, and we raised pigs on the milk. Eventually farms next door started selling up and the farmers moved into Cowes, so by 1975 we had 360 acres.



Anne Davie on the exercise bike in the Cowes physiotherapy clinic.

ERTISER, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1996

I started practicing physiotherapy in 1956. I first used to go out to people's homes at night, even as far as the mainland. If a farmer hurt his back his wife always came into the room because I'd have to ask him to lower his trousers! The old chicory farmers all had terrible backs from their years of working in the chicory paddocks and kilns.

When Bob and I got back from our honeymoon there was a letter waiting for me from the Wonthaggi Hospital asking if I would work there as their physiotherapist, but it wasn't possible then. I did go there for a few years 50 years later though!

I actually ran the first ante-natal clinics in the district. I worked as a physiotherapist from 1956-1996. After my children got a bit older I had clients come to the house during the day, and then I took rooms in Cowes. The local doctors would refer patients to me. I also worked in Warley Hospital as well as Warley Annexe.

Anne demonstrating an exercise bike at her physiotherapy clinic in Cowes, 1996. Phillip Island & San Remo Advertiser

We decided to go into beef cattle in 1968 and started with Brangus, which are a cross between Brahmans and Angus. We found the best mix was 3/8th Brahman and 5/8th Angus. By 1980 we'd changed to just Angus, and that's the breed we still have. Our product is branded 'Gippsland Natural'. We have worked hard to make our property sustainable and our husbandry methods sensitive.

I did an Environmental Management System certificate that allowed us to reach the ISO 1400 compliant universal benchmark for being an environmentally sustainable farm. Our commercial brand is 'Enviromeat' which is sold to selective restaurants in Melbourne. Everything now is monitored – water independence, solar use, padded yards and lots of methods used to reduce the stress to the cattle. Bob transports them himself. We take animal welfare seriously. Everything is computer recorded, included the genetics of each animal, the machinery records, solar usage on pumps and water conservation.

It takes less time to fatten our animals because they are genetically selected to be strong. They take 14 months only from calving to sale. Bob and our son Ritchie frequently weigh animals to see how they're thriving.

We grow all our own feed – silage and hay, and some crops. After the cattle have grazed the crops down the remaining plant is mulched. We use minimal chemical fertiliser. With cropping we first grow legumes that pull in nitrogen from the atmosphere. Then we plant deep-rooted crops that store carbon in the soil. Our farm is now carbon neutral.

One innovative thing we did on the farm was to divide the big paddocks into 5 acres surrounded by rows of indigenous trees, and we'd move the cattle every two days. We found this was economical on feed and the cattle did better as they were so sheltered. All our animals pass Meat Standards Australia as we do not use hormones or nasty chemicals.

1988 marked a huge change for farming in Victoria, as Joan Kirner established Landcare. Phillip Island was one of the earliest groups, and quickly became a very significant group. We have always been very fortunate with the wonderful personnel who have been our co-ordinators. In conjunction with the Barb Martin Bush Bank, Landcare has completely changed the visual amenity of Phillip Island with hundreds of thousands of trees and other plants gone in the ground. Phillip Island is now part of the Bass Coast Landcare Network. It was through Landcare that I did my course. They offered regular field days and courses so that farmers were better informed and made better decisions.

I think one of the main good things about Landcare is that it brought women of the farm to be part of decision-making. Women must have felt comfortable to be involved and Landcare nourished women right across Australia.

Another thing that happened in the Landcare era was that many young people did environmental studies, and jobs began to be created for them to use their skills.

Bob and I became involved in Phillip Island Landcare straight away. I've been President or on the committee for many years. Some farmers were frightened at first to plant lots of trees as they thought they were losing grazing ground and couldn't afford the cost of the fencing. The Kirner government provided money for the fencing as well as the plants. First you had to have 5

metre shelter belts, then they made it 10 metres and now the recommended width is 30 metres.

Jim McFee, a farmer at Rhyll, first suggested the wildlife corridor across Phillip Island to allow wildlife to safely move from one are to another without going on roads. The corridor is now almost fully planted out thanks to Landcare.

We have part of Saltwater Creek running through our paddock and it was very degraded. A big accounting firm in Melbourne sent staff down one day to help us plant the creek area. That was 15 years ago, and so many staff turned up we even hired a porta loo!

We also had a bad salinity problem. Landcare helped us with selective tree planting and drainage and now the problem has virtually disappeared. Whole Farm Planning was also a Landcare initiative and is now a condition of permits on farms.

Because we have been prepared to go whole-heartedly with Landcare we have won several awards. In 2004 we won the Port Phillip and Western Port Regional Landcare Award. In 2005 we won the Rural Press Landcare Victoria Award and the Victorian Landcare Sustainable Farming Award. Then in 2011 we won the National Carbon Cockie Award for Outstanding Innovation and Invention.

So what do I think is the future of farming on Phillip Island? I like to stay positive. Farming has a long history on Phillip Island. Maybe in the future it will take different forms. Perhaps special farm experiences for visitors – people would be interested to tour an operating farm. It would be a different experience. Farming adds greatly to the visitor's experience of the landscape, so hopefully we will not have wholesale subdivision of rural land in the future.

But I do have a great concern for the future of Landcare. I can't understand why something that has been universally accepted as being one of the most effective schemes ever, involving urban, rural and farming communities and respected by all is now so under threat. It is really facing its greatest challenge to survive.

For me, it has been a privilege to have been part of the farming history and journey of Phillip Island. Bob and I would like to think that we have left our part of Phillip Island in better shape for future generations to enjoy and cherish.

My life of horse racing by Cefn Price

One of a series of 17 talks broadcast on South Gippsland community radio station 3MFM during 2014 and 2015 with assistance from a Local History Grant from the Public Records Office of Victoria.

Cefn Price: When I was a kid all I ever wanted to do was be a jockey. My father Tom was an amateur jockey who rode mainly for Gren Harris of Ventnor, who had a successful racehorse

called ‘Una’. I was born into horses. I rode a pony to school and after school I’d race boys on pushbikes down Grossard Point Road to get the mail from the post office at Justices.

Years later my cousin Megs Elkington told me about two brood mares I could have for nothing. They were Miss Meredith, from which I bred Island Lass and Split Time, and Lady Tilly, who had Camplight, Tracey’s Luck and Khalene. I had them with other trainers but they didn’t do much good so I got them back and trained them myself and did well with them. That was from 1970. Back then it was hard to make a living out of farming so the extra from the horses was handy.



Cefn Price, the young trainer on one of his early racehorses. Cefn Price collection

The first year I had 3 horses. They were: Island Lass, who won 3 at Woolamai; Split Time who won 2 at Woolamai, and Camp Light, who had 5 wins for one season. In the mid-1970s, Rising Flame won several races at Woolamai, and still holds the 1600 metre record. My Echo was a good 1000 m horse who also won 4 races at Traralgon. He had 15 wins altogether – both picnic and professional races. Other winners I had were Alma’s Pride, Khalene, Imperial Duchess, Imprint (who had 15 wins), Star Gleam and Fancy Lad. Fast Seal won 15 races, including a triple dead heat at Stony Creek. There has only been three triple dead heats in Australia since the photo finish came in.

These winners were all ridden by Neville Pearse, Neil McInnes, Rhonda and Vicki Hill – they were all leading riders of their time.

In the 1980s I had many horses win at Woolamai and also win at the professionals. Island Beau was my best Woolamai horse, winning 10 races there. He also won 9 at the professionals. Rhonda, Vicki and Kelly Hill all won on him at Woolamai. My best horse for distance was Island Pride. He won from 1,000 metres to 2,400 metres. He was so quiet I could put a couple of kids on his back and lead him around. But his half-brother, Island Beau, was bad natured, so you never know.

Island Pride was one of the best horses I trained, scoring 13 times at the professionals and two at picnics. He won his first race as a maiden at Woolamai, then four out of five at the pros. Later on he won the Woolamai Cup carrying 70 kgs and then won over 2.400 m at Pakenham the following Wednesday.



Another winner for Cefn at the Woolamai racecourse. Cefn Price collection.

My wife Phyl and I ran it as two businesses – the farm and the horses. Sometimes I took money I'd made from the horses to use on the farm, but I never took money from the farm for the horses.

A typical training day for us would be to start about 5 a.m., which was still dark in the winter and we'd have the lights on in the stables. Horse training is such a labour intensive job that you have to start early to get through the work. Also, the flies aren't bad early in the morning, and flies love horses! At the most I had a dozen horses and they all had to be worked. I had a 1000 metre sand track and a grass track on the place and the horses would be trotted, cantered and galloped or whatever they needed.

I also trucked them down to Ventnor Beach and we rode them on the beach, sometimes as far as Trenavin Park at Woolshed Bight, which is about 3 or 4 kilometres. On the way back we'd walk them in the water from Grossard Point back to Ventnor Beach because the sea water is great for any heat or other problems in the legs. For all the years I had the horses on the beach early in the mornings I only had two complaints, but lots of people would stop for a friendly chat.

Keaston Sambell had race horse stables at Summerland and in the 1940s used to gallop them on the Penguin Parade beach. He had four stables on the left of where you go into the Penguin Parade now. I used to work my horses there in the winter in the 1970s, going down through Dr Alec Reith's place.

I also used to take horses to Woolamai race track to train them, and I think that is why I had so much success there.

When we got them back they'd have a roll in the sand roll, then we'd hose them down, feed them in the stables, rug them and put them out for the day in their paddocks. I had two to a

paddock and they got on well. They were stabled again at 5 p.m. The last feed would be at 8 p.m. when we would do a last muck out of their stalls for the night.



Cefn with one of the racehorses he trained, pictured at his stables in Ventnor.
Cefn Price collection.

I also kept their paddocks clean, either picking up or running the smudger over them. So it was about a 16 hour day, with a bit of a break in the middle. Christmas Day was the busiest for us because the staff would have the day off, so we had to do it all ourselves. I'd have Christmas lunch with the family and a bit of a nap for an hour or so, then back into it.

On race days we'd drive up to five hours to whatever track we were racing at that day. You had to have the horses there 1 ½ hours before the race. Now most of them are blood tested. I never had a single problem with swabs. When you get your horses to the course you have to give them a good walk to loosen them up. After the race you have to get them to have a good drink or else they become dehydrated. You hose them down, then walk them to cool them off. I usually took 2 or 3 horses, but have taken up to 7.

I've gone as far as St Arnaud and Wodonga to the races. We usually got home about 9 or 10 p.m. if we'd had a long trip. Maurie Duffy was with me the whole of my career and he would drive to the races while I had a sleep, then help with the horses, then I'd drive home.

I only ever had at most 12 horses in work. I always worked the horses six or seven days a week. It was easier to get a good jockey for a race than it was getting good track riders for training, so we were lucky and we were grateful for our staff. They didn't work for us, they worked with us.

My wife Phyl was never a horse person – she never rode in her life – but she knew how to run a stable and keep the staff happy. She was the stable foreman. She always kept the young ones in order and shared a joke with them. She also did her share of mucking out the stables. We also had 2 or 3 stay with us, so she had to cook for them too. I could never have done what I did without Phyl's help. She kept everyone happy and of course that's good for business.

I raced and won on every Gippsland track except Canni Creek, near Buchan. I had a lot of handy horses. I won two good races at Sandown with Queen Lillie. I bought her in New Zealand for $525. She also won 8 open handicaps in the country. After she retired from racing she had six foals and they were all winners.

Camp Light was the best money-wise. Phyl and I owned him with Lyell and Elaine Williams. I wasn't a betting man, but Lyell was, and one day we raced Camp Light at Traralgon and after he won, Lyell gave the girls his tickets and told them to go and collect. He'd paid $20.50 for the win and $4.50 for the place, and the tote didn't have the cash to pay out – he had to give the girls a cheque. He said "You must own this horse!", and they said "Well, yes, we do." He won five races that season up to 2,400 metres, at Traralgon, Bairnsdale, Mornington, Woolamai and Geelong. Later he won over 2400 at Sandown backed from 33 into 6 to 1.

1986 was my best year, winning 38 races for the season. From the 1990s to 2004 I had many winners that were ridden by Debbie Waymouth, Gavin Bady, Ray Douglas, Craig Blackshaw, Vicki Hill and Adam Bodey. During 2000 to 2003, my final year's training, I won the horse of the year at Woolamai on each occasion. Riders for me at the professionals were mainly Trevor Snell, David Opitz, Graham McLiesh – who rode Fast Seal in the triple dead heat – Bobby Skelton who rode a Melbourne Cup winner Van Der Hum for one of the big trainers – Caroline Ferguson and Scrooge Robertson, who also rode winners and rode a lot of work for us.

The high points of my career included winning the Woolamai Trainers trophy 30 times, winning about 200 races at Woolamai and winning about 450 races overall. I was the leading trainer in Gippsland in 1986, the leading trainer at Bairnsdale for 1995-96, and the leading Victorian Picnic Trainer in the 1990s.

Maurie Duffy was my offsider through all of this. He was a character and had quite a few funny sayings. He'd say "You can't help bad luck" and "You can't educate idiots". He also said "An expert is a drip under pressure". He loved his VB and smokes, so when he was going shopping he'd say "I've got to go and get the essentials".

Phillip Island was a wonderful place to train racehorses. We've got the beaches and undulating country. Horses don't mind a bit of wind – it blows the flies away. What they hate is muggy weather.

I attended the first race meeting at Woolamai in 1945. Back then they had two meetings at Woolamai. In 1946 they formed a club at Wonthaggi and one at Phillip Island, and they had a meeting each, so four meetings in all. I trained my first winner at Woolamai in 1957 with a horse called London Boy, bought by my father and I for £15 (fifteen pounds). He beat a field of 14 from the old six furlong barrier and was ridden by Hugh Donavon, a leading rider of those days who was later a VRC steward.

Racing at Woolamai has always been a big part of the Price family. Phyl had a share in most of the horses I trained. Woolamai Races are a great day out for the family, with the shady old trees, and the spectators are so close to the action. You can take a picnic hamper along and no one searches you, though they do have security there of course. Woolamai has always had good volunteers running it and keeping it financial. It's also a great way for local charities to raise money. There's no problems there, though I have seen the odd streaker at times.

Racehorse training has been special for me because I've had lots of high points and met lots of people with the same interests. I've made life-long friends really. And on the track everyone is equal. It doesn't matter how much you pay for the horse, it's how it all goes on the day.

The thing I enjoyed most was all the good people that I trained for and the good people that I met through racing. Many are life-long friends. Maurie Duffy was with me all the years I trained. Caroline Ferguson and Deidre and David Opitz worked with us for 12 years and they were all part of the family.

I think everyone has a special gift, and mine has been with the horses and livestock. I love working with animals, and I've been very lucky to have had such success. I couldn't have done what I did without my wife Phyl and my family, and my loyal employees.

My Life of Nursing and Warley Hospital by Gwen McRae

One of a series of 17 talks broadcast on South Gippsland community radio station 3MFM during 2014 and 2015 with assistance from a Local History Grant from the Public Records Office of Victoria.

I was born at the Queen Victoria Hospital in Melbourne on 30 January 1930. My mother had a son by a previous marriage. My father had five children by a previous marriage but I did not know them until later life. My father died before I was 15. We lived in Moonee Ponds. I went to Brunswick South State School, then Moonee Ponds Central for forms one and two. I got a scholarship then to go to University High School, where I went for forms three and four. I always wanted to go nursing, but my mother was against my going straight from school to nursing. She thought it was too big of a step, so I put in time 'working' in an importers' office as a clerk, making the teas.

I started nursing training at Epworth Hospital on 6 January 1948. The war was over but we still had to have coupons to buy my uniforms. I was supposed to have 10 aprons and 3 dresses. I only had 8 aprons because that's all we had the coupons for. The dresses were blue and the aprons were white.



Epworth nurses, 1948. From Epworth centenary history.

We lived on the premises at Epworth and had to be in each night by 10 p.m. We needed a special pass if we were going to be later, and if we were going to be in past midnight we had to front the Matron for special permission. The matron at the time was Marjorie Holding, a retired army nurse. She had been matron for less than 12 months when I started. She was very strict, but very fair.

I stayed at Epworth for a couple of years after I trained. I became quite friendly with the Matron during that time. When I was tutoring we used to go together to pick up tapes and things for my tutoring. She had a Morris Minor car, which she used to let me drive.

As a trainee we started and finished each day with one hour of lectures. In between we carried trays, cleaned pans, and gradually built up to more responsible jobs. I remember at one stage having to feed a retired minister. Every time he opened his mouth to receive a mouth full of porridge his top dentures would fall down to his bottom dentures. I was just 17 and hadn't had much to do with old people, so I didn't know what to do. I just kept putting the porridge in on top of his dentures and he got fed!

We had to take temperatures. I remember one time going to the East Wing, where the men's ward was out on a balcony. We had to ask the men if they'd had their bowels open that day, and one of them said to me: "Well, have you?"

Our day started at 7 a.m. and finished at 5.45 p.m. We were given 'hospital meals'. One time we had a lovely meal of cauliflower cheese and mince, but often it was very ordinary. I guess we were given the leftovers because sometimes the staff got sick and couldn't turn up to work the next day.

When I first started we roomed in a 10 bed dormitory, then into double rooms, then single rooms. The dormitory had been a big ward. There was one bathroom for the lot of us. I was a trainee for three years.

We were given lectures morning and afternoon by doctors and surgeons – anatomy, physiology, how to do procedures, eyes, urinary tracts. Lots of different things. The nurses from Bathesda Hospital came to the lectures with us. Even if you had been on night duty you still had to attend the lectures.

We had exams for each of the series of lectures. At the end of the first year we did 'First Professional' exams at Melbourne University. At the end of the third year we had a three hour written examination and a half hour or so oral examination taken by doctors. They asked you how you would treat or look after so and so a condition. They could ask us about anything – we had no idea what they were going to question us about before the exams.

I did a Post-graduate year and was in charge of the Children's Ward at Epworth. The sister there was very good to me. In between that and tutoring I worked in the theatre. I tutored first years then seniors. We were 'Nurses' til we graduated, then we were 'Sisters'.

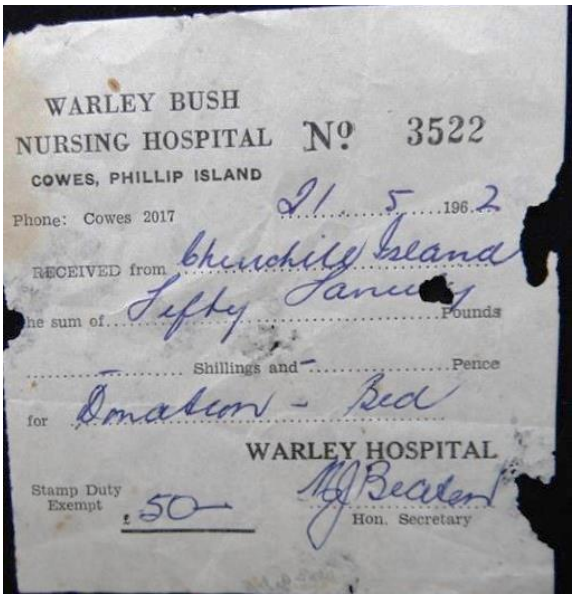
I worked there until 1953, then had to leave when I got married. We just accepted that we had to leave once we got married. When I got engaged the Matron said: "We wanted you to go on to the College of Nursing," but I just said, "Bad luck, I'm getting married." And that was that. As a nurse you had to be registered. I kept registering each year even after I was married. I was

only married 12 months when I had Helen and then they found out at Warley that I was a nurse and asked me to go nursing there. They didn't care that I was married.

Warley Hospital was established in 1923 in a house which Mr Thompson purchased, in response to his wife Lucy's request. Mrs Thompson had been a nurse and with several of her lady friends was distressed that people had to be taken by boat to get to a hospital. Warley was named after the area Mr Thompson lived in when he was growing up. The Dixon twins – John and Laurie – both have 'Warley' as their second names as they were the first twins born there. Warley was also the first Bush Nursing Hospital – up until that time there were only what was called Centres.

Lucy Thompson was really the main organiser of the first hospital. She was very involved in the Red Cross. The records are still intact apart from one of the minutes books from the early 1950s. There are also annual reports from all of the Bush Nursing Hospitals.

The local people supported the hospital very well. The community used to do lots of fundraising. One of the first patients provided a cow which the nurse was required to milk. I'm glad I didn't have to do that when I was there! Fancy having to milk the cow along with everything else you had to do.


WARLEY BUSH
NURSING HOSPITAL No 3522
COWES, PHILLIP ISLAND
Phone: Cowes 2017
21 5 1962
RECEIVED from Churchill Island
the sum of Fifty Pounds
Shillings and Pence
for Donation - Bed
WARLEY HOSPITAL
Stamp Duty Exempt
£ 50
M J Beaden
Hon. Secretary

Receipt issued to Harry Jenkins of Churchill Island in May 1962 for donation of cost of a hospital bed to Warley Hospital of £50 (fifty pounds). Churchill Island collection.

They had 'kitchen teas' to get food into the cupboards. Local men had wood days when they would bring wood. There was a birthday each November when the local people brought food, linen and money to help with the running of the hospital. For many years there was an annual hospital cabaret ball in the old Shire Hall, organised by the local women. They had a proper dance band and the band provided the m.c.

Also for many years the hospital had a car raffle. The car was provided by Dave Cook, and he never made any profit out of it. The car raffle stopped once Dave retired. Stan Davies encouraged the women to start the Women's Auxiliary once the new hospital was built in 1962. They were very active holding stalls, and would keep the hospital supplied with jam and even do some mending.

When it became obvious that a facility was needed to house older, frail people, Dr Hopkins asked Les Findlay if he could ask his mother, who lived next door to the hospital, if the family would consider selling her land to the hospital for a nursing home once she had finished with it. This worked out, and once the hospital had bought the land there was a working bee of lots of local volunteers to clear and level the site. It was held on a Saturday, and with Bill Evans detonating the big trees and everyone pitching in, it only took the day to level the site. Unfortunately they disturbed a bee hive, and one of the volunteers got so badly stung he had to be admitted to the hospital.

After that, funding was sought, and Warley Annexe was built in the mid-1970s, first with 14 beds, and later with another 6 beds. There was obviously a need as the place filled up straight away.

When I was nursing, people were kept in bed after an operation. Now people are sat out the next day. We used to do back washes; that went out. People used to stay in bed and we had to wash them. Now they're up to the shower. If you can put your feet on the floor the modern nurse thinks you can look after yourself. At Warley you could be looking after one patient or twelve, by yourself.

Earlier on we didn't have all the paperwork the nurses have now. We certainly wrote a report at the end of every shift in which we wrote down all the things that had happened to the patients. We had to fill in drug charts, temperatures, that sort of thing and we always did handover.

When I first went to Warley it was the 'little' hospital building. Sisters Cameron and Doreen ran the hospital then and they both had a cocker spaniel each. One was 'Mac' I remember. There were cupboards either side of the Aga stove and the dogs lived and slept on one side each. They were OK if they knew you but if they didn't know you and you came to the door, they'd come flying out barking!

Norma Smith, the cook for many years, did all her work in the little scullery off the kitchen. We had to go to the back door where there was a room where Nell Forrest used to stay – I don't quite know why she was there, but she was. Everything happened in the kitchen. We used to write our reports there as there was no duty room.

When I was on evening shift I always got the coke for the stove and the hot water service. There was a warming oven and a cooking oven – Norma loved them. We had to do the babies' washing. Hang the nappies and clothes out, bring them in, fold them. You worked til 10 p.m. Betty Bedwell, (later Justice) slept there overnight in a single room and got up to answer the door, or the bell, or the phone. Shirley Hobbes had her first baby a bit prem, so Betty got up during the night and did the night feed.

Betty used to worry about what would happen if prisoners escaped from French Island and came over to Cowes, but Dr Don Hopkins said they wouldn't come here, they'd go to Melbourne.

I remember one time when Dr Don Hopkins was here, the girl who married Ian Hannon came in with her finger chopped from a window coming down on her. Old Jessie McGregor was in the hospital at the time and it was winter. Betty said we'd have to shift Jessie because we had

theatre next day and if we shifted her we could have all three tonsil patients in the one room together. Old Jessie objected and went outside to the hedge yelling: “Help! Help! They’re trying to kill me!” She took a swipe at me with her handbag. Betty was busy with Dr Hopkins and the chopped finger. Anyway, Jessie wouldn’t stay in the room we put her in so we couldn’t move her.

One time Jessie had so many clothes on – including a moth-eaten old fur coat. She’d get cold and just put another layer of clothes on. After we got the ambulance they brought in one woman absolutely covered in fleas. They were the volunteer drivers and they undressed her. The volunteers were great – they did all sorts of things to help, including picking up fallen patients if we couldn’t lift them. We’d call the volunteers and in they’d come to help.

The new hospital was an absolute luxury. But even it had its drawbacks. It still didn’t have night staff. Betty left to get married when the hospital was being built. The Bush Nursing used to organise the staff. Betty was on relieving staff and that’s how she came to us originally. She’d been to Pakenham where she’d even had to do the cooking! They asked her to stay there but she wouldn’t.

When I trained in theatre the first work we did was cleaning. Whoever was on afternoon shift scrubbed the theatre. We still did that at Warley. The big hospitals have cleaners for that now. When I started you only spoke to a doctor when spoken to. You always called them Dr such and such, never by their first names. I always called Dr Williams ‘Dr’. It was different with Don Hopkins because we were the same age group. And from then on we always called the doctors by their first names.

We had many visits and delegations to various politicians to try and save Warley Hospital – to Caroline Hogg, Dr Bluett, the member for McMillan which was our electorate at the time, Nicola Roxon. Some of them were supportive of the idea, but said we’d never get it. The Federal members and ministers said it was the state’s responsibility to fund it and vice versa.



Gwen McRae, left with Jan Child, CEO of Bass Coast Health at the opening of the Cowes Medical Hub, 2018. Photo from Mary Whelan.

I was involved with Warley Hospital from 1954. I was doing nursing there til 1993. Even when I was managing the hospital I was doing theatre work. I loved the theatre work with the surgeons

– all the things they could do to make people better. Some of the surgeons we worked with were Misters Hendrickson, Syme, Campbell and Rubenstein. Dr Hinrichson came once a month for 20 years, and also came down for emergencies. I loved all my years of nursing, and wouldn't have changed my life of nursing for anything.

My Life of Fishing by Ray Dickie

One of a series of 17 talks broadcast on South Gippsland community radio station 3MFM during 2014 and 2015 with assistance from a Local History Grant from the Public Records Office of Victoria.

My name is Ray Dickie. I was born in 1936 and started fishing in 1951, though I'd been fishing from a dinghy before that. 'Dickie's Bay' below 'Silverwaters' is named after my family and is a great King George Whiting fishing spot. In the early days the netting boats from Hastings would anchor there at night with their fire pots burning and grandad would row out to them with a nip of whiskey.

The rail came to Wonthaggi around 1910 so then fish were taken by horse and cart to Anderson and put on the train for Melbourne. In the late 1920s Dad did a bit of fishing and farming and sometimes drove the fish truck to Melbourne.

Dad died when I was about 10 and we got off the farm. I left school when I was 14 and worked on a few of the smaller couta boats. Then I got a job with Bert Johnson on the *Evening Star*, crayfishing. That's how I got over the sea sickness.

After World War II there were 50 to 60 couta boats fishing out of San Remo. Naturally there was a hell of a lot of fish caught. Some days' catches were in the hundreds of wooden boxes and each box held about 70 pounds of couta. They were all caught on hand lines with a wooden lure. Before that the lures were white cow hide, but the couta caught just as well on wooden lures, and they were easier.

A typical day would be to be out on the grounds just before daylight, because the fish always bit best right on dawn. The grounds were anywhere from Pyramid Rock to Kilcunda. Most couta boats only had one person on board. Before I started it was nearly all sail, but we had inboard motors. The boats were carvel built, between 20 and 30 feet long – most 24 or 25 feet.

A lot of the time we were on quotas because the agents only sent down a certain number of boxes, all of which belonged to them. When I started, some blokes used to load boxes on their boat the night before. But that meant others had no boxes. It was decided to hold a meeting to work out a better system. I was only 16, but I got the job of counting the empty boxes when they came back from market, divide that by the number of couta fisherman, and write on a blackboard on the jetty what the limit of boxes was for each bloke the next day. After that every box in the port was on the jetty at night.

The couta were so thick that if our quota was 10 or 12 boxes we would have caught that by sunrise and be on our way home. Once we caught them we had to head and gut them. This was done mainly at sea, but sometimes at the jetty if we hadn't finished by the time we motored home.

When we got home, if it was high tide, we got the boxes on board, stack about 30 fish to the box, and put the boxes onto the jetty. If it was low tide, we had to throw the catch up one by one onto the jetty and load them into the boxes there. There were heavy trolleys that ran around the jetty on rails. We'd load the boxes onto the trolley and wheel them up to the big sheds on the jetty. We'd put them into the shed, where there was an ice room. We'd get the ice, which was in blocks, and crush it in a big box with a tamper, then shovel it in on top of the fish. There was always a bent nail on the underside of the lid, so we'd put our name ticket under that, and then hammer the lid down.

Some of the truck drivers were Bert Blackney, Doug Carmichael, Henry Fleisner and then came Clarrie Spokes – all good carriers. At one time I bought a boat from Alec Lacco at Rye. Clarrie brought it back for me on his truck but I was flat broke, so Clarrie said "That's alright, just pay me when we can." That is the way things were done then.

The San Remo Fisherman's Co-operative was set up in 1948. That was an advantage to the fishermen because then we could make our own ice. Before that it used to come back on the truck from Dandenong. We then also had somewhere to store bait for the crays.

With the amount of couta being sold the price fell in a heap. A cannery decided to take some. We loaded the couta into a tip truck and when they got it to the factory, they just tipped it out onto the floor! It was quite good after it was canned.

For the last 12 months that I was in the couta industry we did a lot of filleting. We'd do about 4 boxes an hour. We'd put them in the Co-op freezer and keep them til the winter. That helped the price a bit. Most of the couta were caught in the spring time – November being the best month – and a bit in the autumn.

In the off-season I'd go catching pike at the back of Phillip Island or down to Cape Paterson, and in winter I'd go mesh netting in Western Port. I made up all my own nets for whiting and rock flathead – mainly table fish.

In the 1960s the couta started to decline so it was a case of get bigger or get out. A few of us got bigger boats, some just got out. The fleet went from 3 to 4 big boats to about 12 to15 in the Cray and shark fishing industries.

My first big boat was the 32 foot *Pamela J*. We worked mainly away fishing. My brother John – known as Jock – worked with me. Mostly around Phillip Island and Cape Paterson, and Cape Liptrap. We had *Pamela J* for about 4 to 5 years. The last two years we decided to Flinders Island for the opening of the Cray season on 1st November, which was about 24 hours' steaming. We'd leave 3 or 4 days before, then we'd stay there til mid- December. We kept the crays alive in the boat's wet well, then take them once a week into a little town on Flinders Island called Lady Barren and from there they were air freighted out to Melbourne or Sydney aboard Bristol aircraft.

There were 20 to 30 boats and each boat would have 15 to 20 bags with about 3 dozen crays in each bag. Each bag weighed about 100 pounds. Our biggest price was two and ten pence per pound. Just recently they were $100 per kilo. There was a buyer at Flinders Island who would pay us. The last year we were there we had 20 bags a week for 6 weeks. Now there are only about 3 or 4 Cray boats work out of Flinders Island.

On our boat we were allowed 32 cray pots in Victoria, which was a pot a foot, and in Tasmania we were only allowed 22 pots. Victoria was a pot a foot with a maximum of 40 pots. So a 50 foot boat couldn't have any more than 40 pots. Now boats have 100 or more, but on very strict quotas.

During the six weeks we were down there, my wife Judy would bring one of the kids down and we'd stay in a house there, while Jock flew out for a week. Because a Cray boat is not very big and we'd get sick of each other!

When we came home we crayed around home til February and we'd go to King Island for three weeks, though there was nowhere near the Crays there as there was around Flinders Island.

In the Cray fishing the most important thing that happened in my time was the advent of echo-sounders, which allowed us to 'see' what sort of bottom we'd be putting the pots on and also how deep it was. GPS came in the eighties and meant we could go exactly back to where we wanted to be, which is especially important at sea where we can't see land and can't take any marks. We got radar in the early 1970s and that helped. We could travel at any time, day or night, foggy or clear.

We eventually got sick of going away for so long, so about the mid-60s I got a 45 foot boat called *Lentara*. On that we did a bit of craying but mostly shark. That way we'd only be at sea three to four days, in Bass Strait. That was with long-lines. They were 6 millimetre nylon rope with a hook clipped on about every 20 feet, and about 6 miles of line. It was pretty hard work. We'd start in daylight and finish just before dark. At the end of the day we had to clean the shark and we had an ice room on board, so we'd put them on ice. It got a bit hard for Jock so after 12 months he gave it away, and I put on two young deck hands.

Coming home we'd get all the fish out of the ice room and stack them on the deck. Then when we arrived at San Remo jetty we'd throw them all up onto the jetty. We'd load them onto the truck. They'd be tarped down and went to market in bulk. A piece of tarp went down between each different boat's lot of fish. They had to be stacked in a special way. There might be three tons of shark per load. Nowadays of course they have to be in refrigerated trucks, in insulated bins that hold approximately three to four hundred kilos.

The agents operated on a commission of about 10 per cent. But we were at their mercy. They'd give us the weights and paid us the price. It was supposed to be an auction system. Where we lost out more than anything was in weights. We never had any way of weighing them before they left home, so just had to accept what the agent said. Nowadays with the big insulated bins we know what is in them. They are weighed on the jetty.

In 1971 I got another boat built by Pompies at Mordialloc. This was the *Endeavour*, 55 foot. That boat is still in San Remo and is probably the nicest boat that came into the port. Two Lacco

brothers were working with Pompie at the time, so the *Endeavour* is a nice mix of both boatbuilding families.

When I went to Pompies and said I wouldn't mind a 55 footer they started building it and I gave them a five thousand dollar deposit. As they were building it I told them I wasn't sure I could afford it, but they just kept on building. Eventually it was finished and launched and I said to them "Well, what do I owe you?" They said, "Well, what do you reckon?" So I wrote them a cheque for $50,000 and I still don't know to this day if it was enough or too much or what!

Both the *Lentana* and the *Endeavour* were Huon Pine on the bottom and above the water line was Celery Top Pine. Worms won't eat Huon Pine as it's very oily. In those days they'd make us up a half model and we'd tell them what changes we wanted and they built it from the half model. Nowadays it's all computer modelling. The kids got Pompies to make me a half model of the *Endeavour* for a gift later on. I also have an oil painting of her by Lyn Hahn, painted off a photo when we were steaming home in a bit of rough weather.

A few things happened with shark in the 1970s. Someone found out we could catch shark with monofilament nets. But the shark died in the nets because they can't swim backwards, so they weren't in as good a condition by the time they got home. We fought against nets, but Fisheries weren't any help, saying the nets were more efficient. We didn't win, so we had to join them and put nets on ourselves.

Then the mercury scare came in and all the shark over forty one inches had to be thrown overboard, so it became political. Mostly we were catching gummy shark, so it wasn't so bad. Our argument was it was a naturally occurring mercury because shark are at the top of the food chain and so accumulate more than other fish. No-one's ever been poisoned with it. Now there are strict quotas on how many we can catch.

About 1975 I got a 52 foot steel boat built, named *Jupana* – a combination of Judy, my wife, and Pam and Narelle, my two daughters. My son and son-in-law worked that as one of about 15 shark boats operating out of San Remo. Now there's only five. Now with quotas and restrictions they're even having to put onboard cameras. This replaces the observers we had to take out every now and then. It's to make sure we're not doing the wrong thing.

In 1980 we got another wooden boat at Pompies. Another chap and myself decided we were going to semi-retire, so we'd go trawling. We wanted a 48 foot boat each. We bought two of everything, and both worked on them. Then we had to work out which boat was whose and they had to be named. So we had a coin-tossing party at the boat builders. My boat was called the *Mako* and my mate's boat was the *Yukom*. They were identical.

We mainly caught school whiting and sand and tiger flathead. It was a pretty hard semi-retirement though, because the feeling that you want to keep going out is still there. But it was better, because it was mainly day fishing. That carried me through til I retired in 2002.

I've done a couple of rescues. Going to Flinders Island one day in a 30 knot North West wind, I saw this flag out to sea and it turned out to be five Greeks in a runabout with no anchor, well off Kilcunda. If we hadn't arrived they would never have been seen again. We brought them home.

Another day I got a call about 4 a.m. to say a freighter plane had gone down off Inverloch and could we go and find the pilot. We went down there, then the Tasmanian ferry and the Navy came later, so we got pushed further south. We found the wreckage, strewn everywhere. We then found one of the pilots drowned but still in his life jacket. An abalone boat pulled him out. We found the other life jacket, but no pilot. After about 12 hours we decided to leave and had to get clearance from Canberra. After we'd been home a while we got a phone call from Canberra asking if we'd go back because they thought they'd seen an oil slick, but we'd had enough and told them to get the Navy to do it. Every time there was an emergency at sea out here they seemed to phone me!

I love the sea – the open air. There was never a day when I didn't want to go to work – and there's not too many who can say that! Nowadays we could say that once upon a time I fished to live, but now I live to fish!



Ray Dickie carries the Commonwealth Games baton through Cowes in 2006. The other local to carry the baton was Anne Davie, Life Member of the Phillip Island & District Historical Society.

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NOTE: Many of these books are now out of print. However, they may be sourced through second hand bookstores or online. Some have been digitized online. Some are available for loan through the Myli public library service, and to use as reference in the rooms of the Phillip Island and District Historical Society and the Phillip Island & District Genealogical Society.

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Phillip Island & District Genealogy Society Inc has an extensive family history research library and a searchable database of Phillip Island and district rates records dating from 1872 until 1928. The database is available to view in the society's rooms at Cowes, or searched for a research fee by one of the society's members. Contact them at: http://www.piadgs.org.au/

Public Records Office of Victoria: https://prov.vic.gov.au/ For all official government records relating to Victoria, many of which are digitised.

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Phillip Island History and Memories

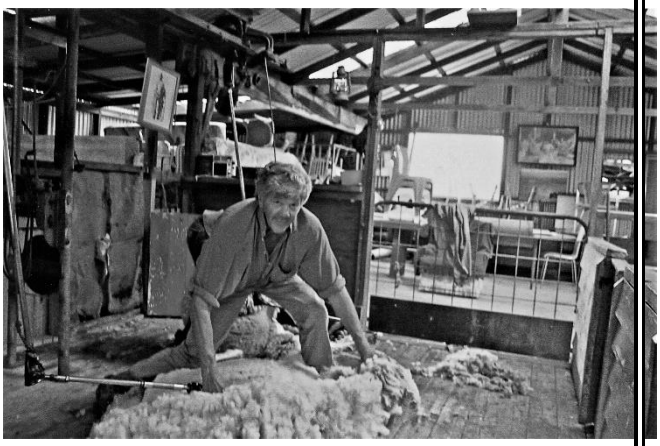
A selection of talks and researched essays from the records of the Phillip Island and District Historical Society

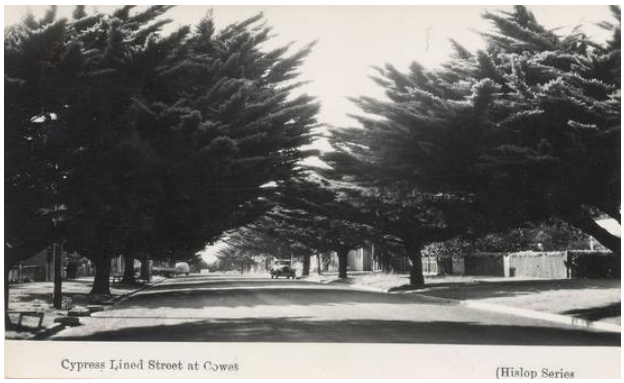
Inside this book you can read of the adventures and struggles of the people of Phillip Island, and close by at San Remo and on Churchill Island – from many walks of life, from the time of closer settlement in 1868 until the present.

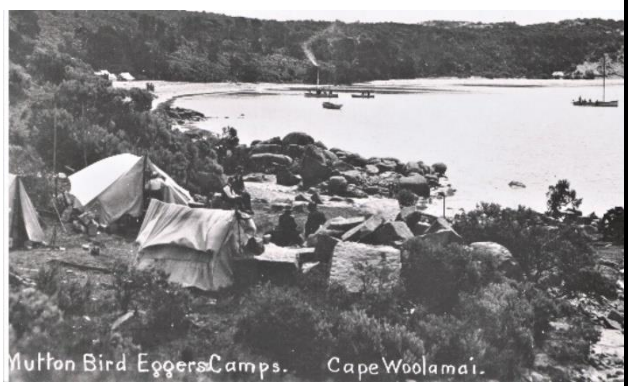
And there's lots of photos from the historical society's extensive collection.

Something for everyone inside these pages!









For more information about the Phillip Island & District Historical Society Inc:
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