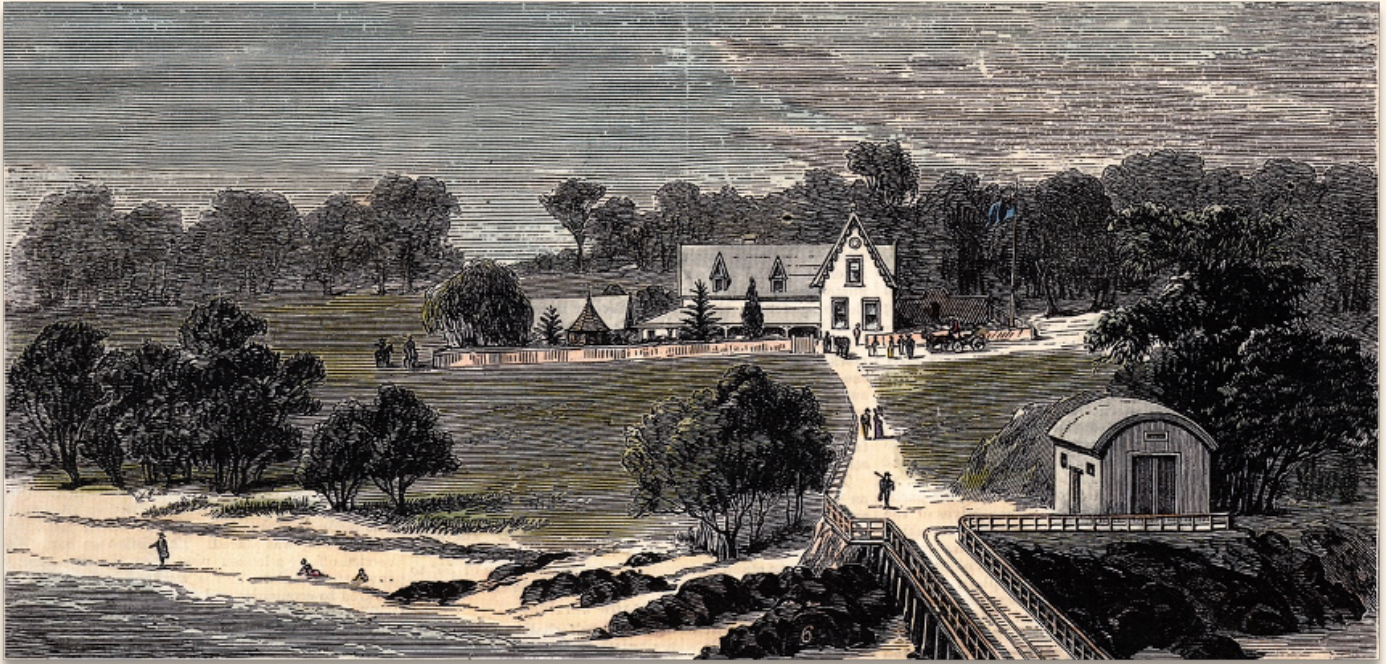


# The Isle of Wight

The toast of Phillip Island



## “The most imposing sight to greet arriving passengers”

The beautiful *Isle of Wight* hotel was a most imposing sight to greet the arriving passengers at the front door of Cowes from as early as 1870. It was known as being the premier accommodation house on the Island for many years.

Starting life as a two-bedroom wattle and daub cottage, the stately hotel was built around the original structure, developing into what was described at the time as one of the most comfortable hotels in Victoria. From its confines, the sounds of revel often punctured the evening quiet.

Described in the press in 1889, as a “picturesque Swiss-looking house with its peaked gables and galleries and verandas”, the original Isle of Wight hotel was the toast of Phillip island.

The land on which the hotel sat was originally owned by Joseph Richardson, and the first license for the hotel was granted to Francois Bauer in 1870.

Francois Joseph Bauer was born Francis Joseph, son of Joseph and Isabella Bauer in 1827. He was baptised in St. James London on 27 January 1828. Joseph’s occupation was a cook and Francis or Francois followed in his father’s footsteps also becoming a cook. He arrived in Australia in 1856 on the *Anglesey*.

Before his move to Phillip Island, he worked as a cook in Melbourne but in 1867 was declared insolvent in Melbourne. The cause of this insolvency was “want of employment and pressure of creditors”. His liabilities were listed as £ 192 12s 9d and his assets were listed as £ 5.

By the late mid 1870s, Francois’ fortunes had turned around and he was exceedingly successful in the running of the *Isle of Wight*, which had been extended to accommodate 50 to 60 guests.

Sadly in 1878, he lost his son, Joseph, who had assisted him in running the hotel.

Francois continued to operate the *Isle of Wight* until the 1890s, when things started to turn sour and an application was made in the San Remo Police Court by Samuel Amess in 1894, to have Francois evicted from possession of the premises. Francois left the Island during about 1895 and died in Melbourne in 1898.

On 23 April 1925, just before 10 am, a fire broke out in the ballroom of the hotel and within minutes the original Bauer’s *Isle of Wight Hotel* was totally destroyed. Fortunately, there were only 6 guests in the hotel at the time of the blaze and no one was injured.

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# “Fire broke out in the Ballroom and the hotel was destroyed within minutes”

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In early 1927, plans for the new two storey brick building replacing the original Isle of Wight were approved. Construction of the new hotel would provide accommodation for at least 200 people with the added feature of a golf course.

Construction commenced immediately and the new Isle of Wight was opened by October 1927 (pictured above). It would have hot water and steam services, a refrigerator and a septic tank system. The 18-hole golf course opened in December 1927.

In the early morning of 22 May 2010, history repeated itself when fire broke out in the second *Isle of Wight Hotel*, completely destroying the building. The remains were demolished, and the site has remained vacant since then.

