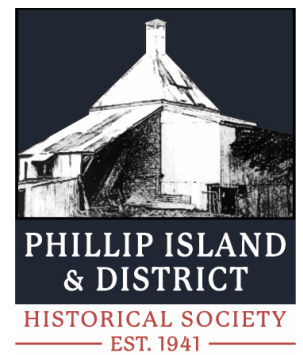


Phillip Island District Historical Society Inc.

Office: 0466 049 755
www.phillipislandhistory.org.au

President: Doug Waugh
Secretary: Pamela Rothfield



September 2024 Newsletter



As September brings the first whispers of Spring, with fresh blooms and the joyful chatter of new life across our island, it also marks a special occasion for our Historical Society—the Annual General Meeting. This meeting, while the only one we're formally required to hold under our constitution, is far more than a formality. It's a pivotal time when we gather to shape the future of our Society - a chance to breathe new life into our Society, much like the season itself.

We're on the lookout for members to join our Management Committee, bringing fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and a renewed energy to our shared passion for history. You do not need to be a wizard on Island history - your knowledge will grow over time as we work together. Whether you're interested in the Management Committee or one of our standing committees, we'd love to welcome

you aboard. Our committees are at the heart of everything we do, and now, more than ever, we need fresh voices, bold ideas, and passionate members who are eager to make a difference. This is your opportunity to step up, to influence the direction of the Historical Society and Museum, and to bring new energy and creativity to our efforts.

Imagine the impact you could have—whether on the Management Committee or one of our standing committees—your contribution could be the spark that ignites new projects, inspires our community, and ensures our history is preserved and celebrated for generations to come.

I hope the above inspires you to consider joining a committee. Attached is a Nomination form for self-nomination, which can be completed and emailed back to us for seconding.

Achievements



This month saw the Phillip Island and District Historical Society's museum shortlisted as one of five finalists in the category of **Small Project of the Year (Museum)** in the Australian Museums and Galleries Association of Victorian (AMaGA). See **attached** story featured in this week's Phillip Island & San Remo Advertiser.

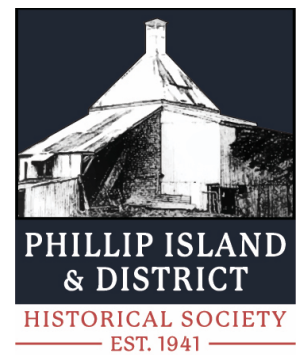
New Members

We welcome Diane Scukovic to our membership and Jim & Sandra Inness, Mike & Pip Cleeland along with Kerry & Colin Francis, rejoining the Society.

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Membership in our Society is the heartbeat that keeps Phillip Island's history alive. We all know people who cherish the rich history of our island—why not invite them to join us? At just \$30 per year, our membership is one of the most affordable on the island, costing only 57 cents a day. That's incredible value for a cause we all care about!

Activities

Outreach

In September, we had the pleasure of hosting a tutorial session for the Dandenong Historical Society, where we shared valuable insights on uploading their catalogue to the 'Victorian Collection'—the web-based system managed by Museums Victoria and AMaGA. I want to extend a special thank you to our cataloguers and especially Elaine Alexander for her exceptional expertise in this area. The feedback we received from the Dandenong Historical Society was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the impact and value of Elaine's guidance.

Advocacy for Historical Assets

Cowes Jetty Shed



We're pleased to share some positive news regarding our ongoing efforts to safeguard the historic Goods Shed at the Cowes Jetty. Following our letter to the Bass Coast Shire Council regarding the deteriorating condition of this important structure, the CEO of the Council took immediate action. He has personally visited the site and is currently exploring various options to address the concerns we raised.

This prompt response highlights the strength of our collective voice and the importance of preserving our local heritage. The Goods Shed, with its rich history and architectural significance, remains a cherished symbol of Phillip Island's past. We will continue to advocate for its protection and keep you updated as further developments unfold.

Iconic Chicory Kilns. Recognizing the deteriorating condition of many of the Island's privately-owned chicory kilns, we recently reached out to the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) to advocate for their preservation. In our letter, we highlighted the historical significance of these structures and expressed our concern that, without intervention, we may lose these important pieces of our history.

Our Society remains committed to protecting Phillip Island's rich history, and we will continue to advocate for the preservation of these important cultural assets. We will keep you updated on any developments.

October is a special time for celebrating history across Victoria, and our Society is excited to join in with our first temporary exhibition at the museum. This exhibition will commemorate the 150th anniversary of Cowes Primary School and San Remo Primary School will open on 18th October.

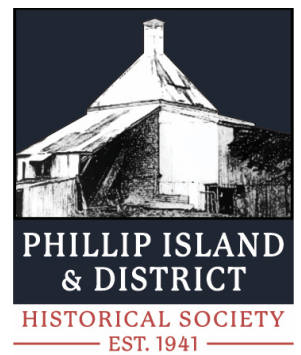
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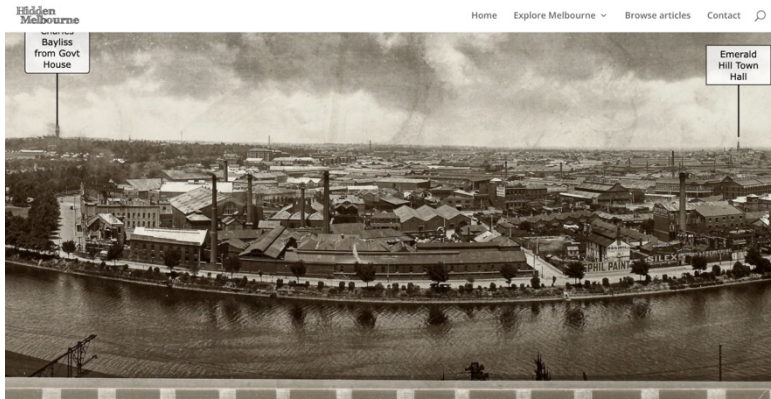
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Hidden Melbourne



Immediately after the completion of the AGM, as reported in last month's Newsletter we're thrilled to welcome Barney Meyer, historian, photographer, and founder of the captivating website 'Hidden Melbourne', [www.hiddenmelbourne.com.au].

Barney is renowned for his remarkable ability to bring Melbourne's past to life, offering a unique 'armchair time travel' experience such as the panoramic image

here which is of Melbourne in 1920. Through his lens, you'll journey through not only the city's rich history, but many other locations as well, comparing yesterday's landscapes with today's scenes. This is a rare opportunity to delve into Melbourne's (and beyond) hidden stories and discover how the various landscapes have evolved over time. Don't miss this chance to be inspired and captivated by Barney's extraordinary work!

[At the Phillip Island RSL, 1pm on 26th September 2024.](#)



Special Birthday Celebration. We are thrilled to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Lorna Collins (née McFee), who will be celebrating her 100th birthday next week! Born on 24 September 1924 at the Warley Bush Nursing Hospital, Lorna is Phillip Island's longest-living resident who was born right here on the island.

Lorna will be marking this incredible milestone in the most fitting place—the Foreshore Restaurant in the village of her birth, Rhyll. It's a celebration of a life deeply intertwined with the history of our island.

In this edition, we've included a special treat: a short interview with Lorna, along with a delightful story she's written about washing and ironing days during her youth. It's a wonderful glimpse into the past, shared by someone who has lived through so much of Phillip Island's history.

I know all members will join in wishing Lorna a very happy 100th birthday!

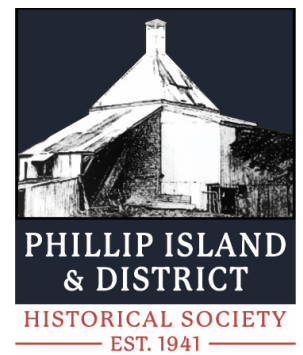
Enjoy!

Pamela Rothfield

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Do you have any memorabilia from the **Cowes Primary School** or the **San Remo Primary School** – such as workbooks, photographs, uniforms etc. suitable for a temporary exhibition of these two wonderful institutions, to celebrate their sesquicentennial in October? If so, please contact us at:

hello@phillipislandhistory.org.au



Interview with Lorna Collins.



Lorna McFee as a young girl in Rhyll

"I can't believe I have reached 100! It has gone so fast. It feels as though my life has been 'book-ended' by Phillip Island.

Having been born here and lived here for the first almost 30 years and then returning permanently almost 20 years ago - I sometime wonder what I did in between!

The funny thing is that as a girl living in what was the tiny little hamlet of Rhyll, I was dying to live in the 'big smoke' in Cowes! Never dreaming that I would venture further afield to Melbourne and Queensland as well!

When I look back on my childhood at the farm in Rhyll, it wasn't about luxury, but it was certainly a wonderful, idyllic life. Dad worked hard growing chicory and milking cows, and I remember him sending the extra cream off to the factory at Archies Creek. My brother Jack would help Dad with the vegetable garden which covered about two acres, so there was always plenty to go around. It was just how things were back then — any neighbour who stopped by would leave with a basket full of fresh veggies.

We also had free-range turkeys and chickens, and one of my fondest memories is the fun we had searching for their hidden nests of eggs. Those simple, everyday moments made life at Rhyll so special.

Highlights of my life? My wonderful family and my wonderful football team - Geelong."

Newsletter written and edited by Pamela Rothfield

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<https://www.facebook.com/pidhs>

Recollections of Washing and Ironing Days in the 1930s

By Lorna Collins

Every Monday morning was dedicated to washing day. The process started early, with the washing done in



an old-fashioned copper pot, perched on a brick foundation just outside the washhouse door. We'd light a fire underneath the copper—a skill we perfected with plenty of practice! It took just the right amount of air to get the fire hot enough to boil the water.

On rainy days or when the wood was damp, the fire would struggle to catch, filling the air with smoke and leaving us with watery eyes—quite the challenging start to the day! But Mum had a clever trick: she'd fetch some dripping from the kitchen, toss it onto the fire, and soon enough, flames would appear, saving the day.

Once the fire was roaring, we'd fill the copper with cold water, add the clothes, along with grated velvet soap (later Rinso), and sometimes a bit of lemon juice for extra whitening. The clothes were left to boil, which was essential for getting them truly clean. The boiling water created the turbulence needed to scrub the dirt away—a concept not too far off from the modern washing machine.

As the clothes boiled, we'd use a clean copper stick—often a sawn-off broom handle sanded smooth with use—to push them back down into the water, as they constantly bobbed to the surface. This process continued until we were satisfied that the clothes were thoroughly clean.

Once the clothes were deemed clean, we'd lift them out with the copper stick and into a large cane basket, which we placed on a sheet of corrugated iron angled to drain the hot water back into the copper.

Our water came from a large underground well. My father used to pull it up with a bucket tied to a long rope, but later he installed a pump, which provided great fun for us kids as we took turns pumping the water. Water conservation was crucial since our supply depended entirely on rainwater.

Our washhouse was a simple weatherboard lean-to attached to the back of the house. It had twin concrete troughs, a rough wooden floor, and shelves over a white porcelain bath in one corner. It wasn't unusual for the washhouse to double as a bathroom.

After boiling, the clothes were rinsed in the concrete troughs and wrung out by hand—until we eventually got a wringer, many years later. The clean clothes were then placed in the cane basket, ready for the clothesline.

Delicate items like woollens and silks couldn't be boiled, so after the main wash was done, we'd carefully wash these by hand in the warm rinse water, followed by a rinse in clean water. Heavily soiled clothing, like those my father and brother wore while working in the chicory fields, were scrubbed hard on a washboard with a corrugated metal surface to help remove stubborn dirt.

Once all the washing was done, we'd carry the basket to the clothesline. Our lines were made of stranded wire, stretched between large poles with a ti-tree prop in the middle to lift them high and catch the breeze. On days with an extra-large wash, we'd string up extra makeshift lines of rope.

Given that washing day was Monday, it's no surprise that ironing day followed on Tuesday—unless, of course, it was delayed due to rain. On Monday afternoon, once the clothes were dry, they'd be gathered from the line and put into the large cane basket. Some heavier items, like socks that weren't quite dry, would be left out until the following day.

Ironing back then was a more involved process, particularly with certain garments that needed to be starched. Detached collars, tablecloths, serviettes, and doilies were starched by dissolving starch in hot water, then thinning the mixture with more water until it was ready for dipping. Once saturated in the starch, the items were hung on the line to dry stiff.

After drying, the starched items were 'damped down'—sprinkled with water from a sauce bottle with holes in the lid—and then rolled up and stored away for ironing the next day. The water made the fabric softer and easier to iron.

The remaining clothes were sorted—some were folded and put away, while others were set aside for ironing.



We used two types of irons. The first was a flat iron (left), which was heated on our wood stove. We had three of these, and as one cooled off, it was replaced by another. The second was a box iron, (right)



larger and equipped with a compartment for hot coals. We'd blow on the coals with bellows through a hole on the back of the box to keep them burning, with smoke escaping through a funnel at the front, also providing draught.

My father and brother played cricket for Rhyll every Saturday, so their 'creams'—cream shirts and trousers—had to be just right. I often got the job of ironing these, taking special care to avoid getting any dirty marks from the iron. The shirts were easy enough, but the trousers required careful steaming with a hot iron and a damp cloth to set the creases perfectly.

While washing and ironing days were certainly more labour-intensive than today, there was a great sense of satisfaction at the end of it all, with the aroma of freshly ironed, sun-dried clothes filling the air. And, of course, there was comfort in knowing that this task was done for another week.

PHILLIP ISLAND

7 DAY WEATHER FORECAST

Wed/Sep11



SHOWERS

11 16

Thu/Sep12



SHOWER OR TWO

9 15

Fri/Sep13



SHOWER OR TWO

9 15

Sat



SHO

9

Museum shortlisted for prestigious award

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Phillip Island and District Historical Society's Museum at Berninnet has been honoured as one of the five finalists in the prestigious Small Project of the Year (Museum) category by the Australian Museums and Galleries Association of Victoria this week.

Pamela Rothfield, Secretary of the Historical Society, said it was fitting recognition of the society's perseverance to preserving and sharing the rich history of Phillip Island, from its early days of European settlement to the vibrant community it is today.

"The journey to this achievement has been both challenging and rewarding," said Pamela.

"After the move and subsequent demolition of the old Heritage Building in 2021, which housed our original museum, the society faced the significant task of operating in a much smaller space.

"With the expertise of Convergence Design, we collaborated to create a new, thoughtfully curated space. Although we had to reduce the selection of artefacts on display, the museum continues to be a vital resource for both locals and visitors, offering a window into the island's past."

However, the transition has not been without its difficulties.



The Phillip Island and District Historical Society's Museum at Berninnet is one of five finalists in the Small Project of the Year (Museum) category by the Australian Museums and Galleries Association of Victoria.

The reduction in space at Berninnet has sparked concerns within the community, as many cherished exhibits had to be scaled down or reimaged, creating an off-site storage issue for the society.

The winner of the Small Project of the Year award will be announced on October 1, and the society eagerly awaits the

outcome.

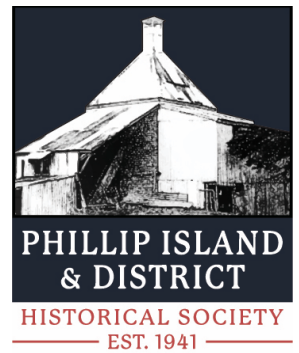
Regardless of the result, being shortlisted for such a significant award is a feather in the cap for the society and a reflection of their efforts to bring Phillip Island's history to life.

Stay tuned for updates and be sure to visit the museum to see the work that has earned this well-deserved recognition.

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COMMITTEE NOMINATION FORM

THE PHILLIP ISLAND AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC. ('SOCIETY')

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – THURSDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2024

- All positions will be declared vacant at the AGM on Thursday 26 September 2024
- Nominations will be received until 11.59pm on Wednesday 25 September 2024
- Please submit nomination form via email to: hello@phillipislandhistory.org.au

I, _____ being a paid up member of the
Society, wish to nominate for the position of:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> President | <input type="checkbox"/> Vice President |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secretary | <input type="checkbox"/> Member of a Standing Committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Treasurer | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Member 1 | |

Nominee signed: _____ Date: _____

Seconded (Name): _____ Signature: _____

AGM to take place at the ANZAC Room, Phillip Island RSL at 1pm Thursday 21 September 2023

(AGM takes place after the 12pm lunch - optional - in the RSL Bistro)