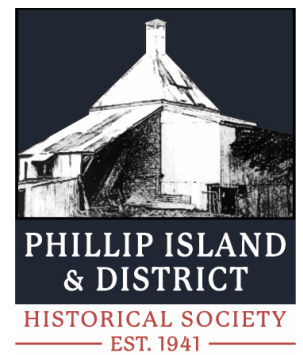


Phillip Island District Historical Society Inc.

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

President: Doug Waugh
Secretary: Pamela Rothfield



December 2024 Newsletter



As 2024 draws to a close, we can reflect on the past twelve months with a genuine sense of satisfaction and pride. For a small, volunteer-based society, we've certainly achieved a great deal, proving once again that we're capable of punching well above our weight.

Sadly, our much-loved Christmas dinner had to be cancelled this year due to low attendance. The challenges of the current economic climate are being felt across our community, including within our own membership. Despite this, the Society continues to offer exceptional value, with membership costing just 57 cents per week—an investment in preserving and celebrating our local history.

Looking ahead, 2025 promises to be another exciting year. We'll kick off with the **Gathering of Neighbours** on Sunday, 26th January, at Rhyll Hall and Park. This family-friendly event invites us all to reflect, respect, and celebrate the incredible land we call home. More details can be found on page 2 of this newsletter.

In April, we'll join in the National Trust Heritage Festival with this year's theme, **'Unearthed.'** The Society will host an exhibition showcasing fascinating items from our collection that were unearthed in years gone by—stay tuned for more information as plans take shape.

We're also thrilled to announce a new exhibition in the works, dedicated to the history of the original Warley Hospital. This will coincide with the anticipated opening of the new Community Hospital, expected in the first half of 2025.

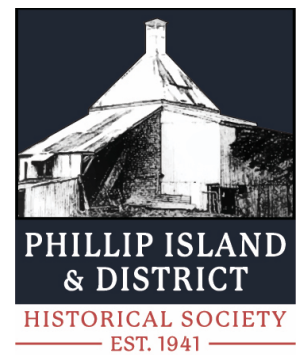
Behind the scenes, the Society is actively working to protect Phillip Island's iconic chicory kilns. We've applied for a grant through Bass Coast Shire Council to engage a heritage consultant who will update the 2008 Heritage Report on the kilns' condition and explore what protections are currently in place. This project will hopefully serve as a foundation for ensuring support for their long-term preservation.

And that's not all—there are several other exciting projects on the horizon, which we'll share with you as they take shape. Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to another vibrant and productive year together.

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Vale Noel Nicol. Very sad news that one of our long time members, Noel Nicol passed away on November 25. Noel was married to the late Audrey Nicol (nee Harris) descendant of the Richardson family. Our sincere condolences to his daughter and son, Judy and Robert.

The final story for 2024 explores the naming of the beloved Berry's Beach. Even today, many locals still refer to it as Barry's Beach, sparking curiosity and debate about its true name.

The Management Committee of the Historical Society wishes all our members, their families and friends a safe and joyous Christmas and we look forward to the excitement of 2025.

Enjoy
Pamela Rothfield



A big welcome to both **Judy Nicol and Glenda Longshaw** to our Society.

o000o



The Society eagerly awaits the return of our third annual **Gathering of Neighbours event**, which takes place on Sunday, January 26, at Rhyll Hall and Park. Festivities will begin at 11am, bringing the community together for a day of reflection, respect, and celebration this Australia Day.

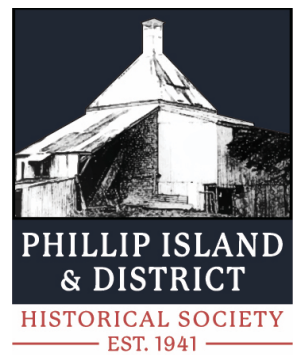
This delightful family event promises something for everyone. Enjoy live music, entertaining activities for the kids, food vans, and a complimentary sausage sizzle. For the adults, the Society will also be operating a bar stocked with a selection of wines and beer, adding to the festive atmosphere.

Rhyll Park will come alive with the spirit of community and camaraderie, creating a memorable experience for all. We invite you to join us for this perfect blend of fun and reflection—mark your calendars and be part of the celebration!

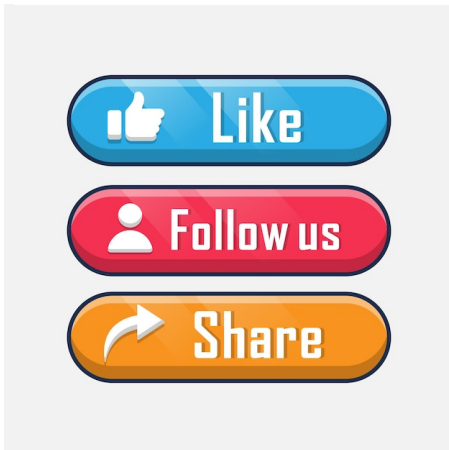
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Membership Matters

Do you know someone who would like to become part of our Society? Every membership strengthens our ability to preserve the essence of Phillip Island. Let's make sure the voices of our past are never lost — encourage others to join us today!

Newsletter written and edited by Pamela Rothfield

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Berry's Beach: A Name, a Story, a Legacy

by Pamela Rothfield

Berry's Beach is one of Phillip Island's most iconic spots, but the story behind its name is lesser known and often confused. For years, locals referred to it as "Barry's Beach," leading many to wonder about the true origins of Berry's Beach Road. The name, as it turns out, is a testament to the life of an early settler: George Berry.



George Berry

George Berry's journey began in Westmorland, England, around 1815, where he was born into a family of weavers. While some accounts suggest he worked as a stonemason, it's more likely he followed in his father's footsteps as a weaver before seeking new opportunities in the colony of Port Phillip, arriving in 1841. By 1846, George had married Susannah Head, and the couple began their life together in a settlement known as Saltwater—modern-day Footscray.

Their pioneering spirit took them westward over the years. By 1854, they had settled in Derrimut, and later, Melton, where George farmed the land and possibly crossed paths with fellow farmer James McIlwraith. McIlwraith would become one of Phillip Island's first settlers in 1868, and it's likely his tales of lush pastures inspired George to venture to the island.

In 1870, George Berry selected a 136-acre parcel of land on the island's south coast, east of Native Dog Creek. Here, he built a wattle and daub house, nestled on the sheltered eastern slope of the property's hill. George and Susannah raised their family of eight children here, with their youngest, Ada Berry, born in 1872.

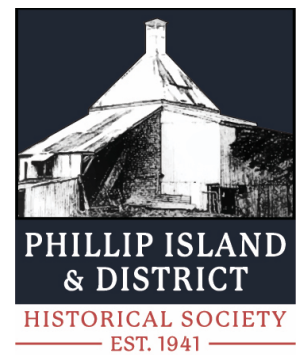


Susannah Berry

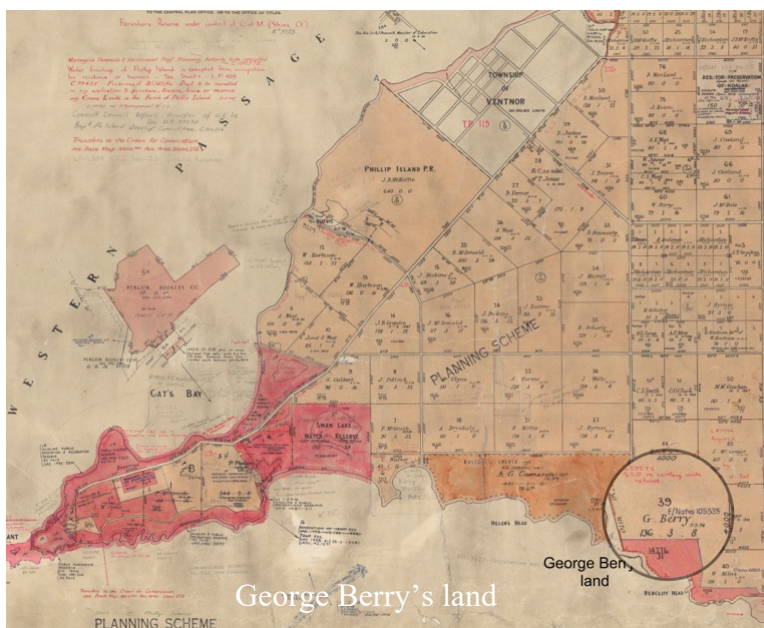
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George farmed the land with determination, engaging in mixed agriculture: dairying, raising poultry and pigs, and growing oats and barley. Like many of Phillip Island's early settlers, however, the Berrys faced relentless challenges. The lack of water, plagues of rabbits, caterpillars, and armyworms, and the sheer cost of transporting goods to market made life gruelling. By the mid-1870s, George and his family were struggling to scrape together a living.



The harsh realities of subsistence farming finally forced George to make the heartbreaking decision to leave Phillip Island in the late 1870s. The family moved first to Avenel and later settled in Korumburra, Gippsland, where George and Susannah lived out their final years.

Even after the Berrys left, their mark on the land remained. According to Joshua Gliddon's *Phillip Island – In Picture and Story*, neighbouring settlers salvaged stones George had meticulously carved

for his fireplace. By 1925, part of his land, east of Native Dog Creek, was reclaimed by the Crown to establish a wildlife reserve.

The confusion over the name “Barry’s Beach” likely arose from oral traditions and mishearings over the years. But the historical record is clear: it was George Berry who worked this rugged land, and it is his legacy that endures in the name Berry’s Beach today.



As visitors stroll the sands of Berry's Beach or take in the stunning views of the south coast, they are treading on a landscape that once echoed with the footsteps of a determined settler family. The beach, like George's story, is a poignant reminder of the challenges and hardships faced by Phillip Island's early pioneers.