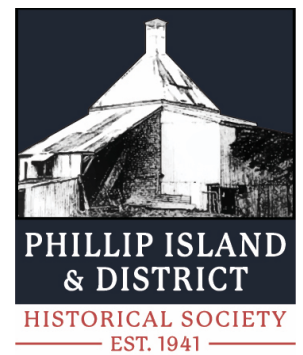


Phillip Island District Historical Society Inc.

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

President: Doug Waugh  
Secretary: Pamela Rothfield



## January 2025 Newsletter



### Welcome to 2025 and Our Holiday Edition Newsletter

Happy New Year! We're thrilled to kick off 2025 with some exciting updates and events.

As mentioned in last month's newsletter, we're starting the year with **The Gathering of Neighbours** next Sunday, **26th January**, at **Rhyll Hall and Park**. This family-friendly event is an opportunity to reflect, respect, and celebrate the incredible land we all call

home. Starting at **11 am**, the day will feature:

- Food vans, including an ice cream van
- Live music
- Activities for kids (and grandkids!)
- A free sausage sizzle
- Beverages for adults (proceeds from the bar will support the Historical Society—so raise a glass for a great cause!)

The weather forecast suggests a lovely day, so fingers crossed it holds true!

### Important Updates

- **Research Room Closure in February**

The Bass Coast Shire Council has advised us that our **research room on the first floor of Berninneit in Cowes** will be closed throughout February. This is due to internal works in preparation for an air test to achieve **Passiv Haus certification**. These works will include internal investigations and rectifications, ensuring the facility meets the highest environmental standards.

- **Heritage Grant for Chicory Kilns**

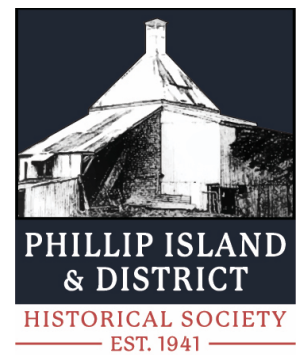
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We're delighted to share that our grant application to engage a heritage consultant has been successful! This funding will allow us to update the **2008 report on the condition of Phillip Island's chicory kilns**, paving the way for the preservation of these iconic structures.

### **A Look at Australia Day**

In the interests of fairness and reflection, we've included a special feature on the **history of Australia Day**, researched by Charis Chang for an article originally published on news.com.au. It's a thoughtful exploration of the evolving significance of this day and its impact on our national identity.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter and look forward to seeing many of you at the Gathering of Neighbours. Here's to a fantastic year ahead!

Enjoy

Pamela Rothfield



A big welcome to Mary Whelan to our Society. Mary is a long-time resident of Phillip Island and has been very involved in recording the history of Warley Hospital as well as the history of golf on Phillip island.

o000o

Our third annual **Gathering of Neighbours event**, 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 and non-alcoholic drinks.

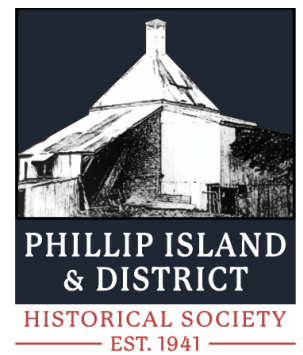
Rhyll Park will come alive with the spirit of community and camaraderie, creating a memorable experience for all. We invite you to join us for this perfect blend of fun and reflection—we hope to see you there!



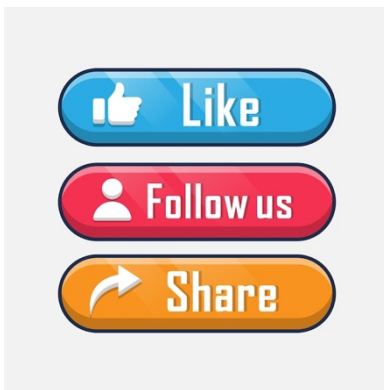
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<https://www.youtube.com/@PhillipIslandHistoricalSociety>.

## 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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## The Other Australia Day

Australia Day, often a source of heated debate, has not always been celebrated on January 26, nor has the date been a fixed national tradition. The origins of this day and its significance offer a complex historical narrative.



January 26 marks the landing of Captain Arthur Phillip at Sydney Cove in 1788, where he raised the Union Jack and proclaimed British sovereignty. However, the First Fleet of 11 ships had actually arrived earlier, landing at Botany Bay on January 18, 1788. Finding Botany Bay unsuitable due to its lack of fresh water and fertile soil, the fleet moved north to Sydney Cove.

Initially, January 26 was known as “First Landing Day” or “Foundation Day.” Early settlers in New South Wales commemorated it with anniversary dinners, and in 1818, Governor Lachlan Macquarie hosted a 30-gun salute to mark the 30th anniversary. Over time, events like regattas on Sydney Harbour became a hallmark of the day, but its celebration was largely confined to New South Wales.

In the 19th century, other states marked their own significant dates:

- **Tasmania** celebrated Regatta Day in December, honouring both Abel Tasman’s landing in 1642 and its separation from New South Wales in 1825.
- **Western Australia** observed Foundation Day on June 1, commemorating the arrival of white settlers in 1829.
- **South Australia** held Proclamation Day on December 28.

By 1888, January 26, then known as “Anniversary Day,” was observed in all capital cities except Adelaide. Even then, concerns arose about celebrating the state’s convict origins, and prominent figures like NSW Governor Henry Parkes acknowledged the day as a reminder of dispossession for Aboriginal people.

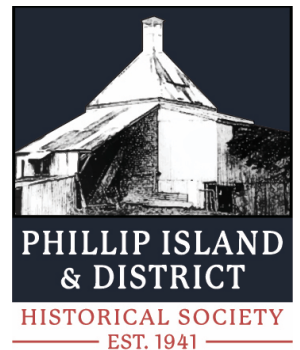
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With the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901, efforts grew to establish a unifying national holiday. Empire Day, introduced in 1905, honoured Queen Victoria and imperial ties. The first “Australia Day” was held on July 30, 1915, as a fundraiser for World War I.

It wasn't until 1935 that all states agreed to celebrate Australia Day on January 26. However, it took until the 1940s for the day to be recognized as a national public holiday,

and only in 1984 did the National Australia Day Committee receive federal funding.

In recent years, as reported by Charis Chang in her article on Australia Day, calls to change the date have grown louder, with critics arguing that January 26 marks the dispossession and oppression of Indigenous peoples.



Charis writes that Macquarie University's Professor Bronwyn Carlson notes that Australia Day has not always been tied to this date, emphasizing that it is not a long-standing tradition.

Professor Carlson believes the date is problematic because it overlooks the broader and often painful history of Australia's colonial past. While she does not consider the date itself racist, she highlights how the colonial events following the First Fleet were

driven by notions of race, leading to the dispossession and massacre of Indigenous Australians.

Changing the date, she argues, would signal a broader understanding of history and a willingness to acknowledge the impact of colonization. For many, this shift would be a step toward reconciliation and inclusivity in modern Australia.

The history of Australia Day shows that its celebration has been fluid, tied to evolving perspectives on the nation's identity. While the date remains contentious, it also presents an opportunity to deepen our understanding of Australia's past and its ongoing impact on all Australians.