

To Date Tourism has become the major industry. Most employment is in entertainment, construction and services which can be attributed to the numbers of visitors. It is estimated that there are approximately 3.5 million visitors to Phillip Island each year.

Heritage Centre Museum

Phillip Island's history can be traced in the Heritage Centre Museum. In the early days, the island supported a variety of industries including, sealing, whaling, sheep farming and chicory farming. It was even used for a short time as a military post to deter the French from claiming the area. In 1920 a track to the penguin colony was built, and tourism began.

The museum features exhibitions and a 20-minute video of the history and wildlife of the Island. While on Phillip Island, call in to the Heritage Centre Museum in Thompson Avenue, Cowes.

Opening times: All year except Christmas & Boxing Day, New Years Day & Anzac Day.

- Saturday 10am to 12 noon
- Sunday 2pm to 4.30pm
- During school holidays Tuesday & Thursdays 2pm to 4.30pm

Groups by arrangement and admission by gold coin donation.

Contacts:

Secretary Christine Grayden ph: 5956 8501

Email: history@waterfront.net.au

Website: <http://home.waterfront.net.au/phillipislandhistory>



For further information

Phillip Island Visitor Information Centre
895 Phillip Island Tourist Road, Newhaven
Phone: 1300 366 422
Email: piinfo@basscoast.vic.gov.au

Cowes Visitor Information Centre
Cnr Thompson Avenue & Church Street
Email: covesinfo@basscoast.vic.gov.au

Wonthaggi Visitor Information Centre
1 Bent St (cnr Bass Hwy), Wonthaggi
Phone: 1300 854 334
Email: woninfo@basscoast.vic.gov.au

Inverloch Visitor Information Centre
16 A'Beckett Street, Inverloch
Phone: 1300 762 433
Email: invyinfo@basscoast.vic.gov.au

Disclaimer: Whilst every reasonable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet. Bass Coast Shire Council does not accept any responsibility for inaccuracies, omissions, incorrect information or action taken as a result of any information detailed in this guide. Updated 18/03/2011

Phillip Island History

Past to Present



www.visitphillipisland.com

1798 George Bass discovered Phillip Island in January 1798.

1801 In March, Lieutenant James Grant entered what is now known as Western Port Bay by the Western passage. He anchored in a bay that he named Elizabeth Cove, after the daughter of the Governor of NSW (near Grossard Point). Lt. Grant thought the land on his right resembled a horseman's helmet, or a snapper's head, so he named it Snappers Island (now known as Cape Woolamai). Lt. Grant planted the first crops in Victoria on Churchill Island, named after the Devon farmer who gave him the seeds. He also raised a blockhouse



measuring 4 x 8m – however the exact site of this blockhouse still remains a mystery. At the end of 1801, Lt. Murray was sent by Governor King to further map

the area. Lt. Murray commanded the 'Lady Nelson' with the same group of surveyors used by Lt. Grant. They sailed into the bay and named it 'Port King'. On returning to Port Phillip Bay, he made his first recorded mention of Snapper Island as Phillip Island, deciding to rename the island after Governor Arthur Phillip, the first Governor.

1826 White man first formally occupied the Island in 1826 when Captain Wright and crew made a settlement in Rhyll. This settlement was soon abandoned however for Corinella on the mainland where there was a dependable supply

of fresh water. The Island had been used informally by sealers for perhaps 20-30 years previously before settlement in 1826.

1842 John and William McHaffie from Scotland were granted the right to use the Island as a sheep run. The McHaffie brothers were responsible for clearing some of the Island's vegetation the introduction of fallow deer, rabbits and kangaroos, the purpose being for game hunting.

1865 After another survey was completed on the Island, Cowes was officially named. Commander Cox thought the Island resembled the "Isle of Wight" in England. Upon completion of the survey, the island was thrown open for free selection.

1870 The first Chicory crop was grown on Phillip Island and in 1873 John and Solomon West built the first kiln. Due to soil fertility, climate and a market nearby in Melbourne, it was a viable business. Only the root of the plant was used (similar to a parsnip). The root was dug from the ground using a "Chicory Devil", a special fork. The chicory was then washed, sliced then



roasted in the kiln over a fire. It was used as a bulk additive to coffee, and also made into an essence. The chicory industry boomed from the mid 1930's to the early 1940's, through the years of the great depression and the

Second World War. The last operational chicory kiln closed in the early 1980's.

1880 Koalas were introduced to Phillip Island and the koala population on the Island today is quite low, as chlamydia and traffic have had a dramatic affect. In 1992 the Koala Conservation Centre was opened, allowing visitors to view koalas close up in their natural habitat.



1882 Many farmers found it difficult to survive as their blocks were small and often in exposed areas. As sheep and cattle required large areas of land and feed, life was very hard for these farmers. Many eventually sold out to wealthier farmers, who in turn increased the size of their properties. By 1882, William Harbison and John Cleeland owned 23% and 40% of the rural land respectively. The two properties were used for cattle and sheep.

1940 Before the first bridge was constructed in 1940, the Island was dependent on ferry transport. The ferries ran between San Remo and Newhaven across the Eastern Passage and between Cowes and Stony Point on the Mornington Peninsula. With the completion of the suspension bridge there saw an increase in the number of visitors to the Island and holiday homes. The suspension bridge only had a load limit of 6 tones. Difficulties arose as large milk tankers could not cross and tourist buses had to unload before crossing. A new concrete bridge was opened in 1969 at a cost of \$3.2million.