

# **Griffiths Island whaling station, Port Fairy: An Archaeological Survey**

**Callum Harvey**

Flinders University

2023

## Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Callum Harvey', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Callum Harvey

Submitted in partial fulfilment of a Master of Maritime Archaeology degree in the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, Flinders University, Bedford Park, South Australia.

**Cover Photo:** State Library of Victoria, Image IAN21/05/70/101, Belfast (Port Fairy) Harbor Works, Robert Bruce, 1870.

## Abstract

Griffiths Island is one of six whaling station sites on the Victorian Heritage Register. At the time of writing no in depth archaeological research has been conducted on these sites. As such, Victorian shore-based whaling sites are underrepresented in an Australian context. This research seeks to contribute to the understanding of the Victorian shore-based whaling industry, and in doing so evaluate the remains and significance of Griffiths Island whaling station in a national context.

## Acknowledgements

Firstly, I'd like to say a big thanks to my supervisor Dr Wendy Van Duivenvoorde who supported my idea from the get-go and offered some much-needed direction.

A super big thanks to friends and family that have offered direction and guidance in the early stages of this research. You all helped turn what little information I started with into what it is now. A very special thanks to my folks Fiona and Peter, who I pestered with questions throughout the process.

Sunniva you have been a constant support through the stresses of juggling work, thesis, and moving.

A special thanks to the Port Fairy Historic Society, Marten Syme, and the Moyne Shire for their speedy response to questions and their willingness to share information on the region.

# Table of Contents

Declaration	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
List of Figures	vii
List of Tables	vii
List of Appendices	ix
Glossary	x
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
Research question and aims	2
Justification	2
Significance	4
Methods	4
Chapter outline	5
Background	6
The shore-based whaling industry	6
Study area	8
Site Context	10
Chapter 2. Literature review	13
Western Australia	14
Case Study: Pakington whaling station	15
South Australia	19
Case Study: Sleaford Bay Whaling Station Site	20
Victoria	24
Case Study: Portland Bay	25
Tasmania	28
Case Study: Adventure Bay	29
New South Wales [and Queensland]	32
Case Study: Davidson whaling station	33
Summary	35
Chapter 3. Methodology	37
Approach	37
Historical Research	38
Site survey	41
Limitations	42
Chapter 4. Results	44

Historical research	44
Maps	44
Map georeferencing	46
Newspapers and gazettes	50
Whaling in Port Fairy	50
Johnathan Griffiths	54
Construction of the Port Fairy breakwater	58
Township of Port Fairy	60
Aboriginal relationships	62
Disturbance	64
Field Survey	67
Site inspection	67
Site survey	67
Whaling Building Survey Area	68
Southeastern and Southwestern Survey Area	76
Island survey	76
Limitations	77
Chapter 5. Analysis	79
Documentary research	79
Survey	82
Disturbance	83
Significance	85
Conclusion	89
Suggestions for future work	91
References	92
Appendices	100

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1:</b> Location of Port Fairy in relation to Melbourne.	9
<b>Figure 2:</b> Map of the 33 heritage registered shore-based whaling station sites in Australia.	13
<b>Figure 3:</b> Heritage registered shore-based whaling sites in Western Australia.	15
<b>Figure 4:</b> Pakington whaling station site.	16
<b>Figure 5:</b> Dressed stone building blocks with render eroded from foredune, and lying exposed and scattered on beach in May 2018 (Anderson 2018:5).	17
<b>Figure 6:</b> Heritage registered shore-based whaling sites in South Australia.	19
<b>Figure 7:</b> Sleaford Bay whaling station site.	23
<b>Figure 8:</b> Tryworks Foundation, Sleaford Bay 2001 (Paterson 2006:30).	23
<b>Figure 9:</b> Heritage registered shore-based whaling sites in Victoria.	24
<b>Figure 10:</b> Anderson Point, Double Corner Cove, and Convincing Ground whaling station sites in Portland Bay.	26
<b>Figure 11:</b> Heritage registered shore-based whaling sites in Tasmania.	28
<b>Figure 12:</b> Adventure Bay whaling station site.	29
<b>Figure 13:</b> Excavated building remains at the Grass Point station, Adventure Bay (Nash 2003:53).	30
<b>Figure 14:</b> Heritage registered shore-based whaling sites in New South Wales.	33
<b>Figure 15:</b> Davidson whaling station site.	34
<b>Figure 16:</b> Map of Port Fairy, showing limited information on Griffiths island (Public Records Office of Victoria ELEC 24 1856).	45
<b>Figure 17:</b> Buildings on Griffiths Island (Public Records Office of Victoria MCS 71 1856).	46
<b>Figure 18:</b> Map CS36 (1854) overlaid on satellite imagery with buildings identified.	47
<b>Figure 19:</b> Map FEAT 599 (1850) overlaid on satellite imagery with buildings identified.	47
<b>Figure 20:</b> Map SYDNEY B3 (1851) overlaid on satellite imagery with buildings identified.	48

<b>Figure 21:</b> Map CS 36: Port Fairy Belfast, overlaid on satellite imagery with buildings identified.	48
<b>Figure 22:</b> Position of buildings determined by georeferenced overlay.	49
<b>Figure 23:</b> Map showing extent of rifle range on Griffiths Island. (State Library of Victoria, La Trobe Picture Collection, EY000192, Port Fairy, 1942).	66
<b>Figure 24:</b> Proposed survey route to explore the areas identified in georeferencing of historic maps.	68
<b>Figure 25:</b> Proposed survey path in comparison to actual survey path.	70
<b>Figure 26:</b> Picture of visibility on the survey route on Griffiths Island.	71
<b>Figure 27:</b> Vegetation covering an outlier in the landscape in the suspected area of buildings on Griffiths Island.	71
<b>Figure 28:</b> Map of ground visibility on Griffiths Island.	72
<b>Figure 29:</b> Actual survey path in comparison to ground visibility.	72
<b>Figure 30:</b> Actual survey path and location of building foundations identified in survey, in comparison to potential building locations.	74
<b>Figure 31:</b> North wall uprights with horizontal bracing (10cm scale divisions).	74
<b>Figure 32:</b> Inside of north wall, galvanised sheet metal covering exposed gaps in timber, holding earth in.	75
<b>Figure 33:</b> North wall looking west.	75
<b>Figure 34:</b> Galvanised spike/nail approximately 150mm in length (1mm scale divisions).	76
<b>Figure 35:</b> Collapsed bluestone cistern located on the east of Griffiths Island.	77
<b>Figure 36:</b> Port Fairy- Moyne River mouth (Victoria Collections: Museum Victoria, VPFH 62.01.008, Port Fairy Moyne River Entrance, 1925).	85



## List of Tables

<b>Table 1:</b> Positions of building foundation.	73
---	----

## List of Appendices

<b>Appendix 1:</b> Location data for potential whaling buildings on Griffiths Island.	100
<b>Appendix 2:</b> Moyne Shire consent to access off the path areas on Griffiths Island.	102
<b>Appendix 3:</b> Whale catches by year in Port Fairy	105
<b>Appendix 4:</b> The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines.	106
<b>Appendix 5:</b> The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines: Criterion A	107
<b>Appendix 6:</b> The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines: Criterion B	108
<b>Appendix 7:</b> The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines: Criterion C	109
<b>Appendix 8:</b> The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines: Criterion D	110
<b>Appendix 9:</b> The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines: Criterion H	111

## Glossary

**Baleen.** Baleen is the series of fringed plates hanging in right whales' mouths that are used to strain seawater for food. Whalers collected baleen for use in a range of manufactured products.

**Blubber.** The thick layer of fat that surrounds a whale's body to keep its vital organs warm in cold climates. This fat can vary from 2–30cm thick. This fat was the main product of whaling operations around Australia.

**Boiling down.** The process of separating the fat or oils from animal carcasses by the application of heat.

**Flensing.** The removal of the blubber or outer skin, separating it from the animal's muscle tissue.

**Try-pot.** A large cauldron or kettle used for boiling oil out of whale blubber.

**Tryworks.** A furnace where oil was boiled out of the whale blubber, in try-pots.

## Chapter 1. Introduction

Colonial Australia was intrinsically maritime, founded in 1788 by eleven ships, the new colony often turned to the sea for resources to sustain its growth. *Britannia*, a whaling ship that brought supplies and convicts to Sydney as part of the third fleet, was the first colonial ship to harpoon a sperm whale off the Australian coast, in October 1791 (Newton 2013:44–45). This whaling ship and its successors played a pivotal role in the economic growth of the newly founded colony. In the early years of Australia's colonial settlement, the economy relied heavily on the export of whale oil, baleen, and seal skins, rather than the later staples of wool and wheat (Lawrence and Staniforth 1998:7; Kostoglou and McCarthy 1991:xi).

Shore-based whaling in Australia began with the establishment of a whaling station in Hobart in 1803, two years after the colonisation of Van Diemen's Land (Nash 1998:21). Colonial shore-based whalers explored the Australian coastline extensively and often settled in coastal areas long before the inland regions were settled by pastoralists. The Australian shore-based whaling industry was well established by the 1820's and it had peaked by the late 1830s. By the 1850s declining whale populations lead to many shore-based whaling stations becoming financially untenable. As a consequence, the pelagic whaling industry expanded as whalers were forced to seek their prey further from land (Nash 1998:21).

The remains of the shore-based whaling industry comprise some of the oldest colonial maritime infrastructure sites in Australia. Study of the archaeology and history of these sites has the potential to contribute to the understanding of colonial life, and the settlement and development of early Australia (Kostoglou and McCarthy 1991:xi). In Victoria, six early whaling stations have been identified. These Sites are

located at Refuge Cove, Gabo Island, and Griffiths Island, with three in Portland (Davies and Lawrence 2001, 2003). The extent of archaeological and historical surveys of these sites is minimal compared to studies which have been conducted on similar sites in other parts of Australia.

The Griffiths Island whaling station site is unique in Victoria, as the settlement of Port Fairy (then Belfast), circa 1836, preceded colonial survey of the Portland area (Powling 2006:3). This site was constructed and settled illegally, without the permission and knowledge of the colonial government.

This research investigates the maritime culture and landscape of the Griffiths Island shore-based whaling station infrastructure and its context within the broader Australian whaling industry. Historical and maritime archaeological methodologies are used in an integrated approach to the study of the oldest colonial maritime industry in Australia.

### Research question and aims

This thesis has two primary aims. The first is to build on existing knowledge and contribute to the development of Australian maritime archaeology, through known frameworks. The second is to determine the significance of Griffiths Island whaling station site, in the context of Australia's early colonial whaling industry. In doing so, this thesis will satisfy its auxiliary aims of determining the extent of the remaining maritime infrastructure on Griffiths Island through examination of available documentary evidence.

### Justification

Griffiths Island whaling station was established in 1834–35 (Syme 2018:7; Powling 2006:35). The construction and occupation of dwellings on Griffiths Island, and the

establishment of a shore-based whaling station is representative of early dispersion of the colonial immigrant population on the mainland. At this time, the colony founded in Botany Bay in 1835 had spread 120 miles (193 km) inland, and to the south, an illegal squatter camp (which later became Melbourne) was established on the banks of the Yarra River, however, colonial exploration of Australia was still limited (Boyce 2013: xiii).

In comparison to nearby Tasmania and South Australia, Victoria has a small sample of shore-based whaling station sites. Refuge Cove, at Wilsons Promontory (Victorian Heritage Register H1729) was the subject of a small number of surveys which confirmed the presence of a tryworks and small dwelling, but only limited evidence of this remains (McKenzie 1998; Lennon 1998; Stuart 1989). Portland, in Victoria, consisted of several smaller shore-based whaling operations, which have been identified and recorded in several previous surveys and various local histories (Eslick 1983). An in-depth survey is yet to be undertaken on any shore-based whaling station site in Victoria.

Griffiths Island whaling station provides an important case study of early maritime settlement in Victoria and Australia. Unlike whaling station sites in Portland and Refuge Cove, Griffiths Island whaling station remains untouched by development and has been protected as a coastal reserve since its abandonment. Previous studies undertaken on shore-based whaling station sites in Australia emphasise the wealth of information that is available at sites like this (Anderson 2018; Garratt 1994; Gibbs 1994, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010; Gojak 1998; Hewitt 2003; Lawrence 2001, 2006, 2008; Nash 1998, 2003; Stanbury 1983, 1994).

## Significance

Shore-based whaling stations scattered along the Australian coast were often at the frontier of colonisation. Characterised by remoteness, these sites offer unique insight into the people associated with shore-based whaling operations, the technologies they used, lifestyle, and interaction with Aboriginal communities.

## Methods

Historical documentation, including early maps, were used to provide a geographical and social context for the presence of the whaling station on Griffiths Island.

Shipping registers were consulted in order to establish the relationship between this whaling station and the maritime seascapes of early colonial Australia. Materials consulted in the historic research included newspaper articles, early histories of the area, aerial imagery, shipping logs, and land survey data. To inform future survey and archaeological investigation of the Griffiths Island site, case studies from each State have been used as a means of providing a preliminary paradigm for the nature and spatial arrangement of potential archaeological features at the Griffiths Island site. Case studies were selected using the following criteria: subjected to numerous archaeological investigation, possess physical remains of whaling infrastructure, and where possible share similarities to Griffiths Island whaling station site.

Early maps of the Griffiths Island were georeferenced and compared to current aerial imagery to determine the approximate locations of key historical features and to place those features within the present geomorphological context. Additionally, a walking, non-disturbance survey of the island was completed, and possible remains of the whaling site were identified and recorded.

## Chapter outline

Chapter 1 includes an introduction and background to this study, which will consist of an overview of the whaling industry and technologies to contextualise this work within the timeframe Griffiths Island whaling station was in operation. The site context will also be explored as will the people involved in its development, to assist in providing context for the site within the broader colonial Australian whaling industry.

Chapter 2 provides a review of previous investigations of Australian shore-based whaling sites and their relevance to the whaling station at Griffiths Island. This chapter also explores whaling station sites by state and includes a brief case study to examining the research methods used, and themes that have arisen in similar investigations around Australia.

Chapter 3 outlines methodological approaches to all aspects of the research. Archival research comprises most of the research conducted for this thesis and is therefore explored in the greatest detail. Archaeological survey is also discussed along with the limitations of the research.

Chapter 4 presents the historical, archival, and archaeological data collected for this study. Historical archival research forms the foundation of this thesis and will be explored in the greatest detail. Site survey and mapping are also explored, but to a lesser extent due to issues with site accessibility.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the research and examines the place of Griffiths Island whaling station in the context of the broader, early Australian colonial whaling industry.

Chapter 6 summarises the findings of the study and provides conclusions addressing the research questions. This chapter also addresses the limitations of the project and presents strategies for the management of the Griffiths Island shore-based whaling station.

## Background

### The shore-based whaling industry

Whales are warm-blooded mammals, which by evolutionary development have adapted to an entirely aquatic life, and to survive in some of the world's coldest waters in the world. This is due to a thick layer of subcutaneous fat (also known as blubber) that serves as insulation, and in times of need, as a food reserve. Blubber was initially prized as a food source, but with the rise of industrialisation, increasing demand for whale oil for lighting and lubrication (Nash 2003:8—9), saw whaling become an important contributor to colonial economic development.

The methods used by colonial whalers and whalers around the world were based on centuries old Basque techniques which were adopted by the British and Americans and refined over time (Chamberlain 1989:1; Nash 2003:7—9).

The Australian colonial whaling industry developed in three distinct methodological phases. The earliest phase was bay whaling from shore-based stations established in inlets or bays that the Southern Right whales (*Eubalaena australis*) were known to frequent. These bays and inlets on the southern coast of Australia and Tasmania were used for breeding, calving, or as resting locations during migration (Chamberlain 1989:1). Bay whaling involved the establishment of shore-based tryworks and living quarters (which were occupied seasonally) and chasing and harpooning whales from small open whale boats with crews of five to eleven



whalers. After capture, the whale was either towed back to shore or allowed to sink. In the next 48 hours, if at sea, the carcass would float to the surface where it would be flensed of its baleen and blubber or would be flensed when it was brought back to shore (Chamberlain 1989:1). The blubber would then be heated in the tryworks and rendered into oil. As these shore stations were relatively cheap to establish and operate, they were the most widespread and popular form of colonial whaling (Nash 2003:15).

The decline of the shore-based whaling industry in the 1840s was caused by dwindling Southern Right whale populations brought on by the indiscriminate killing of calves. Whalers targeted the calves as they were relatively easy to catch, and they knew the cow would come to the aid of the offspring and could also be harpooned (Chamberlain 1989:1; Nash 2003:15).

In its second phase, colonial whaling evolved to a form of bay whaling, where, instead of an onshore tryworks and accommodation, a ship with the necessary infrastructure of tryworks, whaleboats and accommodation for crew, was anchored in a bay or inlet close to a source of whales (Chamberlain 1989:1—2). This development had its advantages as the processing facilities were mobile, whalers utilised previous knowledge of whale migration routes, and the whaling operation could be moved, (at relatively low cost) to follow whales and explore new whaling grounds.

The decline in the Southern Right whale's population, in combination with higher prices for Sperm Whale oil, pushed the Australian whaling industry to diversify from shore or bay whaling operations to pelagic whaling (Nash 2003:15). This third phase was the beginning of modern whaling practice.

Pelagic whaling was a significant departure from shore-based and bay whaling practice, as the entire whaling process was carried out from ship-based facilities. Whaling ships could stay at sea for months or even years as they followed whales in the Pacific and Southern Oceans (Nash 2003:15—16). This practice became the primary form of whaling undertaken during the 1850s. Pelagic whaling has been characterised by constant technological innovation, focussed on increasing efficiencies in the process of capture, slaughter and processing of whales (Basberg 1982:163—171).

### Study area

Griffiths Island is located at the mouth of the Moyne River to the southeast of the township of Port Fairy, approximately 290km southwest of Melbourne, Victoria (Figure 1). The settlement date for Port Fairy is contested, but is believed to be between 1835 and 1836, following the establishment of the shore-based whaling station on Griffiths Island (Johnson 1954:4; Powling 2006:35; Syme 2018:7).



**Figure 1:** Location of Port Fairy in relation to Melbourne.

At the time of settlement in Port Fairy, Griffiths Island consisted of three separate islands; Griffiths, Goat, and Rabbit. In the 1870s, revetment works were undertaken at the mouth of the Moyne River to improve navigability and to secure the port as a safer anchorage (Powling 2006:258—259). Changes in the geomorphology, caused by the revetment works, resulted in sediment accretion that caused the three islands to become joined forming the single island that is now referred to as Griffiths Island. Since the conjoining of the three original islands Griffiths Island has experienced a significant build-up of sand and is now densely vegetated.

Griffiths Island is an unusual geological landform, consisting of an isolated basalt outcrop with an overburden of calcareous sand, and bounded in part by collapsed lava tunnels formed at the extremity of the Mount Rouse lava flow (VHD H1659). The island is a dune habitat comprising 37 hectares of remnant coastal scrub which was

reserved as a public park in 1902. Over 80 species of birds have been observed on the island. However, the mutton bird, or short-tailed shearwater, (*Ardenna tenuirostris*), is the most common species, and can be found nesting in large numbers between September and April. The burrows of these birds have caused significant alteration of the surface morphology of the island and present a significant obstacle (especially when combined with the dense vegetation cover) when traversing the landscape on foot.

The mouth of the Moyne River is narrow with shifting sands to the north and shoals to the south, these features and its deep river entrance make Port Fairy one of the few protected ports on Victoria's southwestern coastline. Inland, the Moyne River becomes significantly shallower and banks extend out to low lying floodplain and swamp in the winter months.

### Site Context

The first whaling station camp was established on Rabbit Island (see Figure 17 for location of Rabbit Island), directly adjacent to Griffiths Island in March 1835. The camp was established by a crew of 21, sent by James Haycock Reibey and Joseph Penney of Tasmania in the 32-tonne cutter *Mary Anne* (Syme 2018:7). During the station's first whaling season in 1835 only two whales were caught, but then lost, due to bad weather. The season was a failure due to an inexperienced crew and inadequate provisioning. The consequent inability to make the settlement self-sufficient led to Reibey and Penney selling their assets on the island to John Griffiths and Michael Connolly (Powling 2006:14; Syme 2018:7).

Griffiths, and Connolly, had whaling experience and existing investments in whaling infrastructure in Tasmania and Portland. They moved the tryworks and living

quarters from Rabbit Island to the beach on Griffiths Island (Syme 2018:7). Their takeover marked the beginning of the organised whaling operation on Griffiths Island during the latter half of 1835.

John Griffiths, after whom the island was named, was the son of Jonathan Griffiths (1773–1839). At the age of 15, Jonathan Griffiths was convicted of grand larceny and sentenced to be transported for seven years. In August 1790, he was transported to Norfolk Island where he remained as a convict for five years. By 1804 Jonathan Griffiths was established as a boatbuilder by trade, with a good reputation for his work. By 1806 presumably after completing his sentence, Jonathan moved to Sydney, where he had been granted 100 acres in Richmond New South Wales (NSW) and had seven children with his wife Eleanor. By 1822, Jonathan Griffiths and two sons moved to Tasmania where they continued shipbuilding. During this time, they were also involved in the development of maritime infrastructure, most commonly bridges and wharves. By 1830, Griffiths and sons had acquired some 7000 acres around Freshwater Point in Tasmania (Australian Dictionary of Bibliography 1966).

John Griffiths (1801–1881) was one of the seven children born in Richmond, NSW and shared his father's enterprises and zest for work. At the age of 18 years old, in 1819, Griffiths built his first ship, *Glory*, and took 1,000 seal and kangaroo skins to Launceston after shooting on the islands of Bass Strait. By the 1830s, Griffiths was involved in whaling and sealing all along the Australian coast, particularly Portland, Launceston, and Twofold Bay. In 1833, Griffiths set up his main fishery in Portland and by 1835 had relocated it to Port Fairy, where, in partnership with Michael Connolly they imported sheep and cattle, added to his fleet, and sent his ships from

Eden to the West Australian coast in search of seals and whales (Australian Dictionary of Bibliography 1966).

It can be argued that Griffiths' enterprising nature and previous experience in shipping operations and conducting business from Tasmania around the more distant shores of Bass Strait was instrumental in the subsequent (relative) success of the whaling enterprise on Griffiths Island.

Griffiths Island whaling station shows a divergence from the traditional seasonality of the shore-based whaling industry. Income from their pastoral enterprises allowed Griffiths and Connolly to keep whalers working in the off season. As a result, they were able to keep experienced whalers employed from season to season as opposed to the regular seasonal turnover of workers. Working for Griffiths and Connolly was an attractive opportunity that allowed formerly seasonal workers to have a steady year-round income and settle in the town (*Argus* Tuesday 27 May 1890:9). Subsequently, employment under Griffiths and Connolly increased and supported the founding of Port Fairy as a regional centre.

## Chapter 2. Literature review

At the time of writing, there are a total of 33 shore-based whaling station sites listed in Australian national or State heritage registers. Figure 2 provides an overview of the locations of these sites. They are generally well documented, and some have been the subject of individual publications. This chapter reviews the published work related to these shore-based whaling sites. Analysis is broken up by State to better define the work completed by heritage management agencies, and individuals or nongovernment organisations.

Figure removed due to copyright restriction

**Figure 2:** Map of the 33 heritage registered shore-based whaling station sites in Australia.

Each state and territory in Australia have a government funded heritage department which oversees the management and protection of underwater and maritime cultural heritage. Of the 33 heritage registered whaling station sites around Australia, all

have associated publications. These publications generally take two forms; site reports from governing bodies, and academic papers that build on and interpret data from the site reports. In the absence of archaeological reports, it is often found that sites have been the subject of local histories.

## Western Australia

The maritime heritage in Western Australia is managed by the Western Australian Museum. The Museum focusses on shipwrecks and other underwater cultural heritage, however extensive work has been undertaken on associated maritime infrastructure.

The waters off the Western Australian coast remain an active shipping route, as well as a migratory route for several whale species. It is presumed by Gibbs (1995:47) that whaling, by foreign vessels, began on Australia's western coastline long before the first British settlement there in 1826 when Major Edmund Lockyer established a possessory lien over what is now Western Australia to protect the newly founded colony's resources (and nascent whaling enterprise) from foreign interests (Bryant 2014:3; Gibbs 2000:3).

Currently there are eight whaling station sites on State and national heritage registers in Western Australia: two sites at Cheynes Beach (Gibbs 2005), and one each at Whaling Cove Barker Bay, Frenchmans Bay, Norwegian Bay (Ackley 2014; Boocock et al. 1990; Garratt 1994; Stanbury 1983,1994), Malus Island, Castle Bay, and Pakington Whaling station (Figure 3).



Figure removed due to copyright restriction

**Figure 3:** Heritage registered shore-based whaling sites in Western Australia.

### Case Study: Pakington whaling station

Pakington whaling station (Figure 4) has been the subject of the most research conducted on a whaling station in Western Australia, possibly due to its proximity to the extensively researched historic shipwreck *Xantho*, Western Australia's first steamship.

Research into the Pakington whaling station site was first conducted by the Western Australian Museum in 1985, with further surveys conducted in 1987 (McIlroy), 1994 (Gibbs), 2006 (Rodrigues and Anderson), 2011 (Rodrigues), and 2018 (Anderson).

Site inspections conducted by the Western Australian Museum form the base data for further investigations into these sites.

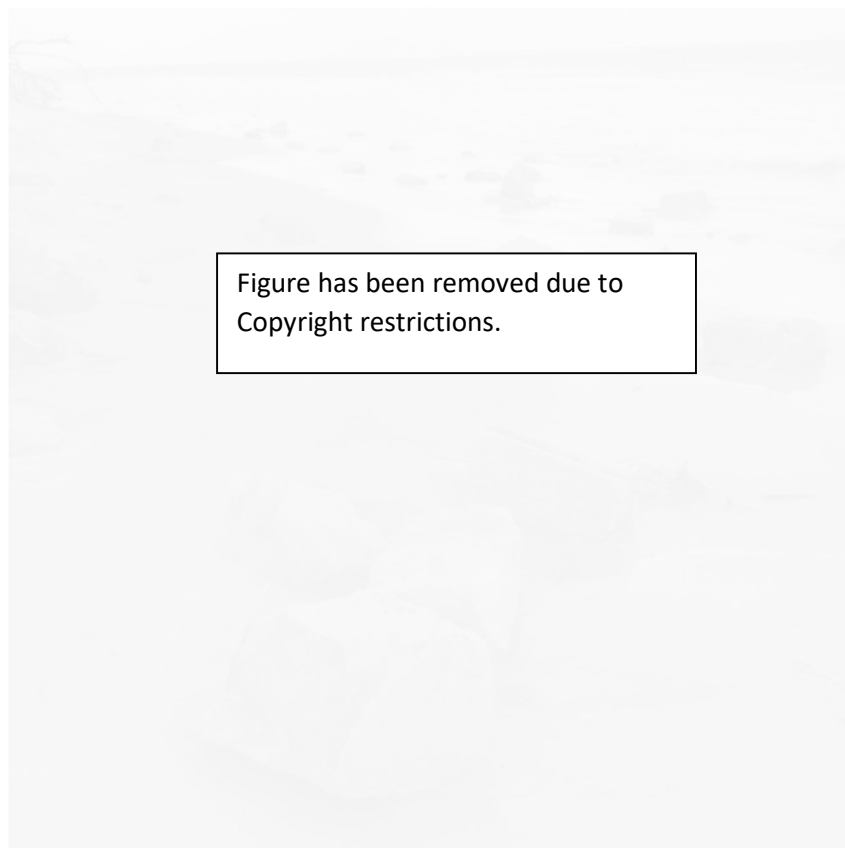
Figure removed due to copyright restriction

**Figure 4:** Pakington whaling station site.

Between 1985 and 2006, five site inspections were carried out in Port Gregory at Pakington whaling station. Maritime archaeologists first visited the site in 1985, when they were in the area for the excavation of *Xantho*, which sank at Port Gregory in 1872. Preliminary site inspections confirmed physical remains for whaling activities and the potential presence of shore-based whaling infrastructure in Port Gregory (Rodrigues and Anderson 2006:11).

Rodriguez (2011) analysed artefacts salvaged in the 1985 and 2003 excavations. She concluded that previously recovered artefacts, and those remaining *in situ*, provide sufficient evidence to confirm the presence of nineteenth century shore-based whaling and associated activities.

Anderson's 2018 survey and site inspection, undertaken after significant coastal erosion, concluded that the remaining structure at the site was larger than previously thought and was of high construction quality. The structure was built from dressed sandstone; a material not found in shore-based whaling sites elsewhere on the Western Australian coast. Examples of sandstone building blocks are shown in Figure 5. The variance in construction and size revealed in Anderson's survey was attributed to the misappropriation of convict labour and colonial funds under Captain Henry Stanford, who was later dismissed from his position as Assistant Superintendent at Lynton Hiring Depot (Anderson 2018:19).



**Figure 5:** Dressed stone building blocks with render eroded from foredune, exposed, and scattered on beach in May 2018 (Anderson 2018:5).

The research framework used in the site surveys of the Pakington whaling station, has potential to be used in the survey of Griffiths Island whaling station. The Pakington whaling station in Port Gregory was constructed of dressed sandstone

and was of a higher build quality compared to similar structures on the Western Australian coast. This construction could be considered as reflective of a belief, on the part of the owners, that the Port Gregory whaling station was an investment with potential to provide a profitable return and growth in the longer term. The construction material used at Pakington whaling station was abundant and locally available. It is reasonable to assume that a similarly abundant material around Port Fairy was used in the construction of Griffiths Island whaling station tryworks and associated structures, provided the whaling station was profitable into the future as it was in Port Gregory.

Previous site inspections and excavation of Pakington whaling station show that both artefactual and documentary evidence, provide information that can be used to interpret life in Australia's early colonial outposts. The successful identification and relationships drawn between archaeological remains and documentary evidence following excavation and erosion events at Pakington whaling station, highlight the potential of the remains at Griffiths Island whaling station.

## South Australia

The South Australian whaling industry began in 1836 following the previous year's successes at Portland in Victoria. At the time, one third of the colony's whale oil exports (approximately 1000 tons) came from Portland Bay (Bell 1991:45). Portland Bay whaling station lies approximately 65km from the border of Victoria and South Australia. Given this, it would be reasonable to assume that the commercial exploitation of the maritime environment pushed the whaling industry and colonisation westward into South Australia.

Figure removed due to copyright restriction

**Figure 6:** Heritage registered shore-based whaling sites in South Australia.

The South Australian heritage register currently includes a total of ten whaling station sites. These are located at; Yankalilla, Coffin Bay, Fowlers Bay, St Peter Island, Thistle Island, Encounter Bay, Smoky Bay, Flinders Island, Sleaford Bay, and Kangaroo Island (Figure 6). However according to investigations by Bell (1991), and Kostoglou and McCarthy (1991), the number of whaling station sites in South Australia is estimated to be approximately 25. Evidence for the existence of these sites is primarily documentary and indicates that these sites were variable in their construction methods and materials. They were often built to utilise features of the coastline as, for the most part, mechanical processing of whales was less prevalent and sophisticated in South Australia (Bell 1991:46–47). Consequently, the infrastructure at these sites is likely to be less permanent, with low build quality. Therefore, these whaling sites are likely to have experienced rapid decay and consequent loss of visible evidence of their existence after abandonment.

Investigations of whaling station sites in South Australia have been mainly focussed on the preparation of high level regional or statewide surveys (Bell 1991; Kostoglou and McCarthy 1991; Lawrence and Staniforth 1998; Parkinson 1997). Few sites have been the subject of detailed recording and analysis. Those sites that have been the subject of more detailed individual investigation appear to have been explored as side projects to the archaeological investigation of other, unrelated sites nearby (McKinnon et al. 2007; Staniforth et al. 2001; Walshe 2014).

#### Case Study: Sleaford Bay Whaling Station Site

The Sleaford Bay whaling station site (Figure 7) exhibits the most extensive physical evidence of shore-based whaling activities in South Australia. The site lies 40 metres from the shore in dense coastal vegetation and has been subjected to heavy impacts

from previous excavation. In 1985, a local landowner excavated the site to a depth of 1.5 metres, in search of buried harpoon heads, and in the process caused extensive damage to the site. Peter Bell, of the South Australian State Heritage Branch, mentioned that baleen and hoop-iron had been found in excavated spoil. At the time the excavation damage occurred, the site was protected under the provisions of the *Planning Act 1982* (now the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*) and prosecution of the landowner was initiated (Bell 1991:48).

The first archaeological investigation of this area identified the area as the Sleaford Bay 'Station Complex'. This survey identified two functionally different areas: a habitation located in the dunes behind the beach, and an industrial area including a tryworks and flensing platform located on the eastern side of the bay (Kostoglou and McCarthy 1991:17; Paterson 2006:26). A more detailed survey of the structures was undertaken by Flinders University students in 1997. This survey identified and recorded seven structures constructed with a combination of local limestone and brick (Bradbury 1997:70), and produced detailed line drawings of the unexcavated tryworks, as well as a base line and offset survey to measure erosion of the site (Paterson 2006:26).

The first major investigation and excavation of the site was in September 2001 where another team of students under the guidance of Dr Mark Staniforth, went to Sleaford Bay to determine the stability of the site. The team was accompanied by Heritage South Australia archaeologist, Terry Arnott. The aim of this excavation was to assess the potential for erosion of the site and at the same time, determine materials and construction methods used in the foundation of the tryworks (Paterson 2006:28–29). This survey revealed that the base of the tryworks floor was constructed using red brick, laid end to end, over a foundation constructed of large

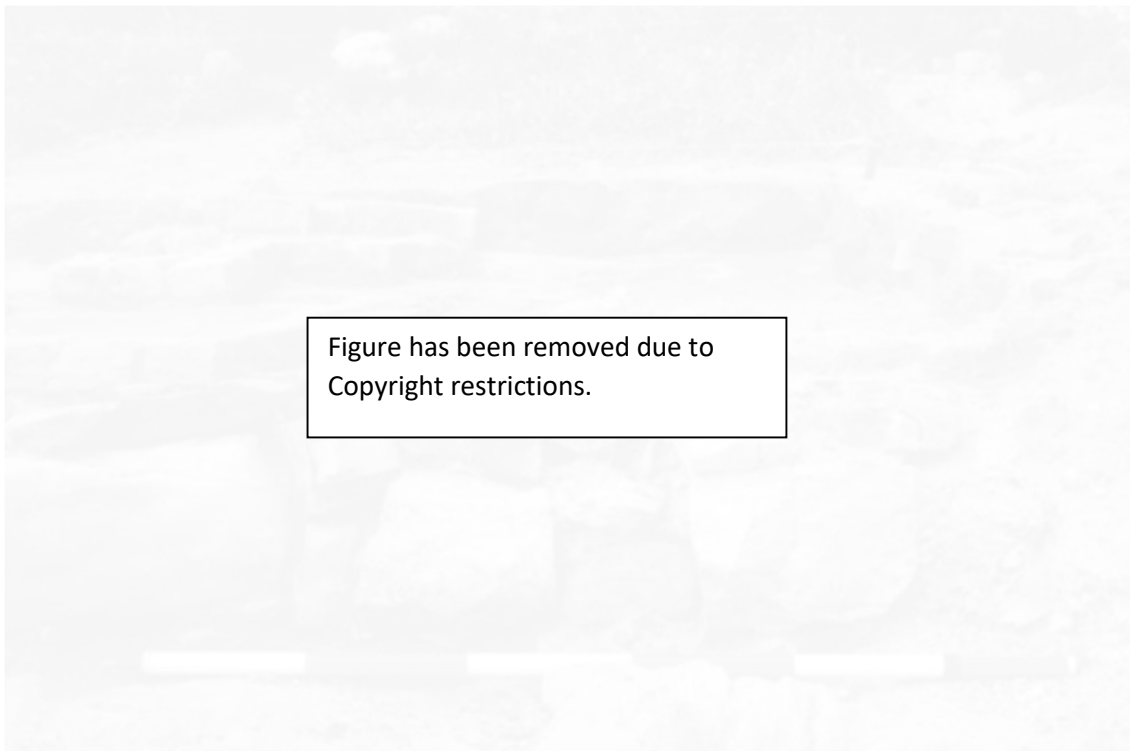
pieces of local granite (Figure 8). The tryworks floor was built as an extension of naturally occurring bedrock. Post excavation the site was stabilised to prevent erosion, and later checked by Staniforth in 2004, when the erosion prevention measures were found to be successful (Paterson 2006:29–30). Baleen and hoop-iron fragments were found in the vicinity of both the residential and industrial structures during these investigations (Bell 1991:48; Lawrence and Staniforth 1998:60).

The archaeological investigations of the Sleaford Bay tryworks and habitation area have shown that the site continues to hold rich potential for further archaeological study, despite the illegal disturbance in 1985. The site is large, and the potential for *in situ* deposits is high. This site shares several physical similarities to Griffiths Island whaling station. For example, they are both heavily vegetated and have experienced accretion of sediments since abandonment. It would, therefore, be reasonable to assume that evidence for shore-based whaling activities would be similar at Griffiths Island and could include a well preserved charcoal lens in the vicinity of the trying out area, as well as whale bone fragments, hoop iron, and possible sub surface building remains.



Figure removed due to copyright restriction

**Figure 7:** Sleaford Bay whaling station site extent of registration.



**Figure 8:** Tryworks Foundation, Sleaford Bay 2001 (Paterson 2006:30).

## Victoria

Whalers and sealers can be considered the first colonial settlers in Victoria. It is estimated that whaling and sealing ventures were carried out in the east of Victoria as early as 1797 (Lennon 1998:64). By the 1830s, the sealing and whaling industry was thriving, and the export value of whale oil and whalebone exceeded that of wool and other primary produce (Lawrence 2006:8—9). But by the 1850s, the whaling industry in Victoria was all but defunct. Colonial economic ventures had shifted focus to burgeoning agricultural activity. Such diversification was already evident in areas that had experienced earlier permanent settlement such as Portland and Port Fairy (Syme 2018:12).

Figure removed due to copyright restriction

**Figure 9:** Heritage registered shore-based whaling sites in Victoria.

Heritage Victoria is responsible for the protection and management of underwater cultural heritage in Victoria. Currently there are seven shore-based whaling sites on the state or national heritage registers (Figure 9). Shore-based whaling in Victoria

was short-lived in comparison to neighbouring states. Since abandonment, many sites have fallen victim to erosion or uncontrolled development activity. Port Fairy and Refuge Cove whaling station sites lie in protected parklands and therefore are likely to have a higher potential for *in situ* archaeological remains. Portland Bay (Clark 2011) and Refuge Cove (Stuart 1989:14–17) are both well documented. However, to date, no whaling station sites in Victoria have been the subject of in-depth archaeological investigation.

An archaeological survey of the Victorian coast was first conducted by Victoria Archaeological Survey (VAS) in the 1970s and 1980s (Lennon 1998:66; McKenzie 1998:29; Stuart 1989:1). These surveys attempted to map and record all known maritime cultural heritage on the Victorian coast. The VAS identified the whaling station sites that are currently included in State and national heritage registers. All subsequent reporting on these whaling station sites from government agencies has been a part of ongoing monitoring strategies, apart from Portland Bay whaling station where excavation and recording was carried out pre-disturbance (Eslick 1983).

### Case Study: Portland Bay

Portland Bay lies on the eastern side of the Portland Peninsula, on Victoria's west coast. The town of Portland has an extensive maritime past and has developed to its current standing as the major entrepot to western Victoria because of its status as the only sheltered deep-water port between Melbourne and Adelaide. Portland was first sighted in 1800 by British navigator James Grant (Edquist 2019:364; Powling 2006:3). The first known landing at the site was in 1828 by William Dutton who, in 1834, spearheaded settlement of the area (Edquist 2019:364—365).

Figure removed due to copyright restriction

**Figure 10:** Anderson Point, Double Corner Cove, and Convincing Ground whaling station sites in Portland Bay.

The history of settlement and shore-based whaling in Portland is complex. Presently there are three sites listed on the Victorian Heritage Database that refer to whaling activities in the Portland area (Figure 10). Anderson Point and Double Corner Cove whaling stations are said to contain intact features relating to their use as whaling stations (VHR H2079). The third is the Convincing Ground, which is known to be intact and a site of significant early contact and conflict with Aboriginal people (VHR H2079). At Portland, partnerships and associations between different whalers changed from season to season, as did the infrastructure used, and the locations for settlement and processing. Seasonal settlement and mobility of infrastructure implies an impermanence of construction and subsequent loss, or scarcity, in the archaeological record. The threat of loss to these sites is recognised by Eslick (1983) in a survey conducted by Victoria Archaeological Survey, which states ‘the Alcoa aluminium smelter being constructed south of the town has placed pressure on the

town and surrounding area for development, which would lead to the destruction of potentially important archaeological sites'. Eslick's investigation was the first archaeological investigation in the Portland area which identified and recorded 260 new historic sites. Eslick's research was not exhaustive as it excluded the identification of precise locations of the sites, as well as construction materials. Eslick's investigation is, however, the foundation of many of the current heritage listings in the area. Her research was revisited later in 2003 by Geoff Hewitt whose desktop survey ties in historical documents, and GPS locations from more recent surveys, with the data collected in the initial survey (Hewitt 2003). Hewitt concluded that information on the construction of the boiling down works is too scarce to be conclusive, but that the archaeological potential of these sites is high. A brief and sole description of the whaler's dwellings is revealed and described as '...several small weather boarded buildings...' (Hewitt 2003:11).

The primary form of research conducted on whaling station sites in Victoria is documentary. While early documentary evidence is sparse, there is sufficient evidence to confirm the presence of the whaling industry. The scarcity of documentary evidence combined with the unknown extent of physical remains for whaling station sites in Victoria is evidence alone for its value. Given the proximity of Port Fairy to Portland Bay's whaling station sites, and the confluence of parties involved, it would be reasonable to assume that the construction of the tryworks and associated buildings would be similar to those in Port Fairy.

## Tasmania

The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service is the government authority responsible for the protection of Tasmania's maritime cultural heritage. Settlement of Tasmania (formerly Van Diemen's Land) occurred in the early days of colonial expansion in Australia. In 1803 Lieutenant John Bowen was commissioned to proceed to the Derwent River in Tasmania's southeast. The orders given to Bowen referred to the southern fisheries and the importance of securing them for the colony (Nash 2003:35).

Figure removed due to copyright restriction

**Figure 11:** Heritage registered shore-based whaling sites in Tasmania.

Mike Nash (2003) has conducted perhaps the most extensive investigation into shore-based and bay whaling stations around the coast of Tasmania. In his 2003 book, he presents a gazetteer of 59 Tasmanian whaling stations and stressed that

his study is far from complete. Nash used a combination of documentary evidence, field survey, and recording to identify these sites. Currently, there are four whaling station sites listed in the Tasmanian Heritage Register (Figure 11), although more are represented in the literature (Nash 2003).

Lawrence (2006) has conducted detailed and pioneering research into the colonial whaling industry and its infrastructure in Australia.

### Case Study: Adventure Bay

Figure removed due to copyright restriction

**Figure 12:** Adventure Bay whaling station site.

Adventure Bay is located on the eastern point of South Bruny Island on the eastern coast of Tasmania (Figure 12). Study of early whaling practice in Tasmania has revealed several commonalities. Lawrence observes that given the opportunity whalers chose sites that were most favourable, with a gently sloping beach, good anchorage, level ground for the construction of processing and accommodation facilities, a seasonal watercourse, and readily available timber (Lawrence 2008:20).

Consequently, most whaling stations in Tasmania lay on the relatively sheltered eastern coast, in sheltered bays, in proximity to the migration route of the whales. These conditions were not as common on the generally south-facing Victorian coast, which goes some way to explaining the lower concentration of shore-based whaling sites there.



**Figure 13:** Excavated building remains at the Grass Point station, Adventure Bay (Nash 2003:53).

Adventure Bay was founded in the 1820s which was the most lucrative period for whaling in Tasmania. An excavation by Lawrence in 2006 at the Grass Point whaling station site revealed a professionally constructed stone building with two rooms, two fireplaces, and a stone floor (Lawrence 2006:57). In the licence application for the site, it is stated that £200 was spent on the construction of buildings and fences. Lawrence infers that this construction commissioned by Captain James Kelly at Adventure Bay represents a long-term capital investment in the region (2008:21).



The buildings at Adventure Bay show that different standards of accommodation were provided for the whalers present. Lawrence deduced that the simple, one roomed building, constructed of bark or timber with a single fireplace at one end of the room, was likely shared by the crews of the whaleboats. While the more spacious two or three roomed stone buildings, with substantial fireplaces, served as private quarters for the headsman (the person in command of a whaling boat), and the station manager (Lawrence 2008:20). An example of the excavated building remains can be seen in Figure 13.

The significance of the investment made into long term accommodations at Adventure Bay is amplified when viewed in comparison to later whaling station sites. Castle Bay in Western Australia is an example of this, where a two-roomed portable house was erected. This had the advantage of being transportable by ship and took minimal time to construct, eliminating the need for time consuming collection and preparation of local materials (Gibbs 2005:186).

Excavation at Adventure Bay recovered almost 300 kilograms of artefacts, most of which were butchered domestic animal bone. Lawrence reveals that the whaling camps imported salted pork in barrels from as far afield as Samoa, and likely maintained a small flock of sheep for fresh meat near the whaling camp (Lawrence 2008:21–22). Lawrence attributes this finding to meal readiness, as whalers needed to be ready, worked unusual hours and did not have time to exploit native resources for subsistence (Lawrence 2001:217, 2008:21). It is also considered that the supply of fresh and salted meat for the whaling camps was a management strategy by Captain James Kelly to assure the best results for the whaling season, and as such utilised his pastoral company to do so (Lawrence 2008:21–22).

## New South Wales [and Queensland]

Heritage NSW is responsible for the protection of underwater and maritime cultural heritage within the state. Most of the recorded whaling station sites in Australia are located on the southern and western coasts, but a few extend further north on the eastern coast.

The sole shore-based whaling station in Queensland, at Tangalooma on Moreton Island, was in operation between 1952 and 1962. The period of operation for this site falls outside the scope of this study and will not be explored further in this paper (Queensland Heritage Register: 602559).

There are three whaling station sites included in the NSW heritage register: Davidsons whaling station, Chowder Bay, and Kingston on Norfolk Island (Figure 14). Davidson's Whaling Station located on the southern shore of Twofold Bay, 35 kilometres south of Eden, is the most well documented of these (Figure 15).

The remains of these whaling stations are sparse and generally comprise footings of buildings, and sub surface deposits, as is the case elsewhere in Australia. Smith and Weir (1999:38) attribute this scarcity of cultural material to the tide of development that has swept the NSW coast, resulting in a considerable loss of cultural heritage remains. Smith and Weir (1999:38) state that:

It is to shipwrecks, however, that continued study might be directed. They remain a source of potentially enlightening information on the seaward side of the whaling experience and, therefore, the operations as a whole. It is fair to comment to say that wreck sites retain a greater level of potential for documenting whaling operations at certain phases than many of the terrestrial sites. This is evident when one considers the

range and extent of shore-based whaling sites that have survived in the archaeological record.

Figure removed due to copyright restriction

**Figure 14:** Heritage registered shore-based whaling sites in New South Wales.

It is unknown whether the scarcity of recorded sites can be attributed to incomplete archaeological survey of Australia's eastern coast or to the unsuitability of the coast to support shore-based whaling operations.

#### Case Study: Davidson whaling station

Davidson whaling station was the longest running whaling station in Australia and the last of its type to cease operations. Shore-based whaling operations commenced in 1832 and were undertaken by numerous groups including the Imlay brothers, Benjamin Boyd and later the Davidson family (Hewitt 2003:11; Pearson 1985:45). Shore base whaling using open boats was conducted in Twofold Bay for over 100 years. The station site is relatively undisturbed, with the accommodation buildings still existing on the site. These buildings comprise the cottage 'Loch Garra', a detached kitchen and dining room, a garden shed, and a shower shed. The buildings are of timber weatherboard or slab construction with corrugated iron roofing and

were constructed in 1896 (New South Wales Government 2005; Gojak 1998:15). The industrial remnants of the whaling station site consist of only fragments of the brick footings and fireplaces, assorted roofing timbers, and three ships tanks used as storage and transport of whale oil (Gojak 1998:15). The tryworks were also built on top of an Aboriginal midden, archaeological investigation of which also revealed the remains of a dingo (New South Wales Government 2005). The Davidson whaling station is a unique example of undisturbed historic and prehistoric deposits and is a rare example of an untouched first contact site. Its relative isolation and continuous use over 100 years adds to its already high archaeological potential and makes it unique amongst other Australian whaling sites (Eden District Office 1995:3–5).

Figure removed due to copyright restriction

**Figure 15:** Davidson whaling station site.

## Summary

The investigation, research, and interpretation of shore-based whaling station sites around Australia, inform the methodology and interpretation that can be used in the investigation of the Griffiths Island whaling station.

Australian shore-based whaling stations generally utilised locally sourced building material in the construction of tryworks and associated dwellings. The tryworks and their foundations are mostly constructed of locally sourced rock, for example sandstone at Pakington whaling station in Western Australia (Anderson 2018:19). Where suitable local materials were unavailable, building materials (bricks for example) were imported. This strategy is evinced in numerous whaling station sites in Tasmania (Nash 2003:136,137,139,156). Given the proximity of Griffiths Island and its interconnectedness with Portland Bay it is reasonable to assume that construction materials and practices were similar. As John Griffiths and the Griffiths Island whaling station's origins are Tasmanian, it is also likely that the Griffiths Island station shares similarity of materials and construction practices with its Tasmanian counterparts.

Historical documents are vitally important in the investigation of Australian whaling station sites. Whaling station sites are by necessity constructed in dynamic environments and consequently experience accelerated rates of decay. Typically, investigations into shore-based whaling station sites find little more than the tryworks foundations. In many cases it is likely that high value or scarce materials are sold or salvaged for use elsewhere. The absence of physical remains for these whaling station sites highlights the importance of documentary sources in the preservation of the history associated with one of the most important early colonial industries. Where

sites have been identified through historical research, but structures related to the whaling station site are scarce, the potential of the sub-surface archaeological deposits are high. This can be seen in the comprehensive investigation and analysis of artefacts from Adventure Bay and Lagoon Bay completed by Lawrence (2006).

Early whalers ventured to remote corners of the Australian coast and often made first contact with local Aboriginal communities. The nature of these initial interactions varied from hostile (Clark 2011; Eldridge 2015:54–56) to cordial (Ryan 2011).

Generally speaking, however, these interactions are not well documented in the historical record and so the potential for archaeological deposits to contain information relating to whalers and first nations people should not be overlooked.

Whaling was an international enterprise in which Australia was an active participant. The nascent Australian economy was boosted through the export of whale products but also income generated by the increased traffic of international whaling and other vessels that frequented Australian ports for repair, resupply, and transshipment of whale products. Whaling, even in its infancy, in the late eighteenth century was a far-reaching maritime industry that came to characterise Australian maritime culture and became an integral part of the new Australian colony's economy and culture.

## Chapter 3. Methodology

The first section of this chapter discusses the methodology used to collect historical data, how this research led to further tangential investigation, and how the data obtained from the historical sources was interpreted. The second section describes the methodology used for site survey. Limitations of the methodology are also addressed.

### Approach

During the nineteenth century whaling developed rapidly from a subsistence activity conducted opportunistically from small vessels to an unsustainable mechanised behemoth. This was driven by industrialisation and a growing consumer culture which demanded ever increasing volumes of whale products. Australian shore-based whaling represents a relatively small sample of the global industry, however, this small proportion is responsible for significant economic growth of early colonial Australia. In examining the remaining whaling station sites in Australia, and despite the limited sample size, several themes emerge. In studying the Griffiths Island whaling station, it is both useful and necessary to identify commonalities with shore based whaling station sites elsewhere in Australia.

Several features generally determined a whaling station site's viability and mode of operation. Proximity to whale migratory paths and resting areas was the primary consideration in deciding the location of a station. Nash (2003:66) also mentions other features that were required to ensure the station's success. The most important of which were plentiful wood and water, good soil for gardens and pasture for cattle, and easy sailing distance to supply base. Geographical features that

assisted in the whaling process were also essential. The whaling station location must include the following: naturally sheltered from wind, swell, and current, have a landing suited to the launching and retrieval of boats, the in-water processing of whale carcasses, the landing of supplies and the export of processed oil and meats. Access to elevated land for a lookout was also favourable but sometimes impossible. With these factors taken into consideration, Griffiths Island possesses most of the favourable features required for the establishment and success of a shore based whaling station.

### Historical Research

The most important aspect of any historical archaeological project is the documentary research that precedes any investigation on site. This is especially important in maritime coastal environments, where the subject of the investigation is often in an advanced state of decay or lost altogether. Since abandonment, Griffiths Island has experienced extensive sand accretion and dense re-vegetation. The effect of this on the preservation and visibility of any remaining archaeological deposit was unknown prior to the commencement of this investigation. In the absence of any evidence that the original whaling station site was exposed on the island, historical research was used to understand the possible extent and location of the remains potentially present on the island.

The documentary history of the site proved to be patchy and posed many questions. Numerous sources were consulted to gather information pertaining to the whaling station site at Griffiths Island, former whaling station site on Rabbit Island, and the early town of Belfast (now Port Fairy).



The *Trove* website (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/>) proved to be an integral component in the information gathering process providing links to newspaper articles, government gazettes and reports, shipping arrivals and departures, and historical maps relating to the settlement of Port Fairy and Griffiths Island.

Newspapers were the most plentiful source of information on the development of the whaling industry in Port Fairy. The newspapers also contained the only description of construction materials through the course of the research. Information contained in local newspaper articles was generally vague and focused predominantly on the coming and going of vessels and not on the specifics of the whaling industry on Griffiths Island. Due to the scarcity of information in these newspapers, the search was expanded to include the death notices of individuals associated with the island and the enterprises conducted there.

Government gazettes and reports proved valuable in identifying the ownership of land, who was investing in the region, and the general economy and industry of the Port Fairy region. This information provided leads to individuals involved in the whaling industry, and the links they had to similar industries and regions around Australia. In addition, abundant shipping arrivals and departure records made it possible to see which places were linked by trade to Port Fairy, the parties involved, and the cargoes being transported.

Historical maps proved essential to pinpointing the potential locations of the whaling station buildings on the Island.

Four maps depicting Port Fairy and Griffiths Island show buildings marked as 'whaling buildings' on the Island. (Public Record Office of Victoria [PROV], Historic Plan Collection, CS36 Port Fairy, VPRS 8161 – P0005, 1854. VPRS 8161 – P0005,

1854.; PROV, Historic Plan Collection, Sydney B3: Belfast Town, VPRS 8161 – P0005, 1851.; PROV, Historic Plan Collection, CS 36: Port Fairy Belfast, VPRS 8161 – P0005, 1854.; PROV, Historic Plan Collection, MCS 71: Port Fairy, VPRS 8161 – P0005, 1856.; PROV, Historic Plan Collection, FEAT 599: Belfast (Port Lots), VPRS 8161 – P0005, 1850.).

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software (QGIS) was used to geo-reference historical maps to current satellite imagery using common features. This allowed for approximate locations of the whaling station buildings to be determined. The buildings shown in consistent clusters on these maps (Figure 22) are likely to be the tryworks, and other more substantial buildings of the station. The buildings that appear consistently in the historical mapping but are not labelled as whaling buildings as in Figure 17 are considered likely to be related to whaling activity due to the history of land use on the island.

The maps also provided information relating to the movement of sediment of sand on the coastline, and consequent changes to the morphology of the river mouth and the island shoreline. This was useful in determining the eligibility of the consistent building clusters as whaling station buildings.

Identification of people, places, and vessels associated with the whaling station provided leads for further documentary research including: biographies, newspaper articles in outlying regions, further shipping logs, the Lloyds Register of Shipping, and shipping arrivals and departures.

Local histories while often detailed provided a large amount of unverifiable information. They did, however, lead to other areas of research, that provided more

reliable documentary evidence, solidifying information on the parties involved and emphasized their significance to the growing colony.

Shipping logs, arrivals and departures, and in part, Lloyds Register revealed the relationship and trade between Port Fairy and various other ports in Australia, as well as, in a few instances, international relations.

Locally authored histories proved valuable in providing tangential links in research but often provided unverifiable commentary extrapolated from information in primary sources.

### Site survey

Griffiths Island is currently managed by Moyne Shire and comprises about 37 hectares of remnant coastal scrub. It is home to several species of native animals including a breeding colony of short-tailed shearwaters. Access to the island is limited and a permit from Moyne Shire was required to conduct the survey. The permit was granted on condition that the survey was non-disturbance in nature and limited the potential impact on the protected native vegetation and shearwater burrows.

The aim of the site survey was to determine the location and extent of any exposed archaeological remains. The survey took the form of a non-disturbance inspection and recording of features identified in the background research and literature review. The on-site survey activity was focused primarily in the approximate location of the structures identified as whaling buildings on the historical maps (Public Record Office of Victoria CS36 1854, FEAT 599 1850, MCS 71 1856, SYDNEY B3 1851).

The on-site survey was conducted in two parts. As the precise location of the whaling buildings, and the extent of vegetation cover and sand build up was not

reliably known, an initial site visit was made to determine the on-site conditions and facilitate planning a systematic survey at a future date.

The subsequent visit to the site consisted of a non-disturbance walking survey completed in compliance with the Moyne Shire approval conditions (Appendix 2). A route for the survey was planned prior to commencement and was designed to cover the positions of the buildings identified in the historical mapping and included the surrounding areas to allow for errors in the original mapping and georeferencing. The survey route was walked by three people, using handheld GPS receivers to guide them along the planned route. Extremely dense vegetation and the presence of shearwater burrows often prevented the planned route being followed closely. However, the tracking feature in the GPS receivers was used to generate a record the actual track taken and to ensure that the areas of interest were all surveyed.

Recording of any exposed features of the former whaling station buildings or related infrastructure included detailed photography and GPS positioning of any exposed features.

## Limitations

The limitations of this study must be addressed to ensure a thorough approach to the historical and archaeological survey of the Griffiths Island whaling station site.

First, it may be difficult to determine useful historical and literature sources from the extensive information recorded on the whaling industry in Australia. As this research has a narrow focus on the Griffiths Island whaling station, the research is highly dependent on the availability of information. The availability of this information is restricted in the most part to digital sources, as the Covid-19 restrictions, in force at the time, prevented access to libraries, archives and other sources of hard-copy,

non-digitised material. The greatest limitation was being unable to access newspapers published in Port Fairy from 1842, which are available at the Port Fairy Historical Society.

The ground visibility during the on-site survey was poor due to extremely dense cover of grasses and other introduced plant species. Moyne Shire Environmental Officers suggested survey in summer when the vegetation usually experienced a dieback, however this was not possible due to COVID-19 restrictions. The window of survey was limited further by regulations put in place by Moyne Shire to protect the resident Shearwater colony.

The limitation regarding the possible position of buildings was the accuracy of the mapping. In the georeferencing process the maps were distorted in order to reference accurately to satellite imagery. This in turn may have skewed the position of the building in the final expected location. This limitation was mitigated by using multiple source maps and creating a survey path that explored these potential building locations as well as the areas around them.

## Chapter 4. Results

### Historical research

As outlined in the methodology, the historical research component explores maps, newspaper articles and gazettes, and shipping arrivals and departures as primary source data. This research identified locations of interest for the site survey and revealed associations with the whaling station site on Griffiths Island that assisted in establishing significance.

### Maps

In total, 11 historical maps produced between 1846 and 1879, were found showing the town of Port Fairy and Griffiths Island. Maps were sourced from both Trove and the Public Record Office of Victoria. The maps vary in purpose and in the information they display. Most of the maps were focused on recording cadastral information, coastal features (Public Records Office of Victoria ELEC 24 1856, FEAT 536 1852, FEAT 549 1850, FEAT 556 1852, MS X14 1879, SYDNEY P13 1846). The maps often neglected Griffiths Island entirely or offered very limited information as can be seen in Figure 16.



**Figure 16:** Map of Port Fairy, showing limited information on Griffiths island (Public Records Office of Victoria ELEC 24 1856).

General coastal survey maps proved most useful in this process as they provided replicable features on the coast. These maps showed a greater detail of the town, the entrance to Port Fairy harbour, numerous buildings in the Port Fairy area, and known shipwrecks along the coast. In selecting maps suitable for georeferencing, those that showed buildings on Griffiths Island were prioritised (Public Record Office of Victoria CS36 1854, FEAT 599 1850, MCS 71 1856, SYDNEY B3 1851). In some instances, the buildings on Griffiths Island were labelled as whaling buildings (Figure 17) which was useful in identifying the potential survey area.



**Figure 17:** Buildings on Griffiths Island (Public Records Office of Victoria MCS 71 1856).

### *Map georeferencing*

Following the selection of useful maps for the overlay, each map was added as a raster layer and georeferenced using common fixed features. Depending on the map, these features were often nearby street intersections, navigational markers, or fixed coastal features. The original maps were aligned with satellite imagery (Figure 18, Figure 19, Figure 20, Figure 21). Buildings were then identified and marked on each individual map. All building location points were then collated, and overlaid on one single satellite image (Figure 22).



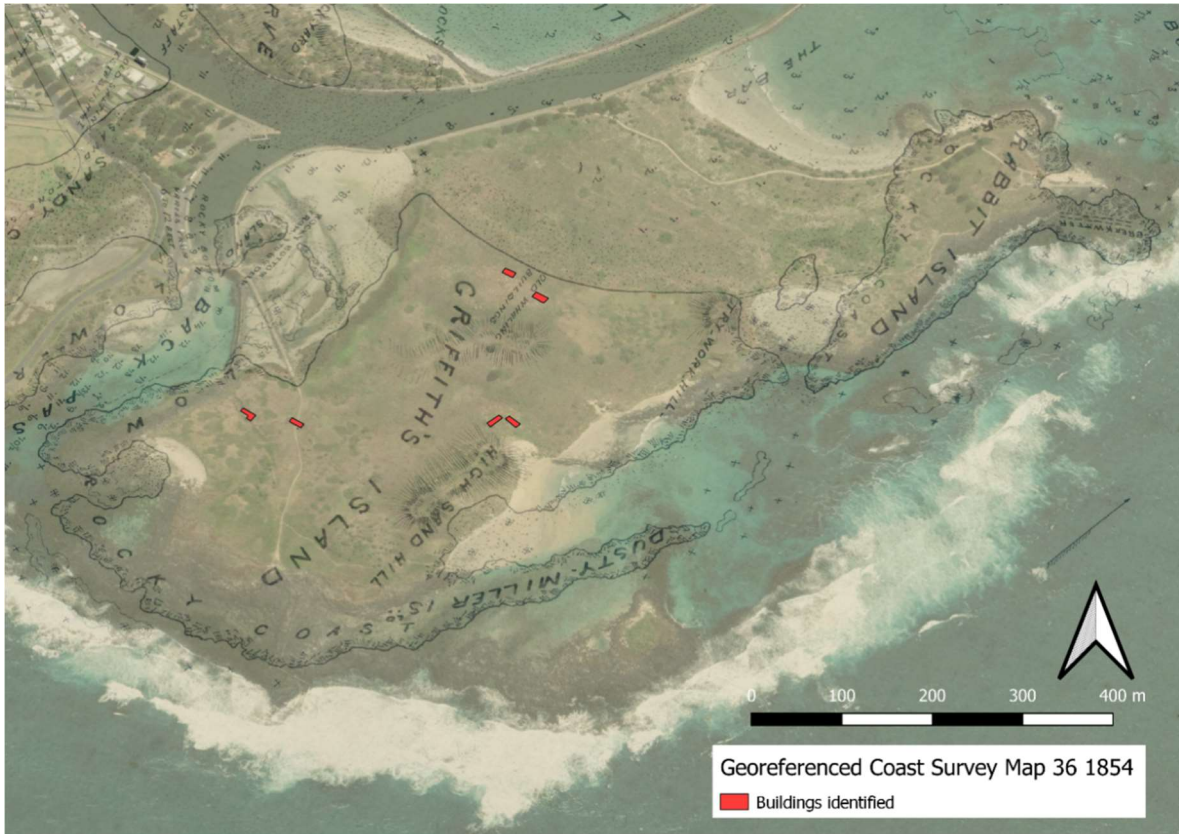


Figure 18: Map CS36 (1854) overlaid on satellite imagery with buildings identified.

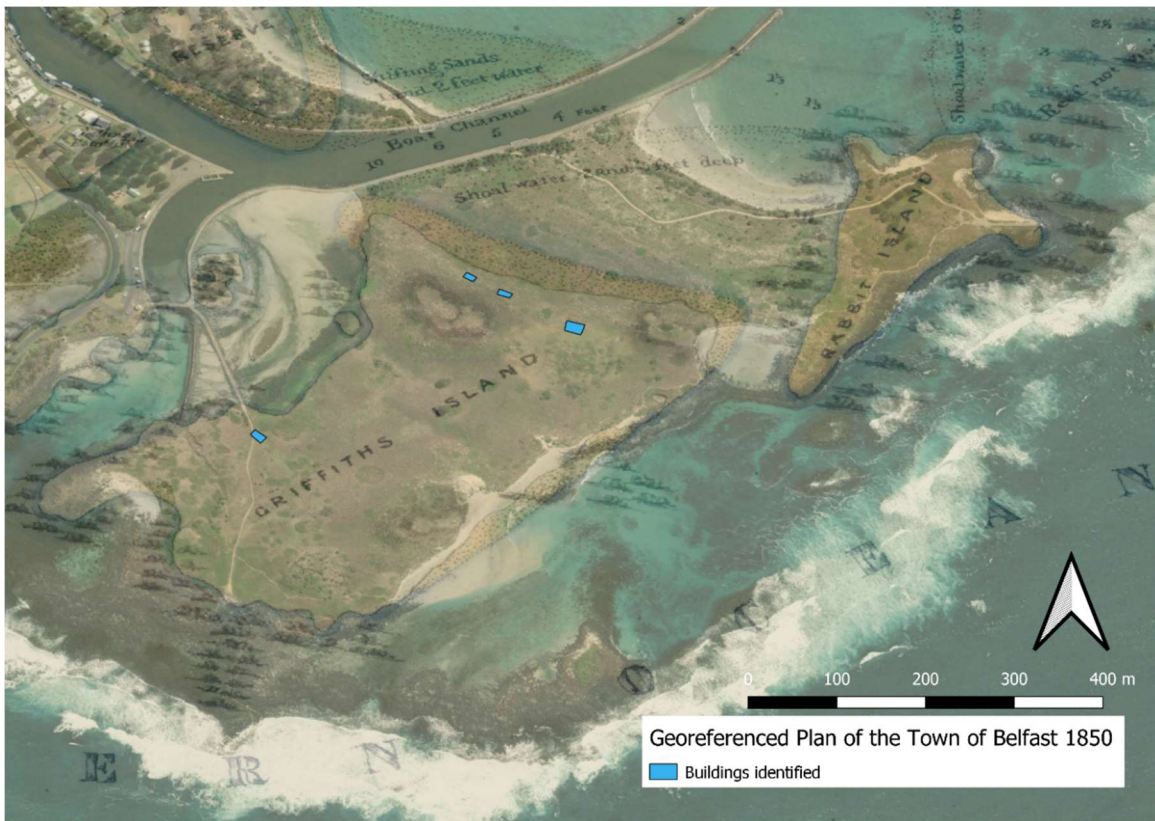


Figure 19: Map FEAT 599 (1850) overlaid on satellite imagery with buildings identified.



Figure 20: Map SYDNEY B3 (1851) overlaid on satellite imagery with buildings identified.

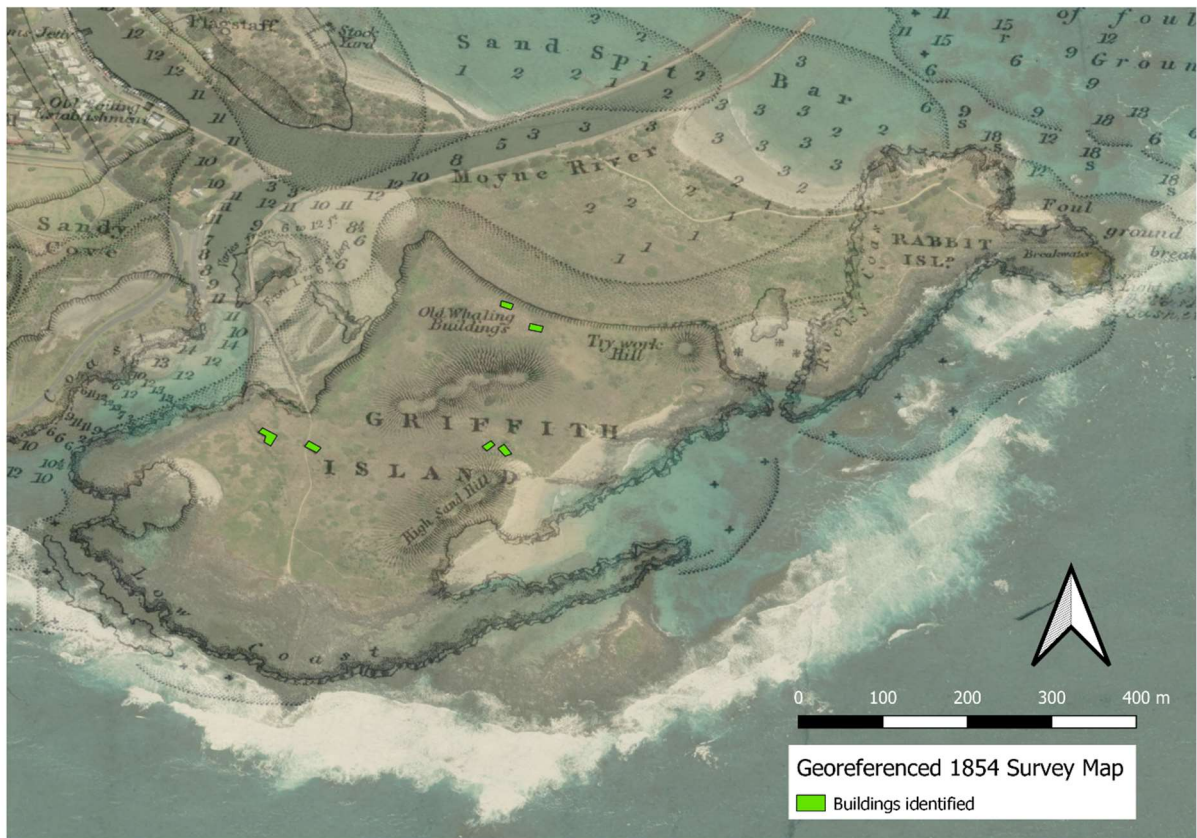


Figure 21: Map CS 36: Port Fairy Belfast, overlaid on satellite imagery with buildings identified.

This revealed several clusters of potential building remains. Buildings were present on all four maps and appeared in relatively small groupings. One group of buildings were labelled 'whaling buildings' on several of the maps (Figure 21 and Figure 18). These buildings and the ones in the immediate vicinity were associated with Griffiths' whaling station, as they are the only named buildings on any of the maps. This was reinforced by their proximity to 'Tryworks Hill' (seen in Figure 21) which was also labelled. Other buildings were also identified on the island but were unlabelled and inconsistently present on all four maps.

The buildings from each georeferenced map were collated into a separate shapefile layer which was then overlaid on satellite imagery, to determine the extent of the survey area. All maps created for mapping paths and locations use a Bing base map, satellite imaging data supplied by Maxar 2020, finalised maps were maps created using QGIS.

Figure removed due to copyright restriction

**Figure 22:** Position of buildings determined by georeferenced overlay.

## Newspapers and gazettes

Newspaper articles and government gazettes formed the bulk of the documentary sources consulted for this project. The process of searching newspapers involved key word searches using Trove, however due to poor legibility of scanned material this method was not as productive as expected. Once this method was exhausted, relevant newspapers were searched manually.

Due to the limited availability of information relating to whaling activities in Port Fairy, documentary searches were expanded to include Jonathan Griffiths' activities before, during, and after the operation of the whaling station on Griffiths Island.

Newspapers available online that were sourced in this research ranged from 1830–1859. In the earliest period of availability (1830–1840), newspapers principally came from Sydney and Launceston, and from 1840 to 1860 local regional newspapers also began reporting on whaling activities in Belfast/Port Fairy.

## *Whaling in Port Fairy*

To assist in placing the Griffiths Island whaling enterprise in the national context, this section provides a timeline for the Port Fairy whaling industry and its main protagonist, Jonathan Griffiths. The relationship between the whalers and local Aboriginal people is also investigated.

The first whaling enterprise in Port Fairy commenced in 1835: the relatively short lived and unsuccessful venture of Reibey and Penney on outer Rabbit Island (Powling 2006:14—15). John Griffiths purchased the infrastructure and began whaling in 1836. Griffiths continued whaling in Port Fairy up until 1847 (*Argus* Wednesday 28 September 1853:4). The duration of Griffiths whaling enterprise is

unclear, as an 1848 newspaper reported that Griffiths would have “as large a party as they can muster with any prospect of success” (*Geelong Advertiser* Tuesday 4 April 1848:2). This signalled Griffiths’ intent to continue whaling if the season looked to be successful.

### **1843**

By 1843, Griffiths’ whaling enterprise in Port Fairy and the Portland region appeared to have been experiencing success, as it had been recorded that: “whalers at Port Fairy were fortunate enough to secure another whale, making twelve so far this season” (*Port Phillip Gazette* Saturday 26 August 1843:1; *Melbourne Times* Friday 25 August 1843:3). The 1843 whaling season came to close in late September with a total of 15 whales caught (*Melbourne Times* Friday 13 October 1843:1). Work for whalers outside of the whaling season was advertised in newspapers. One such advertisement stated that whalers without employ should turn their attention to the lack of fish for sale in the township (*Port Phillip Gazette* Wednesday 11 October 1843:4). This suggests that there was support from the township for Griffiths whaling enterprise.

### **1844**

In 1844, it was documented that whaling in Belfast (Port Fairy) had been progressing successfully, with ten whales being caught in season, nine of which being taken by the shore party (*Port Phillip Gazette* Saturday 3 August 1844:3).

### **1845**

The whaling season of 1845 commenced in early May (*Port Phillip Gazette* Saturday 10 May 1845:2). Mr Campbells maintained the only whaling shore-party for the 1845 season using three boats. Griffiths’ ship, *Elizabeth*, arrived in Portland Bay for the

1845 whaling season, the *Geelong Advertiser* states, “she arrived empty last year and went away full.” (*Geelong Advertiser* Wednesday 14 May 1845:3). Through the 1845 season, only two whales were taken by three boats belonging to the whaling industry in Port Fairy (*Port Phillip Gazette* Sunday 2 August 1845:2). The whaling season in Portland Bay was also poor, and whalers were drawn to Lady Bay (Warrnambool) for the promise of richer grounds (*Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser* Monday 4 August 1845:2).

### **1846**

The 1846 season in Port Fairy was described as “remarkably unsuccessful” as they had only harpooned and caught one whale, despite maintaining a sharp watch on the whaling grounds. The whaling season in Portland was more successful, with a total of eight whales caught (*Geelong Advertiser and Squatters’ Advocate* Saturday 18 July 1846:2).

### **1847**

The 1847 season proved equally disappointing, with the results of the end of season declaring that “Whalers are yet without good fortune of a catch but are living in daily hope” (*Port Phillip Gazette and Settler’s Journal* Wednesday 7 July 1847).

### **1848**

Neither Portland nor Port Fairy caught any whales during the 1848 season. This was attributed to ‘shyness’ and the presence of more whaling vessels in open waters (*Geelong Advertiser* Tuesday 11 July 1848:2). It is unknown whether a shore-based whaling party was active in Port Fairy during this time.

## **1849**

1849 saw significantly less whales caught and less mention of whaling in the newspapers. During this year, there was no evidence for a whaling party in Portland or Belfast. Due to the want of success in 1848, this contributed to the great number of British and foreign vessels 'outside' or undertaking pelagic whaling operations (*Argus* Tuesday 13 March 1849:4).

## **1850**

In 1850, there was no regular whaling party in Port Fairy or Portland. Whales entered the bay and were chased by hastily put together parties, however, these proved to be unsuccessful (*Geelong Advertiser* Saturday 20 July 1850:2). Evidence of American and French whalers in the waters between Hobart Town and Port Fairy, were conducive to the theory of foreign vessels outside contributing to fewer catches for shore-based operations (*Argus* Saturday 2 February 1850:2).

## **1851**

Two whales were caught in Port Fairy, but there was no evidence of running totals for the year, or if there were dedicated whaling parties stationed in Port Fairy at the time (*Geelong Advertiser* Wednesday 30 April 1851:1).

## **1852 onwards**

Whaling took place intermittently. There was no evidence from 1853 to suggest who was whaling. One whale was washed ashore, and parties were witnessed cutting it up. It was stated that "several poor men had risked their lives in endeavouring to capture it, one of whom was drowned" (*Argus* Wednesday 17 August 1853:5). By 1854, there was no evidence of whaling in Port Fairy, nor newspapers reporting

sightings of whales entering the harbor. Moreover, there were no sightings of whaling boats (*Portland Guardian and Normanby General Advertiser* Monday 17 July 1854). It seems by this point, shore-based whaling out of Port Fairy had become opportunistic.

### **Whaling buildings**

The only description of the buildings associated with the Griffiths Island whaling station that were revealed during this research, was found in an article shown in the *Geelong Advertiser*, in 1844. This article, in describing the entrance to Port Fairy, states “The only buildings visible from the vessel were some wooden edifices belonging to the whaling establishment of Messrs, Griffiths and Connolly” (*Geelong Advertiser* Monday 27 May 1844:4). This is the only documentary evidence for the construction materials used in the whaling station buildings on Griffiths Island.

### *Johnathan Griffiths*

Johnathan Griffiths (also known in historical records as John Griffiths and Captain Griffiths) was as an early colonial entrepreneur. He was a shipbuilder, pastoralist, sealer, whaler, shipowner, and heavily involved in coastal infrastructure development.

Griffiths’ whaling activities commenced as early as 1830 and can be further explored through the arrivals and departures of his ships in southeast Australian ports (Syme 1984, 1987, 2006). In early July 1830, the schooner, *Henry*, with Captain Griffiths aboard, departed Twofold Bay with 15 tons of black oil. On the same day, Griffiths’ *Resolution* returned to Launceston (*Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* Thursday 15 July 1830:2). The following year in April, Griffiths, in his ship



*Henry*, arrived in Sydney with 12,000 seal skins and a considerable quantity of seal oil. This is also recognised by the newspaper as “certainly proving one of the most profitable resources of the colony” (*Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* Tuesday 5 April 1831:2). Later that year, Griffiths, in his ship *Resolution*, en route from Launceston to Circular Head, lost both its masts and had to undergo repair in Sydney, which was expected to take no longer than a week (*Hobart Town Courier* Saturday 7 May 1831:2). By June 1831, Griffiths began the construction of a new ship in Launceston, purpose built for whaling pursuits (*Independent* Saturday 4 June 1831:2).

Griffiths was also heavily involved in the development of the colony in Tasmania. He played an important role in the construction of infrastructure, vital to the success of the Tasmanian colony. One such example of this is reported in the *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* (Saturday 13 July 1833:4):

We are glad to find that Mr. Griffiths, the contractor of the long-talked of bridge over the North Esk, in this town (Launceston), is not sleeping over his job. Considerable progress has been made in driving the piles; and the work is continuing to proceed as rapidly as it has done since the order given to Mr. Griffiths. Very few months will elapse before we will have to record the completion of this much-needed passage over the Esk.

Earlier in the year, Griffiths was described as proceeding eagerly in sourcing timber for the construction of the Tamar Bridge, and the construction of which, as stated by the *Sydney Gazette*, “when completed would be in every way exceptional” (*Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* Saturday 26 January 1833:2).

In 1835, Griffiths’ Tamar-built, 42-ton schooner *Richmond*, arrived from Launceston and was advertised for sale in Sydney (*Sydney Herald* Monday 16 February 1835:4).

In the years following this, Griffiths supplemented his whaling activities with continued coastal trading, as well as ship salvage, repair, and sales.

### **1843**

In 1843, Griffiths settled permanently in Belfast, as an article published in the *Melbourne Times* (*Melbourne Times* Friday 8 September 1843:3) describes:

Mr Griffiths, late of Launceston arrived a few days ago with three families, to permanently fixing his abode in this thriving settlement. He has brought with him the materials of a Wind Mill, which he proposes forthwith erecting, in a conveniently situated part of the township. Mr Griffiths is a gentleman of amazing enterprise, and through reduced circumstances, his indomitable spirit seems to have received an increase in vigour by his past misfortunes, and he now proposes to commence life afresh in this district in which he has long felt a deep interest, and in which, too, he has had a considerable stake.

The same year Griffiths' *Socrates* was chartered by Atkinson for the conveyance of stores, for the growing settlement at Port Fairy (*Geelong Advertiser* Thursday 31 August 1843:2). This was a role that would supplement Griffiths' seasonal whaling enterprise and contribute to the growth of the settlement.

### **1844**

In late 1844, Griffiths purchased the hull of *The Diana*, which had wrecked on the beach at Port Fairy (*Geelong Advertiser* Thursday 31 October 1844:2; *Port Phillip Gazette* Saturday 12 October 1844:3). Griffiths' presence in Port Fairy, for the salvage and rescue of vessels on the nearby coast, could be attributed to the availability and readiness of the whaling party positioned on Griffiths Island. In 1844 Griffiths paid an exploratory visit to a newly discovered port (Warrnambool) 30 miles (48.3 km) to the east of Port Fairy. Griffiths returned with a description of the

capabilities of the harbor, describing the 'sides as very steep, its water smooth, a large vessel may lay alongside the rocks and discharge her cargo' (*Geelong Advertiser* Thursday 24 October 1844:2; *Melbourne Weekly Courier* Saturday 28 September 1844:2).

## **1845**

Griffiths' *Ellen and Elizabeth* made the paper traveling to Melbourne from Portland via Belfast (*Melbourne Courier* Monday 1 September 1845:2). Reports of Griffiths' ships movements on the Victorian coast are too numerous to report entirely in this thesis. However, shipping arrival and departure records are available and detail this extensively (Syme 1984, 1986, 2006). In relation to Griffiths' enterprise, shipping arrival and departure records are valuable in determining the extent of Griffiths' maritime enterprise.

## **1846**

In the December of 1846, Griffiths began the construction of a new vessel in Port Fairy which was due to be launched around Christmas of the same year (*Melbourne Argus* Tuesday 22 December 1846:2). The *Geelong Advertiser* described Griffiths' construction as the following, "framework is as strong as the walls of adamant", and that "she will frighten the rocks out of the water" (*Geelong Advertiser and Squatters' Advocate* 26 December 1846:2). On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 1846, Griffiths' whaling party witnessed the wrecking of the schooner *Squatter*. The schooner was caught by the wind and went broadsides onto the reef running parallel to the beach at Port Fairy, the whaling party rendered immediate assistance to the sinking vessel (*Geelong Advertiser and Squatters' Advocate* Wednesday 3 June 1846:3). On the 6<sup>th</sup> of June,

Griffiths purchased the wreck at public auction for £12 (*Melbourne Argus* Tuesday 9 June 1846:2; *Port Phillip Gazette and Settler's Journal* Saturday 6 June 1846:2).

## **1847**

In 1847, Griffiths on his ship *Brothers*, along with Mr. Campbell, arrived in Warrnambool in order to remove the *Clarence* off the beach, the *Melbourne Argus* reports they are “likely to get her off without much trouble.” (*Melbourne Argus* Friday 15 October 1847:2). The *Clarence* was then taken to Port Fairy to be repaired by Griffiths (*Port Phillip Gazette and Settler's Journal* Saturday 16 October 1847:2). Furthermore, in 1847, Griffiths ship *Lydia* had such substantial leaking that it had to be run aground, and was subsequently sold by Griffiths at no loss (*Melbourne Argus* Tuesday 23 March 1847:2; *Port Phillip Gazette and Settler's Journal* Wednesday 10 February 1847:2).

## **1848 onward**

In late January, the *Argus* reports Griffiths' barque, the *Sydney Griffiths*, of 368 tons leaving Port Fairy for London, loaded with wool (*Argus* Tuesday 27 January 1852:2). The *Sydney Griffiths* was a purpose-built vessel, designed to transport the wool from the Port Fairy region, directly to London.

## **Construction of the Port Fairy breakwater**

The harbor improvement works, consisting of a breakwater and deepening of the bar at the mouth of the river, were thought to be essential for the continued growth of Port Fairy as a regional centre. Mr Atkinson, landholder at Port Fairy contracted Griffiths for the works for the sum of £5,000 in 1844 (*Melbourne Argus* Friday 10 July

1846:2). By 1845, Mr Atkinson had begun the erection of a steam flour mill and intended that construction of the harbour improvement work was to “commence imminently”, with the assistance of 100 prisoners, courtesy of the government (*Melbourne Courier* Wednesday 5 November 1845:2; *Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser* Saturday 6 September 1845:2). The flour mill was to be completed between August and September of 1846, but by this time the harbor works had yet to commence (*Melbourne Argus* Tuesday 28 July 1846:2).

In 1847, Mr Atkinson and the Government planned the construction of the breakwater, with one half of the expenses borne by each party (*Port Phillip Patriot and Morning Advertiser* Tuesday 7 September 1847). On the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 1849 the *Argus* reported that construction by Griffiths on the breakwater would commence immediately, and that the bar was to be removed to allow vessels of large tonnage to come up the river (*Argus* Tuesday 11 December 1849:2).

In mid-February of 1850, twenty men arrived in Port Fairy from Launceston in Griffiths’ ship *Brothers* to commence the construction of the planned breakwater (*Port Phillip Gazette and Settler’s Journal* Tuesday 12 February 1850:2). The importance to the township, of the construction of the breakwater and deepening of the bar, was discussed by the Lieutenant Governor in council. It was suggested that the government spend the sum of £600 on the employ of Griffiths for the deepening of the river entrance (*Argus* Wednesday 17 December 1851:2).

Griffiths commenced the construction of breakwater in February/March however, they were not completed (*Argus* Monday 22 August 1853:5). The failure to finish the construction of the breakwater was wrongly attributed to a storm, supposedly washing away the progress made by Griffiths (Syme 2018:15; Powling 1980:15).

However, the *Argus*, in 1851 (Saturday 11 October 1851:2) states: “Griffiths commenced building the breakwater here, but finding the first quarter’s payment not forthcoming, discontinued the work, and is now taking legal proceedings against Mr. Atkinson for breach of agreement”.

After the vessels, *Margret* and *Agnes*, dragged anchor in the outer harbor, the need for a breakwater and deepening of the bar at the entrance to the harbor was reiterated by regional Victorian newspapers. By 1859, the breakwater was still not established, and it was expected that the construction cost would be too great. The consensus of the region was that the construction of the breakwater would be the only thing that could secure the safety of the shipping of the bay (*Geelong Advertiser* Tuesday 30 August 1859:2). As a temporary solution, stronger moorings were installed to prevent such accidents from recurring. Griffiths continued with these works, although it is unknown whether he was engaged by the government to complete them or if he did them of his own accord, as it served his business interests (*Argus* Wednesday 26 May 1852:4).

### *Township of Port Fairy*

Port Fairy, like many other new settlements in the colony, was the subject of many glowing reviews in newspapers. One such review states, “the ground in the neighbourhood of the township is fertile; the whale fishery has been prosecuted with astonishing success; luxuriant pasture lands stretch far and wide around – who may question its success?” (*Port Phillip Gazette* Saturday 26 August 1843:2). This review highlights the potential seen in Port Fairy as a thriving settlement. In 1843, the township contained approximately 14 small weather board and broad-paling cottages

(*Melbourne Times* Friday 8 September 1843:3). The township was going ahead in rapid strides and by March 1843, the township contained a little more than 50 inhabitants. In October of the same year, the population was estimated at 250 people (*Geelong Advertiser* Monday 28 October 1844:4; *Port Phillip Gazette* Saturday 7 February 1846:2). By November, the number of residents had grown to 300 (*Port Phillip Gazette* Wednesday 1 November 1843:2; *Port Phillip Gazette* Saturday 21 October 1843:4). The 1846 census listed the population at 601 people (*Geelong Advertiser and Squatters' Advocate* Wednesday 20 May 1846:3). As per the 1854 census, Port Fairy showed a 50 percent increase in population with 1400 residents, whilst nearby Portland experienced a 150 percent growth since the previous census (*Banner* Tuesday 13 June 1854:10).

By early March of 1844, the settlement of Port Fairy contained approximately fifty buildings, most of which of timber (either sawn or hewn), several of wattle and daub, and three of stone. Brick had not yet been used in Port Fairy (*Port Phillip Gazette* Saturday 2 March 1844:2). By late 1844, the number of houses had grown to about 60, upwards of 20 of these were fenced. Previously, only two allotments had been fenced. As industry grew along with the population, new additions to the township included a mill, a tannery, and a brewery (*Melbourne Weekend Courier* Saturday 9 November 1844:3).

The establishment of a township in Warrnambool with its advantageous natural features that allowed a ship of up to 500 tons to load safely, became an imminent threat to the port of Port Fairy (*Geelong Advertiser* Saturday 19 April 1845; *Port Phillip and Melbourne Advertiser* Saturday 23 August 1845:2). Nevertheless, in 1847, Port Fairy was still reported as a regional centre, which was “rapidly and

securely advancing in size, and in general importance.” (*Melbourne Argus* Tuesday 27 July 1847:4).

### *Aboriginal relationships*

Little evidence of the relationship between the settlers, particularly whalers, and Aboriginal people was found during the course of this research. The instances in which interactions were reported in the press were almost entirely those of conflict between the settlers and original inhabitants. The tone of such reporting is exemplified in an article by the *Geelong Advertiser* (11 April 1844:4), published in 1844:

The natives in Belfast, unless speedily treated with care and decision are likely to give the inhabitants great annoyance. Already their quarrelling creates unpleasantness amongst the peaceable dwellers here; and their frequent yellings during the night whether by way of sorrow or joy are alike disturbing to a large portion of the township. One of the next steps which we may expect, will be for the natives to quarrel with the inhabitants, as there are not wanting even now, indications of a contemptuous and hostile feeling on the part of many of the latter. Their being allowed to build break-winds on the very township, and in such close connection with the houses of the inhabitants must be anything but agreeable to the families which cannot under such circumstances, fail to be annoyed with their state of nudity and with other of their degraded habits.

Another account from the *Melbourne Times* advises against travelling between Portland and Port Fairy due to the presence of a large number of Aboriginal people, estimated at approximately 200. The paper also warned that the Aboriginal people have “on occasions manifested a hostile disposition toward travellers” (*Melbourne Times* Friday 25 August 1843:3). Travel was advised against, in part due to fearmongering, but also to the risk of attack.



By 1845, it is evident that this relationship was becoming increasingly hostile between settlers and Aboriginal people, which becomes apparent in the following article from the *Melbourne Courier* (4 August 1845:2):

Intelligence reached town by Friday's overland mail from Portland, of a series of outrages committed by the blacks, at and in the vicinity of Messrs. Campbell and M' Knight's station, in the Port Fairy district, about twenty-five miles from Belfast. The utter absence of a protective force in that district has, it seems, emboldened the marauders, who belong to the Mount Eales tribe, to carry on their depredations with the greatest effrontery, and not content with carrying off with them sheep and cattle at will, they have the hardihood to dare the settlers to pursue them, and in one or two cases they have even gone the length of attempting to take human life. This state of things cannot, of course, be long tolerated; if the authorities do not interfere for the protection of the settlers, we may expect in a short time to hear of another wholesale massacre.

Overall, evidence of the interaction between settlers and Aboriginal people found in the historical records during this research is minimal. But that which is available points to the steady impost of European culture and values on the society and culture of the original inhabitants. The consequent alienation of the aboriginal population and attendant hostility to the European settlers, while seen as outrageous and predatory at the time, is not at all surprising in more enlightened times. As whaling is the focal point of this research, this is not to say that the interaction did not take place. Evidence to support the interaction between Aboriginal people and the whalers of Port Fairy was not found during the documentary research stage of this research.

In nearby Portland a well documented interaction which culminated in a massacre of local aboriginal people, over the possession of a whale carcass, is described in (Clark 1995:18):

It is stated that the natives fought the whalers. Now the cause of this fight, if ever such an unequal contest can be so designated, firearms are certain death against spears, was occasioned by the whalers going to get the whalebone from the fish, when the natives, not knowing their intentions and supposing they intended to take away the fish which the natives considered theirs and which it had been for 1000 years previously, they of course resisted the aggression on the part of the white men; it was the first guns of the fishery, and the whalers having used their guns to beat them off and hence called the spot the Convincing Ground. That was because they convinced them of their mistake and which, but for the firearms, they perhaps could not have done.

It is unknown how many aboriginal people were killed at the massacre, but it was found by 1841 that there were only two survivors remaining of the *Kilcarer gundij* people (Clark 1995:19).

### *Disturbance*

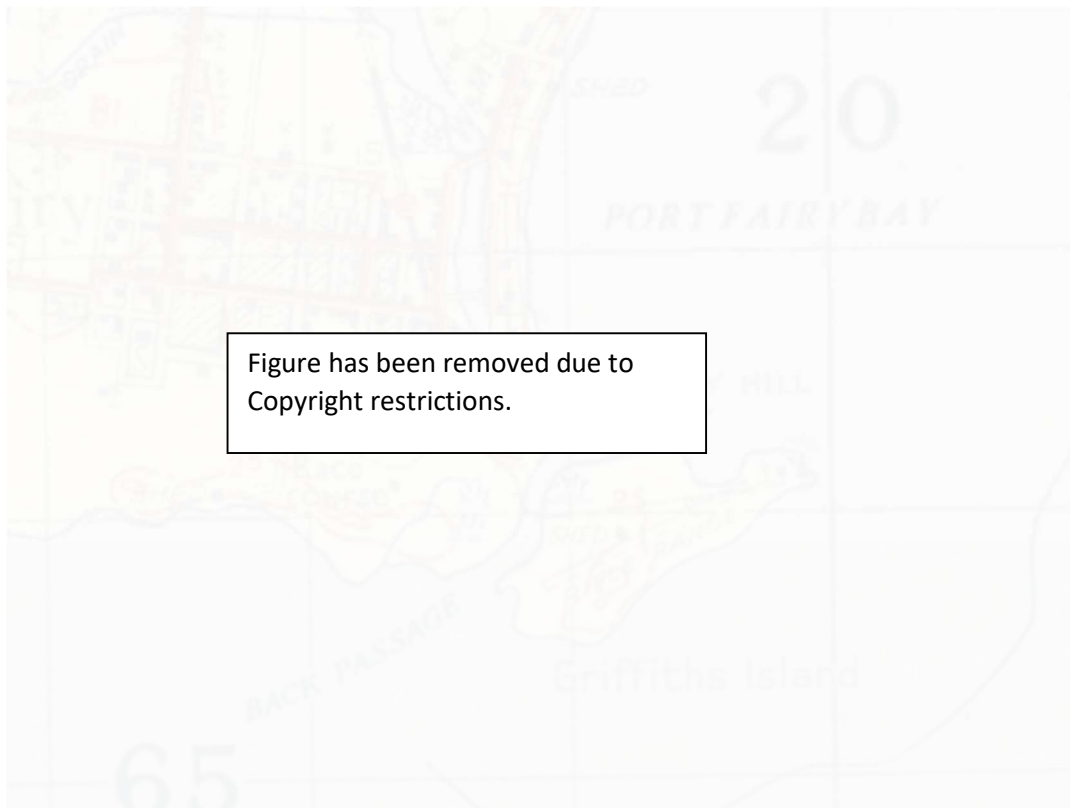
Griffiths Island has been subject to a variety of different land uses after it was first established as a whaling station. The activities and constructions associated with those land uses have had significant impacts on the natural landscape. The first of these was in 1837, when John Griffiths began construction of a 'substantial new house' on the island. Two carpenters and a stonemason were employed and remained on the island after Griffiths departure in 1847 (Powling 1980:15).

Subsequent structures included a school building (unknown builder and construction date) that was in use up until mid-1854, at which time the building, furniture and associated livestock were sold (*Warrnambool Examiner* Saturday 7 July 1854; Thursday 13 July 1854). The building was demolished by the purchaser Thomas Southcombe, and no description of the construction of the building was given (*Town and Country Journal* Thursday 5 January 1888).

Goat Island was also used as a sea bathing venue, with bathing boxes being moved between the island and mainland (Powling 1980:250).

In 1859, a breakwater, comprising two training walls at the mouth of the Moyne River, was completed using prison labourers. Following the completion of the training walls the channels between Goat, Griffiths and Rabbit islands gradually became filled with silt due to altered hydrology (Powling 1980:51). The resulting single island became known as Griffiths Island and the names “Rabbit” and “Goat” fell into disuse.

In the 1880s, reference is made to the sale of the island to the council for the purpose of utilising stone on the island to supply the construction of the training walls along the river (Powling 1980:304; Syme 2018:47). Twenty-ton blocks of basalt were removed from Goat Island by dynamite, to a depth of 8 to 10 feet (2.4 – 3 metres) below sea level (*Belfast Gazette* Tuesday 1 May 1888; Friday 29 June 1888; Tuesday 15 January 1889). A plan was made to establish a tramway from a quarry on the western side of Griffiths Island, across the top of the training wall to the train terminus in the centre of Port Fairy, to deliver stone to Warrnambool for export. However, due to the economic depression during the First World War, the project was cancelled (*Port Fairy Gazette* Monday 6 September 1915; Monday 4 October 1915; Monday 29 November 1915; Thursday 9 December 1915; Thursday 30 March 1916). The quarry itself was situated on Rabbit Island, but the tramway crosses the northern extent of the study area. There is also evidence for quarrying on the southern edge of Griffiths Island, less than 200 metres from the southernmost extent of the survey area. Quarrying works have clearly had a significant impact on the island’s landscape since the whaling station was abandoned.



**Figure 23:** Map showing extent of rifle range on Griffiths Island. (State Library of Victoria, La Trobe Picture Collection, EY000192, Port Fairy, 1942).

The bay between the southern training wall and the northern edge of the original Rabbit Island was progressively filled with dredged material from the river entrance, such that the original beach was about 225 metres west of the current beach on the southern side of the training wall (Syme 2018:163).

In 1928, Ewen MacPherson and D. Dempsey gained a lease on Griffiths Island for the Rifle Club. The new range on the island was completed in 1921 and extended in 1928 to 700 yards (640 metres). To complete the range, excavation was conducted, which unearthed whalebone, old posts, rubbish, metal whaling artefacts, bricks, and cutlery (Port Fairy Gazette Friday 16 July 1928; Syme 2018:163). This is a clear indication that at least part of the archaeology of the whaling infrastructure has been disturbed or lost. The rifle range (Figure 23) transects the study area (Figure 22),

with disturbance expected to be minimal from this activity. If the excavation was undertaken in order to create rifle butts (high mounds of dirt to stop bullets) the extent of damage to the archaeological deposits could be very large.

Revegetation and stabilisation works were implemented from 1883 due to sand shifts, utilising marram grass to stabilise the sand on the island's southern dune (Syme 2018:90). A fence was also constructed to prevent cattle damaging the newly implemented stabilisation grasses (Syme 2018:90).

## Field Survey

The field survey consisted of two parts. The first was an inspection to become familiar with the landscape of the island. The second was the site survey, which involved returning with permissions to access the survey areas. The site survey also included a general survey of the island's pathways for any related cultural heritage.

## Site inspection

The site inspection consisted of a familiarisation walk on the path that encircles the island. The visibility of the ground surface of the interior of the island was found to be limited, although many parts of the interior of the island were not visible from the path. The area adjacent to the path was also surveyed for any evidence of whaling related cultural material, but nothing was found.

## Site survey

The site survey took place on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2020. Permission to survey the 'off the path' areas was applied for and granted from the Moyne Shire (Appendix 2). A predetermined survey route was planned to limit the impact on the protected vegetation and wildlife (Figure 24). The permission was granted to conduct the survey as it was outside the nesting season for the short-tailed shearwater.

The proposed survey route was transferred to a mobile device so that the positions of the buildings and planned route could be followed real time. The use of the mobile device also allowed for recording deviations from the planned route caused by obstacles in the terrain.

Figure removed due to copyright restriction

**Figure 24:** Proposed survey route to explore the areas identified in georeferencing of historic maps.

The survey was conducted by three people, mid-morning, in mostly sunny conditions. The survey was broken up into three distinct sections, the planned path for each is depicted in Figure 24. The survey first targeted the survey area with potential to contain the whaling buildings (shown in green in Figure 24).

#### *Whaling Building Survey Area*

Shortly after commencing the first survey, it became apparent that poor surface visibility would be a severely limiting factor (Figure 28). A large proportion of the first

half of the survey had ground visibility of 0-10%. Large depressions in the landscape caused by burrows from the previous season's short-tailed shearwater nesting necessitated significant deviation from the planned route. These deviations from the planned route are shown in Figure 25. Survey path variation in comparison to the ground visibility can be seen in Figure 29.

It was previously suspected that the burrowing activity had the potential to reveal buried cultural material, however density of spring vegetation obscured most burrow entrances. Examples of the dense vegetation present throughout the survey area are shown in Figure 26 and Figure 27.

After completing half of the whaling buildings survey area (green segment in Figure 24) no remains or cultural material had been identified. However, the grassy plain in the eastern segment of this survey area, contained several protruding anomalies in the otherwise flat landscape (Figure 27). These could be considered of interest in subsequent surveys, as they are in the vicinity of potential building positions. These shapes were extremely densely vegetated, it was not possible to see what was underneath. Removal of this vegetation was outside the scope of this non-disturbance survey and would have violated the conditions of the permit issued by Moyne Shire. Probing with a range pole produced no hard return however this does not entirely preclude the existence of building structure or other archaeological material within. No further investigation of these outliers in the landscape was possible in this survey.

Figure removed due to copyright restriction

**Figure 25:** Proposed survey path in comparison to actual survey path.

A building foundation was discovered in the southern third of the survey area, approximately 20–30 metres from the southern-most potential building position (Figure 33). The location of the building is shown in Table 1 and shown in pink in Figure 30. This site is not listed in the Victorian Heritage Database and has not previously been recorded or identified.





**Figure 26:** Picture of visibility on the survey route on Griffiths Island.



**Figure 27:** Vegetation covering an outlier in the landscape in the suspected area of buildings on Griffiths Island.

Figure removed due to copyright restriction

**Figure 28:** Map of ground visibility on Griffiths Island.

Figure removed due to copyright restriction

**Figure 29:** Actual survey path in comparison to ground visibility.

The feature is rectangular in shape with dimensions on 9.2 metres by 3.3 metres constructed of long timbers 200–250mm wide and 80–100mm thick, stood vertically with one end buried, and edge-joined to form the wall of the foundation (Figure 31). The northern wall is the most exposed and intact of the four walls (Figure 33). The timbers protruded on average 450mm on the northern wall and 750mm on the southern wall. Timbers with the dimensions 40–50mm width and 100mm depth, were positioned horizontally at 400–450mm from the ground along the vertical timbers to provide bracing (Figure 31). These timbers measured 1600mm in length and are fixed to the vertical timbers using galvanised spikes/nails on average 150mm in length (Figure 34).

The ground level on the outside of the foundations is lower than the inside, and appears to be built up, possibly to raise the building in the landscape and prevent the ingress of moisture. On the inside of the foundation walls, galvanised sheet steel has been positioned over cracks between the vertical timbers apparently to prevent the raised earth escaping the foundations (Figure 32). Due to the degradation of the southern wall, it is plausible that the timbers exposed may have originally protruded further, having been subjected to degradation over time.

Position	Latitude	Longitude
NE corner	-38.392600	142.248483
SE corner	-38.392677	142.248535
SW corner	-38.392698	142.248492
NW corner	-38.392623	142.248437

**Table 1:** Corner positions of building foundation.

Figure removed due to copyright restriction

**Figure 30:** Actual survey path and location of building foundations identified in survey, in comparison to potential building locations.



**Figure 31:** North wall uprights with horizontal bracing (10cm scale divisions).



**Figure 32:** Inside of north wall, galvanised sheet metal covering exposed gaps in timber, holding earth in.



**Figure 33:** North wall looking west.



**Figure 34:** Galvanised spike/nail approximately 150mm in length (1mm scale divisions).

### *Southeastern and Southwestern Survey Area*

The southeast and southwestern survey areas were explored but faced the same limitations as the survey of the potential whaling buildings. These limitations cause a deviation from the planned path but recording of the path shows that the area was surveyed thoroughly regardless. No cultural material was revealed during the survey in both areas.

### *Island survey*

Following the completion of the survey of the study area, the perimeter path around the island was walked again. Several features on the island became apparent that do not appear on the Victorian Heritage Database.



**Figure 35:** Collapsed bluestone cistern located on the east of Griffiths Island.

To the east of Griffiths Island on the former Rabbit Island, bluestone foundations were present from the former lighthouse keepers' buildings as well as a collapsed bluestone cistern (Figure 35).

### Limitations

Extremely dense vegetation cover greatly restricted ground surface visibility during the survey. In some places grass cover was waist high, and burrows from years of Shearwater nesting on the island made traversing the survey area challenging. It was anticipated that this burrowing activity may expose some evidence of cultural material relating to the whaling station although this was not the case and aside from the building foundation nothing was found during the transit of the survey area.

The potential for more remains on the island is high, and further examination of areas of interest such as that pictured in Figure 27 is likely to reveal more archaeological features and contribute to a more complete understanding of the

archaeology of the Island. The removal of vegetation above the ground level is unlikely to impact the nesting areas of the short-tailed shearwater but was beyond the scope of this non-disturbance survey and the permit conditions imposed by the Moyne Shire (Appendix 2).



## Chapter 5. Analysis

This purpose of this thesis is to explore the whaling industry in Port Fairy, its technologies and its place in Australia's maritime cultural history. In addressing the aims of this research, documentary research was undertaken with an additional non-disturbance site survey. In the previous chapters documentary research and the site survey were explored, this chapter will discuss the implications of this research.

Activities on the island following the cessation of the whaling industry on Griffiths Island have potential to impact the *in situ* remains. The post use disturbance will be explored in order to quantify the level of disturbance the site may have experienced, and potentially identify if the foundations could be associated with any post whaling activities. This disturbance assessment will also allow for the determination of significance of the potential archaeological remains.

### Documentary research

The focal point of the documentary research was the whaling industry and its contribution to the development of Port Fairy and its place in Australia's maritime cultural history. This research revealed that the whaling season in Port Fairy commenced in late April-May and closed in September-October. Organised whaling took place in Port Fairy between 1835 and 1847–1848. Catch statistics are available from 1843 to the end of organised whaling in Port Fairy (Appendix 3). The availability of catch statistics before 1843 can be attributed to the unofficial nature of the settlement in Port Fairy and the lack of media in the region at the time.

John Griffiths was explored as the protagonist of the whaling industry in Port Fairy. As a renowned colonial entrepreneur involved in shipbuilding, whaling and sealing,

coastal freight, and later as a pastoralist, Griffiths' activities were frequently reported on by the local press. Through this research it was possible to track his activities in NSW, Tasmania and then later in the establishment and operation of the whaling station in Port Fairy. Research also reveals some of his other entrepreneurial exploits concurrent with the operation of the whaling station. These include the salvage and repair of one of Victoria's most significant shipwrecks *Clarence* after it ran aground at Warrnambool in 1847, three years before its sinking (*Port Phillip Gazette and Settler's Journal* Saturday 16 October 1847:2). Griffiths' involvement in the whaling industry in Port Fairy has the potential to contribute to the significance of the site in accordance with Criterion H (Appendix 4) of The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines (Heritage Council Victoria).

Catch statistics in the early years of the Port Fairy whaling station coincide with the growth of the township. But, as the whaling industry waned from 1846 with the decline of whale catches, new industries were established and Port Fairy experienced steady population growth that outlasted the whaling industry. Whaling contributed to the initial growth and development of Port Fairy as a township but was not responsible for its ongoing development.

The mapping analysis conducted was used to define the survey area showing that the site is likely to comprise a cluster of whaling related buildings on the eastern shore of Griffiths Island prior to the infilling of the channel between Griffiths and Rabbit Island. It is reasonable to assume that the cluster of possible building locations gleaned from the early mapping (Figure 22) clearly indicated the locus of the shore based whaling operations on the Island. Artefacts uncovered during the construction of the by Ewen MacPherson and D. Dempsey (Figure 23), further support the presence of the whaling establishment particularly because the artefacts

they reported in their excavations are typical of those expected from a whaling station.

Mapping can also be used for further research in the area that falls outside the scope of the current research. The research conducted for this thesis also identifies features of the whaling stations site that can be expected to be found on Griffiths Island. Based on the findings of the background research and case studies, these features can be expected to include:

- a charcoal lens in the southern section of the island around the associated Tryworks Hill.
- Whale bone/baleen.
- Metals artefacts including tools and fittings associated with the flensing process.
- The tryworks, which are likely constructed from locally sources materials, of basalt or bluestone, or of red brick if materials were brought to the site.
- Building remains. Would likely be of similar construction to the building identified in the site survey utilising local stone for the fireplace. Or potentially similarly to the early buildings of Port Fairy, constructed using basalt or bluestone.
- Trypots, which if still situated on the island would have a strong magnetic signature.

The potential for significant archaeological remains on Griffiths Island is high, The site appears to have been subject to only limited post depositional disturbance and the physical remains found during this survey, in combination with the supporting historical documentation, and strong association with the early Australian

entrepreneur, John Griffiths, strongly indicate that the Griffiths Island whaling station site presents a unique opportunity for archaeological investigation of an early whaling station site with a high level of significance at both the State and National level.

## Survey

The onsite survey was significantly limited by poor surface visibility caused by exceptionally dense vegetation cover which prevented a detailed search for artefactual material. A number of features were identified in the landscape during the survey, however removal of vegetation would have been in breach of the conditions of the non-disturbance survey, so the features remain unidentified. The survey area identified in the georeferencing has identified potential locations for future works if vegetation cover changes or other methodology becomes available.

The discovery of a possible timber building foundation in the southern section of the survey area was of construction methodology identified in the documentary research, which states “The only buildings visible from the vessel were some wooden edifices belonging to the whaling establishment of Messrs, Griffiths and Connolly” (*Geelong Advertiser* Monday 27 May 1844:4). As Griffiths’ previously resided in both NSW and Tasmania it could be assumed that the construction methodology of the Port Fairy whaling buildings would be like those found at either of those places. Timber slab constructions along with corrugated iron roofing were used in Davidsons whaling station in NSW (Davidson Whaling Station 2005; Gojak 1998:15), and timber buildings were also utilised in Adventure Bay in Tasmania (Lawrence 2008:20). The timber slab construction is consistent with the description of the buildings in Adventure Bay and Davidsons whaling station.

Galvanised nails and sheet metal allow for some interpretation of the age of the potential building. The exposed nail is uniformly cylindrical with no evident manufacturing marks on the shaft and has a pointed and uniform tip. Because of these features it is likely that these are wire nails, and of a modern provenance. Evidence for galvanised nails and sheet metal in the Geelong region are as early as 1849 (*The Melbourne Daily News* Tuesday 26 June 1849:2, *The Argus* Monday 6 May 1850:2). Although it is possible, given the condition of the galvanised materials, in a harsh coastal climate, that the galvanised materials were added after the building was constructed for the purpose of maintenance and repair.

So far there is not enough information to confirm the age of the foundations, or its association with whaling activity on the island. Despite documentary evidence that supports the possibility that this structure is related to the whaling industry, it is possible that it is related to the rifle range. The foundations were previously not recorded and a small excavation in the area has potential to accurately date the structure and determine its association to the whaling industry.

## Disturbance

Without disturbance, Griffiths Island presents a highly significant example of an Australian whaling station site. Its significance lies in its preservation, and association with John Griffiths. The association with John Griffiths and the possible remains for his house on the island, add to the significance of this site at a national level.

Historical research has revealed several post whaling activities which potentially disturbed the site. Quarrying occurred on the outer rabbit island, and the associated tramways ran along the edge of the river on the northern side of the island. However,

the tramways were established land that formed after the whaling phase on the Island and are therefore unlikely to have impacted the archaeology of the former whaling station site.

The creation of the breakwater and deepening of the river mouth resulted in spoil being transported to the north facing beach of the bay (seen in Figure 36). The creation of the training wall and deposition of dredging spoil is likely to have buried at least some of the former whaling station site. The later establishment of grasses and vegetation to stabilise the dunes on the island, reduced seasonal sand shifts and likely stabilised the overburden on the former whaling station site on the former northern beach of Griffiths Island.

The greatest potential for impact on the island was the extension of the rifle range by Ewen MacPherson and D. Dempsey. As these extension works uncovered material relating to the whaling station, impact on the site is inevitable, however the extent of this disturbance is not clearly documented. As the whaling station was likely situated on the beach in a northeast-southwest orientation and the rifle range in a southwest-northeast orientation, the transection of the whaling station site by the rifle range is minimal. As the impact on the site is minimal, the archaeological potential of the Griffiths whaling station site remains high. The area of impact provides an even greater potential of being able to view an *in situ* undisturbed site side by side with localised disturbance.



**Figure 36:** Port Fairy- Moyne River mouth (Victoria Collections: Museum Victoria, VPFH 62.01.008, Port Fairy Moyne River Entrance, 1925).

## Significance

The research conducted in this paper has revealed information surrounding Griffiths Island whaling station which can be used to inform a reassessment of the significance of the site. In determining the significance of the site, at a state level, The Victorian Heritage Register criteria and threshold guidelines will be explored (Appendix 4). Criteria A–D, and H will be explored as they most closely meet the requirements of the guidelines.

**Criteria A:** Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria’s cultural history (Appendix 5).

In satisfying this criteria, Griffiths Island whaling station demonstrates early frontier settlement and commercialisation of natural resources. The establishment and practice of whaling on Griffiths Island is evident in documentary resources and is explored throughout this thesis. Griffiths Island whaling station fulfills the requirements of this criteria and presents a unique example of early whaling station sites in Victoria and likely meets the requirements for state level significance.

**Criteria B:** Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history (Appendix 6).

Griffiths Island is the least disturbed shore-based whaling station site in Victoria, with the highest potential for being intact. This criterion is likely satisfied through the documentary evidence alone, which suggests that the potential of the archaeological remains is high. Griffiths Island shore based whaling station site is uncommon and rare in an Australian context.

**Criteria C:** Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history (Appendix 7).

This research confirms the presence and approximate location of the whaling station on Griffiths Island, and attributes the development of Port Fairy township to the presence of the whaling station. Whaling was an early economic practice of the colony and Griffiths Island presents a unique example of potentially undisturbed remains of whaling station sites in Australia and has potential to contribute to an understanding of frontier settlement and early Australian whaling practice.



**Criteria D:** Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects (Appendix 8).

The whaling operation on Griffiths Island and the association with John Griffiths presents insight into early frontier settlement and whaling operations. The economic impact of the industry formed the basis for the settlement of Port Fairy. The distinction for this criterion could be strengthened by further investigation of the archaeological remains of the site to evaluate the 'physical fabric' of the site. However, as a precinct, Griffiths Island is named after John Griffiths, there is a Tryworks Hill on the island and remains of a potential building were found during the survey.

**Criteria H:** Special association with the life works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history (Appendix 9).

The association with John Griffiths is the basis for this criterion. John Griffiths established the first organised whaling operation on the island, established a dwelling on the island, conducted coastal trade, shipbuilding, established training walls and other infrastructure, all from Port Fairy. John Griffiths as an early Australian entrepreneur had strong ties with Port Fairy as can be seen through his involvement with the development of the community.

Griffiths Island presents a rare example of a whaling station site in Victoria that is presumed intact, and well supported by documentary evidence. The significance of the site is high, and further exploration of the archaeological remains of the site have

potential to increase the significance of the site and strengthen the requisites for satisfying criteria at a state level.

## Conclusion

This thesis set out to:

1. Determine the significance of Griffiths Island whaling station site in the context of the early Australian colonial whaling industry.
2. Determine the extent of the remaining maritime infrastructure on Griffiths Island with an exhaustive examination of available documentary evidence.

### **Aim 1: Significance of Griffiths Island whaling station site in the context of the early Australian colonial whaling industry.**

Griffiths Island was in operation for a short period in comparison to other Australian whaling sites (see case study examples). However, significance lies in its relationship with John Griffiths and his early colonial enterprises.

The whaling industry in Port Fairy provided the capital and interest to establish and grow the town that became the entry point to (what we now know as) western Victoria. This also commenced exploration and expansion in the region for settlement and farming.

Exploration of the Victorian Heritage Register criteria and threshold guidelines explored above and evinced in this research develop on the significance of the whaling industry on Griffiths Island, and suggest the potential of the archaeological remains. Griffiths Island holds an important place in Australia's early colonial maritime history, holding the potential to provide *in situ* deposits associated with the whaling operation and its processes, as well as evidence for the earliest period of European economic activity in Victoria. Griffiths Island may not meet the criteria of

the Australian Heritage Database to be nationally significant, but the site has potential to be is a unique example of an intact shore-based whaling station site. Griffiths Island is a nationally significant shore-based whaling station site and important to the development of Australia's maritime heritage.

**Aim 2: Determine the extent of the remaining maritime infrastructure on Griffiths Island with an exhaustive examination of available documentary evidence.**

The varied records of documents, landscape, and material culture associated with shore-based whaling practices have been analysed using perspectives drawn from current maritime, and historical archaeology theory (Lawrence and Staniforth 1998:111). This would provide an exhaustive integrated approach to develop on and synthesise previous work. Archaeological investigation of Victorian shore-based whaling sites is underrepresented in a national context. Australia's early maritime infrastructure is crucial in understanding early colonial life and has the potential to build on the scarce historical information available.

It is through this investigation that, in the absence of concrete physical evidence for the former whaling station site on Griffiths Island, the potential for remains can be evaluated. One structure was identified through the course of the survey, but without further investigation it is not possible to confirm its association with the Griffiths whaling enterprise. Despite considerable land use following the cessation of whaling, the only activity that caused disturbance to the site was the construction of a rifle range, transecting the site. It is reasonable to assume that the whaling station site is mostly intact and as such provides a unique example of very early commercialisation of natural resources outside the frontier of the established colony.

## Suggestions for future work

As the extent of the archaeological remains is unknown, further physical investigation of the survey area is strongly suggested.

It is suggested that future works involve:

- Test excavation around the newly identified structure to determine its usage and its potential for association to the whaling industry.
- Determine the extent of the disturbance on the island, through test pit excavations.
- Exploration of anomalies identified in the site survey conducted in this research.
- Test excavation in area of building locations identified in georeferencing overlay.

In the interim it is suggested that ongoing monitoring is conducted due to the site's significance, and as the newly identified structure showed signs of regular foot traffic.

As part of this research, Heritage Victoria will be updated with the findings, information on the survey will be provided to Moyne Shire Council as per requirements of the access to the off-path areas.

## References

- Ackley, A. 2014 Preserving Australia's whaling past: Discovery Bay's historic whaling station. *Signals* 107:54–59.
- Anderson, R. 2018 Pakington whaling station inspection, Port Gregory. Report for the Department of Maritime Archaeology, Western Australian Maritime Museum, No. 328.
- Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University: Griffiths, John (1801–1881) from <<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/griffiths-john-2242/text2697>> published first in hardcopy 1966, accessed online 5 August 2020.
- Basberg, B.L. 1982 Technological change in the Norwegian whaling industry: A case-study in the use of patent-statistics as a technology indicator. *Research Policy* 11(3):163–171.
- Bell, P. 1991 Research and management issues arising from sites associated with the South Australian bay whaling and sealing industries. *Bulletin of the Australian Institute for Maritime Archaeology* 15(2):45–58.
- Boocock, A., R. Bower, C. Coroneos, R. McKinnon and G. Marshall 1990 Survey of Wrecks, Frenchman Bay, Albany. Report for the Department of Maritime Archaeology, Western Australian Maritime Museum, No. 50.
- Boyce, J. 2013 *1835: The Founding of Melbourne & the Conquest of Australia*. Melbourne: Black Inc.
- Clark, I. 1995 *Scars in the landscape: a register of massacre sites in western Victoria 1803–1859*. AIATSIS, Canberra.
- Chamberlain, S. 1989 Sealing, Whaling and Early Settlement of Victoria: An Annotated Bibliography of Historical Sources. Report prepared for the Department of Conservation and Environment.
- Clark, I.D. 2011 The Convincing Ground Aboriginal massacre at Portland Bay, Victoria: fact or fiction?. *Aboriginal History* 35:79–109.
- Davies, P. and S. Lawrence 2001 Whalers on Gabo Island? *Australasian Science* 22(8):45.
- Davies, P. and S. Lawrence 2003 The Gabo Island Jetty Shed. *Bulletin for the Australasian Institute of Maritime Archaeology* 27:19–24.
- Eden District Office 1995 Davidson Whaling Station Historic Site Plan of Management. Unpublished report prepared for NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.
- Edquist, H. 2019 Portland Bay and the Origins of European Architecture in Port Phillip 1828–1836. *Fabrications* 29(3):359–378.

- Eldridge, R. 2015 The Cultural Interactions of Aborigines with Whales, Whalers and Whaling in southwest Victoria 1828–1850. Unpublished Masters thesis, Federation Business School, Federation University Australia, Ballarat.
- Eslick, C. 1983 Historical Archaeological Sites in the Portland Area. Victorian Archaeological Survey Occasional Report No.10, Ministry for Conservation, Melbourne.
- Garratt, D. 1994 Norwegian Whaling Station Frenchman Bay, Maritime Heritage Inspection Report. Report for the Department of Maritime Archaeology, Western Australian Maritime Museum, No. 82.
- Gibbs, M. 1994 An archaeological conservation and management study of 19<sup>th</sup> century shore-based whaling station sites in Western Australia, A report to the national Trust of Western Australia, Perth.
- Gibbs, M. 1995 The Historical Archaeology of Shore Based Whaling in Western Australia 1836-1879. Unpublished B.Sc. (Hons) thesis, Department for Anthropology, The University of Western Australia.
- Gibbs, M. 2000 Conflict and Commerce: American Whalers and the Western Australian Colonies 1826–1888. *Great Circle: Journal of the Australian Association for Maritime History*, The 22(2): 3–23.
- Gibbs, M. 2005 The archaeology of subsistence on the maritime frontier: faunal analysis of the Cheyne Beach Whaling Station 1845–1877. *Australasian Historical Archaeology* 23:115–122.
- Gibbs, M. 2010 *The shore whalers of Western Australia*. University of Sydney, N.S.W.: Sydney University Press.
- Gojak, D. 1998 An Historical and Archaeological Overview of the Whaling Industry in New South Wales and Norfolk Island. In S. Lawrence and M. Staniforth (eds), *The archaeology of whaling in Southern Australia and New Zealand*, pp. 11–20. The Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology and The Australian Institute for Maritime Archaeology, Special Publication No. 10.
- Hewitt, G. 2003 Archaeology and Whaling in the Twofold Bay/Ben Boyd National Park Region of New South Wales: Final Report of the April 1999 Survey. Unpublished report prepared for New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service.
- Hewitt, G. 2003 Portland revisited: towards the definition of historical archaeological sites in the modern regional landscape. Report of unknown origin.
- Johnson, E. 1954 *Port Fairy, 1810–1954*. Port Fairy: Port Fairy Community Hospital.
- Kostoglou, P. and J. McCarthy 1991 *Whaling and Sealing Sites in South Australia*. South Australian Department of Environment and Planning and Australian Institute for Maritime Archaeology, Adelaide.
- Lawrence, S. 2001 Foodways on two colonial whaling stations: Archaeological and historical evidence for diet in nineteenth-century Tasmania. *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 87(2):209–229.

- Lawrence, S. 2006 *Whalers and free men: Life on Tasmania's colonial whaling stations*. North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing.
- Lawrence, S. 2008 A Maritime Empire: Archaeological Evidence for Van Diemen's Land Whaling in the Southern Oceans. *Tasmanian Historical Studies* 13:15—33.
- Lawrence, S., M. Staniforth (eds) 1998 *The archaeology of whaling in Southern Australia and New Zealand*. Special publication Australian Institute for Maritime Archaeology no. 10. Gundaroo, N.S.W.: Brolga Press for the Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology and the Australian Institute for Maritime Archaeology.
- Lennon, J. 1998 Whaling at Wilsons Promontory, Victoria in the 1840s. In S. Lawrence and M. Staniforth (eds), *The archaeology of whaling in Southern Australia and New Zealand*, pp. 64–67. The Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology and The Australian Institute for Maritime Archaeology, Special Publication No. 10.
- McIlroy, J. 1987 Nineteenth Century Bay whaling stations in western Australia, A report to the National Trust of Western Australia, Perth.
- McKenzie, L. 1998 Whaling Sites in Victoria. In S. Lawrence and M. Staniforth (eds), *The archaeology of whaling in Southern Australia and New Zealand*, pp. 29–31. The Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology and The Australian Institute for Maritime Archaeology, Special Publication No. 10.
- McKinnon, J.F., A. Smith and I. Moffat. 2007 Kangaroo Island shipwreck shelter huts. *Bulletin of the Australasian Institute for Maritime Archaeology* 31:64–73.
- Nash, M. 1998 A Survey of the Tasmanian Shore-Based Whaling Industry. In S. Lawrence and M. Staniforth (eds), *The archaeology of whaling in Southern Australia and New Zealand*, pp. 21–28. The Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology and The Australian Institute for Maritime Archaeology, Special Publication No. 10.
- Nash, M. 2003 *The bay whalers: Tasmania's shore-based whaling industry*. Woden: Navarine Publishing.
- Newton, J. 2013 *Savage History: A history of whaling in the Southern and Pacific Oceans*. University of New South Wales Press Ltd. Sydney.
- NSW Government: Office of Environment and Heritage 2005 Davidson Whaling Station. Retrived 6 August 2020 from <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=5000659>.
- Parkinson, C. 1997 Land Based Whaling Activities on the West Coast of South Australia, 1829–1845. Unpublished BA(Hons) thesis, Department of Archaeology, Flinders University, Adelaide.
- Paterson, A. 2006 *The Sleaford Bay tryworks: Industrial Archaeology of shore based whaling stations*. Adelaide, SA: Flinders University.
- Pearson, M. 1985 Shore-Based Whaling at Twofold Bay: One Hundred Years of Enterprise. *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 71(1):3—27.
- Powling, J.W. 2006 *Port Fairy: The First Fifty Years*. Melbourne: William Heinemann.



Rodrigues, J. 2011 Pakington whaling station, Port Gregory: A short report on site inspections and later discoveries of whaling-related features and evidence. *Australasian Historical Archaeology* 29:52–58.

Rodrigues, J. and R. Anderson 2006 Pakington Whaling Station. Report for the Department of Maritime Archaeology, Western Australian Maritime Museum, No. 214.

Ryan, L. 2011 The Struggle for Recognition: Part-Aborigines in Bass Strait in the Nineteenth Century. *Aboriginal History* 1:27–51.

Smith, T. and C. Weir 1999 Where are the Whalers?: The whaling wreck site potential of New South Wales. *Bulletin of the Australian Institute for Maritime Archaeology* 23:38—43.

Stanbury, M. 1983 Norwegian Bay Whaling Station: An Archaeological Report. Prepared for the Department of Maritime Archaeology Western Australian Maritime Museum.

Stanbury, M. 1994 Norwegian Bay Whaling Station, Maritime Heritage Inspection Report. Report for the Department of Maritime Archaeology, Western Australian Maritime Museum, No.88.

Staniforth, M., S. Lampard and C. Lewczak 2001 Archaeology unearthing the invisible people: European women and children and Aboriginal people at South Australian shore-based whaling stations. *Journal of Pacific Maritime History* 36(3)12–19.

Stuart, I. 1989 An historical archaeological survey of Wilsons Promontory. In N.V. Waarden and D Ranson (eds), *Wilson's Promontory archaeological Project*, pp. 1–33. Victoria Archaeological Association.

Syme, M. 1984 *Shipping Arrivals And Departures, Victorian Ports. Volume 1. 1798-1845*. Melbourne: Roebuck Book.

Syme, M. 2018 *Port Fairy: A Town That Kept its Character*. Port Fairy: Marten Syme.

Syme, M., 1987 *Shipping Arrivals And Departures, Victorian Ports. Volume 2., 1846-1855*. Melbourne: Roebuck Book.

Syme, M., 2006 *Shipping Arrivals And Departures, Victorian Ports. Volume 3. 1856-1860*. Melbourne: Roebuck Book.

Tucker, C., L. Falvey and J. Hyett 2010 Archaeological Assessment: Portland Foreshore. Unpublished report prepared for Glenelg Shire Council.

Walshe, Keryn. 2014 Archaeological Evidence for a Sealer's and Wallaby Hunters' Skinning Site on Kangaroo Island. South Australia. *The Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology* 9(1):130—143.

## Maps

Public Record Office of Victoria [PROV], Historic Plan Collection, CS36 Port Fairy, VPRS 8161 – P0005, 1854. VPRS 8161 – P0005, 1854.

Public Record Office of Victoria [PROV], Historic Plan Collection, Sydney B3: Belfast Town, VPRS 8161 – P0005, 1851.

Public Record Office of Victoria [PROV], Historic Plan Collection, CS 36: Port Fairy Belfast, VPRS 8161 – P0005, 1854.

Public Record Office of Victoria [PROV], Historic Plan Collection, MCS 71: Port Fairy, VPRS 8161 – P0005, 1856.

Public Record Office of Victoria [PROV], Historic Plan Collection, FEAT 599: Belfast (Port Lots), VPRS 8161 – P0005, 1850.

Public Record Office of Victoria [PROV], Historic Plan Collection, FEAT 549: Portions No 44 8 9 Near Belfast Port Fairy, VPRS 8168 – P0005, 1850.

Public Record Office of Victoria [PROV], Historic Plan Collection, FEAT 536: Tower Hill-Lake + Marks Moyne River Belfast, VPRS 8168 – P0005, 1852.

Public Record Office of Victoria [PROV], Historic Plan Collection, FEAT 556: Belfast Bootahpool Goose Lagoon, VPRS 8168 – P0005, 1852.

Public Record Office of Victoria [PROV], Historic Plan Collection, ELEC 24: Belfast, VPRS 8168 – P0005, 1856.

Public Record Office of Victoria [PROV], Historic Plan Collection, MS X14: Belfast Town Allotments, Wrecks Noted, VPRS 8168 – P0005, 1879.

Public Record Office of Victoria [PROV], Historic Plan Collection, SYDNEY P13: Port Fairy, VPRS 8168 – P0005, 1846.

State Library of Victoria, La Trobe Picture Collection, EY000192, Port Fairy, 1942.

## **Newspapers**

*Argus* Monday 22 August 1853 p.5

*Argus* Saturday 11 October 1851 p.2

*Argus* Saturday 2 February 1850 p.2

*Argus* Monday 6 May 1850 p.2

*Argus* Tuesday 11 December 1849 p.2

*Argus* Tuesday 13 March 1849 p.4

*Argus* Tuesday 27 January 1852 p.2

*Argus* Wednesday 17 August 1853 p.5

*Argus* Wednesday 17 December 1851 p.2

*Argus* Wednesday 26 May 1852 p.4

*Argus* Wednesday 28 September 1853 p.4

*Banner* Tuesday 13 June 1854 p.10  
*Geelong Advertiser and Squatters' Advocate* 26 December 1846 p.2  
*Geelong Advertiser and Squatters' Advocate* Saturday 18 July 1846 p.2  
*Geelong Advertiser and Squatters' Advocate* Wednesday 20 May 1846 p.3  
*Geelong Advertiser and Squatters' Advocate* Wednesday 3 June 1846 p.3  
*Geelong Advertiser* Monday 27 May 1844 p.4  
*Geelong Advertiser* Monday 27 May 1844 p.4  
*Geelong Advertiser* Monday 28 October 1844 p.4  
*Geelong Advertiser* Saturday 19 April 1845  
*Geelong Advertiser* Saturday 20 July 1850 p.2  
*Geelong Advertiser* Thursday 11 April 1844 p.4  
*Geelong Advertiser* Thursday 24 October 1844 p.2  
*Geelong Advertiser* Thursday 31 August 1843 p.2  
*Geelong Advertiser* Thursday 31 October 1844 p.2  
*Geelong Advertiser* Tuesday 11 July 1848 p.2  
*Geelong Advertiser* Tuesday 30 August 1859 p.2  
*Geelong Advertiser* Tuesday 4 April 1848 p.2  
*Geelong Advertiser* Wednesday 14 May 1845 p.3  
*Geelong Advertiser* Wednesday 30 April 1851 p.1  
*Hobart Town Courier* Saturday 7 May 1831 p.2  
*Independent* Saturday 4 June 1831 p.2  
*Melbourne Argus* Friday 10 July 1846 p.2  
*Melbourne Argus* Friday 15 October 1847 p.2  
*Melbourne Argus* Tuesday 22 December 1846 p.2  
*Melbourne Argus* Tuesday 23 March 1847 p.2  
*Melbourne Argus* Tuesday 27 July 1847 p.4  
*Melbourne Argus* Tuesday 28 July 1846 p.2  
*Melbourne Argus* Tuesday 9 June 1846 p.2  
*Melbourne Courier* Monday 1 September 1845 p.2  
*Melbourne Courier* Monday 4 August 1845 p.2

*Melbourne Courier* Wednesday 5 November 1845 p.2  
*Melbourne Times* Friday 13 October 1843 p.1  
*Melbourne Times* Friday 25 August 1843 p.3  
*Melbourne Times* Friday 8 September 1843 p.3  
*Melbourne Weekend Courier* Saturday 9 November 1844 p.3  
*Melbourne Weekly Courier* Saturday 28 September 1844 p.2  
*Port Philip Gazette and Settlers Journal* Saturday 6 June 1846 p.2  
*Port Phillip Gazette* Wednesday 1 November 1843 p.2  
*Port Phillip and Melbourne Advertiser* Saturday 23 August 1845 p.2  
*Port Phillip Gazette and Settler's Journal* Saturday 16 October 1847 p.2  
*Port Phillip Gazette and Settler's Journal* Tuesday 12 February 1850 p.2  
*Port Phillip Gazette and Settler's Journal* Wednesday 10 February 1847 p.2  
*Port Phillip Gazette and Settler's Journal* Wednesday 7 July 1847  
*Port Phillip Gazette* Saturday 12 October 1844 p.3  
*Port Phillip Gazette* Saturday 2 March 1844 p.2  
*Port Phillip Gazette* Saturday 26 August 1843 p.1  
*Port Phillip Gazette* Saturday 26 August 1843 p.2  
*Port Phillip Gazette* Saturday 3 August 1844 p.3  
*Port Phillip Gazette* Saturday 7 February 1846 p.2  
*Port Phillip Gazette* Sunday 2 August 1845 p.2  
*Port Phillip Gazette* Wednesday 11 October 1843 p.4  
*Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser* Monday 4 August 1845 p.2  
*Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser* Saturday 6 September 1845 p.2  
*Port Phillip Patriot and Morning Advertiser* Tuesday 2 November 1847 p.2  
*Port Phillip Patriot and Morning Advertiser* Tuesday 7 September 1847  
*Portland Guardian and Normanby General Advertiser* Monday 17 July 1854  
*Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* Saturday 13 July 1833 p.4  
*Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* Saturday 26 January 1833 p.2  
*Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* Tuesday 5 April 1831 p.2  
*Sydney Herald* Monday 16 February 1835 p.4

*Warrnambool Examiner* Saturday 7 July 1854  
*Warrnambool Examiner* Thursday 13 July 1854  
*Town and Country Journal* Thursday 5 January 1888  
*The Melbourne Daily News* Tuesday 26 June 1849 p.2  
*Belfast Gazette* Tuesday 1 May 1888  
*Belfast Gazette* Friday 29 June 1888  
*Belfast Gazette* Tuesday 15 January 1889  
*Port Fairy Gazette* Monday 6 September 1915  
*Port Fairy Gazette* Monday 4 October 1915  
*Port Fairy Gazette* Monday 29 November 1915  
*Port Fairy Gazette* Thursday 9 December 1915  
*Port Fairy Gazette* Thursday 30 March 1916  
*Port Fairy Gazette* Friday 16 July 1928

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Location data for potential whaling buildings on Griffiths Island.

Name	Vertex	distance	angle	x/Ing	y/lat
Unlabelled Building west	0	0	79.77729014	142.2436784	-38.3937544
Unlabelled Building west	1	0.0001888554233	171.4200669	142.2438428	-38.3938473
Unlabelled Building west	2	0.0002860230029	262.555032	142.2437761	-38.3939179
Unlabelled Building west	3	0.0003485713569	347.7068352	142.2437229	-38.393885
Unlabelled Building west	4	0.0003869367951	348.1546553	142.2437441	-38.3938531
Unlabelled Building west	5	0.0005017848772	351.3600753	142.2436474	-38.3937912
Unlabelled Building west	6	0.0005498409614	79.77729014	142.2436784	-38.3937544
Unlabelled Building East	0	0	75.91857725	142.2442994	-38.3938773
Unlabelled Building East	1	0.0001664107221	164.5398222	142.2444459	-38.3939561
Unlabelled Building East	2	0.0002249723029	254.5621918	142.244416	-38.3940064
Unlabelled Building East	3	0.000394200214	345.9409469	142.244267	-38.3939261
Unlabelled Building East	4	0.0004528216839	75.91857725	142.2442994	-38.3938773
Unlabelled Building South-east 1	0	0	90.88938002	142.2469212	-38.3938469
Unlabelled Building South-east 1	1	0.00005625233648	179.2726491	142.2469673	-38.3938791
Unlabelled Building South-east 1	2	0.0002480918649	275.6845568	142.2468128	-38.3939928
Unlabelled Building South-east 1	3	0.0003118901969	7.301287695	142.2467699	-38.3939456
Unlabelled Building South-east 1	4	0.0004925208394	90.88938002	142.2469212	-38.3938469
Unlabelled Building south-east 2	0	0	91.08576142	142.2470521	-38.3938576
Unlabelled Building south-east 2	1	0.0001714905326	179.4382462	142.2471916	-38.3939574
Unlabelled Building south-east 2	2	0.0002450907602	271.7351431	142.2471326	-38.3940014
Unlabelled Building south-east 2	3	0.0004163932475	3.382658312	142.2470017	-38.3938909
Unlabelled Building south-east 2	4	0.0004767996299	91.08576142	142.2470521	-38.3938576
Old Whaling Buildings 1	0	0	78.61754463	142.2473911	-38.3922853
Old Whaling Buildings 1	1	0.0001777698018	171.4745149	142.2475499	-38.3923652
Old Whaling Buildings 1	2	0.0002661722101	262.8386746	142.2474861	-38.3924264
Old Whaling Buildings 1	3	0.0004331170549	349.9817043	142.2473407	-38.3923443
Old Whaling Buildings 1	4	0.0005107364145	78.61754463	142.2473911	-38.3922853
Old Whaling Buildings 2	0	0	76.57263851	142.2470027	-38.3919838
Old Whaling Buildings 2	1	0.0001455371643	163.4540623	142.2471358	-38.3920428
Old Whaling Buildings 2	2	0.0002184459995	254.6864148	142.2470961	-38.392104
Old Whaling Buildings 2	3	0.0003705461407	347.804991	142.2469598	-38.3920364

Old Whaling Buildings 2	4	0.0004384098309	76.57263851	142.2470027	-38.3919838
-------------------------	---	-----------------	-------------	-------------	-------------

Appendix 2: Moyne Shire consent to access off the path areas on Griffiths Island.



Our Reference: 947065/RH

15 September 2020

Callum Harvey  
Flinders University  
GPO Box 2100  
Adelaide SA 5001

Dear Mr Harvey

**RE: CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON FORMER WHALING STATION SITE ON GRIFFITHS ISLAND**

Thank you for contacting Moyne Shire Council seeking consent to conduct research on the former whaling station on Griffiths Island, Port Fairy.

As the designated Committee of Management of Griffiths Island, Council grants you consent to conduct the research outlined in your correspondence dated 14 September 2020 subject to the following conditions:

- Due to the presence of Short-tailed Shearwaters and their breeding burrows, you may only undertake your research between mid-May and mid-September. Outside of this period (i.e. mid-September to mid-May) you must not leave the formed (concrete and/or limestone) walking paths on the island for any reason;
- No vehicles are to be taken onto the island without further written permission from Council;
- All researchers are to wear some form of consistent high-visibility clothing to readily identify them from general members of the public (Council may be able to loan fluorescent orange vests for this purpose should you require them);
- The walking path around the island must remain trafficable to pedestrians at all times;
- Overall disturbance to the natural and cultural environment must be minimal;
- A copy of the findings that result from your research must be sent to Council upon completion of your studies; &
- Your field work research must be performed within eighteen (18) months from the date of this letter (otherwise consent will be deemed to have expired).

Like all users of this reserve, you must abide by all of the gazetted Griffiths Island Management Regulations (a copy is attached with this letter).

Council would also like you to consider involving community members of the 'Friends of Griffiths Island' in your research project however you can. President of this group is Marten Syme who can be contacted via e-mail at [martange@bigpond.com](mailto:martange@bigpond.com) or via telephone on 0355682632.

If you need to discuss this matter further you are welcome to contact me via e-mail at [rhodgens@moyne.vic.gov.au](mailto:rhodgens@moyne.vic.gov.au) or via telephone on 0355680553/0418566294.

Sincerely  
  
Richard Hodgens  
ENVIRONMENT OFFICER

*yourshire*

Page 1 of 3

All correspondence to - PO Box 51 Port Fairy VIC 3284  
Phone: (03) 5568 0555 Fax: (03) 5568 2515 DX 28402 Port Fairy

[www.moyne.vic.gov.au](http://www.moyne.vic.gov.au)  
[moyne@moyne.vic.gov.au](mailto:moyne@moyne.vic.gov.au)





### GRIFFITHS ISLAND MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS

The following regulations pertain to Griffiths Island and were advertised in the Victorian Government Gazette on 21 March 1979 (pages 769 & 770):

1. No person shall –
  - (a) Enter or remain in the Reserve who may offend against decency as regards to dress, language or conduct or who may behave in a disorderly, unseemly or offensive manner or create or take part in any disturbance;
  - (b) Enter or remain in the Reserve whilst under the influence of liquor or drugs;
  - (c) Behave in a manner which tends to frighten unduly or disturb and bird or animal in the Reserve;
  - (d) Play at or engage in any game or athletic sport or gymnastic exercise in the Reserve;
  - (e) Light or cause to be lit any fire in the Reserve;
  - (f) Throw down or drop any lighted tobacco, cigarette, cigar, match or any other burning material or thing in the reserve;
  - (g) Bring into or allow any animal of any kind to enter or remain in the reserve; any dog or cat found in the Reserve shall be liable to be destroyed and any horses or cattle...found trespassing within the Reserve shall be liable to be impounded;
  - (h) Obstruct, disturb or annoy any officer or employee of the Committee in the lawful execution of his work or duty.
  
2. No person shall, unless authorised in writing by the Committee –
  - (a) Carry or bring into the Reserve any trap, poison, snare, firearm or any weapon capable of discharging a missile;
  - (b) Trap, poison, snare, catch or otherwise destroy or interfere with or take away any animal or bird found in the Reserve or interfere with or take away therefrom any skin, egg, feather or nest;
  - (c) Bring into the Reserve any seed or any portion of any plant or tree;
  - (d) Offer or expose for sale in the Reserve any article of food or drink or any other merchandise whatsoever;
  - (e) Deposit in the Reserve any rubbish, litter or refuse of any kind except in receptacles provided for the purpose;
  - (f) Break, cut, damage, dig-up or injure in any way or take away the whole or portion of any tree, shrub, plant, seed, scrub, undergrowth, fern, flower, soil or any other vegetation or property in the Reserve;
  - (g) Cut or paint names or letters, marks or other matter on the trees, gates, posts or fences in or around the Reserve or otherwise deface the same or post any bills or advertisements thereto;
  - (h) Remove, displace or damage any board or fitting, written or printed notice for exhibition of any regulations, or any notice fixed or set up by the Committee in the Reserve;



- (i) Ride or drive any motor vehicle, motor cycle, trail bike, mini-bike or similar recreational vehicle within the Reserve;
- (j) Camp or erect or place any building, tent, booth or other structure in any part of the Reserve;
- (k) Enter or use any area in the Reserve set aside for any particular purpose or activity whilst a sign is displayed prohibiting entry into or prohibiting or regulating the use of any such area.

Every person infringing this regulation in any respect shall be liable to expulsion from the Reserve in addition to any other penalty to which such person may be liable.

- 3. For the purpose of good order, any person authorised by the Committee may refuse admission to any person to the Reserve.
- 4. No person shall remain in the Reserve at any time when lawfully directed by a member or employee of the Committee, a member of the Police Force or a Crown Lands Bailiff, to leave the same.

Every person who contravenes or fails to comply with these regulations shall be liable to penalties prescribed in section 13 of the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*.

**Appendix 3: Whale catches by year in Port Fairy**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of whales caught</b>
1843	12
1844	10
1845	2
1846	1
1847	0
1848	0
1849	0
1850	0
1851	2

#### Appendix 4: The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines.

Criterion A	Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.
Criterion B	Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.
Criterion C	Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.
Criterion D	Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.
Criterion E	Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.
Criterion F	Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.
Criterion G	Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.
Criterion H	Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.
Guidelines	<p><b>6 December 2012:</b> this guide, outlining the key considerations in determining whether a place or object is of state level cultural heritage significance and could be included in the Victorian Heritage Register, was adopted by the Executive Director Heritage Victoria and the Heritage Council of Victoria.</p> <p><b>5 June 2014:</b> guide updated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines (DOCX, 14 MB)</a></li></ul>

**Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.**

## CRITERION A: IMPORTANCE TO THE COURSE OR PATTERN OF VICTORIA'S CULTURAL HISTORY

A place or object is likely to satisfy this criterion at the state level only if **all** of the following requisites are met:

### STEP 1: A BASIC TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION A

The place/object has a *CLEAR ASSOCIATION* with an event, phase, period, process, function, movement, custom or way of life in Victoria's cultural history.

+

The association of the place/object to the event, phase, etc *IS EVIDENT* in the physical fabric of the place/object and/or in documentary resources or oral history.

+

The *EVENT, PHASE, etc* is of *HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE*, having made a strong or influential contribution to Victoria.

=

**CRITERION A IS LIKELY TO BE SATISFIED**

+

### STEP 2: A BASIC TEST FOR DETERMINING STATE LEVEL SIGNIFICANCE

The place/object allows the clear association with the event, phase etc. of historical importance to be *UNDERSTOOD BETTER THAN MOST OTHER PLACES OR OBJECTS IN VICTORIA WITH SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME ASSOCIATION.*

=

**CRITERION A IS LIKELY TO BE RELEVANT AT THE STATE LEVEL**

**Note:** the sub-themes in *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes* will assist in understanding the events, phases, periods, processes, functions, movements, customs and ways of life in Victoria's history.

### STEP 3: EXCLUSION GUIDELINES FOR CRITERION A

The place or object is unlikely to satisfy this criterion at the state level if any of the following conditions apply:

<b>XA1</b>	<b>Poor, indirect or unproven association</b>	The association of the place/object to the historically important event, phase etc is <b>either incidental</b> (minor, secondary) <b>or cannot be substantiated</b> . For instance, every rural property is not important in demonstrating the spread of European settlement or pastoral land use across Victoria and a 'legend' relating to a place or object needs to be backed up by strong documentary or other evidence if the place/object is to be registered on the basis of that story.
<b>XA2</b>	<b>Low or questionable historical importance</b>	The place/object has an association with, or demonstrates evidence of, an historical event, phase etc that is <b>of low or questionable historical importance</b> , i.e. the event, phase etc has not made a strong or influential contribution to Victoria. For example, the recreational pursuit of table tennis is considered to be a niche activity that has not made a strong or influential contribution to the state.
<b>XA3</b>	<b>Poor evidence</b>	<b>No reliable or verifiable physical, documentary or oral history evidence remains</b> to demonstrate the association of the place/object with an historical event, phase etc.

## CRITERION B: POSSESSION OF UNCOMMON, RARE OR ENDANGERED ASPECTS OF VICTORIA'S CULTURAL HISTORY

A place or object is likely to satisfy this criterion at the state level only if **all** of the following requisites are met:

### STEP 1: A BASIC TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION B

The place/object has a *CLEAR ASSOCIATION* with an event, phase, period, process, function, movement, custom or way of life of importance in Victoria's cultural history.

+

The association of the place/object to the event, phase, etc *IS EVIDENT* in the physical fabric of the place/object and/or in documentary resources or oral history.

+

The place/object is *RARE OR UNCOMMON*, being one of a small number of places/objects remaining that demonstrates the important event, phase etc.

OR

The place/object is *RARE OR UNCOMMON*, containing unusual features of note that were not widely replicated

OR

The existence of the *CLASS\** of place/object that demonstrates the important event, phase etc is *ENDANGERED* to the point of rarity due to threats and pressures on such places/objects.

=

**CRITERION B IS LIKELY TO BE SATISFIED**

+

The place/object is *RARE, UNCOMMON OR ENDANGERED* within Victoria.

=

**CRITERION B IS LIKELY TO BE RELEVANT AT THE STATE LEVEL**

### STEP 2: A BASIC TEST FOR DETERMINING STATE LEVEL SIGNIFICANCE

**Note:** the sub-themes in *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes* will assist in understanding the events, phases, periods, processes, functions, movements, customs and ways of life in Victoria's history.

\* Refer to p4 for definition of "class".

### STEP 3: EXCLUSION GUIDELINES FOR CRITERION B

The place or object is unlikely to satisfy this criterion at the state level if any of the following conditions apply:

<b>XB1</b>	<b>Low or questionable importance of attribute linked to the place/object</b>	The place/object is rare, or is even the only one of its type, but the <b>attribute(s) of claimed rarity is of questionable importance</b> . For example, the only 2-storey potting shed or bandstand with fitted windows etc.
<b>XB2</b>	<b>Dependence on too many qualifiers</b>	The claimed rarity is <b>dependent upon numerous qualifiers</b> being strung together. For example, the place is the <i>only</i> stone house ... <i>with</i> a slate roof... <i>in</i> the Federation style... <i>designed by</i> the architect...
<b>XB3</b>	<b>Place/object is 'endangered' only because of an imminent demolition threat</b>	For the purpose of this criterion, 'endangered' should generally relate to a <b>class</b> of place/object that has become so rare over time that there is a risk that in the short to medium term no such place/object will remain.
<b>XB4</b>	<b>Poor evidence</b>	<b>No reliable or verifiable physical, documentary or oral history evidence remains</b> to demonstrate the association of the place/object with an historical event, phase etc. or to the rarity/endangered status being claimed.

## CRITERION C: POTENTIAL TO YIELD INFORMATION THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF VICTORIA'S CULTURAL HISTORY

A place or object is likely to satisfy this criterion at the state level only if **all** of the following requisites are met:

### STEP 1: A BASIC TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION C

The:

- visible physical fabric; &/or
- documentary evidence; &/or
- oral history,

relating to the place/object indicates a likelihood that the place/object contains **PHYSICAL EVIDENCE** of **HISTORICAL INTEREST** that is **NOT CURRENTLY VISIBLE OR UNDERSTOOD**.

+

From what we know of the place/object, the physical evidence is likely to be of an **INTEGRITY** and/or **CONDITION** that it **COULD YIELD INFORMATION** through detailed investigation.

=

**CRITERION C IS LIKELY TO BE SATISFIED**

+

### STEP 2: A BASIC TEST FOR DETERMINING STATE LEVEL SIGNIFICANCE

The knowledge that might be obtained through investigation is likely to **MEANINGFULLY CONTRIBUTE** to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.

+

The information likely to be yielded from the place/object is **NOT** already **WELL DOCUMENTED** or **READILY AVAILABLE** from other sources.

=

**CRITERION C IS LIKELY TO BE RELEVANT AT THE STATE LEVEL**

This criterion will normally apply to archaeological sites (land-based and maritime archaeology) and sites that develop over time through the layering of fabric.

### STEP 3: EXCLUSION GUIDELINES FOR CRITERION C

The place or object is unlikely to satisfy this criterion at the state level if any of the following conditions apply:

<b>XC1</b>	<b>Poor evidence</b>	<b>No reliable or verifiable physical, documentary or oral history evidence</b> exists to provide a <b>reasonable indication</b> that physical evidence of investigative potential may be present <b>OR insufficient information</b> exists to locate the likely physical evidence with sufficient accuracy.
<b>XC2</b>	<b>Dubious importance of information to be yielded</b>	The information likely to be yielded is of <b>low or questionable historical importance</b> , i.e. the information is unlikely to contribute to an understanding or appreciation of important aspects of Victoria's cultural history.
<b>XC3</b>	<b>High degree of disturbance</b>	The physical evidence has been, or is likely to have been, so <b>disturbed</b> by subsequent activity that any research potential is compromised.

## CRITERION D: IMPORTANCE IN DEMONSTRATING THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A CLASS OF CULTURAL PLACES/OBJECTS

A place or object is likely to satisfy this criterion at the state level only if all of the following requisites are met:

### STEP 1: A BASIC TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION D

The place/object is one of a **CLASS\*** of places/objects that has a **CLEAR ASSOCIATION** with an event, phase, period, process, function, movement, important person(s), custom or way of life in Victoria's history.

+

The **EVENT, PHASE**, etc is of **HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE**, having made a strong or influential contribution to Victoria.

+

The principal characteristics of the class are **EVIDENT** in the physical fabric of the place/object.

=

**CRITERION D IS LIKELY TO BE SATISFIED**

+

The place/object is a **NOTABLE EXAMPLE** of the class in Victoria (refer to Reference Tool D).

=

**CRITERION D IS LIKELY TO BE RELEVANT AT THE STATE LEVEL**

### STEP 2: A BASIC TEST FOR DETERMINING STATE LEVEL SIGNIFICANCE

**Note:** the sub-themes in *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes* will assist in understanding the events, phases, periods, processes, functions, movements, customs and ways of life in Victoria's history.

\* Refer to p4 for definition of "class".

#### Reference Tool D: What is a 'notable example' of a class?

The term **notable example** is used to encompass any of the following:

- **A fine example** – the place/object displays a large number or range of characteristics that is typical of the class; the place/object displays characteristics that are of a higher quality or historical relevance than are typical of places/objects in the class; or the place/object displays the principal characteristics of the class in a way that allows the class to be easily understood/appreciated.
- **A highly intact example** – the place/object displays characteristics of the class that remain mostly unchanged from the historically important period of development or use of the place/object.
- **An influential example** – the place/object contains physical characteristics of design, technology or materials that were copied in subsequent places/objects of the class (direct physical influence), or other places/objects were created, altered or used in response to the characteristics of this place/object.
- **A pivotal example** - the place/object encapsulates a key evolutionary stage in the development of the class.

### STEP 3: EXCLUSION GUIDELINES FOR CRITERION D

The place or object is unlikely to satisfy this criterion at the state level if any of the following conditions apply:

<b>XD1</b>	<b>Demonstrates few characteristics of the class</b>	The place/object <b>does not exhibit the principal characteristics</b> that define the class, either having never possessed them or having lost them through subsequent development, activity or disturbance.
<b>XD2</b>	<b>Poor evidence</b>	There is a <b>lack of reliable or verifiable physical, documentary or other evidence</b> to indicate the place/object clearly belongs to a specific class of place/object and is a notable example within that class.
<b>XD3</b>	<b>Low or questionable historical importance of class</b>	The class itself is <b>not associated</b> with an event, phase etc of historical importance in the Victorian context or the association is <b>incidental or cannot be substantiated</b> . For example, not every fine or intact example of a road culvert or fowl house warrants inclusion in the VHR.



## **CRITERION H: SPECIAL ASSOCIATION WITH THE LIFE OR WORKS OF A PERSON, OR GROUP OF PERSONS, OF IMPORTANCE IN VICTORIA'S HISTORY**

A place or object is likely to satisfy this criterion at the state level only if **all** of the following requisites are met:

### **STEP 1: A BASIC TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION H**

The place/object has a *DIRECT ASSOCIATION* with a person or group of persons who have made a strong or influential *CONTRIBUTION* to the course of Victoria's history.

+

The *ASSOCIATION* of the place/object to the person(s) *IS EVIDENT* in the physical fabric of the place/object and/or in documentary resources and/or oral history.

+

The *ASSOCIATION*:

- directly relates to *ACHIEVEMENTS* of the person(s) at, or relating to, the place/object; or
- relates to an *ENDURING* and/or *CLOSE INTERACTION* between the person(s) and the place/object.

=

### **STEP 2: A BASIC TEST FOR DETERMINING STATE LEVEL SIGNIFICANCE**

**CRITERION H IS LIKELY TO BE SATISFIED**

+

The place/object allows the clear association with the person or group of persons to be *READILY APPRECIATED BETTER THAN MOST OTHER PLACES OR OBJECTS IN VICTORIA*.

=

**CRITERION H IS LIKELY TO BE RELEVANT AT THE STATE LEVEL**

### **STEP 3: EXCLUSION GUIDELINES FOR CRITERION H**

The place or object is unlikely to satisfy this criterion at the state level if any of the following conditions apply:

<b>XH1</b>	<b>Poor, indirect or unproven association</b>	The association of the person(s) with the place/object is tenuous or cannot be substantiated or verified. For example, the person spent a brief, transitory or incidental time at the place without leaving evidence or achieving anything there that is relevant to their importance.
<b>XH2</b>	<b>Inability to demonstrate association</b>	No evidence remains to demonstrate the association of the place/object with the person(s) or, in the case of physical evidence, the remaining physical fabric has been so altered that it no longer demonstrates reasonable evidence of the association.
<b>XH3</b>	<b>Person(s) is of local significance only</b>	There is insufficient reliable or verifying information available to support a claim that the person(s) is of more than local importance.