



Local History Factsheet:

A brief history of the suburb Henley Beach



From left: Henley jetty pavilion c1920, Henley Square 1960s, Horse trams at Ramsgate hotel 1905, Henley Square date unknown. Images courtesy Henley & Grange Historical Society.

The first section of Henley Beach Township subdivided in 1877. Almost all of the allotments were sold by October of that year resulting in an extension being surveyed.

The Henley Hotel opened 1878 and the Ramsgate Hotel was built in 1897. Del Monte Palace opened in 1911 as 'South Australia's leading seaside resort. It boasted electric light throughout and hot and cold baths on each floor.

Henley Beach jetty was built in 1883. The population at that time was 134 people residing in 24 houses.

The Henley Beach Tramway was opened in February of 1883. A railway linking Henley to the City (via Grange) was opened in 1894. The Electric tramline opened in 1909. The last tram to Adelaide departed from Henley Beach on 2 February 1957, and the tram was replaced by a bus service.

Signs to define areas of beach to be used by male bathers and female bathers were erected in 1882. In the early 1960s, Henley & Grange Council became the first to allow bikinis on the beach.

The Henley Football Club was formed 1906.

Henley and Grange separated from Woodville Council in 1915. In 1997, 82 years later, Henley & Grange amalgamated with Hindmarsh-Woodville to form the City of Charles Sturt.

The heritage listed Henley Town Hall and Soldiers Memorial opened in 1921.

Henley Beach's first petrol bowsers were installed in 1926 at Henry Hicks' Magnet Motor Garage in Main St (opposite the Ramsgate).

The Henley pool, located on the Esplanade, opened in 1934-35. It closed in 1985. A marker just south of the Henley Surf club commemorates the pool.

The famous 'pole sitters' competition held as part of the annual Henley Carnival broke all records in 1959, with competitors staying atop their poles for 15 days straight. Local icon 'Bob the Wonder dog' entertained at many Henley Carnivals in the 1920s and 1930s. Through his performances he fundraised £600 to erect playgrounds on the Henley and Grange beaches. When he died in 1936, the Advertiser refused his owners attempts to place a death notice.

In May 1953 a great storm severely damaged the foreshore, demolishing the amusement platform, bathing boxes, beach shelters and playgrounds. The jetty and swimming pool were damaged.

Henley High School opened with 176 students and 6 staff in 1958.

In December 1959, television was blamed for closure of the Henley Odeon Cinema after 30 years of operation.

Henley Square opened in 1979.

Want more information

The Henley & Grange Historical Society is a voluntary organisation devoted to researching, interpreting, documenting and preserving the history and heritage of the Henley and Grange area.

The Society holds four general meetings a year, which feature news and guest speakers, and publishes an annual Journal which is provided free to all members. New members are always welcome.

In addition to the annual journal, the society has recently published a compilation journal 'Telling the Stories of Henley & Grange' featuring articles written over the last 30 years on the history of Henley & Grange. Copies of the journal are available for sale from the Henley Beach library for \$22.

Membership enquires can be made via Henley & Grange Historical Society, PO Box 56, Henley Beach SA 5022.

Sources

'From Sand and Swamp to Seaside City: A Chronicle of the Henley & Grange Area, 1836-1986' by the Henley & Grange Historical Society.

'Telling the Stories of Henley & Grange' Henley & Grange Historical Society, 2010.