1. Introduction

“Imagine a time when sun and flame were the only light and warmth. When if you wanted
to go somewhere, you walked or rode a horse, or rowed a boat. When the only
entertainment was the song or the birds, or your own voice, or your own dance.

When the only foods you bought were flour and tea. A time when wine came in barrels
and salt fish too. If you wanted meat, you killed it. If you wanted fruit, you grew it. A time
when even a child knew that after autumn rain, the mushrooms would appear. And if you
wanted butter, you fed the cow, milked it, and separated the cream to make the butter and
the cheese, which took the best part of a day. A time when, having carried the water from
river or well, you did not squander it, for water is heavy and there was no one but yourself
to do the task.

This is how most of the world lived 150 years ago. Without machines, men co-operated
with each other. Manpower had a different meaning then. A man, a lever, a wheel and a
piece of rope could accomplish much.”

Located north of Phillip Island in Western Port, Churchill Island was used by
Boonwurrung/Bunurong Aboriginal people. Churchill Island also has an important place in
the history of the settlement by Europeans in Victorian, and is the site of the first
European garden in Victoria.

Following the sighting of the bay by George Bass in 1798, Lt. James Grant disembarked
from the Lady Nelson in 1801 and he named this small island after the man who had
given him seeds to bring on his long journey.

Samuel Amess, former mayor of Melbourne, purchased the island in 1872 for both holiday
and farming use. Ownership of the Island changed hands a number of times over the
years until it was sold to the Victorian Government in 1976.

The Friends of Churchill Island Society (FOCIS) was established in 1980. FOCIS is active
in raising funds and providing an opportunity for people interested in the historical
significance and the exquisite natural beauty of Churchill Island to get involved and to
make a difference.

In 1996 Churchill Island was incorporated into the holdings of the Phillip Island Nature
Park (PINP). FOCIS works closely with PINP in promoting the Island to the public.

PINP holds the stewardship for Churchill Island and is responsible for protecting the
natural environment of the Island. FOCIS holds the primary responsibility for the
collection of moveable cultural heritage items on the Island. This is why the principal
purpose of the Society has been defined in the Society’s Constitution as:

The promotion of the moveable cultural heritage of Churchill Island.

---

1 Churchill Island - History and Her Story, Author: Patricia Baird, ISBN: 9780958093415
To achieve its principal purpose, the Society undertakes activities that include:

- Acquisition of new items for the collection.
- Archiving, preserving and restoring items in the collection.
- Publishing books, newsletters, videos and web site articles about the collection.
- Cataloguing items in the collection, including onto the online cataloguing program Victorian Collections.
- Educating the public about items in the collection.

Items in the collection include:

- A Cannon and cannon balls.
- A lace collection.
- Historic farm machinery and implements.
- Journals and other historic documents.
- Personal belongings of the early settlers on Churchill Island.
- A large photographic collection dating from 1880s to the present time, currently being sorted and archived by a FOCIS volunteer.
- Three oil paintings and a sketch book, all of Churchill Island, dating from circa 1890 and all produced by members of the Amess family.
- A collection of home movies showing life on Churchill Island circa 1940s and 1950s; now on DVD.
- A collection of archaeological objects dating from circa 1850.
- A large collection of newspaper cuttings regarding Churchill Island dating from the 1920s to the present, sorted and archived by FOCIS volunteers and a Museums Studies student.

Many of these items have now been catalogued in the Victorian Collections online catalogue. This catalogue provides a showcase of cultural artefacts held by many hundreds of organisations distributed across the State of Victoria in Australia. The catalogue of items held at Churchill Island can be viewed here: [http://victoriancollections.net.au/?q=churchill+island](http://victoriancollections.net.au/?q=churchill+island)
2. Where is Churchill Island?

Churchill Island is a 57 hectares (about 141 acres) island in Western Port, Victoria, Australia.

It is connected by a bridge to Phillip Island.

It is the site of the first European garden in Victoria.

Figure 1: Map Showing Churchill Island and Phillip Island
3. The History of Churchill Island

3.1 Aboriginal Heritage

Churchill Island was "home country" to the Boonwurrung/Bunurong people, an aboriginal tribe whose traditional lands ranged from south of the Yarra river in Melbourne to the Tarwin river in South Gippsland. The land and sea visible from Churchill Island are the tribal lands of the Yallok Bulluk clan. Churchill Island was known as Moonar'mia and as a place of special significance that has a legend associated with the Moonah tree. Lt. Grant did not record meeting Boonwurrung/Bunurong people during his time in Western Port in 1801; he did however notice signs of their presence such as remains of canoes and remains of fires.

An aboriginal midden on the eastern coast of Churchill Island has recently been identified by an archaeological survey as part of preparation of the Churchill Island Conservation Management Plan.

3.2 Churchill Island’s Historical Significance

Located north of Phillip Island in Western Port, Churchill Island was walked on by Boonwurrung/Bunurong Aboriginal people and has an important place in the history of the settlement by Europeans in Victoria.

Following the exploration and naming of Western Port by George Bass in 1798, Lt James Grant disembarked onto Churchill Island from the Lady Nelson in March 1801. He named this small island after the man who had given him seeds to bring on his long journey.

Here trees were felled to enable the building of a blockhouse and the seeds were planted making it the site of the first European agricultural pursuits in Victoria. Since the 1850s, this fertile, 57 hectare island has been continuously farmed and in 1872 when Samuel Amess, former mayor of Melbourne, purchased the island for both holiday and farming use, he built a substantial house and outbuildings. Largely intact today, these include two cottages that have evolved over the years from the 1860s and are part of the historic precinct.

In the garden is the cannon which is believed to have been given to Samuel Amess by his friend and neighbour from nearby Cape Woolamai, Captain John Cleeland. Together, the buildings and garden reflect the lifestyle and farming methods of the 19th century.

As a holiday house of the 1870s, the timber homestead is of particular importance. Original wallpapers and internal finishes that have been uncovered provide valuable evidence of contemporary interior decoration. Today, the house is presented for public viewing, furnished and decorated in the spirit of the time.

The landscape of Churchill Island has been classified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and now that Churchill Island belongs to the people of Victoria, we are all welcome to study and enjoy its natural characteristics. These include the unique and ancient Moonah trees and an abundance of waterfowl, sea birds and migratory wading
birds. The whole island is also registered on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) H1614.

The entire area of Western Port surrounding the island has been listed under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, (the RAMSAR Convention).

An Aboriginal midden and archaeological remains of stone foundations (HVR H7921-0014) contribute to the historic and cultural importance of this unique island. The presentation of early farming methods and a 19th century homestead surrounded by a garden that contains trees planted during the Samuel Amess era – including a Norfolk Island Pine gifted to Amess by Ferdinand von Mueller and planted to commemorate the building of the house in 1872 – give a valuable insight into the social history of Victoria.

### 3.3 John Rogers: 1854 to 1860

In 1854 John Rogers acquired the pastoral lease for the Sandstone Island Run and became a squatter (the accepted term at the time and since for a lessee of a pastoral run is a squatter).

The run originally comprised Sandstone, Elizabeth and Churchill Islands. Evidence suggests that Elizabeth Island became a run in its own right in 1855, and Churchill Island in 1860. Until 1863 Rogers paid £10 per annum for the privilege of de-pasturing each separate Run. Thus Sandstone and Churchill Island cost Rogers £10 jointly till 1860, and £10 each from 1860-1863. From this point onwards the Churchill Island run cost Rogers only £2.10.

How early Churchill Island was used by Rogers is difficult to pinpoint. His pastoral returns for the island in 1854 and 1860 show no stock de-pastured on the island, but parliamentary debates in 1861 record that Rogers was illegally cultivating his island pastoral runs, including Churchill Island against the terms of his de-pasturing licence. Georgiana McHaffie’s diary suggests that Rogers continued to cultivate illegally, despite the notice he had attracted in parliament. How long Rogers used Churchill Island for agricultural purposes is unknown.

### 3.4 Pickersgill Era: 1860 to 1866

The first European settlers of Churchill Island arrived via sailing or row boat from French Island in 1860. Samuel Pickersgill had recently been released from indenture as a farm labourer and together with his wife Winifred and their three children, took up land on Churchill Island.

It is difficult to imagine the remoteness of Churchill Island at this time. The only other settlers in the vicinity were the McHaffies who lived at the western end of Phillip Island some 25 miles to the west and the small port of Griffiths Point (now San Remo) to the east. Both of these neighbours could only be reached by sail or row boat. Nevertheless, Winifred went on to have a further five children and to support her husband to build a small dwelling and vegetable garden which sustained the family for their six years of habitation on the Island.

The Pickersgills never legally owned Churchill Island and moved to Griffiths Point (San Remo) a few years after the freehold was sold to John Rogers.
3.5 John and Sarah Rogers Era: 1866 to 1872

John Rogers became the legal owner of Churchill Island on January 15th 1866 for the sum of two hundred and ten pounds. Rogers first built a cottage for his family and later another adjoining the first. The fact that these two cottages still stand today is a testament to his building skills and hard work.

John and his wife Sarah went on to create a vegetable garden, an orchard and planted rows of trees for shelter beds. This pioneering farming family established crops and not only maintained themselves but supplied wheat and vegetables to the Melbourne markets.

John Rogers, and his family did not remain long on Churchill Island after its purchase. The island was sold in 1872, but Rogers had already removed to Brandy Creek near Buln Buln sometime around 1869 and 1870 under the terms of the Amended Grant Act of 1869, having selected land there on the recommendation of his Westernport neighbour James Hann. In purchasing Churchill Island Rogers had been able to make his investment in the property secure, but the island was too small to make a comfortable living.

The freehold was eventually mortgaged to JD McHaffie who subsequently sold it to Samuel Amess. The Rogers left a well-established and prosperous farm, orchard and still-standing dwellings.

3.6 Amess Family Era: 1872 to 1929

Samuel Amess bought Churchill Island in 1872 when he was at the height of his career as a successful stonemason and builder. He had been appointed Mayor of Melbourne in 1869 and was responsible for some of the most significant building works in Melbourne during the prosperous years after the gold rush of the 1850s.

Amess bought Churchill Island as a summer retreat for his family after hearing about its abundant produce. During his time on the Island he built the substantial homestead “Amess House” and, as a member of the Victorian Acclimatisation Society, introduced rabbits, quails, and pheasants. He also established a fold of and West Highland cattle which, as a Scotsman, were to “maintain fond memories of the land of his birth”.

Samuel Amess brought the same energy and enthusiasm to Churchill Island as marked his career in Melbourne as a builder and Alderman. He grew onions, extended the orchard and grew many more trees including some which today are included on the National Trust Historic Trees Register such as the majestic Norfolk Pine outside the homestead, the Olive and Mulberry trees as well as all of the native Moonahs.

Churchill Island passed through two further generations of the Amess family, retained as a holiday farm and home to a retinue of farm managers and domestic servants who maintained the property for the pleasure of the squire. The island was eventually sold in 1929.
3.7 Gerald Buckley Era: 1929 to 1935

In 1929 another Western district farmer, Gerald Neville Buckley heard that a small Western Port island was for sale. A bachelor, he was known as a kindly man who had been born into a wealthy family but never lost the common touch.

An absentee owner, Buckley employed the Jeffery brothers, Bob and Ted to run the property and a flurry of building activity commenced. A dam was dug out, a windmill was erected, and a milking shed built to accommodate the new milking machine. By this time the island was supporting a dairy herd of some 80 Ayrshire cows. Bob and Ted, with the help of Harry Cleeland laid a track across the Island and a crossing to the mainland which was marked with a guide post indicating the tide level. When this was visible, a horse and cart could be driven across and it was by this route that the milk and cream was transported to the mainland.

After diligently building the farm into a prosperous business, the Jeffrey brothers were promised by Buckley that Churchill Island would be passed to them on his death. Unfortunately within a short time, Buckley died and within a few months the property, including all the beautiful furnishings was sold.

3.8 Dr Harry Jenkins Era: 1936 to 1963

The next family to own the island was Collins Street Dentist Dr Harry Jenkins, his wife Alice and their only son Edward (Ted). The property was purchased from Mars Buckley (nephew of Gerald Buckley) in 1936 for four thousand pounds. Dr Harry bought the farm principally to provide an interest for Ted who had been injured in a sporting accident at the age of sixteen and paralysed from the waist down. Another absentee owner, Jenkins employed Eve and Ern Garrett and Sister Margaret Campbell, Ted’s nurse, to look after the farm and the family on their frequent visits to the island.

Dr Jenkins was an adventurer and counted road car racing, hill climbs, motor cycles, crocodile shooting, flying and adventurous travel amongst his favourite pursuits.

Jenkins introduced many innovations to the farm including a tractor to replace the working horses and a wind powered generator to supply electricity and in 1959, a bridge to connect the island to the mainland. He introduced Hereford cattle, beehives, a flock of turkeys (which always seemed to mysteriously diminish around Christmas) and water tanks to supplement the dam supply.

After Harry’s wife Alice died, Sister Margaret Campbell became the driving force of the family. Between her duties in caring for Ted, she managed to run the house and farm and act as hostess to the many guests that visited Ted and Harry when they entertained on the island.

Ted died in 1960 and Harry three years later and ownership of the island passed to Ted's carer for most of his life, Sister Margaret Campbell.

3.9 Sister Margaret Craig Campbell: 1963 – 1973

Sister Margaret, or “Aunt Jimmy” as she was known to the locals, continued on the island running the farming business. Born into a farming family, life on Churchill Island was no
hardship for Sister Margaret. During her 40 years on the island, she not only provided the mainstay for the Jenkins’ family, she was the driving force behind the farm. To help her she re-engaged Ern and Eve Garrett who had been employed by Dr Jenkins before the war as farm managers.

Entering her 60s and with a debilitating disease, Sister Margaret finally had to put the property up for auction in 1973.

Sister Margaret is fondly remembered by her neighbours and friends as a caring and energetic woman who truly cared for Ted Jenkins and her precious Churchill Island.

### 3.10 Into Public Hands: 1973 to Present Day

Churchill Island was bought at public auction by Mr. Alex Classou of Patra orange juice fame in 1973. Mr. Classou had a vision to turn the island into a horse stud. He employed Bruce and Margaret Blenheim as managers to set up the property for this purpose. Classou was approached by Sir John Knott, chairman of the newly formed Victoria Conservation Trust, and asked if he would sell Churchill Island to the government, which he did in 1976.

Central to the acquisition of Churchill Island by the Victorian Government was Sir Rupert Hamer and the Victorian Conservation Trust (now Trust for Nature). After its purchase the trust had little money left for restoration and relied on its auxiliary, the Churchill Island Restoration Group to raise funds and build sponsor support to realise small restoration projects. In 1982 CIRG merged with the Friends of Churchill Island Society (FOCIS) and worked closely with Churchill Island farm manager Carroll Schulz to restore and preserve Churchill Island’s heritage.

Highland Cattle were first brought to Victoria by Lord Glengarry in 1841 when he landed at Port Albert with his clan. In 1872 Samuel Amess senior imported four head of black highland cattle direct from the Isle of Skye to establish a “fold” of the cattle on Churchill Island. The cattle increased until a fold of over 30 head flourished here. The FOCIS Highland Cattle Fold, Churchill Island, was established by the Society in 1986. With the ready co-operation of the department of Conservation Forests and Lands, Dandenong Region, a grazing permit was issued to FOCIS. This has also become a community project involving local schools.

Building on the tradition of volunteer labour initiated by Dr Jenkins, the care of Churchill Island was enthusiastically taken up by a team of people both local and more distant. In the years following public purchase, if it were not for the dedication of these volunteers much of the historical significance of the island would have been lost.

In 1996 Churchill Island was incorporated into the holdings of the Phillip Island Nature Park (PINP). In the decade following, a number of major restoration works were completed including bringing the homestead back to an original form, replacing Dr Jenkins’s bridge (which had been infested with marine worms) with a concrete bridge and the construction of a visitor centre and café. The gardens were restored and a working farm was now possible as farm management and labour was now able to be funded by the PINP.
4. Churchill Island Today

Churchill Island is a small island almost connected by mangroves to Phillip Island’s eastern flank, surrounded by the mudflats and waters of Western Port.

Churchill Island is an ideal place to visit with family or friends to spend an hour or two taking in the stunning views, the historic ambience and seeing the West Highland cattle, Suffolk sheep and the animal nursery which is a great favourite with the children. Visitors can have a ride in the coach, meet Sophie the Clydesdale, see the ducks and chickens and the wild Cape Barren geese and other native birds.

Churchill Island is full of wonders for everyone with an historic homestead, a charming garden and rustic outbuildings all within a working farm. Farm demonstrations including sheep shearing, whip cracking, working dog and cow milking, are held each afternoon.

5. Why the Friends of Churchill Island Society Exists

The Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc. (FOCIS) is dedicated to preserving and enhancing the unique history of Churchill Island.

First established in 1980, FOCIS is active in raising funds and providing an opportunity for people interested in the historical significance and the exquisite natural beauty of Churchill Island to get involved and to make a difference.

FOCIS works alongside the Phillip Island Nature Park (PINP) and helps to guide PINP in the preservation of all historical aspects of the Island.

In the early years, FOCIS was heavily involved in activities that included assisting with running the shop, attending the ticket box at the old bridge, assisting with the gardening, hay carting, animal and pest control along with fencing and building maintenance. Over the years, those activities have been taken over by PINP. Today, FOCIS is primarily concerned with the acquisition, preservation and restoration of the collection of moveable cultural heritage items and presenting the collection to the public.

In pursuing its objectives, the Society acts in accordance with the following principles:

1. PINP holds the stewardship for Churchill Island.
2. The Society will focus its efforts on the promotion of the moveable cultural heritage of Churchill Island by undertaking activities that include:
   a. acquisition of new items for the collection,
   b. archiving, preserving and restoring items in the collection,
   c. publishing books, newsletters, videos and web site articles about the collection,
   d. cataloguing items in the collection, and
   e. educating the public about items in the collection.
3. The Society will draw upon the knowledge and skills of the membership of FOCIS in all activities concerned with promoting the moveable cultural heritage of Churchill Island.
4. The Society recognises that PINP is responsible for the maintenance of the infrastructure. The Society will provide advice, where appropriate, about changes that have the potential to affect the historical significance of the
infrastructure and the impact on the moveable cultural heritage of Churchill Island.

(5) The Society will work with PINP to foster public awareness of Churchill Island as a living and public museum in order to promote the moveable cultural heritage of Churchill Island.

(6) The Society will work with PINP to help with the maintenance, restoration and preservation of collections of historical interest at Churchill Island in order to promote the moveable cultural heritage of Churchill Island.

(7) The Society will work with PINP on special projects for the enhancement of Churchill Island, its historic working farm and precincts in order to more effectively promote the moveable cultural heritage of Churchill Island.

(8) The Society will work with PINP on advancing relationships with, and connections, to the wider community of Bass Coast residents, volunteers and supporters in order to more effectively promote the moveable cultural heritage of Churchill Island.

6. Activities of the Curator

The Society has appointed a Curator to manage the moveable cultural heritage of Churchill Island and to work with PINP in promoting the Island to the public.

This section provides examples of the work performed by the Curator in cataloguing, preserving and restoring items of moveable cultural heritage and presenting them to the public.

The Curator provides a regular written report to members of the Society and this report is published in the Society’s newsletter. Excerpts from the Curator’s reports are provided in the sections below. These excerpts show the range of activities performed by the Curator and volunteers in promoting the moveable cultural heritage of Churchill Island by:

1. Acquiring new items for the collection.
2. Cataloguing items in the collection.
3. Archiving of documents and other items which form part of the collection.
4. Preserving items in the collection.
5. Restoring items in the collection.
6. Presenting items in the collection to the public.

6.1 Curator’s Report – Spring 2011

In the Curator’s Report in the Spring 2011 edition of the newsletter, the Curator reported on these activities concerned with the cataloguing and of items of moveable cultural heritage:

- My main job on Churchill Island at present is stocktaking. I am recording each object, its catalogue number if it has one, its location, its condition and any comments about what might make it special, such as who donated it. So far I have been through all the rooms of Amess House, the two Rogers’ Cottages, the store room, wash house and half cellar. I have now paused in the stock take to check off all the National Trust and Phillip Island & District Historical Society items from my list.
6.2 Curator’s Report – Summer 2011

In the Curator’s Report in the Summer 2011 edition of the newsletter, the Curator reported on these activities concerned with the cataloguing, preservation and presentation of items of moveable cultural heritage:

- I have now completed photographing the National Trust objects and have started on those Phillip Island Nature Park items for which there is no photographic record. Due to the value of the Janet Amess lace collection, dating from the 1860s, I am starting with the lace. Janet Amess was obviously a very frugal woman as many of the lace pieces are lengths of narrow (1.5-3 cm wide) lace which she – or perhaps a servant – had removed from garments, wound around her finger and saved. Some of it has been spread out evenly to wind, but other pieces have bunched up and need to be carefully spread and rewound. Apart from the lengths of lace, varying from 20 cm to 1.5m long, there are several lace garments, including an extremely fine and delicate bed jacket and a wedding petticoat of linen with a very wide lace border from half way down to the hem. All the pieces are coloured white or ivory, and most are in remarkably good condition. They are stored carefully in acid free tissue. Members who attend our February 11, 2012 general meeting will have the opportunity to view the collection after the meeting. Due to the age of the lace, however, members will not be able to handle any pieces.
- Thanks go to my helpers FOCIS volunteers Irene, Margaret, David, Ruth and Tom, who have helped me with various archiving tasks.

6.3 Curator’s Report – Autumn 2012

In the Curator’s Report in the Autumn 2012 edition of the newsletter, the Curator reported on these activities concerned with the cataloguing of items of moveable cultural heritage:

- Janet Amess Lace Collection. All pieces have now been basically catalogued. There are 96 catalogue sheets in all.
- I have started on cataloguing the farm machinery. Since some items are missing since the previous stocktake in 2002 and other items have appeared, I have decided to start from scratch and just catalogue what is there. I have photographed all items to go with their catalogue sheets.

6.4 Curator’s Report – Winter 2012

In the Curator’s Report in the Winter 2012 edition of the newsletter, the Curator reported on these activities concerned with the cataloguing, preservation and presentation of items of moveable cultural heritage:

- I have been mostly engaged in cataloguing the farm machinery collection. I am also working on a document to put to the nature park board asking that the most valuable pieces be displayed under cover in an enclosed shed with attractive interpretation. This will not only ensure correct management of the collection, and increase our chances of reaccreditation with Museums Australia Victoria, but will provide an undercover and interesting display to encourage visitors to stay longer and gain more from their visit.
- As part of the PINP Open Day on Sunday March 4 I did two “show and tell” sessions with five items from the collection: grape crushers, Samuel Amess branding iron, Mrs Brown’s knitting, the silk Maltese lace fichu from the lace collection, and the pair of hand-shaped page holders from the morning room. I had
about 15 people per session, which were held in the dining room. Everyone seemed to enjoy the sessions.

- I took the lace up to the Lace Group of the Embroiderers’ Guild in Malvern. Three very experienced lace experts there ran their magnifiers over every single piece and were able to tell me whether they had been machine, bobbin, needle, crochet or chemical-made. In some cases they were able to give me dates and locations, and for some of the cut out pieces they could tell me from what sort of garment they had been cut. All of this information is now on the catalogue sheets. This follows a trip to the NGV with the lace which was also useful, but not as thorough. All of this information was freely given.

- Last Saturday we held a FOCIS working bee, where nine of us did a big brush down of most of the farm machinery collection. Dust is a big enemy of all collections, so I was very grateful for the help of FOCIS volunteers Margaret, Hagen, John, Tom, Ruth, Janet, Maureen and Peter. A great team!

- Finally I will be spending next Thursday in the Phillip Island museum with archaeologists from AAV and traditional owners from the Bunurong and Boonwurrung. It is compulsory to register all aboriginal objects in your collection with AAV now, and next Thursday I will learn the process at the museum for when it is our turn. We don’t have a big collection. But it still has to be registered.

### 6.5 Curator’s Report – Spring 2012

In the Curator’s Report in the Spring 2012 edition of the newsletter, the Curator reported on these activities concerned with the cataloguing, archiving and preservation of items of moveable cultural heritage:

- David Maunders and I attended a cataloguing workshop to learn how to catalogue the Churchill Island collection onto the Victorian Collections online cataloguing program. Thanks mainly to David we now have over 30 items online. You can see them at [www.victoriancollections.net.au](http://www.victoriancollections.net.au) We are now using Victorian Collections as our digitised cataloguing system.

- Deakin University Heritage and Museum studies post-graduate student Sandra Kanis is volunteering here on Fridays for work experience and I am mentoring her. So far she has sorted out the photo albums and created an A3 pocket folder of newspaper cuttings all in chronological order. Now she is cataloguing Jenkins era documents which we found in another A3 folder in the filing cabinets. She also did Victorian Collections training and will put the Jenkins era documents online once she has finished the catalogue sheets.

### 6.6 Curator’s Report – Summer 2012

In the Curator’s Report in the Summer 2012 edition of the newsletter, the Curator reported on these activities concerned with the cataloguing, archiving and preservation of items of moveable cultural heritage:

- My volunteers and I have been very busy with cataloguing and archiving the collection. We have been provided with 2 second hand 4 drawer filing cabinets which operate somewhat better than the old ones. We now have a spare 3 drawer filing cabinet, but since we have five archive boxes full of documents we won’t have any trouble filling the spare drawers.

- Thanks to FOCIS volunteers Irene Measom and Margaret Geppert for continuing to list all the documents and for help in moving files to new filing cabinets. My post
grad student Sandra Kanis had archived our newspaper cuttings collection in chronological order, but since then we have had a significant number of cuttings donated so Irene and Margaret have created another archive folder for them.

- Between David Maunders, Sandra and I we now have about 150 items on the victoriancollections.net.au website. Hopefully we will get some response from experts on historic farm machinery and lace, and can fill in some missing detail. We are using this website as our digital cataloguing system.
- Sandra is currently writing a Conservation Management Plan for the Churchill Island historic precinct which will be a very useful tool for us to have. She is also writing metal labels for tagging all of the historic farm machinery as required for reaccreditation.

### 6.7 Curator’s Report – Autumn 2013
In the Curator’s Report in the Autumn 2013 edition of the newsletter, the Curator reported on these activities concerned with the archiving, preservation and presentation of items of moveable cultural heritage:

- Most of the farm machinery has been metal tagged.
- FOCIS volunteers Irene and Margaret continue to help me with archival tasks, and my student Sandra is still coming to help once per week.
- Sandra has written a brief Conservation Management Plan which we will complete for future reference.
- I am also in the process of registering the aboriginal objects owned by Phillip Island Historical Society on display in the CI Visitors’ Centre.

### 6.8 Curator’s Report – Winter 2013
In the Curator’s Report in the Winter 2013 edition of the newsletter, the Curator reported on these activities concerned with the archiving, preservation and presentation of items of moveable cultural heritage:

- My volunteers, Irene, Margaret and Hagen, have been wading through seven years of local papers given to us from Hayley at PINP, cutting out articles about Churchill Island for our newspaper cuttings file. This is an excellent research tool.
- Finally, next time you visit Amess House, make sure you go into the dining room and see the mannequins dressed in their replica 19th century costumes, donated by Cheryl Stratford. No, they are not ghosts!

### 6.9 Curator’s Report – Spring 2013
In the Curator’s Report in the Spring 2013 edition of the newsletter, the Curator reported on these activities concerned with the archiving, preservation and presentation of items of moveable cultural heritage:

- Thanks to FOCIS volunteers Irene and Margaret and Hagen for helping cut out Churchill Island items from many years of the Advertiser newspaper which Hayley had saved and had no further use for. The cuttings are going into archival folders and will form a valuable research resource.
- Margaret and her two delightful grand-daughters also put our almost complete collection of FOCIS newsletters in order in a filing cabinet drawer in the Volunteers Hut.
Following the donation of many replica nineteenth century costumes by Working Horse Festival stalwart Cheryl Stratford, I got permission to purchase two female mannequins who are now dressed in winter costumes in the Amess House dining room, complete with signage. We will change the ladies to summer costumes during the spring.

6.10 Curator’s Report – Summer 2013

In the Curator’s Report in the Summer 2013 edition of the newsletter, the Curator reported on these activities concerned with the restoration, conservation and presentation of items of moveable cultural heritage:

- Volunteer Brad is restoring the old Sunshine Mackay stationary baler that is used during the Easter Festival.
- Volunteer Jeff has finished his conservation work on the 1920s seed drill and is now working on the dairy delivery wagon.
- Our replica costume maker Cheryl Stratford and student Sandra came last Friday to change the two lady mannequins in the Amess House dining room into summer costumes from their winter ones. Cheryl has also donated a male mannequin who is suitably attired. They are much photographed.

6.11 Curator’s Report – Autumn 2014

In the Curator’s Report in the Autumn 2014 edition of the newsletter, the Curator reported on these activities concerned with the acquisition, preservation and presentation of items of moveable cultural heritage:

- My volunteers Sandra, Margaret and Irene have completed updating our newspaper cuttings file.
- I purchased three pieces of antique china to go on the kitchen dresser: a gravy boat, cream jug and milk pitcher.


In the Curator’s Report in the Winter 2014 edition of the newsletter, the Curator reported on these activities concerned with the acquisition, preservation and presentation of items of moveable cultural heritage:

- Pavers have been put under machinery and mulch spread around.
- Mannequins in Amess House dining room have had their costumes changed thanks to Cheryl Stratford, costume maker.
- Ed Garratt has donated Ted Jenkins’ shark fishing reel.
- Margaret Madge, direct descendant of Samuel and Jane Amess, has donated a cup, saucer and plate set hand-painted by their youngest child Mary. The cup is signed MA 1909 and the set is on display in the kitchen.
- Margaret also donated a christening gown used by five generations of the Amess family, which is currently in storage with the lace collection.
- An Amess family tree has also been donated.
- All donated items have been catalogued.
- Our farm machinery conservation volunteer, Jeff Cole, continues to work his way through our machinery collection, having recently rust-proofed and painted three mouldboard ploughs and a potato digger.
6.13 Curator’s Report – October 2014

In the Curator’s Report in the October 2014 edition of the newsletter, the Curator reported that a number of items had been added to the collection of items of moveable cultural heritage:

1. Cup, plate and saucer hand-painted by Margaret Amess, well known china painter and youngest child of Alderman Samuel and Amess and Jane.
2. Christening gown worn by five generations of the Amess family.
3. Amess family tree 1750-2012 and several family photos.
5. First prize ribbon for Mrs Lavinia Brown’s knitting, which is on display in Amess House nursery. (Mrs Brown’s knitting has now been officially donated.)
6. Grain grinder, brand Smith from Bendigo, donated by Errol Bradford of Ventnor who got it from well-known local racehorse breeder and trainer Cefn Price, who used it to grind his horses’ feed.
7. “Silver leaves” gift card sent from Harry Jenkins to his aunt during the Boer War.

The Curator also reported on these activities concerned with the cataloguing, preservation and presentation of items of moveable cultural heritage:

- Volunteer Jeff Cole and I are gradually cataloguing larger items of tools Jeff is discovering stored in Amess Barn and he intends to set up a series of themed displays using the items.
- Volunteer Margaret Geppert has started on the sorting and archiving of our large photograph collection.

7. Activities of the Society’s Volunteers

This section provides examples of the work performed by FOCIS volunteers in cataloguing, preserving and restoring items of moveable cultural heritage and presenting them to the public.

7.1 Book Publishing

In 2012 the Society published the second edition of the book titled Churchill Island - History and Her Story. The author, Patricia Stavely Baird, has stated that “Churchill Island History and Her Story is my attempt to evoke earlier days and ways, so that later generations may gain some idea of the different way life was lived in simpler times.”

7.2 Video Publishing

In 2014 the Society published a video which shows working horses on Churchill Island performing farming duties in the manner performed by the early settlers on the Island. Historic farm machinery items within the Churchill Island collection were used during these demonstrations.

This video is available on YouTube: http://youtu.be/YrZzdG0Xgos and on Vimeo: https://vimeo.com/112209637
7.3 **Newsletter Publishing**
The Society publishes a quarterly newsletter to keep members of the Society and members of the public up to date with the work the Society is doing to promote the moveable cultural heritage of Churchill Island.

The latest edition of the newsletter is publicly available online here: [http://tinyurl.com/luasu4b](http://tinyurl.com/luasu4b)

7.4 **Web Site Publishing**
The Society publishes its own web site to keep members of the Society and members of the public up to date with the work the Society is doing to promote the moveable cultural heritage of Churchill Island. The web site address is: [http://friendsofchurchillisland.org.au](http://friendsofchurchillisland.org.au)

7.5 **Online Catalogue - “Victorian Collections”**
A FOCIS volunteer is gradually placing all hard copy catalogued collection items onto the online catalogue at: [http://victoriancollections.net.au/organisations/Churchill-island-heritage](http://victoriancollections.net.au/organisations/Churchill-island-heritage). This means that the moveable cultural heritage of Churchill Island now has a world-wide audience.

7.6 **Research**
FOCIS volunteers and the Curator undertake research into the background of collection items enabling supplementary files to be created as research and information tools. This enhances the significance of items of moveable cultural heritage.

7.7 **Input into the Churchill Island Conservation Management Plan**
FOCIS members are providing input into the Churchill Island Conservation Management Plan by providing social significance information through a survey of FOCIS members.

7.8 **Working Bees**
Working bees are held several times per year where FOCIS volunteers clean all items of moveable cultural heritage on display to the public.
7.9 Restoration and Preservation Activities

Figure 2: Volunteer Undertaking Restoration Work on one of the Moveable Cultural Heritage Items

Figure 3: Volunteers Undertaking Preservation Work on one of the Moveable Cultural Heritage Items
7.10 Presenting the Cultural Heritage to the Public

Figure 4: Volunteer Guide in Period Costume Presenting the Cultural Heritage to the Public

Figure 5: Volunteer Guide Presenting the Cannon to the Public
Figure 6: Volunteer Guide in Period Costume Presenting the Cultural Heritage to the Public

Figure 7: Volunteers Presenting the Cultural Heritage to the Public
Figure 8: Demonstrating the Use of one of the Moveable Cultural Heritage Items

Figure 9: Volunteer Preparing a Wheelwright Display
7.11 Research Activities – An Example

The following article was found as a result of research activities by members of the Society.2

![Figure 10: Results of Research Activity – Page 1 of 2](Image)

---

Figure 11: Results of Research Activity – Page 2 of 2
Figure 12: PhD Student, Rebecca Sanders, Presenting the Results of her Research into the History of Churchill Island

Figure 13: Descendants of the Rogers Family (1866 to 1872) Showing the Family Bible from that Era
8. Examples of Moveable Cultural Heritage Items at Churchill Island

This section provides examples of some of the moveable cultural heritage items at Churchill Island. Members of the Society are actively involved in promoting these items through acquisition, preservation, restoration and presentation to the public.

8.1 Churchill Island Six Pound Cannon

Figure 14: Cannon mounted on wooden carriage with loading shaft

Samuel Amess placed the cannon on Churchill Island.
8.2 Six Pound Cannon Balls

Figure 15: Six pound cannon balls

Approximately 24 six pound cannon balls. Accompanies the cannon. Fired by Samuel Amess and Harry Jenkins.
8.3 *Hand-made Brussels lace*

![Figure 16: Hand-made Brussels lace fichu, circa 1880](image)

From a collection of lace owned by three generations of Amess women.
8.4 Hand-made bobbin Torchon lace

Figure 17: Hand-made bobbin Torchon lace length, circa 1870

From a collection of lace owned by three generations of Amess women.
8.5 *Limerick lace camisole*

![Limerick lace camisole](image)

*Figure 18: Limerick lace camisole, circa 1860*

From a collection of lace owned by three generations of Amess women.
8.6 **Silver Stop Watch**

Stop watch owned by Dr Harry Jenkins. Part of a collection of personal items left by Harry Jenkins.

*Figure 19: Silver stop watch*
8.7 Journal of Churchill Island Farm Expenditure 1941-2

Figure 20: Journal of Churchill Island farm expenditure 1941-2

Journal with red title print and red spine showing farm expenditure 1941-2. Shows historic farm activity on Churchill Island.
8.8 H Jenkins postcard from South Africa sent to his aunt during his Boer War service

Figure 21: H Jenkins postcard from South Africa sent to his aunt during his Boer War service
8.9 **Motor Spirit Consumer's Special Licence**

![Motor Spirit Consumer's Special Licence](image)

**Figure 22: Motor Spirit Consumer's Special Licence**


Dr Harry Jenkins owned Churchill Island from 1936 to 1963 and bequeathed it to Margaret Campbell on his death. The document demonstrates his interest in the farm and provides information on farming in the era.
8.10 Seed Drill

Figure 23: Seed drill

Horse drawn seeder red with white wheels suitable for large seeds e.g. corn, beans, peas.
8.11 *Restored Double Furrow Mould Board Plough*

*Figure 24: Restored Double furrow mould board plough*

Double furrow mould board plough, two wheels front, one rear.
8.12 Two Mould Board Ploughs and a Rare Potato Digger

Figure 25: Two mould board ploughs and a rare potato digger restored by FOCIS volunteers

8.13 Furphy Water Cart

Furphy water cart, unpainted with traces of red on embossed end.

Furphy carts were an important item in Australian agriculture, leading to the addition of the word "furphy" a misleading rumour (originally as spread from gossip around the water cart).
8.14 Oil Paintings of Churchill Island

We believe these were painted either by Margaret Amess, Samuel and Jane's youngest child who was a well-known china painter, or her cousin Minnie Laurence, one of whose paintings already hangs in the drawing room of Amess House. The paintings were given to the donor's aunt Mary, maid to Margaret Amess until Mary's wedding to the gardener, by Margaret herself.