



FOCIS

newsletter

Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.

WINTER 2003

Dear Readers,

I've almost forgotten what a real winter is like. As I write this, it is mid June, there has been a little rain but the temperature is 16 deg. And it is warm and sunny. Certainly it is wonderful relaxing and holidaying weather, but why pack the caravan? Who needs to go to Queensland? Queensland has come to us!

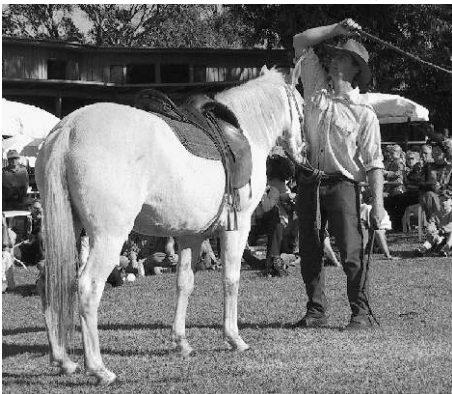
Just before Easter we had a few useful showers and within a few days our faded island had turned a tender green just in time for the Working Horse Festival.

This has become a famous event and it seems it is attended better and better each succeeding year. I believe the combined efforts of volunteers and staff has made this possible particularly in their vibrant and clever selection of stalls, entertainments, events and spectator participations.

The atmosphere was incomparable everyone happy and smiling. It is such a lovely occasion for families and I know from my own casual enquiries that they appreciate the diversity and variety of the festival, as well as the sheer loveliness of the place. The weather was brilliant and with the horses strutting their stuff, the entertainers, the food, the costumes and the distancing from the usual commercial emphasis, there was certainly an air of a village festival.

Sally O'Neill and the organising committee are once more to be congratulated on a superb job of planning. I was there early on the Saturday morning as the stall holders and other participants arrived and they flowed smoothly to their allotted space almost without a hitch and certainly without losing their smiles. It takes a lot of thought to make such a huge event work so smoothly and well. Huge thanks to Sally, Keith and Maureen and all the committee for their great organization. Special thanks also to every staff member and volunteer who all put in so much time and effort to make these days the enormous success they were.

Cheers from your Editors, Jocelyn Bradley and Pat Baird.



Whipcracker Colin Young and his well trained horse were a hit with the crowd at the Working Horse Festival.



Billy the ferret meets Dylan Smith at Churchill Island.



2003 Working Horse Festival

It was a magical two days... the sun shone and smiles lit up the faces of visitors, volunteers and workers alike!

This year's Working Horse Festival attracted record crowds of over 5000 for the two days. People came from around Victoria to experience heritage farming, pioneer life and great entertainment.

The festival began with an official opening by Harry Cleeland, a member of one of Phillip Island's pioneering families. Harry was brought to the "Mane Stage" by a horse drawn cart driven by head ranger, Scott Campbell. Harry spoke fondly of his memories of farming on the island. The stage then was handed over to a non-stop program of entertainment featuring local artists, bush band poets and, on the Saturday, singing duo, Vika and Linda Bull.



Rick Talbott from Kutupner on a stiff tooth cultivator with a six horse rig at work.

Thirty magnificent Clydesdale horses provided breathtaking displays in the paddocks. Teams of up to six horses delighted the crowds as they worked in the paddocks with the glittering bay as their backdrop. Their owners were more than happy to stop for a chat and to answer the many questions asked of them.

Over 100 volunteer exhibitors worked tirelessly throughout the weekend to delight visitors with their skills. Exhibitors included blacksmiths, coopers, wood turners, spinners, patchworkers and a Celtic baker who caused a bun fight in Rogers Cottage when the hot cross buns came out of the wood fired bakers oven! Other highlights were local pony club games, ferret races, working sheep dogs, pioneer and bush skills and Old Time Games. A very popular area was

the Fiddlers Green where poets, fiddlers and celtic bands performed. It also became the venue for some debut performances by local music students.

Two new events were also held this year. The first, a Sheep To Shawl contest in which local spinners participated in a race against the clock to be the first to spin and knit a shawl from a freshly handshorn fleece. The winning team completed the task in just over two and a half hours. The second, a Sheaf Tossing contest in which strong lassies and lads came forward to toss a sheaf of oats over a high bar.

Planning has already begun for the 2004 festival that we hope will be better than ever! Sincere thanks to the FOCIS members who worked so hard to make this festival possible.

SALLY O'NEILL



FROM THE GARDEN

The weather has well and truly turned to chilly winter, after a lovely autumn....we have had a bit of rain which has helped things along some what...although Churchill Island always seems to recover fairly quickly due to its sheltered aspect & fertile soil.

The garden has coped with the dry exceptionally well, due to extensive mulching using stable manure and the type of plants in the garden are most suitable for coping with these conditions.... being tough hardy old fashioned shrubs and trees such as the Canary Island Smoke Bush, Plumbago, Brugmansias, & Echioms, to mention a few.

We had a lovely time at Rippon Lea and the Melbourne Botanic Gardens recently with some of the Focis volunteers. Visiting these places is so inspirational and energising, and I am always filled with ideas and enthusiasm when I come back. The MBG's visitor centre has always got something interesting & innovative to look at, they have really got creative staff that know how to put things together just so....

Well there are heaps of things to do in the garden so I had better get into it!

Lisa



CHURCHILL ISLAND GARDEN CLUB

To be formed with the intention of coming together of like minded people who love this island and want to be part of caring and nurturing this very special garden.

To help the gardener, Lisa Burrell, on a Wednesday morning 9 - 12 approx.

- To cut back, dig, mulch, plant vegetables, harvest and preserve, pot up cuttings, rake, learn what plants are there and the care of them.
- To make this garden a community garden where locals can come and be involved.
- With occasional visits through the year to see how other gardens operate, eg. National trust properties etc. guest speakers do demonstrations, talks, etc.
- To have input in design & implementation of kitchen garden which is to be built near orchard
- Participate in swapping garden information
- Take part in the spring garden party.
- Have indigenous communities involved
- School children, bush tucker, etc.

Contact numbers - Maureen Symmonds 59566715
Lisa Burrell - Churchill Island Visitors Centre



PERSONALITY PROFILE:

With a name like Scott Campbell, you'd be right to expect that our Personality came from a long line of Scottish men of the land, and that that connection with the land, fostered in his youth, and matured in Australia, should have played a significant part in the making of Scott Campbell, Ranger. Its almost as if Churchill Island was just waiting for Scott to come along, for in his background are grandfathers who were shepherds, farmers and deer stalkers, strong men of the land who worked with Clydesdales, and men who were proud of their strength and endurance.

However, even this sturdy background hardly prepared the young Scott, fresh out of Agricultural College with his farming degree, for the realities of working for 'tight arsed farmers'. Days began at 4 am with 121 cows in the byre to be milked, ten/10 gallon cans to be carried and heaved up onto the truck tray, and all this before breakfast at 8.30 am.

After breakfast there were the stalls to be mucked out and barrowed to the midden (Scottish for manure heap); or turnips to be shredded and mixed with grain to feed the cattle which were kept in the byre 4 months of the year. There were bags of grain weighing 2 hundredweight (100kg) to be loaded and unloaded. No wonder this 15 year old built muscle and character in equal measure.

After a year of this, young Scott moved on to become a 'gillie' and spent the next few years learning animal husbandry caring for stock, both domestic and wild. He learnt much about breeding, culling, stalking, shooting and at 21 became head stalker. As an incidental he also learned a lot about rowing, as he had to either walk eight miles each day, or row across the 'Loch' to his work. Much of the venison from the estate was exported to the German meat market.

On meeting an Australian girl he decided to come to Australia but the unrelenting demands continued for on the last two days of his work he had to cull eight female deer in deep snow conditions, skin them and hang them, then quickly bathe, catch the train and plane, leaving Scotland in minus 10 degree cold and arriving in Melbourne in 35 degree heat!

Over the next few years he had a variety of jobs, cost clerk, bridge carpenter for the Country Roads Board, then in 1976 he had the opportunity to become a Ranger for the Churchill National Park near Dandenong. Here he learned a huge amount about Australian birds from a fellow ranger, he learnt to manage a sometimes stropky public and how to respect the interests of others.

From Churchill he moved as Ranger in Charge to Mt Worth in Gippsland where on an annual budget of \$18,000 (a similar amount as that paid for the horse drawn Drag on Churchill Island) he began the task of grubbing out blackberries and reducing the fox and cat populations before replanting with native trees. In the first year they planted 8,000 trees up to a total of 43,000 in his final year. Scott feels this was his greatest achievement.

Not surprisingly he was then head hunted for the position of second in charge of Wilson's Promontory National Park and within two months found himself Ranger in Charge of the Prom when the head ranger left. Scott spent nine and a half years at the Prom and gained his highest satisfaction from

installing the Leeuwin Track for disabled visitors. His vision for this project was recognised and supported with the miraculous appearance of appropriate funding by Joan Kirner. The official opening of this track was attended by Joan Kirner, but just as importantly by a disabled man who Scott came to realise had walked most of the Sealers Cove track on crutches! An inspiration.

Another achievement was the realignment of the track from Sealers to Refuge Cove. This was built by hand over four months by teams of volunteers from all over the world, working in teams of eight. During these years there were also changes in Scott's personal life and he met and married his wife Julie. Their wedding, appropriately, took place at Picnic Bay, down at the Prom. Their son Kitt is now nine years old.

In his last days at 'The Prom' Scott experienced something of the mystery and 'connection' to the land of the aboriginal people, with whom he has often worked and established friendships. He had sailed around to Refuge Cove and whilst walking some of his favourite places, came upon a fallen blackwood. He was reminded of his friend Russell Mullet who had asked him to find a blackwood elbow to make a boomerang. This tree in fact had a triple elbow in the form of an 'M'. Scott enlisted the help of another ranger and they cut the piece and dragged it down to the boat and lashed it behind. The wind had fallen and as they sat in the boat waiting for it to pick up, two albatross skimmed in and landed at the back of the boat and began a rhythmic albatross dance, nodding to and fro, for some time before launching themselves, feet slapping and paddling across the sea's surface, and soaring away. Within minutes a breeze sprang up and they set sail. Soon a pod of dolphins joined them and led them all the way back. And it is here that the story gets really spooky because when they arrived back at Tidal River guess who was there to greet them? Russell Mullett. Such an experience begs the question of what it was that moved Russell to go to Tidal River at that particular time, on that particular day.

With Kitt's education in mind, Scott and his family then decided to take up the chance of living and working on Churchill Island. At first he was oppressed by the enormity of the task before him the island had been under funded for so long that the boxthorn, thistles, rabbits and rats had all but taken over and it was terribly run down. But in the tradition of the early pioneers of Churchill Island, particularly the Pickersgills and Rogers, Scott's vision for the transformation of Churchill Island over the past few years is a monument to sheer hard work and 'true grit'. We are all the beneficiaries of his vision and his hard work.

 **2004 FESTIVAL NEEDS YOU!!**
The Working Horse festival is FOCIS's main fundraising event of the year.

It is made possible by the work of volunteers, and it needs more!

All it takes is a minimum of four hours per year!

As a FOCIS member, you can make a significant contribution to Churchill Island by taking up the challenge to be involved in the festival. It is not arduous in fact it's lots of fun meeting and talking to visitors, manning the FOCIS tent and spreading the word about Churchill Island and FOCIS. Or it may mean making a couple of salads and joining the Working Horse demonstrators for a barbeque.

Whatever most suits your style.

Your rewards for this commitment are:

- You are contributing to Churchill Island's ongoing protection and improvement.
- You receive a weekend festival pass - experience the festival free!
- You will feel good inside, knowing you have made a contribution to Churchill Island, as you enjoy your membership benefits all year round.
- You will have a great time and meet new people!

Take the challenge and contact

5952 3156 or

workinghorse@penguins.org.au
to register.

2004 Churchill Island
Working Horse Festival
Easter Saturday & Sunday
10th & 11th April 2004
Enquiries 5952 3156



All photos courtesy of Graeme Burgan.

123 YOUR BUNCH
456 OF DATES

The Farmers Market - Fourth Saturday in each month!

WORKING HORSE FESTIVAL 10/11 April, 2004.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 26th July, 1 pm. Venue - Education Room, Churchill Island Visitor Centre.

Afternoon tea will follow AGM then brief meeting of new committee.



CHURCHILL ISLAND VOLUNTEER GUIDING PROGRAM

Becoming a guide is enjoyable, educational and you get to meet a wide range of new people!! Volunteer guides work in the Historic Area of Churchill Island welcoming and informing visitors as they wander through Churchill Island's historic buildings.

Guides enjoy training and regular outings to other historic sites around Victoria.

Call Sally on 5952 3156 for further information or to register your interest.



FOCIS COMMITTEE 2001 - 2002

President: Ann Penaluna (03) 5956 9302

Vice-President: Keith Hocking (03) 5821 9189

Treasurer/Public Officer: Roger Hollingworth

Membership Secretary: Diane McCarthy (03) 5956 8300

Minute Secretary: Jan Fleming

Please send me Green Polo shirts with Churchill Island pocket. @ \$28 each including postage.
Size S M L XL (Please circle)
Name.....
Address.....
.....
Town..... Postcode.....

FRIENDS OF CHURCHILL ISLAND SOCIETY INC.

To: Secretary FOCIS, PO Box 852 COWES 3922, Vic. Aust.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please Enrol/Renew a FOCIS Membership for

Name

YEAR

Address Postcode

Phone: Home Business

Email

Membership is from 1st January to 31st December **ADULT \$15** **FAMILY \$25** **CONCESSION \$10**

Able to volunteer **In the Garden** **As a Guide** **Doing Restoration**

I understand that a current FOCIS membership entitles me to:-

Visit Churchill Island any time during opening hours plus discount for special events.

Visit **Penguin Parade** and **Koala Conservation Centre**

during opening hours 4 times a year for ongoing members and 2 times a year for new members,
10% discount for accompanying visitors, 10% discount on food and souvenirs.

Participate in Churchill Island Projects.

N.B. Membership card is not transferable. All privileges are dependent on production of your current membership card.

If elected as a FOCIS member, I agree to abide by the Society's Rules as laid down in its Constitution.



Friends of Churchill Island Society Newsletter

If undelivered return to: FOCIS, PO Box 852, COWES 3922

Print Post Approved PP330 309 001

Postage
Paid
Cowes
3922

Surface
Mail

ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE 1st JANUARY, 2003

WINTER 2003



Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.

ABN 78 667 051 020 Inc. No. A 00219007W