



FOCIS

newsletter

Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.

AUTUMN 2005

Dear Readers,

The main event for our society is the Working Horse Festival to be held March 26 and 27 (Easter weekend) and once again we appeal for assistance to maintain this event at the level achieved in the past years.

A society like ours depends on the involvement of as many members as possible to maintain and protect this special place called Churchill Island. With a membership of well over 600 people there has to be a vast pool of expertise and willing hands available to assist in upholding a proud reputation that FOCIS has achieved since its inception twenty five years ago.

If you can manage just a few hours over Friday, Saturday, Sunday or Monday please contact Jill Fitzroy-Kelly on 5672 5235 ph/fax, e-mail jillfk@dcsi.net.au. Jobs include setting up on Friday, marshals for Saturday and Sunday, helping with meals for exhibitors and manning the FOCIS tent. There is a role for you even if your ability is limited to sitting down and talking to people. We would love to hear from you.



News from Phillip Island Nature Park Community Advisory Committee

This Committee, along with the PINP Environment Advisory Committee and Education Advisory Committee were established by the Board of PINP in December 2003.

The FOCIS Committee of Management nominated the current Treasurer/Public Officer, Roger Hollingworth, as its representative on the PINP Community Advisory Committee.

The AIMS of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) are as follows:

The Community Advisory Committee shall:

- (1) Act as a conduit to enable a two-way flow of information between the community and the Board, thereby keeping the Board informed on issues of interest and concern to the community and, in turn, informing the community as to the thinking and direction of the Board;
- (2) Meet with representative groups within the community in order to obtain a holistic picture of community views;
- (3) Liase with other Advisory Committees on matters relating to community attitudes;
- (4) Carry out any tasks in relation to community matters that the Board may request.

Issues specifically relevant to Churchill Island are raised by the FOCIS delegate or by other members of the Committee requesting FOCIS input. These matters are discussed with the FOCIS Executive and reported through the FOCIS Committee of Management.

It was agreed that decisions involving Churchill Island should be briefly communicated to members through the Newsletter.

In addition, the FOCIS Executive meets on a regular basis



with the Chief Executive Officer of the PINP who provides feedback on major initiatives within the PINP, and seeks input on Churchill Island issues.

The issue of after hours access to the perimeter walking path on Churchill Island was raised at the February 2004 CAC meeting, which resulted in a Working Party being established, chaired by PINP Board member Stephen Davie.

The brief for the Working Party was to investigate many issues including, after hours access to Churchill Island perimeter walking path, Fishers Wetland, security, public liability insurance, safety and signage.

Following investigations by the Working Party the final report was agreed by the CAC in April and endorsed at a subsequent PINP Board meeting.

Most recommendations have now been implemented by PINP management and the public advised of the changes through the local newspaper. Hopefully visitors now have a better understanding of what facilities at Churchill Island are free.

The following rules are now in operation:

1. FISHERS WETLAND - Free access to walkers and cyclists all hours.
2. CHURCHILL ISLAND - No access when new gate to the bridge is closed.

Free access to the perimeter path (shared path by walkers and cyclists) from 8.00am to 5.00 pm summertime (subsequently extended to 7.00pm by Management) and 8.00 am to 4.00 pm wintertime. Management is currently looking at extending the 4.00 pm closure for shoulder periods.

Members wishing to avail themselves of the opportunity to use the perimeter path should check closing times at the front gate to Fishers Wetland.

Note: There is no need to check in to the visitor centre by walkers and cyclists intending to use the perimeter path, however a fee applies to visitors wishing to visit the Historic Precinct (Amess House, Rogers' Cottages and other historic buildings and farm).

Whilst financial members of FOCIS have free access to the Historic Precinct it is necessary for members to present their current membership card at the desk at the Visitor

Centre to obtain a turnstile card to access the Historic Precinct. Departure is also via the Visitor Centre.

3. VISITOR CENTRE AND CAFÉ - Free access from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm. Café opening time, apart from summertime is 11 am.

FOCIS members are also eligible for a 10% discount on food, beverages and gifts at all Nature Park venues, including Churchill Island and a 10 % discount also applies to entry fees to Churchill Island for visitors accompanying a FOCIS member.



VOLUNTEER GUIDING PROGRAM

So you are thinking of joining us as a guide at Churchill Island! How splendid!

We would be so pleased to have you, particularly as two of our guides are experiencing poor health at present, so we are short of helpers. We wish Gordon and Harald a full and speedy recovery.

Let me tell you something about our day. Most of us sign in at the visitor centre at 11:00am (for insurance purposes) and sign off at 4:00pm. We can nominate a day that suits us and the frequency of our assistance i.e. weekly, fortnightly or monthly. It is optional to wear 1870's style clothing for females a long skirt and frilly petticoat, boots, a high necked blouse, a shawl for cold days and a waist tied white apron. A cap is optional. Our men wear straight legged trousers, boots, high necked collarless shirt, a waistcoat and a soft cap if you have one. Most of us have found at least part of our attire in Op Shops and there is a small supply of spare clothing here that you can try on (speak to Sally O'Neill for details).

We do get a very positive response to dressing up e.g. "You look exactly right in this garden" and with our name badges on, one can instantly be recognized as a helper.

Sally also runs get-togethers for guides to share ideas and PINP gives us a yearly visit to another historic site.

We are not responsible for checking visitor tickets but we do give them a warm welcome. A communication radio is in the homestead so we can call for assistance if needed and if you are on duty for five hours, you are invited to choose lunch from the café to the value of \$10, (they do have some yummy food), tea and coffee are available in Amess House.

A brief written history of the island is given to us and we all pick up little anecdotes over time about the characters that have lived here. Visitors enjoy hearing of these as you have more personal contact with them to bring their visit alive.

People come from all over the world, from interstate and even our local surrounds. Many young adult students bring relatives from overseas and translate what we say. The day a little old lady from Taiwan silently put her hands together and bowed to me made the whole day worthwhile.

Our Aussie visitors get a great deal from the house if Grandma lived in a home that was similar and retired farming couples who worked with Clydesdales and some of the old farm machinery that is used on the Island, love to reminisce. Every day is full of interaction with guests.

On top of all this, you are spoiled by having a day on our own magic little Island with its lovely garden and peaceful paddocks and above all else the priceless tranquility that belongs to it.

Do come and join us.

Mary Mitchell



FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Working Horse Festival

The team has worked very hard on the upcoming festival which we hope will be a great success! I look forward to meeting all of the fabulous people who will be volunteering on the days which are FOCIS's major fundraising event. Jill Fitzroy-Kelly has done an enormous amount of work for this year's festival. See you all there!!

Gulf Station

Neville and I recently had a stall at Gulf Station's 'Working Horse Festival'. This was a great day and many people were very positive about Churchill Island.

Summer Events

The new Arts Markt has so far been very successful. This event is a monthly 'festival of creativity and fun' featuring high quality artworks, great international food, wine, music, massage and lots more! It was established by two Phillip Island ladies who have a passion for art, Maria Reed and Sian Adnam. Both are accomplished local artists who are committed to showcasing local and Victorian talent. They continue to encourage many artists 'out of the studio' to provide lucky market goers with a range of affordable, quality and unique purchases.

Summer Farmers Markets were as popular as ever and will continue throughout the year. Both markets are definitely the most beautiful in Victoria stalls have the spectacular backdrop of golden fields leading to the bay.

Cinema Under the Stars' first season at Churchill Island has put on a great program of movies for all ages and tastes. The movie events have been fairly well attended reports the organiser, Euan Wilson, a local event manager.

We have produced a new Event Calendar which outlines the yearly calendar of Churchill Island events. Each is a great promotion of the island and if I had a dollar for every visitor who said "I never knew this place was here" then I would be very rich by now!!

Functions

Churchill Island weddings have also continued to be very popular and bookings are coming thick and fast for the coming year.

We recently hosted over 90 tourism professionals to a dinner at Churchill Island. This dinner was to showcase the island as a group and conference venue. Everyone who attended was very impressed with the facility and we are optimistic about the same operators bringing groups in the future.

Guide Big Day Out

Well, if you are not a volunteer guide or gardener at Churchill Island, then you missed out on the recent 'Big Day Out' to Werribee park Mansion and Open Range Zoo. The day was a special thank you for all the work these wonderful volunteers do for Churchill Island. So, if you want to be involved in the next exciting excursion, you'd better sign up for guiding soon! Call Pat on 5956 7214 for details.

Collection Management

We recently submitted our final application for Museum Accreditation. This massive document has taken over 3 years to compile and we will receive notification of accreditation in

September this year. A big thanks to Cherry McFee for assisting in some cataloguing of our collection recently, this is a huge but very important task to preserve our precious objects.

That's all for now, see you at the Working Horse Festival at Easter!!

SALLY



WORKING HORSE FESTIVAL

FOCIS Volunteers Update.

FOCIS TENT: Christine Grayden (5956 8501) is the Coordinator in charge of the FOCIS Information Tent at the Festival. We still need some volunteers for Saturday & Sunday. This year we will be the Information Centre for the Festival, maps & communications centre as well as Lost & Found, Lost Children, selling some Festival souvenirs, running a raffle (a lovely watercolour of three working horses and handler donated by Mr. Brian O'Neill) and trying to attract more Members to FOCIS. So we need people of various skills and talents!

CATERING: Thanks to the Shepparton Mob, lunch boxes are nearly covered but breakfast at 7.00 a.m. and dinner at 6.30 p.m. time slots are proving hard to fill. And I still need deserts (something unfussy and substantial) for Sunday Night.

So please give me a call on 5672 5235 ph/fax, e-mail jillfk@dcsi.net.au. urgently if you can help out either with the catering or FOCIS Tent.

JILL FITZROY-KELLY



FROM THE GARDEN

As usual we have had a very busy summer here at Churchill Island, the weather has been a little bit crazy at times but the garden has held up well. It is lucky that we have had a few good down pours of rain to keep everything freshened up, as the watering system has not been operating for several months now since there was some work done to put new lines in, but hopefully we can get a new system put in soon.

The kitchen garden is continuing to be productive with some delicious varieties of tomatoes ripening up, lots of parsley, sage, chives and basil being picked and the fig trees are laden with fruit so come and pick some before the birds get the whole lot!

The veggie garden in the front paddock is producing yellow zucchini, jap pumpkins, cucumbers, tomatoes and lots of other tasty stuff. The sunflowers have done very well and are pointing their bright yellow heads at the bay, which looks a delight when you are coming up the track from Ibis dam, with the lavender rows getting established as well.

Recently the house guides and garden volunteers, Pat Jefferies and I went to Werribee mansion and open plains zoo for a day trip. The bus and lunch was provided by the Nature Park and very much appreciated. We all had a fantastic day but there was too little time to take everything in, we all agreed we must come back and spend some time to see it all.

The bluestone mansion was built in the 1870's and has 10 hectares of grounds surrounding it, heritage listed trees, sculpture walks, vineyard and hotel are part of the facilities. The mansion has audio headphones that you can listen to as you walk from room to room and the laundry has a hologram of a maid talking about their daily tasks. All beautifully restored and elegantly done with attention to detail making it

very impressive. Then onto the zoo as we hopped in a specially fitted out bus that takes you right in the paddocks with the rhino's, zebras and giraffes and the commentary by the bus driver informed us that the re-vegetation works of indigenous trees and shrubs were done by their volunteers. The Meerkats are so gorgeous you want to take them home with you and the walks through the forest to the African villages are very interesting. We did not get back until 7pm so we were quite weary, and Pat Jefferies did a splendid job of co-coordinating the day.

The arborists, Gregor and Marilyn from Tree Improvements, are busy at work now pruning the buddleia, olive and mulberries, and the finished trees look superb with all the dead wood cut out of them and some proper shaping of the whole tree, so that it will enhance their longevity even more.

The Easter Working Horse Festival will be upon us soon so if anyone would like to help getting the place ship shape it would be fabulous as there is so much to do and many hands make light work!

See you in the garden, Lisa



RANGER REPORT

The Island is looking great at the moment with green grass everywhere. Everyone has been flat out with the Working Horse Festival coming up. The toilet block is nearing completion and the volunteer centre is well on the way.

We are getting some of our lambs killed to feed the volunteers at Easter and for use in the restaurant.

The new laneway in the front paddock is nearly finished and will make it a lot easier for the public to move about at the festival plus giving them closer viewing of the activities. As some of you may have seen Churchill Island was on "Sunrise" the channel seven breakfast show, it was a great laugh. It was only supposed to be a three minute part of the show but when Grant Denyer (the weather man) and his crew came the day before to do the shoot they were so wrapped in the Island they decided to do the whole show here live. Well I had better go and get some more jobs done before the festival, hope to see you all there.

Neville



Your Bunch of dates

26th and 27th March - Working Horse Festival

5th April - FOCIS general meeting

28th May - FOCIS general meeting

23rd July - FOCIS annual general meeting

All members are welcome to attend our meetings and new faces would be most appreciated. Come along and meet other members. Your input is needed to make this a viable and effective society.



FOCIS COMMITTEE 2004 - 2005

President: Neil Gladman (03) 5956 6050

Vice President: Keith Hocking (03) 5821 9189

Treasurer/Public Officer: Roger Hollingworth,

Membership Secretary and General Secretary:

Jill Fitzroy-Kelly (03) 5672 5235

FOCIS Members:

Staff have requested that Focis members make sure they have their membership cards with them at all times when visiting Churchill Island and that they show them at the desk on arrival. This will make it much easier to monitor current memberships.

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 July 2004 to 30th June 2005 **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.



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

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Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.

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