



FOCIS

newsletter

Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.

Number 111 AUTUMN 2011



MEMBERS' & FAMILIES' SOCIAL DAY

SUNDAY 15 MAY 2011

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FOCIS is offering members the chance to meet and relax in the style of the Amess family. There will be 19th century games for children and adults and bocce (or boules if you are French). Meet committee members, many are retiring so find out about getting involved. Think about signing up for a working bee or becoming a volunteer guide or gardener. If you cannot do any of these things, come anyway and get to know other members.

RSVP

Please let us know by May 10 if you are coming so that we can make sure we have enough scones and prepare for games. Let us know how many adults and children (ages if possible) either by email or phone to

Christine Grayden
[cgrayden@waterfront.net.au] or
5956 8501

Contact us:

By post—

PO Box 852, COWES,

We are on the web. See this issue in colour

www.friendsofchurchillisland.org.au

President@

Secretary@

Membership@

Treasurer@

Editor@

friendsofchurchillisland.org.au

PROVISIONAL PROGRAM

11.30-12.15 Games at Fiddler's Green (behind Rogers' Cottages). Old fashioned games for children/adults. Bocce for adults

12.15-1.00 Lunch - Bring your own picnic or order from the café.

1-1.30 Brief introduction to working bees and volunteering by staff and FOCIS committee members.

1.30-2.30 Entertainment in meeting room. Recitations, and songs.

Museum trail questions with prizes

2.30-3.30 Afternoon tea. Scones will be baked in the oven in Rogers' Cottage and served with Jam and Cream.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Working Bees for 2011

Sat 4 June: machinery

Sat 17 Sept: house spring clean

Sat 26 Nov: house preparation for Summer season

General Meetings for 2011

Saturday 14 May

Saturday 13 August (AGM)

Saturday 12 November

1.30 pm Meeting Room Churchill

Island Visitors' Centre

Please submit copy for the next newsletter by 4 July

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Stella Axarlis AM

Our meeting on 12th February was well attended and a number of matters were discussed as documented in the Minutes in this Newsletter. We'd like to thank Trevor Heywood and Heather Goldberg for their informative contributions to our meeting.

As you will remember our Museum sub-committee prepared a submission which was presented to the PINP Board and this submission will be considered in the upcoming Strategic Plan.

Another sub-committee consisting of Christine Grayden, David Maunders, Meg McCarthy, Pat Jeffery and Pat Baird met before the committee meeting to consider plans for our Family Day to be held in May. Activities will be focused on families and we will be having scones, jam and cream straight from the oven in Rogers' cottage. (See Page 1)

Family Day, on 15th May, the day following Saturday's FOCIS meeting, will be your opportunity to refresh and renew your association with Churchill Island and perhaps consider ways in which you can

volunteer to help in our diverse activities, according to your interest and time availability. Even a couple of days a year can be a huge support to our PINP staff and FOCIS. PINP will also be having a special day on 27th March to showcase all sorts of PINP activities.

With the AGM approaching in August, Marje Brophy has prepared a Positions Profile outline for the members of the Ex-

Museum sub-committee ... submission was presented to the PINP Board and ... will be considered in the upcoming Strategic Plan.

ecutive so that future members of FOCIS who wish to apply will have clearly defined responsibilities. These can be viewed on the website or hard copies available at the May meeting.

The August AGM will be a time of great change. As you may know from the last meeting, Roger Hollingworth after many years as our trusted and meticulous Treasurer, will not be re-nominating.

However, Tom O'Dea who is taking over from the impres-

sive Marje Brophy as Membership Secretary is also prepared to nominate as Treasurer. Both Roger and Marje have been outstanding contributors and we will miss them. They have been a joy to work with and I am particularly grateful for their support.

Julia Nelson regretfully will also no longer be available as secretary due to the pressure of professional commitments. Vice President Pat Baird will still remain as an active member but cannot continue in her role as she wishes to devote her energies to writing.

The President of FOCIS has traditionally been a person living on Phillip Island and as I will be returning to live in Melbourne, I will not nominate as President. It has been a great privilege to serve FOCIS and I thank you all for your incredible support.

So we need some committed people to offer their services for these roles. Please consider your ability to contribute to FOCIS in one of these positions. We must continue our work to preserve and enhance Churchill Island.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Churchill Island has long depended on the contributions of volunteers, largely in helping to maintain the gardens and serving as guides in the Amess House. Gardeners usually work on Wednesdays so if you are able to give an occasional day please contact Meg McCarthy by email at mmccarthy@penguins.org.au

or leave a message at the Churchill Island reception 5956 7214.

Guides need an interest in the island history, willingness to wear period costume and to engage with visitors. We have an information manual, currently being revised, and new guides shadow an experienced one for a few ses-

sions. If you are interested contact David Maunders by email at

Editor@friendsofchurchillisland.org.au

or phone 0407540392. Come and talk to us at the members day on Sunday 15 May.

PHILLIP ISLAND NATURE PARK REPORT

Matthew Jackson, CEO

Dear FOCIS members

Firstly, may I take this opportunity to thank FOCIS for its contribution towards the protection and preservation of Churchill Island, and the significant volunteer contribution by your many members to assist the Nature Parks to protect and maintain Churchill Island.

I am pleased to update members that YTD visitor numbers in comparison to last year to The Nature Parks in general are up by 40,000 visitors and specifically to Churchill Island, are up 9% or 6,550 visitors.

This is a very pleasing outcome which allows the Nature Parks to continue to invest in our environmental and social responsibilities whilst continuing to maintain our assets, including the preservation of Churchill Island.

I am aware of some concerns relating to the Historic Precinct and some recent works undertaken by the Nature Parks. I am

in the process of arranging a suitable date and time to meet with FOCIS representatives, the Nature Parks and particularly Churchill Island staff to work through any concerns, as a priority.

The Nature Parks will shortly commence its planning for the "Easter Family Fun Festival" to be held over the Easter period and the Nature Parks will consult with FOCIS to ensure its members can be involved where possible.

I would like to express my appreciation to FOCIS for taking the initiative to provide the Nature Parks with a proposal to have a Museum at Churchill Island and the offer to contribute funding of \$30,000 towards its concept development. Clearly, this demonstrates the commitment by FOCIS to continue to support Churchill Island and the Nature Parks. Interpretation of Churchill Island and its history is a key part of the visitors experi-

ence and ensuring that all history including the "past and present" is available for many generations to come.

I have recently met with your President to discuss the proposal and I have also provided the Nature Parks Board with a copy of the proposal for discussion. The Board has agreed to discuss the concept of a Museum during the Nature Parks Strategic Planning process to commence in early April 2011.

During the Strategic Planning stages, FOCIS will most certainly have the opportunity to contribute as will our community towards the Nature Parks future and key areas of focus and investment.

Churchill Island is a key part of the Nature Parks activities and a key part of Victoria's history. I look forward to meeting you all at your next FOCIS meeting and thank you again for your support of the Nature Parks and Churchill Island.

COMMUNITY OPEN DAY ON SUNDAY MARCH 27TH

A free Community Open Day will be the culmination of the month long 'Penguin Month'. March has been declared 'Penguin Month' by the Nature Parks to celebrate the 80th anniversary milestone of Phillip Island's world famous Penguin Parade. Throughout March, a range of activities, tours and events are being held at the Nature Parks on Phillip Island. The day will give the Bass Coast Shire community a chance to visit all the Nature Parks' attractions and sites free of charge, and learn more about how the Nature

Parks operates and the important research, education and environ-



mental work undertaken. It will also acknowledge the volunteer groups and supporters of the Nature Parks. Talks and activities, hosted by Nature Parks' rangers, researchers and other staff, as well as volunteers, will be held throughout the day at various sites, including a "Welcome to Country" to acknowledge the traditional owners, the Boon Wurrung people. Activities on the day will include:

(continued on p. 5)

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING HELD 12 FEBRUARY 2011 AT 1.30 PM.

Present: Stella Axarlis, Marje Brophy, Pat Baird, Jan Jonas, David Maunders, Christine Grayden, Tom & Ruth O'Dea, Kris Moar, Barbara Stephens, Marianne Pattinson.

Apologies: Peter & Ann Jelly, Gaye Cleeland, Mary Mitchell, Terry Moar, Michael & Maureen Barden, Julia Nelson.

Visitors: Heather Goldberg

Minutes of Previous Meeting held November 13th, 2010 (C Grayden / D Maunders).

Carried

Julia Nelson has advised that she has resigned as Secretary of FOCIS effective immediately. Julia's contribution to FOCIS was acknowledged.

PINP Report - Heather Goldberg

Sales of 3 Park pass has increased. Visitors to Churchill Island is up by 7,700. There have been many visitors to the Penguin Parade particularly following the series "Penguin Island" which is currently being screened in Germany & France and will be screened in USA and Canada. There were 89 guests from the "Oprah" group who visited Phillip Island.

Farm Manager Report - Trevor Heywood

Funds from the sale of lambs, cattle, wool etc is returned to be used on Churchill Island to maintain the farm. Several Highland cattle have been sold and lambs will be sold soon. New paths have been laid around the homestead. It was requested that as Churchill Island is an accredited museum and has heritage status, that any changes to structures, paths etc be communicated to FOCIS Executive.

Museum Report

The PINP CEO and Chair of PINP Board were impressed with the submission from FOCIS for the concept of the museum. Pat Baird to speak at a PINP Board Meeting.

Social Day - May 15th

Families could be asked to bring a picnic and FOCIS could provide scones, tea, coffee and soft drinks. Lunch from 12.15 and 1.00-2.30 entertainment such as Museum Detective Trail. Notices to be sent to members with a reply slip so as catering can be ascertained.

Working Bees Working Bees will be held on June 4th, September 17th & November 26th. More information will be provided in future newsletters.

General Business

President's Report: The Executive Committee had met in the

previous week and provided feedback on Position Profiles which had been produced. The Newsletter is to be previewed by President or Vice President, prior to printing and minutes of the general meeting and reports from President and PINP CEO must be included.

PINP Strategic Committee will consist of representatives from the Shire, all associations, members from the Department of Sustainability and the Environment and members of the wider community.

Motion: (R Hollingworth / R O'Dea)

That Stella Axarlis represent FOCIS on this committee.

Carried

Motion: (R Hollingworth / D Maunders)

That the Newsletter Editor be a member of the Executive.

Carried

As Marje Brophy will not be continuing as Membership Secretary and as Paypal is being introduced, it was agreed that Tom O'Dea would take over as Membership Secretary from the May meeting. Marje to review Constitution and send to Tom O'Dea. It was requested that a copy of the Constitution be added to the website.

Treasurer: Report was presented and approved

Membership Secretary: 51 Families and 33 individuals did not renew their membership. There are currently 140 family memberships and 115 individual.

Staff & Volunteers - it would be advantageous for PINP and volunteers to have a proper induction program. The role of FOCIS in this program is to be determined.

Curator

Churchill Island desperately needs a curator. FOCIS to write to PINP requesting the appointment of a curator to Churchill Island.

Action: President

The meeting closed at 3.10 pm.

Next Meeting: Saturday, May 14th, 2011 at 1.30 pm.

FINANCIAL REPORT FEBRUARY 2011

Roger Hollingworth, Honorary Treasurer and Public Officer

PERIOD 1 NOV 2010 - 31 JANUARY

YTD 1 JULY 2010 - 31 JANUARY 2011

INCOME	Period \$	YTD \$	EXPENDITURE	Period \$	YTD \$
Bank Interest	291.35	653.99	Printing	253.00	1,267.00
Donations	nil	280.00	Postage	105.55	401.26
Memberships	565.00	4,780.00	Gifts to PINP	nil	nil
Festivals	nil	nil	Festivals	nil	nil
TOTAL INCOME	856.35	5,713.99	Office	nil	80.45
			Advertisements	nil	nil
			Subscriptions	nil	nil
			<u>Sundry</u>	nil	531.72
			TOTAL EXPENDITURE	358.55	2,280.43

CASH AT BANK

Opening Balance 1 July 2010 \$43,375.84

Closing Balance 31 Jan 2011 \$46,809.40

Less Unpresented cheques (as at 31 /1/11) nil

AVAILABLE FUNDS \$46,809.40

NOTE: quarantined funds for the proposed Museum Project planned for Churchill Island \$30,000

SURPLUS/(LOSS) 497.80 3,433.56

Community Open Day (continued)

.Nature Parks' overview talks by the different departments and their research and work.

- A presentation by Dr Roger Kirkwood on Seals and research at the Nobbies.
- Penguin biologist Andre Chiaradia will talk about the Little Penguin's life at sea - survival and threats.
- A wildlife rescue talk, including an update on the new wildlife hospital..
- Hooded Plover and Shearwater talks
- Feral animal management demonstrations - featuring our celebrity ferrets!.
- Old-time games at Churchill Island for the kids.
- Koala Conservation Centre talks and walks.
- Wetland wonder and bush tucker walks and talks.

- Plus other walks and talks at key sites under the Nature Parks' care



CEO of the Nature Parks, Matthew Jackson, said : "... many people in the community have strong links to the Parade's history, so we thought it important to open up the Nature Parks to all the community so they could see how it has developed. There may be many locals and weekenders who perhaps have not visited the Nature Parks for quite

a while, so this is an opportunity for them to do so as our guest."

The Open Day will commence at 10.00am with activities scheduled throughout the Day, so people can select what they wish to attend. It is free to residents and rate-payers of the Bass Coast Shire, with proof of residency and/or land ownership to be shown when the visitor attends their first site on the day. The visitor will then be given an Open Day pass, which will give them free entry to all other Nature Parks' attractions and sites for the day - including the Sunday night's Penguin Parade.

For more information on the Open Day and a full program visit www.penguins.org.au

SUMMER IN THE CHURCHILL ISLAND GARDENS

Meg McCarthy

High summer and the Moonahs are flowering with a magnificent show of creamy bottle-brush like spikes, a cheery sight in the heat. There is a lot of colour in the garden with orange red hot pokers, yellow sunflowers, blushing pink rose companion, lavender mauve and white and roses of every shade. Our fuchsias have been spectacular this year after all the spring rain.

Big projects achieved recently include a new path across the orchard lawn, removal of a large palm crowding the garden bed in front of Amess house and a major prune of the Buddleja and herb garden bay tree. You may notice the arbour has been demolished. It was on a dangerous lean under the strain of the giant honey-suckle and termite action. We are on the search for strong spars the right diameter and length to build the replacement. The arbour is one of the oldest of the heritage elements and is visible in early photographs. It will be good to see it standing strong again.

The orchard has had a fine crop of various fruit and I have photographed many in an attempt to identify them. For some reason the rosellas have left the fruit alone this year.

Many of the visitors have been able to taste them and the new foal 'Nellie' has been spoiled. The vegetable garden has been lush and I expect late summer tomatoes and scarlet runner beans. The globe artichokes are colonizing well but the jerusalem artichokes are threatening to take over! Other successes are bananas, tamarilloes, chard and



strawberries.

The garden volunteers continue to meet on Wednesday mornings at 9am and it is usual for many trailer loads of weeds and cuttings to be the result of hard labour! The growth rate has been phenomenal this year and I never cease to be amazed at how much green waste is created every day. Thank you to the guides

who have kept up the displays of hydrangea, orange crocosmia and red salvia in the house throughout the summer. I am sure Mrs Amess would have approved.

It has been an exciting spring/summer as old favorites have shown up for the first time in four years. The *Impatiens balfourii* 'touch-me-not' has sprung up from seed – there is a row near the Amess tank all pretty in pink. Also lots of white and blue forget-me-nots. Unfortunately a lamb wandering in the herb garden ate the Solomon's Seal just prior to flowering but the rhizomes are safe underground and will put on a show again next spring.

I have potted a young Norfolk Pine near the mature Norfolk and it has created a lot of wonder. Much discussion about the intelligence, the engineering required to grow so huge and so strong over 140 years from a tiny seed.

Happy gardening, Meg.



THEMES IN THE HISTORY OF CHURCHILL ISLAND

Rebecca Sanders

We continue Rebecca's contribution published in the Summer 2010 newsletter.

I have identified the following possible historical themes and interpretations that might be possible to investigate using Churchill Island history.

Indigenous history

Due to a lack of specific records and a vastly changed landscape it would be very difficult to tell a strong indigenous history, al-

though I would encourage a more general history of the Boon Wurung to be part of Churchill Island's story, as it is within their traditional lands.

Exploration history

Exploration history at Churchill Island for example is very well documented, but no physical remains of this history are evident in the landscape today.

Squatting history

The history of squatting on the island by John Rogers has left rather more physical evidence, specifically clearing and possibly, though not certainly, the cottages, which may have been constructed prior to Rogers purchase of the island in 1865. There is actually quite a long squatting history on the island, and in the surrounding area, and I'm often surprised that squatting receives so much less attention than settling

in most local histories, since the scale of change to the landscape during this era was extraordinary.

Settling history

The cottages once again serve as material evidence of life for immediate post- gold rush European settlers. Recreated kitchen gardens and farming practices, including the difficulty of transporting goods from an island would be interesting ideas to explore. The different ways in which people could secure land through purchase might also be something to think about. Churchill Island is very different to most rural property in the area as it was not purchased through selection, nor was it purchased through preemptive right, but as a special lot at auction. Rogers' desire to obtain freehold, and the necessity of doing so could be discussed here in terms of the desire for land after the gold rush and the subsequent decline of squatting as a form of land use.

Farming history

Farming history is ably served by the site in terms of the extent to which the island has been cleared, although the majority of farm and outer buildings are new rather than original constructions, and in line with the recommendations of the Burra Charter are easily identifiable as such. A plethora of farm machinery could possibly impart a history of farm technology, and the sites' intangible culture- particularly its use of horse drawn ploughing and planting of historic crops could be used to impart a more specific history of farming on the site. Butter churning demonstrations could talk about the fact that such work was women's work, as could work in the kitchen garden. It might also be worth talking about how difficult it would have been to make the farming of this site profitable, due to its small size and distance from markets

Leisure history

Leisure culture on the island spans much of the later half of the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth and could discuss the ways in which leisure changed over time for the wealthy, but assuredly middle class owners of Churchill Island. Indeed, the transformation



Ted Jenkins with foal. Photo Dept Sustainability and Environment

from seaside retreat, with all of its attendant associations with the pursuit of good health, to holiday home the pursuit of pleasure and the pro-



Firing the Cannon. Photo Dept Sustainability and Environment

vision of an interest for some one suffering ill health, as opposed to a cure, is an interesting one. The wealth of pictorial records on this subject period, not to mention the homestead and gardens easily lend themselves to the telling of this history.

Health and environment history

Changing attitudes about health and the seaside could also be discussed using the site, and tourist and medical literature of the time. During the nineteenth century the seaside was, to phrase historian Andrea Inglis, the 'chilly preserve of the afflu-

ent and consumptive' in a manner quite different to the twentieth century's mantra of sun, surf and sand (of which Churchill Island has only one of these ingredients).

Domestic labour history

Records relating to domestic labour during the nineteenth century are very scarce, but oral records from the twentieth provide some information about the kind of work performed, who did what type of work and the kind of hours and conditions people had.

Gardening history

The site lends itself quite wonderfully to gardening history, which could begin with Grant and move right through to Sister Margaret Campbell, examining all of the different reasons why plants were sown and what type were planted. For example under Grant plants proclaimed British colonial territory and tested soil and climate. Under Rogers and the Pickersgills, plants were practical, and planted for eating or to make money from. During Amess era plants were not simply ornamental, but their rarity, exotic nature, and the restrained plantings proclaimed the wealth and taste of the owner. Eve Garratt's recollections of Sister Campbell tell of a woman who had a deep sentimental attachment to her garden, and who took great pride in it, putting a more personal emphasis on gardening more like that which we are used to today, but before the fashion for native plantings.

Some of these themes are well served by historical records, or Churchill Island's material culture (objects), cultural landscape (so called because many of its features are not the work of nature alone) and intangible heritage (ie practices like horse drawn ploughing or butter churning by hand). Others, particularly indigenous history are not, although the very lack of records in this case tells an important story of assimilation and the loss of culture that was encouraged during most of Australia's history.

PRIVACY STATEMENT

The Society collects, uses, discloses and holds information of members in accordance with the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988. The Society collects personal information about members in order to:

1. Maintain a current membership list.
2. Inform members about the Society's activities.
3. Publish details of members, with their consent, in the FOCIS Newsletter or other Society publications.

Members' personal information will be kept confidential and secure and will not be accessible for unauthorised use, amendment or disclosure. Members may seek access to and lodge any complaints about their personal information by contacting the Society.

The Society will strive to ensure that the personal information of members is accurate, up to date and complete. Members may assist the Society in this task by providing correct information and advising when details have changed

GENERAL MEETINGS FOR 2011

Saturday 14 May

Saturday 13 August (AGM)

Saturday 12 November

1.30 pm Meeting Room Churchill Island

Visitors' Centre

Check our website

www.friendsofchurchillisland.org.au



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