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Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.

Number 113 SPRING 2011

If your address label is marked with a RED CROSS please renew your membership.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARDED TO MARY MITCHELL

Inside this issue:

1. Life membership awarded
2. President's Report
3. Spring in the Gardens ; Winter seasonal Walk
4. Working Bee; Curator's Report
5. Minutes of AGM
6. Minutes cont.
7. Audited Financial Statement

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President@

Secretary@

Membership@

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Editor@

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At the FOCIS Annual General Meeting on 13 August, Mary Mitchell was awarded life membership of the society with a commemorative certificate and a Robert Ingpen framed print. Mary first discovered Churchill Island during the 1960s when her family bought a block of land on Phillip Island and has been a FOCIS member from its beginning. She has been one of the longest serving and most passionate and devoted guides and takes great delight in sharing her love of Churchill Island and its representation of the past with both adults and children. She has also inducted many other volunteer guides into their role.

Born in the Riverina district on a wheat and sheep farm only 4 miles from the Murray River, Mary's remembrances of childhood are imbued with the evocation of the simple life as demonstrated on Churchill Island, in Rogers' cottages and Amess House. To Mary the kerosene lamps, candles and the Coolgardie safe bring back memories of her childhood on the farm near Mathoura. Mary recalls seeing the paddle steamers and barges with their loads of timber chugging along to Echuca. She learned to fish from an itinerant farmer who grew cucumbers and tomatoes near the banks of the river. And even though life was isolated, for Mary there was a sort of purity about it which is echoed in the activities and atmos-

DATES TO REMEMBER

GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 12 November

1.30 pm Meeting Room Churchill Island
Visitors' Centre

GARDEN LOVERS' FESTIVAL

Sunday 13 November

FINAL WORKING BEE FOR 2011

Sat 26 Nov, 8-10 am: house
preparation for Summer season

Coffee provided.



Mary Mitchell (l) with Pat Baird and the Ingpen print.

Please submit copy for the next newsletter by 21 November 2011

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Stella Axarlis AM

On behalf of the executive I wish to thank all members who attended our AGM on 13th August, 2011 and who oversaw the changes to our Executive and the Constitution. After years of invaluable service, Roger Hollingworth has resigned from our executive, but gladly not from FOCIS. Also Marj Brophy who has acted as both secretary and minute secretary for several years has resigned. Roger and Marje were outstanding contributors in their respective roles. We offer our great gratitude to both. These resignations marked an important transition in the executive of FOCIS. However, we received the following nominations for President: Stella Axarlis; Vice President: Pat Baird; Secretary: Christine Grayden; Treasurer and Membership Secretary: Tom O'Dea and Newsletter

Editor: David Maunders.

All nominees were returned unopposed. It was very pleasing to have all positions filled with such competent people and I feel sure it will be of great benefit for FOCIS. With the election of office bearers over, we were addressed by Matthew Jackson, Councillor Peter Paul and Rebecca Sanders. They all gave exceptional presentations and it is a pity that more members were not present to hear them.

Christine in her role as Curator is already moving things along with enormous energy.

Saturday 17th September saw a very good number of volunteers gathered at Amess House for a thorough cleaning of every object in

the house. This exercise also aided Christine in updating the inventory of objects in the house. Thank you so much to all who participated.

A revised manual for volunteer guides has been prepared by David Maunders, with Pat Baird and Sally O'Neill who wrote the original version. It will shortly be printed by PNIP.

Congratulations to Matthew Jackson on his appointment as the CEO. I am personally delighted and look forward to a continuous partnership with PINP.

My appreciation to all Office Bearers and I look forward to working with them and all members in the coming year.

With my best wishes,

Stella

Mary Mitchell (continued from p.1)

phere of Churchill Island today, with its heritage farm and the old buildings. The horses too, provide a connection for her as she recalls her father's devotion to his working horses and how he would always ensure they were well fed and sheltered before he ended his own working day. Such an example instilled in Mary an ability for self sufficiency, both practically and spiritually.

In her early school years Mary rode her bike to school but the absence of school buses forced her to attend boarding school for her secondary education. These were difficult years for a girl accustomed to the warmth and security of a loving family. However, this gave her the opportunity to develop

an interest in music. Her mother sang and played the piano and as Mary progressed through Morongo Girls College she became influenced by George Logie Smith at Geelong College whose school choir was combined with Morongo.

After matriculating in music Mary went on complete Kindergarten training which meshed well with her family life later on. Mary worked in a number of kindergartens eventually spending some years at Cowes where she established friendships with many children and their families. She is very proud of all her students and they and their families have in turn, confirmed her sense of belonging on the island.

Mary has a strong political awareness and has been an able advocate on local issues, such as reducing noise from the racetrack and an active member of the Smith's Beach Association including establishing a reserve at Smith's Beach and helping to establish access steps to prevent erosion.

Accepting her award, Mary commented that Churchill Island was the "Jewel in the Crown" and that FOCIS needed new people to keep fighting for its preservation. Mary joins a small band of FOCIS life members: Bill Hopkins, Ray Leivers, Ann Penaluna, Carroll and Amy Schulz, Ray Addicoat and Terry Holman.

SPRING IN THE CHURCHILL ISLAND GARDENS

Meg McCarthy

We have had a beautiful show of daffodils and jonquils this year. Now the blue-bells are coming through. Forget-me-nots, iris, and calendula are everywhere offering good ground cover. The weeds threaten constantly to take hold but thanks to the never tiring help of the Wednesday garden club, I am able to keep the cottage garden beds and paths tidy. Blossoms and new green shoots are all around the orchard and on every deciduous tree.

Unfortunately there has been a hold up with the purchasing of shell grit needed to refresh the homestead garden paths. Farm staff have been strapped for time after Ken resigned to pursue his retirement and settle in New Zealand. The Arbor is also only at the planning stage. Both projects are priorities however and never far from my mind so hopefully not too much longer before both are completed.

Recently the mosaic table under the Buddleia has had its old bent legs straightened by the blacksmith; the top cleaned and metal work painted by the garden volunteers. It looks great. We have also pur-

chased a cast iron table/chair set to use for weddings. Other tasks completed by the garden volleys include a brick paved area in front of the pond/water pump and tile edging near the kitchen gate and tank.

Everybody may be interested to know that all costume (shoes, clothes, hats etc.) is now housed in the F.O.C.I.S. volunteer centre in a new wardrobe. It was not ideal or practical to continue storing it in the wardrobe in the Amess house main bedroom. Besides, you can now get changed in private!

Christine Grayden has passed on some great information regarding Churchill Island gardens, found in the course of her curatorial research. In 1981 Minette Russell, Senior Lecturer Burnley Horticultural College and a team of Burnley students began the task of restoring the gardens. She wrote in newsletter no. 3:

"They cut, they pruned, they sawed - the air rang with noise - chainsaws, even axes were wielded with gusto. It was all a lot of fun, and the rewards were great, as rubbish piled high (16 truck loads in the first

two days)...The aim in the restoration of the Garden has been not to produce a neat organised effect, but to retain the charm of the slightly unexpected. The pleasures of discovering flowers peeping from beneath or around a shrub or tree...so that beauty can be seen. People may still experience that feeling of having discovered something that has been hidden, and perhaps forgotten for a long time."

Wonderful words. The elements of surprise and exploration continue to be major planning features in the garden today. 1983 was also the time the old pines along the north east fence line were removed as they were infested with Sirex Wasp. Over time these have been replaced with a line of Norfolk pines, the most recent of which I planted this year in front of the orchard.

Cheerio and happy spring gardening.

Meg.



PICS WINTER SEASONAL WALK

John Eddy

Starting from the carpark at the Visitors' Centre at Churchill Island, we followed the North Point loop track in a clockwise direction and found much to delight us. The Yalloc Bulluk clans of the Bunurong people held *Moonar'mia* (Churchill Island) as a sacred place. The first stage of our walk, down the hill to the western shore, took us past a row of cypress trees planted by one of these early settlers. Then on to mature Manna Gums and Swamp Gums which were part of the community planting of the late 1970s. At this point we were surprised by the sudden arrival of Max, the Clydesdale stallion, who galloped down the paddock to greet us and stayed long enough for a pat and to ascertain that we didn't have any tasty morsels for him!

As we turned right to follow the coast, we encountered the monument to Grant, remembering in particular his planting of the first crop on Victorian soil. From the track we had glimpses of the cobble beaches, covered with red brown stones of volcanic tuff. This

rock underlies the rich red soils of Churchill Island, and outcrops of the headlands of little coves, and here and there on the grassy bluffs rising from the shoreline. Across the sheltered waters of Western Port, quite close, lies Renison Bight, the ochre cliffs of Chinamen's, and the houses of Surf Beach estate. As a lad I used to look across to this western side of Churchill Island from Phillip Island, and notice how bare it looked. A few old moonahs still clung to the bluffs, and the planted shelterbelts and garden around the homestead stood out, but the rest was just paddocks. However, revegetation and pest control has been so successful in the past 30 years that we were now wending our way through lush woodland, where graceful remnant moonahs, perhaps 500 years old, were joined by established younger moonahs and a variety of other indigenous shrubs and trees. A great habitat for birds, as we noted. We paused to remember with sadness and fondness, Barb Martin, PICS member and activist and long-term volunteer on Churchill Island, whose

ashes were scattered, according to her wishes, in this serene coastal landscape. Her memory lives on in the Bard Martin Bush Bank at the KCC. At North Point, we enjoyed the view across the bay to French Island. A sign gives details of the 670 hectare marine park that surrounds this side of Churchill Island. Down at water's edge, black basalt outcrops contrast with red-browns of the rest of the shore. We now turned towards the south, following the more sheltered eastern coast of the island. White shellgrit blends with the browns of tuff on the beaches, attesting to the abundance of marine life in the surrounding intertidal flats. Mrs Rogers carted this shellgrit to the cottage gardens to form pathways through the beds; a tradition that lives on, although the shellgrit now comes from Western Victoria. The official brochure tells us that North East Cove was the place where building materials for construction of Amess House were transported ashore. If this was the case, these materials **(continued on p.7)**

WORKING BEE Saturday 17 September

David Maunders

At 8 am under the direction of Pat Jeffrey and Christine Grayden, 12 volunteers gave a thorough clean to the Amess House. Everything that moves was lifted and dusted, floors were swept, cobwebs removed and



even the wrought iron guard rails cleaned. Hardy cleaners included Anne Davie, David Maunders, Di Scukovic, Pat Baird, Peter and Ann Jelly, Gil Smith & Maggie Sinnott, Sharon Smart, Hagen & Margaret Geppert, and Pam (whose last name we have lost). The house gleams. If you could not get along, we have another working bee on 26 November and new volunteers are extremely welcome.



CURATOR'S REPORT

Christine Grayden

By way of introduction, my name is Christine Grayden, and I have five associations with Churchill Island. Firstly, my great, great Grandparents were Samuel and Winifred Pickersgill. Secondly, I was involved in weed control, revegetation, gardening and volunteer office work on Churchill Island in the 1970s and early 1980s (before children!). Thirdly, I am secretary of the Friends of Churchill Island. Fourthly I have been working with my other volunteers Pat, Irene and Margaret on the filing cabinets collection of photos and documents for the last 18 months. David has recently also joined in this task. And fifthly, I am currently working on a FOCIS grant from the Phillip Island Nature Park as Curator on Churchill Island. I have a B.A. (Hons) in Australian History, a B. Ed. (Primary and Secondary), and have done a lot of collections training through Museums Australia Victoria. I am also secretary of the Phillip Island & District Historical Society and Treasurer of the Phillip Island Conservation Society.

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.

It is amazing who I have met whilst doing the stock take. People see my uniform and white gloves and immediately start asking questions, or contributing their impressions. Recently I was fortunate enough to be in the half cellar when a stone mason from the NSW Department of Public Works, Heritage Section, came in saying, "This is very similar to the half cellar I recently restored at Government House in Sydney." He was able to provide me with good information on how to



protect the in-ground bricks of the half-cellar and the west wall of Amess House.

Another good aspect of the job is to work alongside the guides, who are a wealth of information, and gardener Meg McCarthy, who knows a lot about the collection. Pat Jeffery has been cleaning the house voluntarily for 15 years, and also knows a great deal. I am fortunate to have these people as supports in my role. If you would like to drop in on me, I work on Churchill Island most Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. til 3.30 p.m. There you can reach me on my mobile, 0400 900 612.

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AUGUST 13th, 2011

Present: Stella Axarlis (President), Pat Baird (Vice President), Christine Grayden (Acting Secretary), Tom O'Dea, Ruth O'Dea, David Maunders, Ann Jelly, Peter Jelly, Marje Brophy, Gaye Cleeland, Jan Jones, Graeme Clausen, Peter Brookes, Michael Barden, Mary Mitchell, Matthew Jackson (Acting CEO, PINP), Cr Peter and Glenys Paul, Rebecca Sanders (Ph.D. candidate)

Apologies: Bruce & Sue Chambers, Roger & Sue Hollingworth, Irene McKell, Carroll & Amy Schulz, Diane & William Scukovic, Helen & Don Sandy, Wilma & Stewart Carter, Rod & Margaret Simkins, Fiona Blackmore, Ian Jones, Una Rossiter, Maureen Barden, Yvonne Robson, Bev Swift, Meg McCarthy

1. Welcome: President Stella Axarlis acknowledged the Bunurong people and their Elders past and present and welcomed all members and visitors to the Annual General Meeting.

2. Minutes from previous General Meeting held 14th May 2011 Ruth O'Dea/Marj Brophy. *Carried*

3. Matters arising from previous General Meeting: Nil.

Reports from the Executive Committee:

4. President's Report:

(a) Thanks to Matthew Jackson for the \$13,000 grant to FOCIS for the appointment of a curator, 10 hours per week for one year. Christine Grayden is the curator.

(b) Marj Brophy has been the Membership Secretary for some years but is no longer able to do the job. On behalf of members Stella thanked Marj and made her a presentation. Marj responded by saying that she had enjoyed the job and the challenge of increased technology. She will still keep coming to meetings.

(c) Roger Hollingworth has been our Treasurer for many years and is now retiring from the position. In his absence Stella thanked him for the wonderful job he had done.

5. Treasurer's Report:

Tom O'Dea presented the Treasurer's Report in the absence of Treasurer Roger Hollingworth. See attached. Tom O'Dea/Peter Jelly *carried*

6. Membership Secretary's report:

Marj Brophy reported that we have 114 family members and 115 individual members, with one new member. We have received \$415 in donations with the membership renewals.

Marj Brophy/Ann Jelly *carried.*

7. Acting CEO's Report, Phillip Island Nature Park:

Matthew Jackson gave a run-down on PINP activities across the parks. He noted the improved relationship between PINP and Bass Coast Shire Council. PINP will this year enter the Banksia Awards for their work in fox eradication and the research program. There is now a link to the FOCIS website on the PINP website. The Board is currently undergoing Strategic Planning for the period 2012-17, and public comment is invited. The Environmental Management Plan will follow the Strategic Plan. Churchill Island visitation continues to grow, from 34,000 in 2004 to 120,000 in 2011. The "Snow on Churchill Island" event was very successful as a way of increasing visitation during a 'shoulder' period. Energy use was low and the snow machine was already available, being at Luna Park. New signage is being rolled out, with 2,500 signs being replaced across the whole park.

8. Revisions to the Constitution:

Tom O'Dea took members through the changes proposed to the FOCIS Constitution to update wording and enable the Constitution to be compatible with new legislation that requires the Public Officer to be the Secretary.

(i) Statement of Purpose: Needed to reflect what we are trying to achieve. Reworded for clarity and to reflect that we are a non-profit organisation.

(ii) New Rule - prior notice to change of constitution now at least 28 days prior to the meeting.

(iii) Notices in writing, but also allow for electronic communication

(iv) Voting at General Meeting: A *member* has right to vote, not membership

(v) 17.1 defines positions of the committee

(vi) 17.3 has been deleted as it is meaningless for us

(vii) 19.1 delete; other 19 numbers changed accordingly

(viii) 20.2 A person may nominate for more than one position but may only be elected to one position. The exception is Treasurer & Membership Officer which can be held by one person.

(ix) If no nomination for a position prior to the meeting nominations can be taken at the meeting. Change notice of meeting from two to seven days.

(x) Change notice of meeting from two to seven days.

(xi) Winding up clause is now Australian Taxation Office wording

(xii) 17.2 The Public Officer is now the Secretary

(xiii) 21.3 Added that technology (such as teleconferencing) is acceptable for meetings.

(xiv) 32.3 is new: A member may ask to see Society's documents and must be provided with them within seven days.

There was some discussion about the number of meetings per year, with the Constitution stating a minimum of two per year. It was decided to leave it at four per year.

Marj Brophy commented that she had started the process of changing the Constitution 3 ½ years ago. She moved that we adopt the proposed changes to the Constitution as circulated.

Marj Brophy/Christine Grayden *carried unanimously*

9. Life Membership Presentation to Mary Mitchell:

Pat Baird made the presentation to Mary of a framed Robert

Ingpen watercolour print of Churchill Island historic buildings and a Life Membership certificate. The certificate read:

Life Membership

of the Friends of Churchill Island Society is awarded to Mary Mitchell in recognition of her long and active membership, her many years of guiding and mentoring new guides and her passionate commitment to preserve the history of Churchill Island.

Mary responded that it is not difficult to volunteer so much for something you are passionate about, as she is about Churchill Island. She is glad that FOCIS appears to have more say in things these days, and that new people have put up their hands to help in the last 10 years. She encouraged all members to be sensitive to the great things on Churchill Island and keep going with the good work.

MINUTES (continued)

10. Election of Office Bearers: Marj Brophy took the chair -

President:

Stella Axarlis - Roger Hollingworth/Pat Baird

Stella Axarlis was declared elected unopposed.

Stella thanked everyone for their support in the past year - Pat, Roger, Marj, Christine, Irene, Gaye, David, Tom and Ruth - and said it was an honour and a pleasure to be FO-CIS President.

Stella Axarlis resumed the chair

Vice President:

Pat Baird - Sue Hollingworth/Christine Grayden

Pat Baird was declared elected unopposed.

Secretary/Public Officer:

Christine Grayden - Peter Jelly/Ann Jelly

Christine Grayden was declared elected unopposed.

Treasurer/Membership Secretary:

Tom O'Dea - Roger Hollingworth/Pat Baird

Tom O'Dea was declared elected unopposed.

Newsletter Editor:

David Maunders - Christine Grayden/Gaye Cleeland

David Maunders was declared elected unopposed.

Phillip Island & District Historical Society Inc representative:

Gaye Cleeland - Christine Grayden/Cherry McFee

Gaye Cleeland was declared elected unopposed.

Friends of Koalas Inc representative:

Irene McKell - Christine Grayden/Gaye Cleeland

Irene McKell was declared elected unopposed

Phillip Island Conservation Society Inc representative:

Anne Davie - Christine Grayden/Gaye Cleeland

Anne Davie was declared elected unopposed.

Auditor: Tom Caulfield was re-appointed.

Appointment of cheque signatories: President, Secretary and Treasurer were nominated

Tom O'Dea/Graham Clausen. *Carried.*

11. Speakers:

Cr Peter Paul spoke about his long-term relationship with Churchill Island, both personally and in his education roles, dating back to 1984. He said that although a huge growth corridor was on our doorstep in Melbourne's south east, and growth will be happening at Newhaven and the airfield site, Churchill Island would remain 'quarantined' from development and as such will have a very important

role to play as a place with a peaceful and historic environment. Peter remembered the wonderful Australian Kite Flying Championships that were held on Churchill Island in the early years and suggested that that might be repeated on the next PINP Open Day. He would like to see Churchill Island as a high profile part of Phillip Island, but CI must not try to be all things to all people. The proposal for a museum on CI is important, but must be sensitively done.

The President thanked Cr Paul for his interesting talk which raised many pertinent issues.

Rebecca Sanders, Ph D candidate spoke about several trends she had found in Churchill Island's history as she has been working through her research. She found that there was actually very little knowledge of Churchill Island's "first garden in Victoria" in Victoria's settlement history. Nor was there much knowledge of Grant's explorations. He had a convict crew, who naturally had a low status. Rebecca has discovered that 'social divide' was very much present in Churchill Island's history - even Jenkins relied on volunteer labour. There were three waves of settlement in Victoria prior to the Land Acts of the 1860s: Bass was settled in 1835; Phillip Island in 1840s, so Churchill Island was late in the wave in the late 1850s. At 144 acres, Churchill Island was rather small for a landholding and not very attractive.

PINP has been tied to farming as a theme. All of the owners used it for farming. Why was it farmed? Perhaps it was considered a good use of the land, socially and morally, rather than economically. The island has been used in the last 30 years to satisfy community expectations.

The President thanked Rebecca for her enlightening talk and stated that we are all looking forward to reading her thesis when it is completed.

12. General Business:

Matthew Jackson was asked about one of the peacocks being lame, and damage being done to the wallaby fence. He will follow these matters up.

Some discussion took place about cleaning methods for the historic objects in the house for the upcoming working bees. Christine will investigate appropriate cleaning methods.

There being no further business the meeting was declared closed at 3.55 p.m.

14. Next meeting: Saturday November 12, 2011, at 1.30 p.m.

**AUDITED STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS
FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2011**

\$

	Last year	This Year			Next year
	2009/2010	2010/2011	Budget	var	Budget
RECEIPTS					
Membership Subscriptions	4,215	4,846	4,300	546	5000
Donations	423	741	200	541	600
Festivals	250	nil	00	(100)	nil
Sundry	168	<i>nil</i>	168	100	
Bank interest	871	1,108	900	208	1,100
TOTAL RECEIPTS	5,759	6,863	5,500	1,363	6,800
PAYMENTS					
Gifts to PINP	3,000	nil	500	500	<i>nil</i>
Festival expenses	<i>nil</i>	nil	200	200	<i>nil</i>
Printing	2,264	1,724	2,300	576	2,000
Postage	1,035	648	1,200	552	1,200
Office Supplies/ admin	169	100	200	100	200
Advertising (notices)	34	nil	150	150	150
Subscriptions	121	121	150	29	150
Web Site	139	nil	300	300	300
Sundry	756	520	500	(20)	500
TOTAL PAYMENTS	7,518	3,113	5,500	2,387	4,500
NET SURPLUS /(LOSS)	(1,759)	3,750	<i>nil</i>	1024)	2,300

Less return of balance of President's float **168**

ADJUSTED NET SURPLUS 3,582

Opening Bank Balance 1 July 2010 **\$43,375.84**

Closing Bank Balance 30 June 2011 **\$46,957.94**

CBA Cash Management A/C

Less unrepresented cheques 577.34
Available funds **\$46,380.60**

Roger Hollingworth, Honorary Treasurer/Public Officer, 9 July 2011

Winter Seasonal Walk Continued from page 3

would have had to be hauled up the steep bluffs bordering the cove, bluffs that are now well re-vegetated. We arrived at the "other" Observation Point. Similar to its namesake on Phillip Island, on a good day, a range of waders

might be seen from this vantage point. Behind the cobble beaches, the soft blue green of coast saltbush gives a pleasing colour contrast. Inland, swamp paperbark has been planted with Coast

Banksia, and, to our surprise, is flowering already in this unusual season. We returned to the Visitor Centre via the track past a dam, past lavender plantings and some very docile cattle. It had been a most enjoyable couple of hours.

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

LAST GENERAL MEETING FOR 2011

Saturday 12 November

1.30 pm Visitors' Centre

GARDEN LOVERS' FESTIVAL

Sunday 13 November

FINAL WORKING BEE FOR 2011

Sat 26 Nov, 8-10 am: house
preparation for Summer season

Check our website

www.friendsofchurchillisland.org.au



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The Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.

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