

Friends Of Churchill Island Society Inc.

FOCIS

NEWSLETTER

ABN 78667051020 INC. No. A 002 19007W

Dates to remember:

General Meetings: 8/2/20, 9/5/20, 21/11/20, AGM 15/8/20

Working bees:

To Be advised

Speaker for the next GM.

Speaker: Christine Grayden will speak about the eccentric and wealthy Gerald Buckley who owned Churchill Island from 1929 until his death in 1936.



We have a new Curator

....but you won't have to learn a new name



Samantha Mather (left) and Samantha Happe, previous and new Curators.

Thanks to Sam for all she did as first an intern then as the curator for six months. She prepared the small display cases inside the entry to the Visitor Centre with themes on Farming, Natural History and the Garden. She and Sam Happe set also set up a large display cabinet with objects from each ownership era on the theme of "Time Unwinds".

(more photo's page 5)

Letter from our President

Dear Members

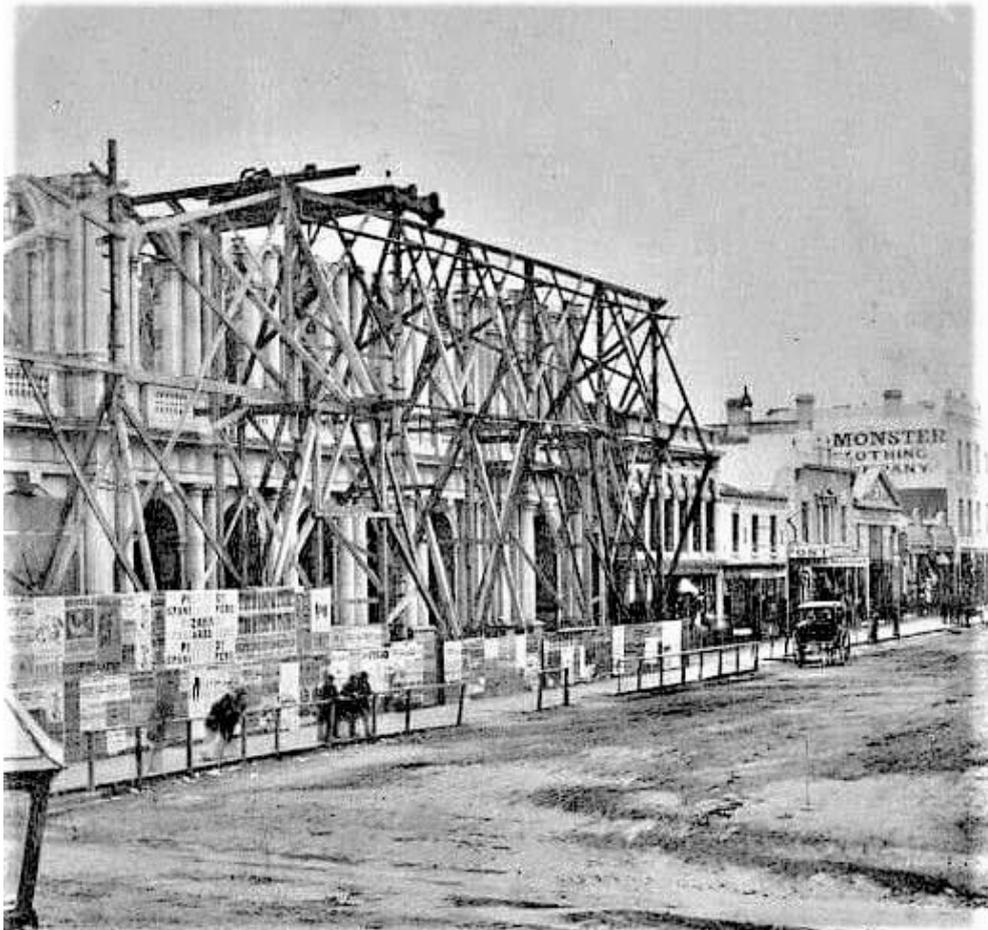
May I take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy Christmas and a happy and healthy 2020.

"will it be the Roaring Twenties?"

My thanks to you all for your support of FOCIS this year and I look forward to seeing you next year.

Particular thanks to the Committee and to members who attended meetings and working bees and to FOCIS members Jan, Jeff and Christine for their regular volunteer commitment to making Churchill Island a better place.

Thanks to you all
Happy Christmas
Graeme



A recently discovered photo of the building of Melbourne's GPO in the 1860s by Samuel Amess. The PO was completed in 1867 without a single accident occurring on the worksite.

FRIENDS OF CHURCHILL ISLAND

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING SATURDAY 9th NOVEMBER, 2019, 1.30 P.M.
AT CHURCHILL ISLAND FUNCTION ROOM, CHURCHILL ISLAND

AGENDA:

1. Welcome & Acknowledgement of Bunurong and other Aboriginal people.
2. Present: Graeme Clausen (chair), Christine Grayden, Tom O'Dea, Jeff Cole, Peter Brookes, Irene McKell, Ruth O'Dea, John Eddy, Di Scukovic, Pauline Taylor, John Ballantyne
3. Apologies: Terry Holman, Robyn Holman, Cheryl Overton
4. Report on Churchill Island activities - read by Christine for Kate Adams

From the Board of Management

Penguin Parade visitor centre redevelopment

The Board was delighted to note that most aspects of the Penguin Parade visitor centre redevelopment were nearing completion. The centre was officially opened by Premier Daniel Andrews, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio and Member for Bass Jordan Crugnale MP on 25 July, following a Community and Staff celebration on 19 July and a Stakeholder dinner on 23 July. The Board was pleased to see that visitation to the Penguin Parade and the new centre had been strong throughout August, and also noted that the Destination Phillip Island Annual Tourism Conference was the first significant external function to be successfully hosted in the new building.

The building's spectacular architectural design was also acknowledged by the Board who noted the announcement of its win at the 2019 International Architecture Awards, out of a field of over 380 submissions from 41 countries.

Annual Report

The Board approved the 2018-19 Annual Report which is due to be tabled in Parliament and then released to the public in mid to late October. The Annual Report has now been approved and will be available on our website soon.

Other information.....

Eastern Barred Bandicoot Release on French Island

Phillip Island Nature and Zoos VIC and members of the Eastern Barred Bandicoot Recovery Team successfully released a number of Eastern Barred Bandicoots onto French Island in the hope of providing a form of insurance for the survival of the Eastern Barred Bandicoot. The species recovery team determined that fox-free islands offered the greatest chance of re-establishing wild populations of the Eastern Barred Bandicoot, but these bandicoot had never been found on any Victorian islands. In 2015, a trial release managed by Phillip Island Nature Parks occurred on Churchill Island, after sustained efforts had rendered the 57-hectare island free of foxes and feral cats. That release showed that the bandicoots could live and breed well on islands. It also showed the benefits bandicoots bring to the environment, contributing to increased soil turnover and soil health through foraging for worms and beetle grubs with their long snouts.

Marketing Manager

- * Daniel Petrillo is no longer in the position of Marketing Manager for PINP
- * Jeff Sharp is heading the marketing team for a few months until a replacement is recruited.

WILD - Sand Sculpture Experience

- * Nature Parks and Sandstorm Events are working together to present a new experience at the Penguin Parade called "WILD".
- * Visitors will learn about animals, particularly threatened and endangered species from across the world through exploring over 30 different sand sculptures.
- * Sandstorm Events have commissioned leading sand sculptors from all over the world to create the sculptures.
- * Wild will run from Boxing Day through to end of April 2020 and is a paid experience.

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Interps Projects

- * Were getting very close to the completion of the shearing shed and historic machinery shed interpretative displays.
- * Thanks to Christine and others from FOCIS for their support on content development and planning for the machinery shed signs.
- * Ailsa will commence consultation with FOCIS, staff and volunteers soon on objectives for the upgrade of interps displays and signage across Churchill Island.
- * Sam Mather has finalised the heritage displays for the visitor centre and once graphic design and printing of signs has been completed we will be installing these displays.

Ocean Sounds Event

- * Planning is underway for the Ocean Sounds music event on 18th January at Churchill Island in partnership with the Hills are Alive Group.
- * The event will be similar to last year providing a family friendly event for locals and visitors.

CI Operations

- * Trev and the team are hoping to finish the paddock fencing along the main access road before peak period begins.
- * The vegie garden has been enclosed protecting this area from animals. Kate can now plan seasonal planting for the enjoyment of visitors.
- * Other capital works planned for 2019-20 are fixing the cattle crush, connecting the two water tanks retrieved from the old pods to collect water off new shed, and upgrading the power system in farm area.
- * We farewell Sam Mather in mid December as she is finishing up as Museum Curator (her next priority is to be a mum!). This position has been advertised with the intention of having a new person in the role prior to Sam's departure.

5. Minutes of last meeting 11.5.19 Di Scukovic/Peter Brookes *Carried*

6. Matters arising from last meeting: Nil.

7. President's report - Graeme Clausen

Graeme reported that he had not been in the position for long, but intended meeting with Kate Adams in the near future to discuss with her PINP expectations from FOCIS for this year.

8. Treasurer's/Membership Secretary's Report - Tom O'Dea

Tom went through the Treasurer's report for the period 1.7.19- 31.10.19 for members. A term deposit of \$8,334.23 is due soon and will be rolled over. Total in the Operating Fund is \$16,533. Total in the Heritage Fund is \$11,449. This is the tax deductible donation fund which commenced in 2016. We also have investments of \$46,872.25, of which \$30,000 was earmarked in 2009 for use when the museum is built. For the Operating Fund our income for the period was \$1,820 and expenses were \$978.

Unfortunately we are missing three boxes of Pat Baird's book "Churchill Island: History and Her Story". They may have been missing from the outset from when we collected them, so we may have to write them off. FOCIS has already covered all costs relating to this publication.

\$2,400 is to come out of the Heritage Fund and be the FOCIS contribution to the information signage for the historic farm machinery display.

"That the Treasurer's report be accepted". Tom O'Dea/Irene McKell *Carried.*

9. Membership Report - Tom O'Dea

Tom reported that membership has fallen by 22 this year. We now have 116 memberships which equates to 207 individual members.

10. Correspondence - dealt with by committee. List of inwards/outwards available.

(Curators report Page 7)

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11. General Business

a) Jeff Cole, FOCIS volunteer, reported that he has been restoring the old side saddle which Christine obtained online from the US when she was curator and was displayed with the side saddle riding outfit made and donated by Cheryl Stratford. Jeff has been gradually applying layers of special oil to soften the leather and once it is at a suitable stage he can stitch and repair the tear in the seat. The side saddle is estimated to be c. 1890.

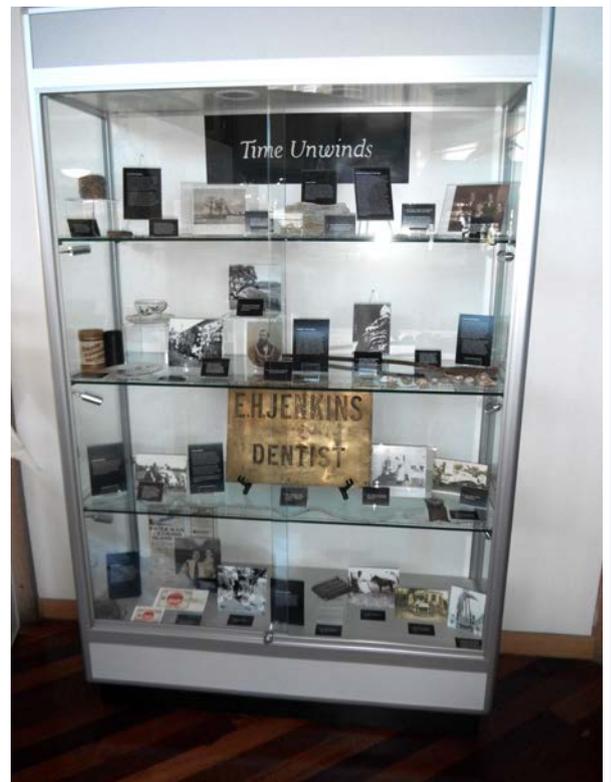
b) Jeff also reported that he has done no further work on restoring/rebuilding the coach wheels as the former curator Melissa Hayes felt they would be better left to display the different stages of wheel building.

c) Christine reported that with the moving and new installation of the model of the *Lady Nelson* in the Visitors Centre, the large glass case which FOCIS ordered and paid for to go protect the model in the dining room is no longer required. If FOCIS is prepared to write off the cost, photos and measurements can be taken and sent out to other Museum Accreditation Program museums who may wish to use it.

12. Speaker: John Eddy, FOCIS member and co-ordinator of the Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve gave a fascinating talk on the history and environment of the reserve which borders the Churchill Island Marine National Park.

13. Close and afternoon tea
Meeting closed 3.12 p.m.

Next meeting: Saturday, 8th February, 2020, 1.30 p.m., GM with speaker TBA. Function room, Churchill Island Visitors Centre.



Some displays that Sam Mather prepared for the displays in the Visitor Centre.

Our Side saddle and Mrs. Esther Stace

A few years ago our curator acquired a Side saddle to go with the riding costume on the model in the house dining room at the time. It is not in very good condition, worn and the leather badly dried out. I have begun the process of preservation and repair of the actual fabric of the saddle. It is at present in the big barn on the door to one of the horse stalls.

Mrs. Stace never rode our saddle of course, it was acquired from America.



This photo, with perfect split-second timing, captures Mrs Esther Stace as she establishes a record jump of 6' 6" (1.98metres) on Emu Plains at the Royal Easter Show in 1914.

At that time, Mrs Stace had established her reputation as a skilled and very successful horsewoman, competing at show grounds around the country for over 15 years. Emu Plains was a 12 year old brown gelding, about 16 hands high, bred by Mr Prentice of Emu Plains – hence its name –

Esther Martha Munford was born in Port Macquarie, and in 1886 she married William H Stace at Walcha, they had two sons and a daughter. Esther died at her home at Granville in July 1918; one of her obituaries reads as follows,

"Mrs Stace had been riding at most of the leading show grounds in the State for about 20 years. For Mr H D Morton she rode the champion Desmond in many of his high jumps. For Mr Judd she made a ladies' record – 6' 6' – on Emu Plains, at the Sydney Showground. Though seemingly of frail physique, Mrs Stace had surprising control over refractory and runaway mounts. She used the now old-fashioned side saddle".

Riding side saddle goes a long way back, there is a 6th century representation of a Greek god riding side saddle in the British Museum. In middle ages Europe women were depicted sitting sideways on a cushion behind a man generally. And later still some male centric nonsense was perpetrated as a reason women should, or indeed could not ride astride. However at all historic periods women did, and Catherine the Great of Russia insisted on doing it.

The more recent use of the sidesaddle was in Victorian times, "for reasons of modesty' etc..... Some Victorian women rode great distances sidesaddle however, Ella Sykes spent years in Persia in the late 1800's and rode everywhere Sidesaddle

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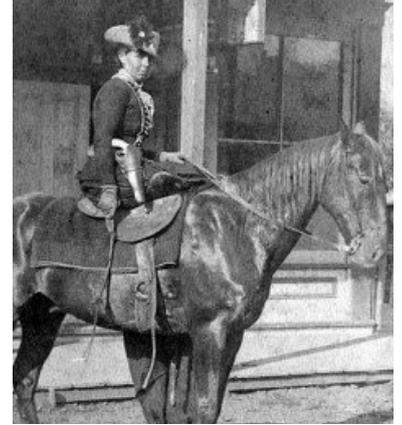
Riding side saddle goes a long way back, there is a 6th century representation on a jar of a Greek god riding sidesaddle. Sidesaddles were evidently made right and left 'legged' so to speak, and many arrangements of horns and platforms were tried. It sounds like many saddles were bespoke items as is today where they are often made for riders with an injury that disallows the normal astride position. Special sidesaddles were made for carrying particular

awkward objects like cables. Women rode sidesaddle into battle, in the Olympics and on long expeditions. There was even a US outlaw named Belle Star who robbed people riding sidesaddle and wearing velvet. They were also used for riding Zebra's Mules, Ostriches and Camels.

In more recent times you may have seen the Queen riding sidesaddle for the Trooping of the Colour parades. And a revival in the 1970's for historic and reenactment reasons.



Our American Sidesaddle,



9. Curator's Report

– read by Christine for Samantha Mather

The Farm Machinery Shed project is also nearing completion, with sign development in the final stages. The machinery is also looking wonderfully clean following the last FOCIS working bee! Again, thank you for your hardwork and amazing cleaning skills.

The only volunteer project that is currently running is the cataloging of the photographs that were sorted into albums by Lin Starke earlier in the year. Simon Eddy is working through the photographs, filling out cataloging worksheets for each. He will soon be scanning them and uploading the images and corresponding information to the Victorian Collections site, once we have received a scanner and laptop from the PINP IT department. I will aim to begin some further volunteer projects before my contract ends on December 17th. These projects will include the development of a "spotto" or treasure hunt type of activity for children, a smart phone virtual tour, and a display for the function room. Hopefully I have enough time over my remaining 5 days to set some of these up to continue after my departure!

It has been an absolute honour to be volunteer and work on Churchill Island for the past year. I have learnt many valuable skills and have been fascinated by the stories of the island's past inhabitants. I look forward to visiting with my growing family in the years to come.

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Fishers Wetland

Fisher's Wetland, a well-known destination for bird-watchers, is tucked away on the side of the access road to [Churchill Island](#), known as Samuel Amess Drive. The most exciting attraction on the island is bird-watching. The island is home to various bird species that exist naturally in their water habitat. The various water birds include geese, pelicans, black swans, ducks and purple hens. It is well worth a walk along the paths and boardwalks to see the extensive birdlife and wetland and salt marsh vegetation that supports many birds and animals that live and breed there.

Photo Ian Smissen



The Friends of Churchill Island Society
Newsletter

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