

Friends Of Churchill Island Society Inc.

# FOCIS

## NEWSLETTER

ABN 78667051020 INC. No. A 002 19007W

**August AGM 15/8/2020**

**GM 21/11/2020**

**40th birthday celebrations**

**10th October 2020.**

**Working bees:**

**Sat 12 September & Sat 14**

**November both 8 a.m.-12 noon -  
house & cottages.**

### **Phillip Island Nature Parks temporarily closes its doors**

In light of the rapidly changing situation, and in order to help contain the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19), the Nature Parks Board has made the very difficult decision to temporarily close the Penguin Parade, Koala Conservation Reserve, Antarctic Journey and Churchill Island, effective from Monday 23 March.

We have been committed to ensuring the safety of our visitors, staff and community since the commencement of this global outbreak, and as you know last week we reduced maximum numbers allowed at the outdoor viewing areas of the Penguin Parade to less than 500, and we had also made significant changes to the operation of the visitor centre so that we could maintain less than 100 people indoors.

Upon further consideration of the risk posed to staff and visitors coming together in all of our venues, the Board made the decision to temporarily close in order to offer the greatest protection to our visitors and staff from close contact.

The decision to temporarily close the Penguin Parade especially has not been made lightly, as it has been an important part of the local community for nearly 100 years, and has been at the centre of holiday plans for generations of Victorian families.

We are critically aware however of the need to play our part in managing the safety of our staff, our visitors, those in our community who are most vulnerable, and the wider community, so this is clearly the right decision.

## Letter from our President

Hello Members

Dear FOCIS members, due to the COVID 19 pandemic, all Phillip Island Nature Parks venues are closed until the government gives the 'all-clear'.. All Nature Parks volunteer operations have been suspended until the COVID19 pandemic has abated. Therefore we will have no working bees and our May 9 General Meeting is postponed.

This year F.O.C.I.S. celebrates **40 years**. Over this time we have made many valuable contributions to the Island and are still doing so. We are planning an afternoon celebration at Churchill Island for Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2020. Put this event in your Diary. (More details later). A joint Nature Parks and FOCIS get-together will also take place later in the year and all members are invited to both events.

We have had a meeting with PINP staff Kate Adams (Visitor Experience Manager), Ben Driscoll (Manager Operations) and curator Samantha Happè, which was very productive, and we plan to meet every 3 months. If you have any concerns or suggestions please let us know and we will pass them on.

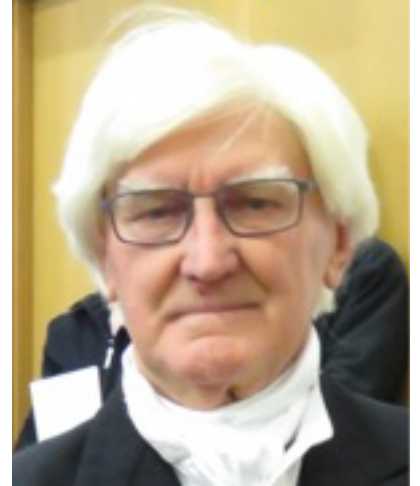
Subject to finances, or grants acquisition, joint projects between the Nature Parks and FOCIS for 2020-21 include:

- Raising the roof on Pedro's Shed (near George the cockie's enclosure) for extra display space of machinery items, e.g. stationary engines and gristers from Amess Barn.
- Conservation assessment on the "Blue Wagon" and a possible move to Pedro's Shed and carrying out some conservation or restoration work.
- Amess Barn: major revamp of display once engines/gristers are removed and space is available.

Historic Farm Machinery signage: final draft has been reviewed and is to be finalised by the graphic artist then sent to the printer. My thanks go to all members and donors who contributed to this project, and to members Wilf Dungan and Jeff Cole for their technical input on the operation of the horse-drawn machines.

Look after yourselves and best wishes during this time of self-isolation. Remember there is always something to read about our beautiful little island on our website or Facebook page.

*Graeme Clausen*



FRIENDS OF CHURCHILL ISLAND  
MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING SATURDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2020, 1.30 P.M.  
AT CHURCHILL ISLAND FUNCTION ROOM, CHURCHILL ISLAND

**AGENDA:**

1. Welcome & Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, the Bunurong/Boonwurrung people, and pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in our community today.

Terry welcomed all members especially immediate past president David Maunders and long-term members Michael and Edwina Tampion who were attending their first FOCIS meeting.

2. Present: Terry Holman (chair), Christine Grayden, Tom O'Dea, Pauline Taylor, Jeff Cole, John Eddy, Margaret Geppert, David Maunders, Michael Tampion, Edwina Tampion, Di Scukovic, Robyn Holman, Lee Tierney, Jan Fleming

3. Apologies: Peter and Ann Jelly, Susan Pearse, Graeme Clauscen.

4. Report on PINP/Churchill Island activities - read by Christine for Kate Adams

Churchill Island

- Sam Happe has started as the new Museum Curator - Sam is focusing on the cleaning, collection management, and supporting volunteers. - Machinery shed interps - Jodi has sent through first round of proofs for review. CC Signs are across the works. Once signs are approved installation will only take a day. We expect this to be completed by end of February 2020.

- Interps Project (garden, buildings, farm and walking track) - Ailsa has developed the project plan and has commenced consultation with staff. She will consult FOCIS on the plan including themes, key messages and types of interps we want in the heritage precinct. We are currently recruiting for an intern student to assist Ailsa with content development for this project so that Sam Happe can concentrate on key duties as mentioned above.

- The modifications to the roof on shearing shed are completed and the last section of interps can now be installed.

- Work on automating the gate at the bridge will be undertaken in the next 6 months as part of the bio-security plan to keep foxes and cats off the island.

- The final stage of fencing will commence shortly.

- Attendance to the Ocean Sounds event was less than last year due to impacts on tourism and smoke in the air from bushfires. Those that did attend enjoyed the day.

Organisation wide

- Management structure - In November 2019, Catherine announced the following changes to the senior management team:

1. Damian Prendergast has resigned from the role of Major Projects Manager - this position no longer exists and these functions will be managed by a Procurement and Projects Officer.

2. Paul Sandells has resigned from the role of Chief Operating Officer

3. A review of the Chief Operating Officer position was undertaken and a replacement role of General Manager - Tourism Operations was identified. This role will now look after the 3 departments critical to tourism operations: Commercial (retail, admissions and F&B), Operations and Visitor Experience. This role will also oversee the Procurement and Projects Officer.

4. The Conservation Manager will now report directly to the CEO

We are currently recruiting for the following positions: Marketing Manager, General Manager - Tourism Operations, and a Procurement and Projects Officer.



# FOCIS

- Nature Parks is taking preventative measures in response to the current Coronavirus threat. You will see health advice posters in all staff and public toilets, hand sanitiser in staff and public areas including where there is interaction with animals, we are providing face masks to staff and public, and have implemented additional sanitising duties as part of daily cleaning schedules. We're also keeping informed regularly from advice by the World Health Organisation and providing updates to staff.

- Nature Parks are providing support to the wildlife response effort for the Victorian bushfires. We have already taken in 3 koalas at the Koala Reserve that need to be cared for as part of their recovery and trained staff are being deployed to Mallacoota and Orbost to help at triage centres. We're also undertaking a number of activities to support the communities affected including a workplace giving program to support the Victorian Bushfire Appeal and Wildlife Victoria. For the month of February \$1 for every ticket sold to the Koala Reserve will go to Wildlife Victoria and once the bushfire emergency has passed, we will be offering a Nature Parks experience to all of our sites free of charge to bring some much needed cheer to those directly affected.

### Impact on visitation from bushfires and Coronavirus

- We recorded good visitation between Christmas Day and New Years day but numbers have certainly dropped off since then. The Chinese market remained steady up to the announcement of the outbreak, we experienced gradual decline over the first 2 weeks and are now seeing major decline in tour groups and self-drive due to border closure and flight cancellations.

### What's happening

- Nature Parks was selected to take part in an national tourism industry focus group to identify actions to combat the effects on international markets
- Our Marketing team is currently developing actions to promote Phillip Island to key domestic markets however this market is heavily saturated on media at present.
- We are talking to tour operators about how we can get them back to the Island including to Koala Reserve and Churchill Island
- We have a number of activities happening in response to Bushfires - provided in first update

At this stage we'll continue to monitor visitation, implement actions for international and domestic markets, and hope that both the bushfires and Coronavirus settle and we can look forward to a healthy Easter peak period.

5. Minutes of last meeting 9.11.19 "That the minutes of 9.11.2019 be accepted." Di Scukovic/John Eddy *Carried.*

### 6. Matters arising from last meeting:

Historic farm machinery shed project: FOCIS has received first proofs for the signage. Committee has looked at these on the laptop today and Christine will forward them on to provide suggestions. Completed signage should be in place by the end of February.

### 7. President's report - Graeme Clausen

I apologise for my absence today as I have family commitments. Thanks to Terry for standing in for me. Firstly I would to say we are all very sad at the devastation caused by bushfires and our thoughts go out to those who suffered tragic loss.

Our work has continued since our last Meeting with my thanks to Christine, Tom and Ruth and others for their efforts during this time. I had a meeting with Kate Adams in December which was productive and informative.

One of the items raised was a Social Event for FOCIS members to get together, get to know each other and catch up. Kate wants to include PINP staff and a speaker, but that would likely be a separate event.

Christine & I will be meeting with Kate on Tues 11 Feb for further discussions and if there are any items you would like us to raise please let us know.

# FOCIS

Another item of concern is the cleanliness of the House. Since Pat is no longer volunteering to clean we seem to be going backward. Sam the Curator only works 1 day a week and does not have time to do all that is needed. Christine has found time to do some work in the house and I thank her for this.

Everyone stay safe and look after each other during this difficult time. Best wishes to you all

Graeme Clausen

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

Tom reported that at the end of the December 2019 quarter, FOCIS had total assets of \$55,626 and liabilities of \$39,538 (museum reserve). Net assets of \$27,765 comprising Operating Fund: \$16,088 and the Heritage Fund \$11,677. For the last quarter we have had \$349.85 worth of donations to the donations box in the Amess House dining room, and member donations of \$365.37. The \$2400 which FOCIS is donating towards the cost of the historic farm machinery signage will be the first expenditure from our Heritage Fund.

\$39,538.02 currently invested in 6 month term deposit will be rolled over on 20 February 2020.

Membership fell by 16 to 122 memberships, which equals a total of 218 members.

"That the treasurer's/membership secretary's reports be accepted" Tom O'Dea/Pauline Taylor *Carried*.

Terry Holman (chair) thanked Tom for the helpful way in which he presents the financial reports to us

## 9. Curator's Report - read by Christine for Samantha Happé (see page 6)

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

## 11. General Business

a) Tom reported that he and Ruth have been working on the payment section of the FOCIS website and have introduced payment by Stripe to make it easier for people to pay for membership subscriptions and donations with a credit or debit card. It is only a one-step process to pay with Stripe (with only 4 data items to be entered by the user), whereas it is a 3-step process to pay by PayPal (with 15 data items to be entered by the user if paying by credit card or debit card), which may have been putting members off making their membership payments in the past. PayPal is still available on the website.

b) Matters to be raised with Kate Adams and Ben Driscoll (operations) for meeting Tuesday Feb 11:

- house and cottages not being cleaned.

- Joint PINP/FOCS social day. Both groups to share catering costs.

- FOCIS 40th birthday celebration proposed date 10.10.2020

- FOCIS wish list: raising roof of Pedro's shed and use for displays; conservation assessment and cover over blue wool wagon near Shearing Shed and possible restoration; Amess Barn - remove at least one grister/stationary engine and create decent display of tools and wagon wheels.

- Curator's role aligned with National Standards for Museums and Galleries, not a cleaner.c) FOCIS 40th birthday celebrations: 10th October 2020 (TBC) - entertainment, historic precinct quiz with prizes, afternoon tea, display of photos, a few members sharing with us their recollections of FOCIS activities over the years.

12. Christine Grayden gave a talk about the life of Gerald Buckley, owner of Churchill Island 1929-35

13. Close and afternoon tea.

## FOCIS WEBSITE CO-ORDINATOR SOUGHT

Are you tech savvy? Would you like to contribute to FOCIS but unable to attend any of our working bees or meetings?

You can still help FOCIS in your own time and home by taking on the role of updating and 'tidying up' our website, which is now almost 10 years old and needs some TLC. Content and support provided.

If you are interested, please contact Tom O'Dea on [webmaster@focis.org.au](mailto:webmaster@focis.org.au)

## Curator's Report

Samantha Happe

Hello members of FOCIS. My name is Samantha Happé and I'm the new Curator at Churchill Island, replacing the other Samantha. I'll just start by briefly introducing myself before I launch headfirst into what I've been up to.

I came to art history through a slightly circuitous route. My first two degrees were in radiation therapy and dosimetry, and I trained up in Brisbane before working in Ballarat and then Canberra. In 2014, I began to pursue art history and curatorship - something I had always wanted to study but was told it would never lead to a job or could be a career. I graduated with first class Honours from ANU in a Bachelors of Art History and Curatorship at the end of 2017, with my honours thesis looking at the Persian influences in a nineteenth-century French jeweller's work. During my degree, I interned within both the National Gallery of Australia and the National Portrait Gallery where I learned a lot about translating my theoretical knowledge into a more practical sphere.

In 2018 I married my husband and we promptly took off overseas for our honeymoon which ended up being 18 months and took us overland from Portugal to Kyrgyzstan via 40 countries. We returned to Melbourne and I started working here some months later. I am enrolled in a PhD program at the University of Melbourne for art history.

I have been working here at Churchill Island since December, and have been busy with familiarising myself with the collection, meeting everybody, and the endless cycle of cleaning. From a practical point of view, I have begun a comprehensive museum registry complete with room plans and detailed location codes, updating the catalogue, retagging and organising our collection. I am starting to develop a small exhibition of pictures within the function space - more details to come on that!

*"NOTE: Sam is currently working from home, cataloguing and scanning Churchill Island's photograph collection, following on from the start made previously by volunteer Simon Eddy. Due to COVID 19 there are no volunteers on Churchill Island until the Nature Parks informs us we are able to return. Sam looks forward to the resumption of FOCIS volunteers contributing to collection care when possible."*



## Gerald Buckley - life and times

by Christine Grayden

Owned Churchill Island 1929-1936

Gerald Buckley was born 1856 at "Beaulieu" mansion, Heyington Place, Toorak to Mars Buckley (of Buckley & Nunn Emporium) and Elizabeth Maroon (nee Neville). Gerald Buckley was educated at Melbourne Grammar School where he excelled at all sports, especially boxing and rowing, and played in both the football and cricket teams in the late 1870s. He continued to box after he left school. Later he became a boxing judge and referee, and judged the Australian Heavyweight title fight at the notorious Cyclorama in Fitzroy in front of 6,000 people in 1906. He didn't have much to do as after a two hour wait by the crowd, the fight was all over in two minutes through a knock out!

Following in his father Mars's footsteps Gerald was an outstanding rider. Mars would often get up at 4 or 5 a.m. to ride, and always rode to hounds every Saturday. It is probable that Gerald joined him in these pursuits. In adult life Gerald bred hunters, and regularly hunted with hounds and was known as a fearless rider, "whose pluck and elan in the hunting field are proverbial."



# FOCIS

Gerald was highly competitive and one of those men who had to be "top dog" at everything he took on. Of course he had the financial means to put his wishes into action. In 1883 he bought the 28,000 acre property "Narrapumelap" for £95,000 and made it his home for the rest of his life, although it was only one of numerous properties he bought, sold or kept over his life.

Gerald loved thoroughbreds. Their fiery nature appealed to him. He loved racing them, using them for riding and as a pair in his carriage, and, from 1921, breeding them and watching the foals and brood mares graze. He happily paid up to 14,000 guineas for the right stallion, and 2,000 guineas for the right mare. He also had Clydesdale and Standardbred stallions standing at stud at Narrapumelap.

Apart from boxing, Gerald had several other sporting passions which we would now consider with horror. One was 'coursing' - the racing of greyhounds to catch a live hare. Another of his horrible passions and which he loved the most, was big-game hunting. He went on shooting safaris in Africa at least three times, paying large sums for all the expenses of a group of shooting friends to accompany him. Once at his destination in Africa, he hired a professional hunter and used 80-90 African porters whom he fed by shooting large numbers of game.

\*\*Gerald would often go well ahead of the rest of the shooting party, and when the Africans herded animals towards him, be they lions, rhinoceros, zebra or deer, he would stand his ground until the animal was 30 metres from him and then unerringly shoot a fatal shot. The African porters would then have to tie the animal to a pole and carry it back to camp, cut off the head and take that to where it could be transported to England to be turned into yet another trophy for Gerald by the famous taxidermist firm of Rowland Ward in Piccadilly. The walls of the billiard room and hall of Narrapumelap were full of his trophy heads and the floors were covered with skins.

Apart from breeding horses and dogs, Gerald had a vision for Narrapumelap to become the top Merino fine wool station in the Western District. He bought Narrapumelap in 1884. In the first six months of Gerald's occupation, trappers killed 21,000 rabbits plus gassed tens of thousands more in their warrens.

Gerald spared no expense in buying top Merino rams and ewes, improving the pasture, employing the innovative Meredith Hope Johnstone as his long-term station manager and buying the best of modern equipment for the farm workers to use. By 1900 Gerald had 27,000 top quality Merino sheep on the 28,000 acres of Narrapumelap.

*To be continued*

## Additional Payment Method

The Society is pleased to announce that we now have an additional payment method available on the FOCIS web site for membership subscriptions and donations.

This makes it much easier for users to pay using their Credit Card or Debit Card.

This action was taken because we found that some users were having problems when trying to make an online payment via PayPal. It's not too bad if the user already has a PayPal account but many people do not have a PayPal account and don't wish to have one. All they want to do is to pay by credit card or debit card.

In summary:

1. Instead of a 3-step process with PayPal, the user only has to perform 1 step.
2. Instead of the user having to enter 15 pieces of information to make a credit card or debit card payment via PayPal, the user only needs to enter 4 pieces of information. We are using Stripe to handle the Credit Card/ Debit Card payments: <https://stripe.com/au>

However, the only time you will see any reference to Stripe is when you receive a payment confirmation email from them when your Credit Card/Debit Card payment has been processed.

The PayPal option is still there for those people who prefer to pay using their PayPal account.

Look for these options when renewing your membership online or making an online donation.

Please get in touch if you have any questions or concerns: [treasurer@focis.org.au](mailto:treasurer@focis.org.au)

Tom O'Dea, Treasurer



### Nature's collage, 20 million years in the making

Volcanic ash (tuf), lava extrusions, algae, seaweed, tidal debris, sand, Mallee mud from a dust storm and rain, shells, Sea Berry (Rhagodia Candollea), Samfire Crithmum Maritimum). Sea Lice, bottle caps, a bird bone and feather, And a few things I missed, there's a few ants in there as well.

(Southern end of the Churchill Island shore)



The Friends of Churchill Island Society  
Newsletter

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