



FOCIS

newsletter

Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.

SPRING 2002

Dear Readers,

On the 1st August I was visiting our island and already it seemed like the end of winter.

Once again I was bowled over by this wondrous, magical place. I was reminded of a friend who lives on one of the Bass Strait Isles who was visited (!) by some evangelists extolling the joys of being admitted at the gates of heaven. She looked at them and exclaimed "Heaven! Look around you! I live in heaven! I'm here!"

That's what it's like coming here on one of those still winter's days when the sea is silvered and the puffy little clouds float across the sky. The hills are gauzed with misty winter light cloud shadows darken the hills briefly then slip gently into the sea and this soft surrounding boundary circles the bay from hill to slope to flat to rounded French Island embracing Churchill Island in its stillness. It makes me feel that this is how the world is meant to be with the cattle munching contentedly, and the chooks pecking at the ground and not a breath of breeze to disturb the leaves, or the air, or a person's soul.

Now I must shake myself back to reality with lots to report in this newsletter, but first of all I have a little gem to share with you. I think it was handed to me by Barbara Stephens during the WHF thanks Barbara. It is an extract from an article published in the South Bourke and Mornington Journal of 1878. (Later, the Dandenong Journal) and it is titled "A Holiday Tour Through Phillip Island and its Surroundings." By Nemo.

On Monday I was driven to the nearest point to Churchill Island where raising a fire in the usual ship wrecked seaman's style, a boat was sent over and I landed, and was received by Mr S. Amess, 'the King of the Island' in his usual homely style. Of course, after whiskies and a rest, I was constrained to join mine host in a rabbit shooting excursion and found them so plentiful that they were jumping up from almost every tussock of grass and the slaughter amongst them was according to baillie Nicol Jarvie, 'prodigious'.

Mr Amess's house is not only a very good one but also is prettily situated in both flower and fruit gardens and has every accommodation that could be possibly wished for, even to a billiard room with a dining/billiard table.

To keep the rabbits out he has to put a close wire fence all around the gardens.

After partaking of a first class dinner, spread with



boundless hospitality, I took a stroll with 'the King' to admire his 'Kyro' cows, costly sheep, and well bred horses, shortly after which I regretfully took leave of Churchill Island and its jovial 'King' and returned to my cosy roost at Bauers at about seven o'clock. (Isle of Wight Hotel).

Before signing off, please check out later in this newsletter Date for Garden Party for new Committee Members; the introduction of a Farmers Market; our new constitution; and finally our very best wishes to Jim and Barbara Stephens. Get well soon Jim.

With regards from your Editorial Committee (re elected for another year!) Jocelyn Bradley and Pat Baird. 59569478



Ranger's Report:

Visitors will have observed the Wetland extension being created at Fisher's. A bird hide has been constructed using tea tree fencing and panels where watchers may see waterbirds. Planting of 3,000 poa grasses and 2,000 native trees species is to commence shortly to complete the landscaping of this important wetland.

Down by the stables we have constructed a hen house using materials from the old toilet block. A long run has also been built using bush poles and chicken wire. The duck pond has been installed within this run. Also the foundations for the new machine shed and hay shed are in place. Construction on these buildings commenced at the end of July.

We are all glad to see the Cannon back in its rightful place after a full restoration job. It is looking very handsome and is a constant temptation for small boys to climb upon.

A sudden explosion in the black rat population has made a baiting programme necessary and this has been in place for many weeks. The removal of the rats will make more successful, the introduction of native animals back to the island.

The Ayrshire heifers have both had calves - 1 bull and 1 heifer. They are both to the highland bull.

In the last newsletter I mentioned that we had a visiting draught horse called Bonnie on loan for a time. Bonnie is now available for purchase and we are fortunate to be able to obtain her for \$2500, including collar, hames and winker set. Bonnie, together with Sophie and Lolly have been out pulling the big wagon and went particularly well.

Does anyone know where we can get onto an old Pianola. We are willing to pay for it or happy with a donation of course.

Scott Campbell. Head Ranger.



PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT 2001/2002

FOCIS has had a busy and successful year. The highlight in the last twelve months has been of course, the Working Horse Festival. The opening of the new visitor center seems to have led to more members attending meetings, which is great.

Other matters dealt with have been an application for tax deductability, a new constitution drafted and ratified, A Statement of Purposes for the Society has been prepared by Diane McCarthy and we have had our usual bi monthly meetings with Phillip Island Nature Park to exchange information.

FOCIS would like to express its appreciation to all volunteers. Particular thanks are extended to volunteer guides, gardeners in the farm precinct, and the design and making of iron work barriers to Amess House rooms (Ron Hocking).

The Working Horse Festival's success was due in no small part to the participation of so many volunteers. We do most profoundly appreciate the time and effort put in by every individual and we mention just a few: Phillip Island Adventure Resort; Sunny Crust Bakeries; PINP for passes; Bass Coast Shire for its grant; Sally O'Neill for assistance with grant writing; Terry Holman for donation of time and food; Hillies Meats fantastic help with sausages. Special thanks to PINP especially Senior Ranger Scott Campbell and Marketing Executive Annabel McDougall. Your work was invaluable. You are all marvelous!

The following office bearers were re elected unopposed at the AGM and Ordinary Committee Members for 2002/2003 are as listed below. (Up to 20 including representatives of the Phillip Island Conservation Society, The Phillip Island & district Historical Society, the Friends of the Koalas Society.)

President: Ann Penaluna (5956 9302)

Vice-President: Keith Hocking (5821 9189)

Treasurer: Roger Hollingworth

Secretary: Jan Fleming

Membership Secretary: Diane Mc Carthy (5956 8300)

Committee Members: Pat Baird, Jocelyn Bradley, Chesterman Chalmers, Jill Fitzroy-Kelly, Joy Gladman, Neil Gladman, David Graves, Brian Rawlins, Diane Rawlins,

Barbara Stephens, Maureen Symmonds, Cherry McFee (Hist.Soc.), Julie Box (Conserv.Soc), Jan Beales (Fr.of Koalas)

Working Together: FOCIS appreciates the representation on its Committee from The Friends of Koalas Society Inc., The Phillip Island and District Historical Society Inc. and the Conservation Society of Phillip Island. Much is achieved and information is exchanged when we work together.

Peter Royce retired from Committee during the year. Peter's short but dynamic contributions have been of great value. His wisdom and advice is appreciated. We thank him sincerely, and wish him all the very best.

Pauline Taylor has submitted her resignation because of her other heavy commitments. FOCIS thanks Pauline for her contributions, especially to the newsletter in previous years, and voluntary tree planting and festival work.

Current Membership: Four hundred and sixty (460) members are shown up to 2002. Eighty-nine of those listed have not been financial since 1999 or earlier.

**Paid up in 2002: 357; Paid up to 2001: 66;
Paid up to 2000: 37;**

FOCIS is reluctant to discontinue posting newsletters to non-current financial members. Please check your membership card for currency. One six-page newsletter costs (including postage) between six and seven hundred dollars. FOCIS would be grateful for receipt of this year's subscription from non-current financial members. All subscriptions are due January 1st each year. Time to catch up!

A New Constitution for FOCIS: The introduction of a new draft Constitution at this Annual General Meeting marks a significant step for our Society. Roger Hollingworth, Diane McCarthy, and Cherry McFee have prepared a sound draft document for your consideration and ratification. The draft represents the FOCIS role and function in partnership with the Phillip Island Nature Park, which is responsible for Churchill Island.

This coming year marks a new era for The Friends of Churchill Island Society. We are keen and our membership continues to expand. All in all, it augurs well for the coming year 2002/2003. My heartfelt thanks to members of the Committee, who so sincerely care for Churchill Island and its future and to our 'unsung' members who so ably undertake volunteer work which ensures the ongoing successful preservation of our precious island.

Ann Penaluna

Following the AGM, Phillip Island Nature Park member Ian Weir gave an excellent address with overheads on the Proposed Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere. The Biosphere is an exciting major project presently awaiting approval from UNESCO. It has received support at local, state and federal levels of government. The potential for Phillip Island and Churchill Island is in respect to the triple bottom line social capital, environmental sustainability and economic value.



From Sally O'Neill - Project Officer:

Despite my 'remote' posting at Koala Conservation Centre (and all over the countryside!) I have still kept in touch with some Churchill Island projects including Fishers Land wetland and the volunteer guiding program. Here's a snapshot of what's been going on from my perspective:

Guiding Program: All FOCIS members should say a big thank you for the wonderful work of our small, but dedicated, team of volunteer guides who have brought warmth to the Historic Area this winter.

The guides, dressed in period costume, add to our visitor's experience. They have also been seen churning butter in an original churn and writing secret letters with a feather quill.

We recently held a guide get together where I presented a short (well I thought it was short!) presentation about the history of Churchill Island. We also discussed issues and had morning tea together. Our next 'excursions' are to meet the volunteers of Coal Creek and the State Coal Mine in Wonthaggi. See what you are missing out on by not being a guide?!

Guides are crucial for security and interpretation in the historic areas and we urgently need more guides to offer a day a fortnight or month to ensure the Historic Area is protected and interpreted. You don't have to know everything or take formal tours - you can just add a presence to the area for security and enjoyment of visitors. Please consider a small donation of time. If you are interested, call 5956 7214 to register your name and we will get back to you.

Events Program: There will be a reduced Events Season in 2003. The main events being the fabulous Working Horse Festival and the Newhaven Food and Wine Festival. This change has a good reason behind it because Working Horse Festival is growing so much, that we want to concentrate most of our efforts on its ongoing success.

New Signage: After over two years of research and writing, several new signage trails will soon be installed. Signs have been written and designed for the Historic Area, walking track around Churchill Island and Fishers Wetland. The signs interpret the natural and cultural importance of the area and have been designed to link in with new seats made of the old bridge timbers.

Wadjil'garook: The restoration project at Fishers Land has been a joint project with members of the Bunurong Aboriginal community. Signage in this area interprets Bunurong Aboriginal culture of the place they call Wadjil'garook which literally means 'pelican estuary'.

Moonah Sculpture: An exciting part of the joint project with the Bunurong community is a sculpture being made by talented local artist, Camille Monet. The sculpture depicts a moment in a sacred Bunurong legend about Moonah trees. The model has just been approved by the Bunurong community and Camille will begin working on the final product in the near future. You can view Camille's work at www.camillemonet.com

Oral History Project: Phillip Island Nature Park Board of Management recently approved my proposal for money to fund a small oral history project. This involves video recording stories of people who have a connection with Churchill Island for archival purposes. We also hope to include some stories in visitor centre displays. A copy of the finished digital video will be given to Phillip Island and District Historical Society and State Library of Victoria. If you have a nomination for a person for this project, please let me know.

Museum Accreditation: The arduous task of achieving Museum Accreditation continues.. We have obtained our computer cataloguing system and, with the help of volunteers have loaded it and begun entering objects. Several Volunteer Positions opportunities exist to assist with this process when it is up and running. See full advertisement in this issue.



(Photo courtesy James Lauritz & Scancolor)

GRANT'S Camp

You may be standing on the site of Victoria's first documented European building.

A party under the command of Lt. James GRANT landed on Churchill Island on March 28 1801. Over the next few weeks, GRANT had his men clear a spot for a garden and construct a blockhouse measuring 24ft x 12 ft. Although documented, the exact site has never been found. Journal entries and charts indicate that this southwest corner of the island was a probable landing site for GRANT and his men.



Artist's impression of Lt. GRANT's blockhouse on Churchill Island.

Illustration - Geoffrey INGELTON
Source - Ingleton Estate

A sample of one of the new signs on the Island Loop walk on Churchill Island (courtesy Sally O'Neill)

And another thing...

- We are working to increase security options for Amess House. Whilst this is an important task, we are happy to report that nothing has been stolen or damaged since the house opened to the public in December 1999.
- Rumour has it that there will be a story about Churchill Island in the October issue of Country Style Magazine...
- We recently received a donation of a cedar chest from Edith Jeffrey who lived on the island in about 1930. The chest was in the house from the era of Samuel Amess' ownership and was given to Edith by Gerald Buckley. It has now returned home to Amess House. Thank you Edith...
- Did you know that our Churchill Island gardener Lisa Burrell is also an artist? She recently opened an exhibition of works titles 'Horseworks' at the 'J Bar' in Cowes. The exhibition runs until Sunday September 8th. 'J Bar' is upstairs at the Jetty Restaurant.

Sally O'Neill Project Officer

And also, about the Farmers Markets

WHAT A Farmers Market run by Victorian Farmers Markets Pty Ltd. It sells home-grown produce including fruit and vegetables, jams, honey and organic poultry. There will be about 30 stalls. There will be no bric a brac or craft.

WHERE Held outside of Visitor Centre, near the bus park. Entry will be free and temporary fencing will be erected to stop patrons entering the Historic Area without a ticket.

WHEN Fourth Saturday of every month
Sept 28th from 8am 1pm

WHO These Farmers markets are also held at Drouin, Koonwarra and Lang Lang. All welcome!!!



From Lisa in the Garden.

Hi everyone! Winter well and truly came to us this year... luckily I was able to take some time off and went to sunny Queensland for a couple of weeks! There is really not much to report about the garden as it is the time when growth is slowed and most plants are dormant. The jonquils and snowdrops are out at the moment and the camellias do their thing when days are bleak.

Before I went away I planted 12 heritage roses in the Rogers Cottage garden. They were bought from The Scented Garden at the Briars on the Mornington Peninsula and they should be spectacular in spring/summer. This spring season will be fantastic as the garden is really coming together with a lot of TLC!

The new chook shed is up under the cypress trees near the stable and has some very contented chooks in it... they will provide eggs for the visitor centre.

See you in the garden. Lisa.

And yes indeed, we hope we do see you in the garden on Saturday 26th October when the FOCIS office bearers will hold a Garden Party at 2.30pm to welcome the new committee and to view the garden at its best. Let's hope it is a fine spring day for us. Please r.s.v.p. at reception in the Visitor Centre at Churchill Island by October 12th, 5956 7214 if you intend to come.



(Photo courtesy James Lauritz & Scancolor)



Personality Profile:

In this issue we are talking to Jane McAlpine who manages the busy kitchen in the café. Jane previously worked at the Penguin Parade and when the Churchill Island position came up, she jumped at the chance having always had a passionate interest in food, its quality, its presentation and its attractiveness.

Her work keeps her very busy but Jane and her partner have recently bought a small acreage in the hills beyond Archies Creek where they will follow their other passion which is restoring indigenous plants to the land.

Jane propagates and grows on plants from seed provided by landholders from their own land, to promote the restoration of the bush environment. This of course not only benefits the land visually, but supports birds and other creatures in providing suitable habitat for them.

Jane like many of the dedicated staff at Phillip Island Nature Park, hopes that some time in the future she will have more time to return to such activities as the Penguin Study group and other similar projects fostered by the Nature Park, but for now her main focus is on providing us with organically grown and in-house prepared foods of the highest quality.

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FOCIS Members:

Staff have requested that Focis members make sure they have their current membership cards with them at all times when visiting Churchill Island and that they show them at the desk on arrival. This will make it much easier for them to monitor who has and has not paid. Thank you.

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

Churchill Island Collection Management

Opportunities exist for volunteers to assist with the management of the 'Churchill Collection' of objects on Churchill Island.

Duties include:

- Recording of information
- Data entry onto file and computer
- Tagging of objects
- Digital photography of objects.

If you could assist with one or more of these tasks, please call Sally O'Neill on 0408 101 976.

123 YOUR BUNCH OF DATES:

456 21st September, 2002 1.00pm, Education Room Churchill Island Visitor Centre.

26th October, 2002, 2.30pm FOCIS Garden Party to welcome new Committee.

23rd November, 2002, 1.00pm, Education Room Churchill Island Visitor Centre.

18th January, 2003. 1.00pm, Education Room Churchill Island Visitor Centre.

(Note change from fourth Saturday)

22nd March, 2003. 1.00pm, Education Room Churchill Island Visitor Centre.

24th May, 2003. 1.00pm, Education Room Churchill Island Visitor Centre.

26th July, 2003. After AGM.

Please note new admittance charges:

\$19.00 per family, \$7.70 adults,

\$5.00 concession, \$3.70 child.

(Group discounts available)

FOCIS discounts applicable as previously.



(Photo courtesy James Lauritz & Scancolor)

FRIENDS OF CHURCHILL ISLAND SOCIETY INC.

To: Secretary FOCIS, PO Box 852 COWES 3922, Vic. Aust.

Name

YEAR

Address

Postcode

Phone: Home Business

Email

Membership is from 1st January to 31st December **ADULT \$15** **FAMILY \$25** **CONCESSION \$10**

Able to volunteer

In the Garden

As a Guide

Doing Restoration

I understand that a current FOCIS membership entitles me to:-

Visit Churchill Island any time during opening hours plus discount for special events.

Visit **Penguin Parade** and **Koala Conservation Centre**

during opening hours 4 times a year for ongoing members and 2 times a year for new members,

10% discount for accompanying visitors, 10% discount on food and souvenirs.

Participate in Churchill Island Projects.

N.B. Membership card is not transferable.

If elected as a FOCIS member, I agree to abide by the Society's Rules as laid down in its Constitution.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please Enrol/Renew a FOCIS Membership for



(Photo courtesy James Lauritz & Scancolor)



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SPRING 2002



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