



# FOCIS

newsletter

Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.

SPRING 2008



**We bring you this Spring Newsletter with sad news. One week after the AGM we learned of the death of our Vice President Keith Hocking. Pat Baird has kindly written the following article:**

In the early 1980s Keith Hocking was introduced to Churchill Island by his friend Vic Harris. It was to be the beginning of a long and committed association to Churchill Island which had recently been purchased by the Victorian Conservation Trust for the people of Victoria. The purchase of Churchill Island led to a surge of public interest from people eager to take part in its maintenance and restoration.

However, the island was severely underfunded and much needed to be done. Friends of Churchill Island Society (FOCIS) was formed in 1980 and became the island's volunteer base.

I would like to quote from Carroll Schulz (letter to FOCIS dated August 1996): "I have been constantly reminded of the core of FOCIS families of the 80s who were bonded together by the work and enjoyment of Churchill Island. Without their efforts, and those of VCT Sponsors it would not have been possible to have achieved so much with so little cash!"

Early volunteers were Keith Hocking and his family. Keith brought to his volunteering great energy and enthusiasm. Over the years he and his family were active in innumerable projects including restoration, maintenance (machinery and buildings) re-vegetation, fencing, re-instatement of the bath house and indeed far too many others to mention.

Over the next decade many projects were carried out but Keith's dream was to have a Working Horse Festival. He badgered, cajoled and was a force majeure in bringing this to fruition. He brought to the concept great networking skills in contacting and involving those invaluable participants with working horses and display farm machinery. Keith's drive and enthusiasm and knowledge combined to enthuse others in FOCIS to take the leap and run our first Working Horse Festival.

It was an unqualified success and has continued to be so right up to the present..

In spite of indifferent health, Keith continued to

make the long trip from Shepparton where he lived, down to Churchill Island. He was present at our last AGM on 26th July. We were deeply shocked to hear of his sudden passing only a week later.

To Keith - Vale, and our unbounded thanks for a job well done. To Jan and Lourin and his wider family, the executive and committee of FOCIS extend our deepest sympathy, joined by all who knew him.

Pat Baird.

**(Our apologies to Keith's family, but a photograph of Keith was not available at the time of printing)**



## CHURCHILL ISLAND RECEIVES MUSEUM ACCREDITATION

Churchill Island Heritage Farm has joined the list of museums in Victoria who have been awarded full accreditation under the Museums Victoria program. The presentation was made at the Museums Victoria Awards night held at the State Library of Victoria last Thursday.

The certificate of accreditation was accepted by Friends of Churchill Island Society's secretary Jill Allen and Churchill Island garden officer, Fiona McCarthy.

"I was delighted to accept the award on behalf of the Society and the island," said Mrs Allen. "I thank everyone involved in achieving the accreditation and FOCIS will now commit to ensuring the high standards of caring for the island and its collections will continue to be met."

"Churchill Island was in good company on the night with Museum Victoria also receiving accreditation at the ceremony," said Mrs Allen

The process of gaining accreditation for Churchill Island has been a long one with the original submission being lodged in 1999. Since then, the team has undergone the arduous process of complying with strict guidelines to ensure excellence in managing the heritage and collections of Churchill Island. The stringent standards develop and improve what museums do, across all areas from caring for heritage objects to marketing and evaluation. Each application is judged by a team of museum experts from around Victoria and includes a large written application along with several site visits.

"We are thrilled that Churchill Island has finally received accreditation. The rating will give us opportunities to promote the island's heritage values and open doors to funding to preserve the island for the future," said Mark Manteit, Chief Executive Officer.



Fiona McCarthy and Jill Allen proudly holding the Accreditation.



## PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

wish to thank those members who attend General Meetings and those who have supported FOCIS activities throughout the year and Executive Committee for their efforts on behalf of FOCIS Members. I thank Ann & Peter Jelly for producing an informative FOCIS newsletter and those who contributed articles.

### Questionnaire

Subject to recount, 92 members completed the FOCIS Questionnaire and renewed their memberships. The distribution of respondents to the questionnaire is 55% local and 45% non local:-

1) Should there be an annual limit placed on the number special events held on Churchill Island?

Yes 63 No 19

2) Should there be a maximum limit to the number of visitors attending a special events held on Churchill Island?

Yes 59 No 21

3) Should special events be limited to those deemed "appropriate" to Churchill Island?

Yes 67 No 13

### Issues identified

A significant number of respondents identified the key issues as:-

1) Protection of the historical precincts.

2) Preservation of Churchill Island's unique heritage and environment.

3) Crowds

4) Loud music.



The accreditation was presented by the ABC's Radio and Television Presenter Andy Muirhead. Fred & Jill Allen, Pat Jeffrey (a well known face at the Visitor Centre), Andy Muirhead and Fiona McCarthy. (Apologies to Fiona, you blinked but we needed to include you!)

## Addressing the key issues

1) The appointment of a Farm coordinator and a Garden coordinator with assistance of other part time staff has improved general maintenance around the park. The condition of historical Amess House, farm buildings and gardens are well maintained. The concerns identified by FOCIS Members have been addressed and improvements made, which should ensure the protection, preservation and sustainability of Churchill Island.

2) Increasing population is a fact of Australian life and living. It is inevitable that increasingly urbanized populations will seek relief from crowded cities filled with noise, vehicles and pollution. I do not believe it is the role of FOCIS to discourage fellow citizens from visiting Churchill Island, the opportunity to breath fresh air, families seeking respite from the pressures of day to day living and work and on occasions enjoy special events held on Churchill Island.

3) The issue of excessively loud music is within limits controllable, as are many of the other issues identified by respondents to the questionnaire. Your committee has worked to build a mutually cooperative relationship with PINP Management, which enables matters of concern to be discussed and more often than not amicably resolved.

4) The title "Chill Island" is the anathema to many members. There is concern and justification for bringing this matter urgently to the attention of PINP Management and the Promoter to have the name changed. The promoter of event has responded positively to our concerns.

## Why hold special events ?

The cost of fuel locally and internationally is expected reduce local and overseas tourism. Holding special events on Churchill Island may become essential for the economic viability and sustainability of Churchill Island. I believe PINP Management will find it increasingly difficult to refuse special events offering zero financial risk, less demand on staffing and with the potential to generate a profit.

## Our task and responsibility

The task and responsibility of FOCIS Members is not to block special events, but to assert appropriate influences to ensure measures are in place to protect Churchill Island's irreplaceable heritage and unique environment. Your committee has worked to build a mutually cooperative relationship with PINP Management, which provides for raising and resolving FOCIS concerns.

## Events deemed appropriate by FOCIS respondents:

- Amway
- Traditional Country & Western Music

- Environment Awareness
- Educational
- Family Heritage
- Garden Lovers
- Working Horses
- Farmers market
- Musical concerts (not pop)
- Bush Dancing
- Lifestyle
- Early days on C.I.
- Art & Sculpture
- Cultural
- Growing Native Plants
- Bread Making
- Jazz Bands

## Embrace change

In conclusion I believe FOCIS must now embrace change. There is an urgent need to review and decide future directions, which takes into account our limited financial resources and the capacities of our membership.

Fred Allen FOCIS President (2007)



## EXTRACT OF MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2007/2008 HELD AT CHURCHILL ISLAND AT 1.30pm 26th JULY 2008

### AGENDA

1. **Present:** 22 Members

2. **Apologies:** 10 Members

3. **Mark Manteit CEO PINP General Update:**

Mark Manteit said that the Budget & Business Plans for the coming year had been approved by the Board in this last week.

Staff numbers had ranged between 207-250. Conservation & Environmental Dept. now had 25 full-time staff.

The Research Dept. was very involved in looking at the effects of the Desalination Plant and a member had been sent overseas to study the effects of the plants in Spain.

The Penguin Parade buildings needed very extensive renovation or to be demolished and completely rebuilt. This could present a new gateway to the Sunderland Bay area.

Overseas visitor numbers were dropping, especially from China, the earthquake and the Olympic Games

having an effect. Local visitor numbers were also being affected by the rise in fuel prices. 3 day passes are proving very popular and Churchill Island benefitting from this.

Some changes were being planned for the Visitors Centre on Churchill Island to make it more workable.

The Working Horse Festival for 2009 would be a more "low key affair" with more emphasis on the working farm.

**Mark then invited Gordon Brown, Farm Manager** to make some comments on forthcoming projects for Churchill Island.

Gordon said that the emphasis would be farming in the 1800's, with more demonstrations of farming skills for the many school and tourist groups. A "Paddock to Plate" theme was proving popular.

He thanked the many volunteers who worked at Churchill Island and invited anyone present to come and join the team.

Some minor additions had been made to the machinery shed to provide an undercover parking spot for the carriage when it is raining, and to provide some undercover seating.



LEFT: Mark Manteit, PINP CEO, addresses the AGM on FOCIS concerns and Nature Park future plans

RIGHT: Gordon Brown outlines the Heritage Farm aspects to be ongoing for School Holiday Programmes and for visitors alike



LEFT: Rebecca Sanders presents her talk about European Settlement in particular Western Port at the AGM.

#### 4. Annual Subscriptions for 2009/2010

Subscriptions (fees) to remain the same for 2009/2010.

#### 5. Membership Secretary's Report.

Marje Brophy reported that there was usually a better response to the Subscription Notice in Newsletter, but it was too soon to tell what the affect of the changes in benefits were having. 189 memberships have been renewed to date, which represents half of the 2007/2008 figure. Economically, times are tough and this may cause a drop in memberships. A reminder would go in Spring Newsletter.

#### 6. General Secretary's Report.

Jill Allen thanked all those Members who had answered her call for volunteers during the year.

The Parks Victoria Management Plan for Western Port had finally been released and copies were available should any Member wish to read it.

The other Advisory Committee on which she was representing FOCIS, 'The Environmental Water Requirements of the Bass River Study. (Melbourne Water)' should release their final Report in the next month. Copies will also be available. Jill said that she had enjoyed the experience of being on these committees as it had given her a wonderful opportunity to get to know much more about the area in which she lived.

However, the Museums Victoria Awards Night was the highlight as she was asked to accept the Accreditation Certificate for the Churchill Island Heritage Farm on behalf of the many people who had worked so hard to bring this about.

She also suggested that those people be recognized in some tangible way.

#### 7. Treasurer's Report:

Unaudited Statement of Receipts & Payments for year ended 30 June 2007/2008. Receipts \$11,807. Payments \$9,569. Surplus \$2,238. Opening Bank Balance \$35,666. Closing Bank Balance \$37,904.

#### 8. President's Report:

See separate column on previous pages..

#### 9. Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members:

Stella Axalis took the Chair for the election of Office Bearers:

**President:** Fred (A) Allen

**Vice-President:** Keith Hocking (Sadly now deceased)

**Treasurer:** Roger Hollingworth

**Secretary:** Jill Allen

**Membership Secretary:** Marje Brophy

**Newsletter Editor:** Ann Jelly

**Assist. Newsletter Editor:** Peter Jelly

**Committee Members:**

Chesterman Chalmers

Gaye Cleeland (Phillip Island & District Historical Society.)

Christine Grayden (Phillip Island Conservation Society)

**(Nominations for Committee Positions are still open.)**

#### MEETING DATES FOR 2008-2009.

Sat. September 27th 2008

Garden Lovers Festival, Sun. November 9th 2008

Sat. November 22th 2008

Sat. January 17th 2009

Sat. March 28th 2009

Working Horse Festival, Sat & Sun, 11th & 12th April 2009

Sat. May 23rd. 2009

AGM, Sat. 25<sup>th</sup> July 2009



#### FROM THE HOMESTEAD

What a good thing we share farming skills with the children who come to Churchill Island. One visitor reported recently that she had told her children a cow had four teats so she could provide strawberry flavoured milk from one, chocolate from another, then caramel and plain milk, I wonder what breed that was!!!

If you think being a volunteer guide is boring, it is NOT, it is surprises waiting to happen. On one day in March the first was a gentleman who asked about a film being made using the Island and homestead when he was a teenager. The family had visited with limited access and found filming equipment and plenty of action while "Summerfield" was being made. It is presently available as a DVD at some Melbourne bookshops, {enquire at Readings}

When a delightful English couple arrived, they were hungry for information about how homes were run in the 1870's. It is always a strange feeling being enthusiastic about our relatively short "white" Australian history, so I asked did they live in an old English house. Well, yes, they did. One part was built in the 1500's, and then added to in the 1600's, and they also had a very old and primitive farmhouse in France which still had an old original arrangement for the washing to be done out of doors, and as for the clever drainage from the cow shed, it was a joy to

behold!!!! Wonderful discussions followed, and I came home the richer as usual.

Annon.

The AGM meeting in July was interesting and informative as usual. Mark Manteit gave us some insight on the Nature Park ideas for the future and mentioned that one of his team had been sent to Spain to investigate the desalination plants of which there are some 300. It is important to have as much information as possible about these plants as they are likely to have an impact on the penguin population, and therefore on visitor numbers to Phillip and Churchill Islands. There were 63,000 visitors to Churchill Island which is up on last year.

We have lost some of our members of FOCIS, we had 433 but are down to only 180 renewals so far this year, the enclosed renewal form is to remind you that subscriptions are now due for 2008/9.

The Island is looking really lovely at the moment, the grass is green again and with the rain, everything has a new lease on life. Fiona and Gordon have done a great job making things look good for the Spring.

Rebecca Sanders gave us a talk and slide show on her thesis up to date, which was very interesting and those of us who were at the meeting enjoyed very much.

Carlos' Café has been great to visit over the winter with delicious soup and sour dough bread to warm up the body on a cold day, as well as an array of substantial snacks and light lunches, I would encourage everyone to come and sample this lovely food.

We were sad to learn of the death of Keith Hocking our Vice President, he will be greatly missed at our meetings as he always had something to contribute.

Ed.

## TREE PLANTING



Mark Merryfull, Revegetation Officer, PINP, and his enthusiastic band of volunteer tree planters

Heads Down, Tails up - the tree planting commences





Mark explains how and where the junior tree should be planted



## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

### EVERYBODY-SOMEBODY-ANYBODY-NOBODY

Once upon a time, there were four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, & Nobody.

There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it.

Anybody could have done it but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job.

Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody didn't do it.

It ended by Everybody blaming Somebody when actually Nobody could accuse Anybody.

Annon.



## HISTORY - REPRINTED FROM A FOCIS NEWSLETTER, WINTER 1984

### Tourist Travel between Melbourne-Phillip Island in 1880's

"...There is a weekly steamer, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. The 7.13am train from Princes Bridge is met at Frankston by Coaches, bound for Hastings, Flinders and Mornington.

We take the coach which carries the mail to Hastings, a distance of 10 miles... Under ordinary circumstances, we leave the coach at Hastings, and embark on the S.S. "Eclipse," commanded by Captain Clarke - his crew consists of an engineer and one deckhand. The steamer runs to Cowes, about 11 miles across, and at times the sea is very rough and the tide very strong, and much care is required to keep clear of the numerous mudflats.

From Cowes, the course is inside Phillip Island to Griffiths Point (San Remo) which is only about a quarter of a mile from the furthest point of Phillip Island, and is reached at about half-past 2pm, when the passengers are landed, and the cargo (if any) put ashore. The steamer goes to Phillip Island to lay up until next morning, and she remains there on Sundays.

I was informed that the population of Griffiths Point was 190, but I suppose that was exclusive of visitors. There is a post and telegraph office, one store, one pub, one State School, one butcher's shop, and a Shire Hall, also used as a Court House and Church.

I was told that a letter posted at Bass for Kilcunda, a distance of four miles, is sent to Melbourne overland, and returned to Kilcunda by train, coach and steamer via Frankston, Cowes and Griffiths Point, a round trip of about 150 miles... so you will not be surprised by anything!

The inhabitants of the district generally are very kind and hospitable. I was agreeably surprised to the general look of the place, and the amount of good land. I met a gentleman named ANDERSON who told me he was a colonist of 50 years come May next (1890).

....I must not forget to say that some very good fishing can be got when tide and weather permits, but there is not much shooting, unless the Alpine climbers like to tackle wallaby in the Cliffs. Sea bathing can be indulged in, in natural formed baths, washed and caverned by the sea.

The return steamer leaves Griffiths Point on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 9am; arrives Hastings 11.45am, in time to catch a coach, which catches the train to Frankston to reach Melbourne at 3.50pm

"Hasting, August 5, 1889..."

Extract from "The Anderson's of Western Port" by Horton & Morris, published by Bass Valley Historical Society, 1983.



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**SPRING 2008**



**The Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.**

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