



FOCIS

newsletter

Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.

SUMMER 2002

Dear Readers,

Scattered patterns of light rainfall have kept our pastures green but now the longer sunny days are gradually drying out the pastures as Churchill Island assumes its summer colours. I always look forward to the changes of season the lambings and calvings, the bright green of spring crops, the winds of the equinox patterning the long grass before it is cut for hay, the fading of the green to pale summer gold as the birds sing and celebrate their freedom after hatching their eggs. I especially love the chirpings of Richard's Pippits in the grass. To me it is a real summer sound. You never see these birds but their cheerful chirpings are everywhere on sunny days.

Long term weather predictions suggest we've got a long hot summer ahead, great for holiday makers. But hopefully the current el Nino will fade away with autumn and we can look forward to more normal rainfall for a year or two. The big trees need it - there's nothing to compare to a good deep watering for them to recover their abundant foliage.

The first three Farmers' Markets have been huge successes with big attendances and lots of wonderful produce for sale. The Farmers Markets and the Working Horse Festival will now be our main focus of activities for the summer of 2003, as well as the usual Ranger activities from 27th December to 27th January.

At the July meeting of Focis, Ian Weir spoke about the Mornington and Westernport Biosphere project which has now been approved by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. "The idea of a Biosphere reserve is to achieve the ecologically sustainable use and development of a region's natural and cultural resources. This fits perfectly with Phillip Island Nature Park's mission of international excellence in nature conservation and ecotourism." said Mr Frank King, Acting General Manager of the Phillip Island Nature Park. This is the first Australian listing since 1981 and the site joins such well known areas such as Croajingolong, Macquarie Island and Wilson's Promontory. Inclusion in the World network of Biosphere Reserves entails official United Nations recognition of local and national efforts to meet global concerns on environmental sustainability. It also represents a 'label of excellence' which helps secure funding and promote tourism and the local economy.

We hope you have noticed our reminder on the cover of this newsletter that ALL subscriptions are due 1st January, 2003. Since that may seem a long way away, let me remind you it is less than four weeks until the new year. And they are probably the busiest weeks of the year. For the past year or two we have had some difficulties in deciding how to deal with unpaid memberships. Being aware that most (but



not all) non payments have simply slipped members' minds we have been reluctant to stop sending newsletters to them.

To rectify this situation, we would ask members to consider paying their subscriptions as soon as they receive this Newsletter so that they do not forget, or lose the form, in the busyness of summer. Summer with its influx of visitors and languid weather does not encourage us to remember mundane matters such as subscriptions, but please remember that we rely on your support to carry out our work of preserving that which is precious on Churchill Island. And of course there are many benefits which flow to members in free entry and discounts etc. Therefore, it was reluctantly decided that if subscriptions are not paid by March, 2003, names will have to be removed from the mailing list and members would then lose touch with what is happening here on our lovely island.

So quickly we seem to have arrived at the end of another year. More than ever, with this final newsletter for 2002, we wish everyone a happy and peaceful Christmas and calm days in 2003.

Jocelyn Bradley and Pat Baird

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456

YOUR BUNCH OF DATES:

27th Dec to 27 Jan 2003 - Ranger activities.

18th January, 2003, FOCIS meeting, 1pm Education Room, Churchill Island Visitor Centre.

(Note change from fourth Saturday)

22nd March, 2003, FOCIS Meeting, 1pm Education Room, Churchill Island Visitor Centre.

19th-20th April, 2003 WORKING HORSE FESTIVAL.

24th May, 2003, FOCIS Meeting, 1pm Education Room, Churchill Island Visitor Centre.

26th July, 2003 - FOCIS Meeting, 1pm Education Room, Churchill Island Visitor Centre.



Ranger's Report:

Just a few lines from me on this wonderful Island.

I have just walked in from spending the day mowing our hay paddock with Sophie and Bonny. Well this has been the driest Spring I have ever seen on Churchill Island. The hay is not going to cut well with only a quarter of what we are used to. We are fortunate in that two crops of oats were sown down and look like they will cut well.

Our Highland cattle fold is doing well with the most calves born this Spring ever. The bull must be in "Top Form".

Our lambs are also very good and should sell for top prices after Christmas.

Fishers Wetland area is at present looking great. In total 5,200 trees, shrubs and native grasses have been planted in and around this Wetland area.

We have overall had a very busy Spring with lots of functions, Marine National Park Launches etc.

I'm sorry this report could not be longer. But you tend to get very "Tied Up" during hay time.

Thank You all for your continued support through the year and please have a Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year.

Scott Campbell and Staff Churchill Island.



Personality Profile:

Recently I had the privilege to meet Edith Jeffery, a living treasure of Churchill Island, who spent the early years of her marriage living in Amess house in the 1930s. Edith spoke of the first time she visited the island with her mother, sister and brother and how they stood at the end of Churchill Road waving a white cloth until young Bob Jeffery rowed over in the dinghy to pick them up. They all rolled up their skirts or trousers and waded out and climbed aboard. Bob Jeffery was about twenty three at the time, and Edith, who was fifteen, little thought that she would one day marry the handsome young man who helped her into the dinghy.

But marry him she did some years later and even today Edith recalls how when walking on the lovely shores of their little island on a balmy summer's evening, she would gaze across the sea to Rhyll and believe she was looking upon heaven.

Daughter of a farmer, and married to one, Edith wasn't one to sit about doing embroidery. She engaged fully in the life

on the farm, helping Bob, growing vegies, fishing for whiting, making a home and riding her horse over to Newhaven once a week for supplies.

They milked the cows and Edith made her own bread and pastry and cakes and to this day one of the mementos she has kept is her old rolling pin. Lighting was from pumped up spirit lamps which gave a very bright light called Gloria lighting. Bob put in a windmill and dam for their water supply, as well as tanks, and Edith would gather pine cones for cosy fires on cold winter nights. And it was very cold at times.

Mr Buckley had purchased the cows and allowed Bob and Edith to accumulate their profits during their caretaking days - this enabled them to establish themselves. You can read more about their farming lives in Jane Cutter's excellent book - Churchill Island, A Special Place.

Edith says the kitchen was a little different then with cupboards along the north wall and on the other side, low seats with cupboards underneath. Edith's laundry was in what is Rogers cottage where there was a copper and some cement troughs and a table and an old box iron (into which you would put hot coals from the fire).

Amongst her memorable achievements was the day Edith climbed the Norfolk Island Pine "to get a view". She climbed right to the top while Bob stood below a bit worried about his adventurous young wife. And what a view it was!

Edith says she was never lonely, they had radio and often had visitors. But after listening to Edith and her wonderful stories, I feel that she always had another support throughout her life and it was her faith. Her life has been expressed through loving and caring and working for family, friends and her faith. She tells me she has not finished her work yet, that the Lord has more for her to do.

I found her a truly loving, modest and inspiring lady.



Project Officer:

As Project Officer, I am always on the lookout for new and interesting stalls for the Working Horse Festival, especially anything with heritage farm or working horse connotations. Any suggestions can be sent to me, contact details are at the end of this section.

You will notice that there is new signage around Churchill Island and this will soon be completed with more at Fishers Land where landscape works are nearing completion. These works include a sand 'stomping ground' for get togethers and perhaps even corroborees. The interpretation in this

area focuses on Aboriginal culture. We are looking forward to our first stomp!

Our usual summer Program of Ranger guided activities is being put in place right now and we promise a range of varied activities for all ages. Check out details on www.penguins.org.au

I am still looking for more volunteer guides to take a turn of duty at Amess House once or twice a month. Its such a lovely place to be where you can meet lots and lots of new people, or on quiet days spend time in quiet reflection in what's probably one of the world's most peaceful places.

Contact me on 0408 101 976.

Finally, I wish everyone Merry Christmas and a safe, happy and peaceful new year.

Sally O'Neill.

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.



From the Garden:

Spring has sprung into summer at Churchill Island! The garden is looking absolutely sensational...the heritage roses are blooming and perfuming the garden with exquisite scents, one of my favorites is the single 'Rosa chinensis mutabilis' in lovely shades of pink, peach and apricot, and the 100 year old trio of 'fantin latour' a pretty light pink cabbage rose flowering with a gorgeous perfume at the front of the homestead.

The silkworms have hatched out and are voraciously eating the mulberry leaves from the 130 year old tree which was an original planting from Mr Amess's orchard. This is the third generation of silkworms from the six that I bought three years ago. Every year they grow on the leaves, spin a cocoon, hatch into a funny little white moth which immediately lays eggs and then dies. The eggs stay dormant for a year until the next spring when the leaves appear again on the mulberry tree. The tiny little worms (which are no bigger than a pin head) hatch out and so the whole cycle begins again.

I have had two lovely helpers in the garden every Wednesday morning. Fiona and Pam who do a great job and we have a lot of fun although they are starting to realise that I leave the more annoying jobs to them! It's great to



spend time in the garden no matter what is happening in the world, it is a place to soothe the soul...

Lisa Burrell, Gardener.



FOCIS COMMITTEE 2001 - 2002

President: Ann Penaluna (03) 5956 9302

Vice-President: Keith Hocking (03)5821 9189

Treasurer/Public Officer: Roger Hollingworth

Membership Secretary: Diane McCarthy (03) 5956 8300

Minute Secretary: Jan Fleming

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.

Late Notes From 23rd November Committee Meeting

1. Working Horse Festival is to be called the Churchill Island Draught Horse Festival from now on.
2. Visitors joining FOCIS will no longer be able to access discount entries to Phillip Island Nature Park; Koala Conservation Centre, Churchill Island and the Penguin Parade on the day of joining. These discounts will be available only after they have received their membership card.

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

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

Please send me Green Polo shirts with Churchill Island pocket. @ \$28 each including postage.

Size S M L XL (Please circle)

Name.....

Address.....

Town..... Postcode.....

FRIENDS OF CHURCHILL ISLAND SOCIETY INC.

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

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please Enrol/Renew a FOCIS Membership for

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. All privileges are dependent on production of your current membership card.

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



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If undelivered return to: FOCIS, PO Box 852, COWES 3922

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ABN 78 667 051 020 Inc. No. A 00219007W