



FOCIS

newsletter

Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.

SUMMER 2004

Dear Readers,

Questions have been raised as to the future role of FOCIS. As you all know, PINP is developing and planning many changes in an attempt to make Churchill Island self supporting. It is my observation that the Nature Park Management has the ultimate aim of maintaining the farm as a historic precinct, preserving the past but employing some modern thinking to ensure the continuance of Churchill Island as an enjoyable place for people to visit, reminisce and show younger generations "how it used to be done".

While in the past FOCIS has played a major role in the upkeep and development of the farm, the overall management has become too large a responsibility for volunteers to maintain and build the Island as a historic working farm and museum into the future.

Professional management with resources to achieve the preservation needed must be employed but FOCIS remains a vital component in the success of plans by assisting PINP in many areas such as guides, gardeners and festival support people. With exciting times ahead we need fresh input from more FOCIS members. If you are able to assist with some time please contact the secretary, Jill Fitzroy Kelly.

PINP management has to date, been very open about their plans and have actively sought comment and support from FOCIS. The future role for FOCIS as I see it, is to be an active partner in any development and ensure that what we consider to be precious is maintained.

To quote "The goals of the society" as written by Anne Penaluna in 2002 the aim is to

1. provide support for, and to foster public awareness of Churchill Island as a living and public museum.
2. undertake special projects in conjunction with the Phillip Island Nature Park Management for the enhancement of Churchill Island and its historic working farm and its precincts.
3. provide a forum for people with a mutual interest in Churchill Island.
4. assist the Phillip Island Nature Park Management with maintenance, restoration and preservation of collections of historical interest at Churchill Island.
5. the primary environmental purpose is to provide:
 - (a) support and assistance to the Phillip Island Nature Park Management and recreate suitable habitat for the collections of wild life, particularly the birds that have historic precedence.
 - (b) extensive replanting of native trees and shrubs, especially the Moonah, is part of this long-term objective.

Using these guidelines the future of FOCIS is assured and it is the responsibility of the committee to ensure we remain a viable and effective organization.

Neil Gladman - President



HELP!!

Due to the retirement of Mr. Bill Hopkins, our honorary auditor for many years, we seek the services of someone to audit FOCIS accounts. If you can assist us, please contact Neil Gladman on 5956 6050.



Vale Ron Hocking

It is with sadness that we note the passing of one of FOCIS original members who over many years worked hard to make Churchill Island what it is today. Ron was one of the "Shepparton Group" of volunteers who come here quite often to assist in building and maintenance and to share their farming experience with Park personnel.

Our thoughts and condolences go to Ron's wife Jean and FOCIS will surely miss the enthusiasm and expertise Ron displayed in the past. See page 3 for Ron's life history.



Volunteer Guiding Program

When a guide comes on duty you never know how the day will turn out. You know you can pass on some information to visitors, make them welcome and most of them appreciate that but Cup Day had a special by-product for me. I had expected no visitors between 2pm and 3:30pm but what a wonderful surprise!

A delightful family from Melbourne came through, with the mother simply glowing with excitement. As a child, she and her siblings used to spend holidays on Churchill Island with "Aunty Jimmy", (Sister Campbell).

She had delayed returning in case her precious memories had been destroyed but she fully approved the restoration and the visitor centre, and the childhood joy was still there how as children they had played in the hay, fed the chooks, gathered eggs, chased each other in the orchard and even found good clay for modeling.

Perhaps her most precious memory was of her "far away tree", our great old mulberry tree, where she sat thinking in the branches. Her children wondered where the fairies were and her small daughter, about three years old, wanted to

know "what was the name of the baby who slept here?"

Above all else she said the house was full of laughter and happiness and her holidays quite magic. She could also recall the firing of the cannon by Ted Jenkins and friends on New Year's Eve!

Her own father designed the first bridge linking Churchill and Phillip Islands and she was pleased to know some of its timber is incorporated in the visitor centre building.

The same day there were visitors from the Channel Islands, close to the French coast, who realized how privileged they were to live as they do in such an old and unspoiled place. It was so interesting to speak with them.

I didn't win anything on the Melbourne Cup but it was a wonderful and most rewarding day spent in the wonderful old house set in the surrounds of Lisa's "Friends" fabulous garden.

Mary Mitchell



Festival & Events

As Christmas is getting closer there are lots of exciting activities set to take place at Churchill Island. The Summer Events Calendar is soon to be released and features Moonlight Cinemas, Summer Farmers Markets, a Summertime Bush Dance, an Art Market a Chill Out Day and much, much more. (Refer Events Listing in this Newsletter.)

Garden Lovers' Festival

Rain didn't deter garden enthusiasts at the inaugural Garden Lovers' Festival, held on the 7th of November. The day was a huge success offering a vast variety of stalls and celebrity gardener Jane Edmanson was a huge hit as she provided magnificent advice for all those gardening problems. The Festival is set to take place again in November next year.

2005 Working Horse Festival

Planning for the 2005 Working Horse Festival is well underway with active recruitment of volunteers, stallholders, demonstrators, exhibitors and performers. Scheduled to take place on the 26th and 27th of March 2005, it will be a fantastic weekend, so be sure to put it in your diary. If you would like to be involved in any way, please contact FOCIS Secretary Jill Fitzroy-Kelly.

Volunteer Guiding Program

We would like to say a big **thank-you** to all of the wonderful guides who volunteer their time to create a warm atmosphere around the homestead at Churchill Island. You are all doing a fabulous job and we appreciate the time you spend with the visitors as they admire the magnificent surrounds.

New Years Eve Dinner

Churchill Island will open for dinner this New Years Eve. Spend a tranquil evening and escape the madness of Phillip Island.

Another Thing

- Sallianne Deckert and the crew from Channel Nine recently spent time at Churchill Island filming a community service announcement for Phillip Island Nature Park. Keep your eyes peeled over the next few months when it goes to air.
- We would like to wish a safe and happy Christmas to everyone. Thank you for all your support in 2004!
- Our deepest sympathy goes to the Hocking family after the loss of Ron who was a great friend and supporter. We will miss him greatly. He always had a smile and a helping hand for everyone.

Sally O'Neill



From the Garden

After the winter rains come spring growth.....and wow is everything thriving! The heritage roses that I put in two years ago have been spectacular and their perfume has been wafting thru the garden much to visitors delight.

The kitchen garden has been producing prolifically carrots, beetroot, potatoes, spinach, silverbeet, parsley, onions and sugar snap peas going down to the visitor centre to be used in the café. There are lots of tomatoes of heritage varieties put in for the summer crop with corn, strawberries and climbing beans as well. I think it is very satisfying to pick things from your own garden and take it to the kitchen to make something delicious to eat.

The Garden Lovers Festival was a great success, thanks to all you gardeners out there who come to these events rain hail or shine! I was amazed at the number of people who turned up in the pouring rain with brollies, gumboots and coats...imagine if it had have been a fine day! Jane Edmanson and co. in the main tent were in fine form dispensing handy hints to everyone who had a gardening question and all the stall holders had very high quality items for sale. It will definitely be on again next year and perhaps be a two day event to entice people from afar to make a weekend of it.

The lavender was planted as part of the activities on the day and many thanks to those who helped- Hannah, Mark and Meredith and two children from Toora whose names have escaped me at this moment of writing this, it was great to get it planted and be able to envision how it will look when it is in full bloom. Even now you can get the scent of the lavender when walking in the paddock so it will be fantastic in a few years time.....we will have to have a Lavender Harvesting Festival as well! The varieties of lavender that have been planted are Allardi, French, Rosea, Munstead and Grosso. There will be interpretive signage in front of the rows that will explain the types of lavender and what they are used for.

In the other rows beside the lavender I have put in some cucumbers, pumpkins, zucchinis, and sunflowers. I recently went to Heronswood and got some unusual forms of corn to put in and also some more heritage tomatoes so it will be looking very productive in the paddock in front of the visitor centre.

That is all for now, have a happy festive season!

Lisa



Ranger Report

The Garden Lovers Festival was a huge success. Although the number of visitors exceeded expectation everybody involved in the running and organization of the event managed beautifully.

After much deliberation and playing in the dirt it was decided that we needed a bed former to make the lavender beds. Running out of time before the festival our farm assistant Luke Mitchell came to the rescue with one of his many contacts. The majority of the lavender was planted during the Garden Lovers Festival, the rest planted later along with the start of our veggie market garden. Lucerne will also be trialed and planted along side a small crop of sunflowers. You will be able to see all of these from the visitors centre verandah.

Dave Newman, Lyle Drayton and his daughter Rebecca came to Churchill Island at the end of last month to help us plough and sow the crop of oats that will be ready for next working horse festival. Our grown crop of oats was also cut with much difficulty as it was very tall and a lot had fallen over. As usual

the fellows worked hard and had a great weekend.

The rangers' new office is in and wired up. All it needs now is the phones connected and a computer with internet.

The sheep are doing well, many developed abscess between their toes due to being out on North Point in the long native grass. Some of these abscess had resolved through the walls of the hoof. All of the sheep have had their feet trimmed and shaped and have been run twice through a foot treatment bath. As always a close eye is being kept on them in this damp weather. The sheep are not due to be shorn until February when the lambs will also be shorn before sale. They will be shorn at the same time by a professional shearer.

As you may already know approval has gone through for the new toilet block. Presumably work on it will commence shortly after Neville gets back from leave.

The new horse Matilda is doing very well although there is still some argument between her and Sophie as to who is the

boss. She has started to take her place in taking tours and will know when she's alive when we start cutting hay.

123 Your bunch of dates

456 22nd January - FOCIS general meeting

26th and 27th March - Working Horse Festival

2nd April - FOCIS general meeting

28th May - FOCIS general meeting

23rd July - FOCIS A.G.M.

All members are welcome to attend our meetings and new faces would be greatly appreciated. Come along and meet other members. Your input is needed to make this a viable and effective society.



Ronald William Hocking. 26th June 1940 - 22nd Nov 2004.

Ron was the first born child of Bill and the Late Lila Hocking. Ron's birth was followed by the arrival of Keith, Ian, Lynette and Des.

Throughout his life Ron moved about the Eastern half of Victoria, starting from his younger years when Dad and Mum shifted from city life to take on the farm life, before finally taking us back back to city life so that us three older boys could learn a trade.

Ron's History.

We lived at 3 Bernard Street Reservoir till Ron was 9 years of age. When we were 6 and 3 years old we had our tonsils removed. As with all families, the shopping had to be done so Mum left us on our own while she went up the street. Imagine her surprise and panic when she returned home and found the two of us running around on the garage roof!

We then moved to McKenzies Road Neerim in 1949, where Ron completed his Primary and Secondary Schooling. We left behind the urban life of Melbourne with electricity & gas, for kerosene lamps and wood-fire stoves of Neerim. We kids soon adapted to our new environment. Riding bikes 7m to and from school each day through the hills. We soon learnt that during the magpie nesting season you had to protect your head Ron heard that holding a piece of wire directly above your head would deter them. It worked! Climbing the pine trees, sitting in the top with the wind blowing backwards and forwards, 80 ft high, giving Dad a heart attack.

Earning pocket money trapping rabbits and selling their skins occasionally we caught a fox which was a bonus. One winter we rode to school in fine weather in the morning, only to have a foot of snow dumped during the day. On the way home a local farmer shot past us, showering us with snow & laughing his head off. I'm not sure who thought of it but we knew he had to drive back past us on the way home, which never seemed to take long as he only picked up the mail. We found a long branch about 4" diameter and hid it under the snow. Sure enough, back came the farmer with a big grin on his face. Not seeing our handy work he hit it, bounced in the air and continued with a big wave and a laugh.

The family moved to Shepparton in 1955 where we lived for 18 months. Ron worked for Duncan Brothers Engineering and Cleckheaton. I always remember Ron coming home one night and saying it's a pity they don't teach the blokes how to drive their trucks. It seems that after several attempts to back his truck into the loading bay Ron offered the truck driver some advice, to which his reply was "If you're so good you do it!", which he did.

From here we moved to Murchison where Ron worked alongside Dad on the farm on River Road Nth Murchison. Like all locals, Ron soon joined the football and cricket clubs. December 1957 Dad decided that we boys were going to need a trade so he shifted us all to Northcote where we were apprenticed to the Melbourne Metropolitan Tramway Board. Ron chose to be a Blacksmith & this started January 1958. During the course of his time at the Preston Workshops he met a chap by the name of Richard Kew, who eventually took Ron home to meet his Sister Jean. Things developed as they always do and, six weeks after Jean's sister

Noela was married, Ron and Jean announced their engagement. They subsequently married on the 9th February 1963. Soon deciding city life was not for them, Ron and Jean moved to Tongala, share farming for the Lister Family. The 27th August 1964 saw the arrival of Faye. Approximately three months later they upped stakes and shifted back to Neerim East (which we still refer to as home) where Ron went back to one of his passions, raising Ducks, and doing handyman work for local farmers. 15th September 1966 saw the arrival Karen, shortly after the family had returned to Tongala.

22nd October 1970 Sue decided it was her time to come into the world. The family stayed at Tongala until 1972 when they moved back to Melbourne where Ron took up his old job Blacksmithing at the Tramway Preston Workshops. 1976 Ron had had enough of Melbourne and shifted to Shepparton where he bought a house milk delivery run. This was followed by a Carpet Cleaning Business before joining Warehousing Services as a storeman, where he remained until his retirement at the age of 52. Also he picked fruit in his spare time and continued with this for the next five years.

Over a ten year period Ron and Jean open their hearts and home to around 100 temporary foster care children. During this time Ron met Adrian Allen where Ron worked for 10 years fixing washing machines and vacuum cleaners.

Ron is survived by wife Jean, daughters Faye, Karen and Sue along with son in laws Mick and Stephen. This started the advent of the Grandchildren, Donna, Stuart, Sean, Lachlan (dec), Daniel, Beau, Brandon and Bryce. This brought a whole phase and excitement to Ron's life which saw grocery shopping every Friday before taking the grandchildren home for vegemite on toast and milo. Ron also took great delight in teaching them to ride bikes, dance, play records and generally have fun. He never lost his passion for the Collingwood Football Club and cricket on TV Or Radio.

When Karen and Sue were playing Hockey Ron would turn up to almost every game, no matter where the game might be played. Later in life he took as much interest in the grandchildren's sporting activities as he did with his daughters. Ron was extremely proud of everything that the children decided to get involved in.

Ron loved working with his hands and really was a JACK OF ALL TRADES.

In his leisure time he became very heavily involved in the Mooroopna Country & Western Club. Also, after visiting Churchill Island Historical Farm in Western Port Bay with myself, he became very involved in the Churchill Island Working Horse Festival. Over a period Ron helped us with fencing and other projects but was rightfully proud of the job he did making the security fencing for the Historical Homestead along with the sheaves of Wheat which overhang the main entrance gate.

Ron was always quick to point out that the experiences given to us by our parents were the reasons why he was prepared to try anything.

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 July 2004 to 30th June 2005 **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.



Friends of Churchill Island Society Newsletter

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