



# FOCIS

newsletter

Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.

SUMMER 2008



## PRESIDENTS CORNER

In an article published in a recent FOCIS Newsletter the title of a popular song "That you don't know what you've got till it's gone" was used in the context of lamenting the loss of Churchill Island's unique tranquility and peaceful ambience, due to the increasing number of visitors and special events.

There is concern that Churchill Island is being overused and commercially exploited. One cannot deny the fact that Churchill Island is attracting greater numbers of visitors and is now an important Victorian tourist destination.

I would make the observation that Churchill Island has never been so well serviced or maintained, and is therefore well able to accommodate increasing numbers of visitors. One should not overlook the fact that increasing numbers of visitors places an additional responsibility on PINP Management to preserve Churchill Island's historical buildings and maintain a high standard of visitor amenities and grounds maintenance.

Most importantly, the success of Churchill Island as an important tourist destination is our assurance that Churchill Island will continue as an economically viable historical showcase of "how we were" for future generations to enjoy.

We must understand that PINP Management is assigned the "stewardship" of Churchill Island and is absolutely responsible for the operation, maintenance, promotion, development and the economic viability of Churchill Island as an important Victorian tourist destination.

We must also understand that The Friends of Churchill Island assumes the "custodianship" of historical Churchill Island and that our primary role and responsibility must be to assert appropriate influences to ensure the historical aspects of Churchill Island are preserved.

The measure of our success as custodians of Churchill Island is the strength of our collective conviction and commitment to preserving the unique history of Churchill Island, which is possible, if we continue to work cooperatively, improve our communications and strengthen our mutually beneficial relationship with

PINP Management.

My concern is the apparent apathy within the current FOCIS Membership as indicated by poor attendance at General Meetings and lack of support during special occasions. The lack of willingness to serve on the Executive Committee is of particular concern.

When we reconvene on January 17, 2009, we must undertake a review of all aspects of our activities, commitment and obligations as members of FOCIS. The results of our deliberations will need to be decided and put in place in the months leading to the Annual General Meeting held in July 2009:-

1. Aims and objectives.
2. Member expectations.
3. Future directions.
4. Constitution.
5. Executive Committee.
6. Frequency and format for conducting General Meetings.
7. Policies and procedures.

May I take this opportunity to thank my colleagues serving on the Executive Committee and members for their continuing support and encouragement.

I wish FOCIS Members and their families a very safe and joyous Christmas and a happy and safe New Year.

Fred Allen President FOCIS



## ED'S REPORT.

At the last meeting of FOCIS, our new Farm Manager Jason Peters (who is taking over the position from Gordon Brown) joined us to tell us a little about himself, and how enthusiastic he is about the new job.

Jason and his partner Elaine are looking forward to the challenges of looking after Churchill Island and have many ideas to put in place.

Jason has come with many qualifications.

He had been managing Monomieth Stud Farm until he came to Churchill Island,

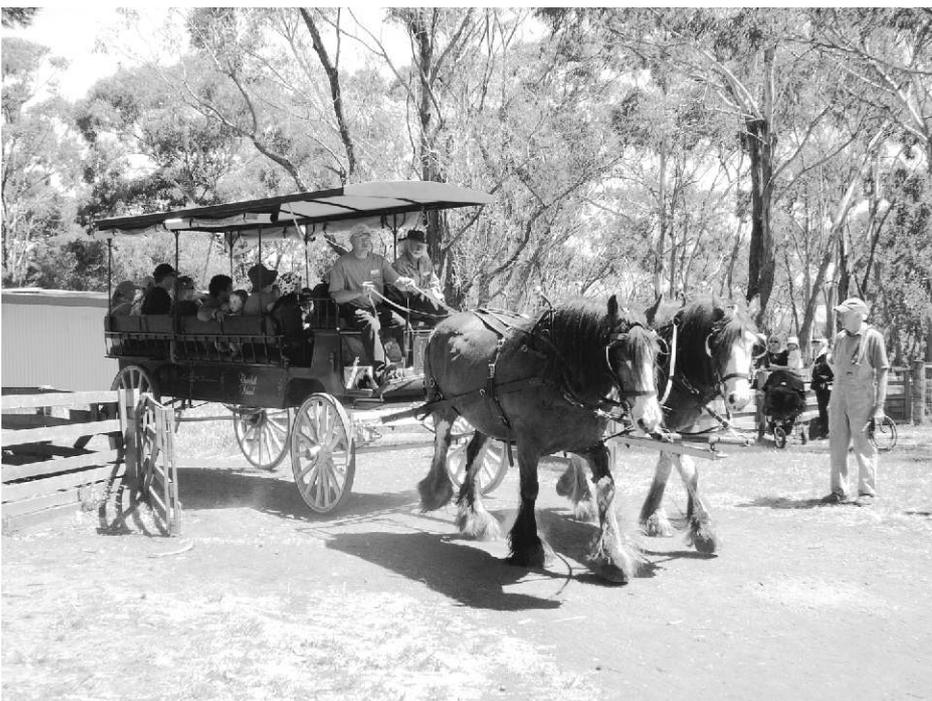
and is used to heavy horses and cattle. He has also

worked at the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement

As well as being a farrier and blacksmith, Jason is also well skilled in animal husbandry, welding and all sorts of machinery care.

I think we are lucky to have such an all round person to look after our lovely Island.

Below: Farm Manager Jason Peters with Tonka, one of the Islands New acquisitions. She and Brutus (not present) will be working the sheep & cattle (and probably ducks).



Always popular with grown ups and kids, our splendid Clydesdales and carriage rides at the Garden Festival

**The Garden Festival** this year was very well attended, it was a beautiful sunny day and the exhibits all looked really lovely. As usual the Devonshire tea room in Roger's Cottage was extremely busy, we were hard pressed to keep up with the demand. Everyone enjoyed the scones and tea or coffee. One of our members Marianne Pattinson was kept occupied in the kitchen in the Volly centre and looked after those in the tearoom with lovely quiche and salad as we had no time to break and have lunch. Heartfelt thanks to Marianne.



Left: Churchill Island Banner by Phillip Island Patchworkers at the Garden Festival.

Right: Garden Festival Old Time Games - Wheel Barrow Race.



Left: Gordon Brown, Foster sheep Mahli (never leaves his side) and Chilli. Best wishes from FOCIS in your new endeavors

Right: Gordon Brown at the Garden Festival with Panda herding the ducks (and Mahli of course!)



The Working Horse Festival next year will be a much more low key event, no loud music or as many exhibits, it is felt by the nature park that we need to scale back in most areas and therefore be able to keep the entrance fee at a more reasonable price. Those of you who have come to the Island during the school holidays will be familiar with the activities that are envisaged. Stand by for any cries for volunteers that FOCIS may need in the next newsletter.



Gordon Brown's Dogs - Snow and Panda's pups



One of Churchill Island's Highland Cattle.  
Always ready for a photo!



Mrs Cape Barren Goose talks down to Mr Goose!



## SECRETARY'S REPORT:

At the Garden Festival. Tonia Luther jammed and creamed 270 scones (These were split in half, so that's actually 540!! Ed.)

Peter Jelly creamed some, when he wasn't being the Delivery Boy, Ann Jelly poured 250 teas & coffees, President Fred took the money and spruiked the goods and I was general dogsbody. We all put in a 7 hour stint and were exhausted at the end of it. We raised either \$500 or \$800, depending on whether we get a bill for the scones.

I can assure you we won't be doing it again next year, unless more people volunteer to help, which would be a pity because it is not only a good fundraiser, but is good publicity for FOCIS.



Rogers Cottage Devonshire Tea Room

Christine Grayden, on her own, manned the plant sale table for the same period of time.

Once again very few Members attended the November Meeting (8) following another fairly poor turn up at the September Meeting (9). This gives the Executive Committee very little feedback on how Members want FOCIS to function. Your support by attending Meetings would be appreciated.

Fred & I attended the Phillip Island & District Historical Society Christmas Breakup on FOCIS' behalf. We were made most welcome and had a very pleasant evening.

All that is left is to wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and we'll meet again in January 2009 (the 17th just a reminder!).

Jill Allen.

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## FISHERS WETLANDS

The recent rains have replenished this bird haven that we usually all drive past on our way to Churchill Island

May we suggest that you stop and spend a short (or longer) time to gaze out across this expanse of water to the nesting boxes and over to the far side to the bird hides which are accessed by the track which skirts the water.

On the boardwalk and further around the track are metal legend boards which describe the way the Bunurong Peoples who inhabited this land in early times used the area to feed and clothe themselves from the abundance of birds and animals which were plentiful so long ago.

More than 50 different species of birds have been seen visiting and using this wetland, some of the residents you are more likely to spot as depicted on the boards are:-

Koon'warra - Black Swan

Wurok'worong - Royal Spoonbill

Turra'willa - Buff Braided Rail

Kooroong'unan - Purple Swamp Hen

Wilgul - Swamp Harrier

Wadjil - Australian Pelican

Kooroorook - White Faced Heron

Thirron'kalk - Black Winged Stilt

So why not pull into the parking area located by the boardwalk (you can see the signboards from the road) and see if you can spot a few of these birds (and learn something about the way the land was before European settlement.)

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Photo Captions -

1 - Nesting Boxes at Fishers Wetland.

2 - Fishers Wetland Boardwalk information boards.

3 - A Koon'warra - Black Swan



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