



FOCIS

newsletter

Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.

WINTER 2004

Dear Readers,

'I scarcely know a place I should sooner call mine than this little island.' I have been thinking about Lieutenant James Grant's feeling for Churchill Island recently, summing up as it does the feeling many of us have for this beautiful place. Now that winter is here and the rains have come, the peace and tranquility of the island tugs at the heartstrings. After the excitement and noise of the Working Horse Festival, the calm of this green and gentle place is a welcome respite for everyone.

How delightful it is to step back to a time when life went at a slower pace and there was time to stop and stare. Visiting the Island when there is nothing special happening, one can see grown-ups and children revelling in the gardens, enjoying the beauty and interest of the old buildings and experiencing the pleasure of being close to farm animals.

This year, the Working Horse Festival was once again a great success, with more visitors than ever and amazing displays from the working horses. The lawns were filled with families having picnics, listening to the music and absorbing the atmosphere. Once again we are eternally grateful to all our volunteers. Their help was invaluable and we hope we will be able to count on them next year. Sally, Keith and Maureen and many others put in an enormous effort and we thank them sincerely.

A draft farm plan has been developed for the future management of the Churchill Island farm. Your FOCIS committee has discussed the plan and is making some suggestions for future directions on the Island. You may be certain, however, that FOCIS firmly believes in upholding the heritage values of the Island, while at the same managing our animals and pastures in the best possible way. We will keep you informed about what is happening.

Regards to everyone, Jocelyn, Neil and Pat.



RANGER'S REPORT

As many of you may already know Scott Campbell has left Churchill Island for seven months leave. For the next few months the management of Churchill Island will be left in the capable hands of Neville Johnson who has been made Senior Ranger. Pat Russell and myself will ably assist him.

There are many exciting changes for the farm. The sheep have gone, God rest their souls, and will be replaced with Suffolk's. The black faced sheep have been chosen because they have an historical place on Churchill Island and look fantastic in the paddock. We also intend to produce our own fat lambs for use in the café; Suffolk's are specifically a fat lamb producer.

The use of our own fat lambs is an example of how Churchill Island will become more sustainable. This stems from the permaculture approach that will be taken toward the farm in the future. Crops that have not been grown on Churchill



Island in the recent past, but do very well in the area, include rape, chicory and sorghum. We will also be trialing lucerne and other legumes such as field peas. Even if these crops do not do well they will, at least, be turned back into the soil as nutrient. Again getting back to permaculture.

The Highland herd will also be improved with a combination of a new bull, artificial insemination, some new cows and/or heifers and the removal of our older breeding cows. The Churchill Island studbook has been allowed to lapse, this will be restarted and coupled with our registration as a Highland Stud. Hopefully our new bull will be quiet and trained to lead. This will increase the visitor experience and allow them to get up close and personal. Our new bull and the semen we chose will be from beef lines, again with the intention of using our home grown beef in the café.

The horses will remain and continue to work on the farm and give carriage rides. Bonnie will be retired due to her arthritis. She is currently on medication and will go to her new home as soon as a replacement horse is found. Lolly is a very beautiful horse but due to her temperament she is not an ideal horse for the public environment of Churchill Island. Lolly is not pregnant and it has been decided that she will be swapped, replaced or retrained. This decision was not taken lightly and was done so with her, our, and your safety as visitors in mind. Sophie, as always, continues to infrequently put a foot wrong.

I would like to put to rest any concerns that you may have about the historic aspects of Churchill Island. The intention never was to get away from historic activities and values, if fact, if anything, they will be increased. Ensuring the heritage of Churchill Island means we need people around doing activities, bringing Churchill Island to life. To have volunteers milking the cow, churning butter, spinning, baking bread etc would just be wonderful. It will take some hard work and commitment from a wider base of volunteers apart from those that are already involved. So put those concerns and great ideas into action and give us a hand!

For example, the half cellar needs upgrading. We would like to display the cellar as it would have been. Research needs to be done into what our half cellar was used for and what equipment was used in it during the 1870's. Some of that

equipment may need to be located, purchased, restored and displayed. Who can help us with this?

With a new, fresh injection of ideas and enthusiasm Churchill Island will continue on in leaps and bounds. Always with the intention of keeping and enhancing the history of Churchill Island. Also to manage the farm using best modern practice, improving soil and pasture, improving the health and quality of the animals grown on Churchill Island and linking it all together with sustainability. Get excited and enthused but most of all get involved!

Amy and staff



FROM THE GARDEN

Winter is on its way again at Churchill Island. We have had some good rainfall so far and everything is looking nice and green. It is time to start cutting back perennials and, as always, mulching the garden beds with a constant supply of stable manure! The bays for the kitchen garden have been made so that there are areas for the composting material to be organised. The only thing that needs to be done now is to make the work tables, so that I can pot up plant cuttings from the garden and have them for sale again.

The kitchen garden is looking very established, and lots of produce is going to the Visitors Centre café. Visitors seem to like the idea of things grown in the garden being used in the food they buy for lunch. At the moment vegies being grown are cabbages, carrots, lettuce, broadbeans, sugar snap peas, onions, parsley, rainbow chard, spinach and potatoes.

Lisa.



A WORD OF APPRECIATION

We continue to get the greatest pleasure from Lisa's work in the garden. Visitors are so interested in the old-fashioned plants, and often ask what they are. If we volunteers don't know, we can usually find 'Lisa in the hat' to cheerfully give them the answers.

Coming from the back of the house in late May, along the path beside the dining room, I was enchanted by the magic glow coming from the lovely autumn leaves lying on the little winding paths. Literally a golden moment. To Lisa and her volunteers, our thanks for the ambience they provide. Baron von Mueller would be pleased!

Mary Mitchell.



PERSONALITY PROFILE

Maureen Symmonds

I was born in Lewisham, London in May 1944, during the 2nd world war. I have one sister, Barbara. Dad, who was Irish, was a captain in the army on the cliffs of Dover, manning the guns, for which he got an O.B.E. I am told that Mum spent her nights running up and down into air raid shelters with me during my first few months, as well as doing shifts on the rooftops watching for the flying bombs to come. We migrated to Australia as 10 pound immigrants in 1948. Being four years old I don't remember much of it except going through the Suez Canal on a ship called the Ormond.

Dad moved around a bit in the early days from Tasmania to Port Augusta then back to Melbourne where he got a job in the Defence department. Then when the big shift took place

in 1960 we left Melbourne for Canberra.

By this stage I was well into horses, had Chapman's transport my ex racehorse up to Canberra and then joined the Canberra Riding Club. This was my first association with committees and soon became Junior Secretary. This opened up to me a great association of local farming families, some like the Southwells went back to Federation. I remember Mrs Southwell telling me how she was there at Federation as a young girl. Her family was one of the early settlers to the area. I helped organise a Pony Club weeklong camp for all the local clubs. The Governor General's daughter Lucy was one of the children attending. At that time it was Lord de Lisle at Government House.

After leaving school I went into the Commercial Bank of Australia and then got a transfer to Canberra. Feeling like a change of job I became a public servant for a while as a dental nurse working in Lyneham Primary School. At that time all primary schools in the A.C.T had their own dental clinic.

Before leaving Melbourne I had met Terry, who became my husband, so during this time we did a lot of driving backwards & forwards until we became engaged and I returned to Melbourne. We married at Ringwood C of E in 1965.

Our daughter Simone was born in 1966, then Justin in 1968.

After the children were born I spent many years working on orchards which I loved picking, packing and thinning fruit, as well as playing tennis for various clubs.

We moved from Croydon to a few acres at Yellingbo onto a hobby farm, having sheep and spinning, a cow and milking, great vegie patch and of course lots of horses and foals. Involvement for many years with Pony Clubs, doing trail rides with the local kids, then Gippsland Pleasure Harness. We had an ex milk delivery horse from Keilor dairies and restored an old milk cart, this was then part of our trail rides.

Terry joined Lions in 1981 giving us many years of community involvement from helping older people do clean ups to outings for Chernobyl kids as well as money raising and supporting the Lions camp at Licola. In 1985 I went on a handicapped camp to Licola and found it an amazing experience. We are both currently involved with San Remo Newhaven Lions Club. Our largest projects are the Art Show & Fishing Village Festival; I also help out at Bingo at Griffiths Point Lodge.

In 1985 we lost our son through an accident in the army which he had just joined as an apprentice at Bonegilla. He was training for the interservice sports with a group of 4 cyclists when a vehicle hit them.

The next few years were ones of much grief but having Lions and lots of good friends got us through and as they say time heals.

Holidays have always been a big part of our life, lots of outback travel, the Canning stock route is the only one still to do.

We have done lots of Boating, and have travelled 1100 kilometres of the Murray River and also the Bi-centennial trip with the Paddle Steamers in 2001 from Echuca to Goolwa. With Blackburn North Lions we did an annual Murray River trip taking a week & camping on the banks, doing different sections of the river each year

Our daughter Simone, son in-law Andrew and granddaughter Ellen have Katmandog Pet Shop. We were partners with them until we retired, then promptly joined the Ulysses motorbike club and started touring with a terrific lot of middle-aged bikers. One of the highlights is the AGM, which is in a different state each year and attracts about 5,000 bikes from all around Australia.



Maureen & Terry Symmonds

Three years ago I rode my bicycle with two friends from Adelaide to Phillip Island and enjoy doing lots of cycling.

My latest hobby is walking with a terrific group of friends in a walking group. We can be seen anywhere in the Gippsland Region on a Tuesday in any weather.

So you can see my interest in Churchill Island isn't surprising when you look back over my life. There is no other place I would rather be than this little island.



DINNERS AT CHURCHILL ISLAND

Dinner is going to be available on Churchill Island at weekends. The first will be for Friends and Staff and will be held on Saturday, 12 June. The following night, Sunday, 13 June, dinner will be available to the public. We would love to see you there!



RED STAR ALERT!

Does your address label have a red star? The star signifies that your 2004 subscription is now due. Any Members who remain unfinancial as at 30/09/04 will be delisted and no further Newsletters will be sent. The 2004/2005 subscription covers the period 01/01/04 to 30/06/05 - so you still have 12 months in which to use your card. Please send your subscription ASAP.



WESTERN PORT NATIONAL PARKS MANAGEMENT PLAN ADVISORY GROUP

A representative of F.O.C.I.S. was invited by Parks Victoria to attend the first meeting of the above Group. This Group is open to all interested parties, scientific, environmental, commercial, historical and also to the general public. The Plan covers the Marine Parks and Marine Sanctuaries within Western Port Bay - Yaringa Marine Nature Park, French Island Marine Nature Park and Churchill Island Marine Nature Park.

The meeting was held at Hastings on 5th April 2004, and included a trip on board the Western Port Explorer. During the discussions which took place all facets of the Management Plan were covered, and input was welcomed from the 12 non Parks Victoria people present. These discussions are at present being turned into a draft document and will be reviewed at the next meeting to be held in June.

F.O.C.I.S.' main contribution is seen as being a member of the proposed Friends of Western Port Bay, where we can assist in the passing on information to our Members so they are well informed and kept up to date with Parks Victoria's plans. As it is envisaged that the Plan will be in place within 2-3 months, we will give more details in the Spring Newsletter.



MOONS AND MOONAHS

An exhibition and sales of paintings and drawings by Josephine Allen. An exhibiting artist for over twenty years, through group exhibitions and galleries. Moons and Moonahs will be held at the Art Space on Churchill Island.

Anyone who meets Josephine Allen becomes immediately aware of her fascination with things both heavenly and earthly. In her latest exhibition, "Moons and



Josephine in her studio.

Moonahs", this is manifest in a collection of fourteen works which chart this well-known local artist's exploration of these two themes over the past decade.

The moon's romance and mystery have inspired a series of works which, skilfully interpret the visible changes of the moon in a series of land and skylines. Cool, shadowy forests bathed in silver contrast with swirling, dramatic cloud masses. "I could never look at the moon and remain indifferent," said Josie. "It is something that creates a resonance within us all."

Similarly inspiring is the other subject of Josie's exhibition. Moonah trees have been standing for centuries. The Bunurong people regard the Moonah as a sacred tree and it is part of an ancient legend about forbidden love. Josie's works again clearly show not only her artistic talent, but her skill in offering a sympathetic interpretation.

The scrubby melaleucas with their characteristic twisted trunks are transformed into a sinuous melange of colour, line and form, which emanates a strong physicality.

"People bring their own stories and interpretations to both art and nature, and I hope that this exhibition inspires further perceptions." said Josie.

This evocative exhibition "Moons and Moonahs" is being held, appropriately, in the evolving Art Space at the Visitor Centre on Churchill Island, Newhaven, where Josephine was first inspired by the Moonah trees. The exhibition runs from June 12-27, 2004 and is open daily from 10am-4.30pm. The Art Space is next to the café with its wood fire and appealing views.

Further information at www.islandinfluence.com.au

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YOUR BUNCH OF DATES

12th June - dinner at Churchill Island for Friends and Staff.

13th June - dinner at Churchill Island for the public.

11th June - 25th June - Art Space Exhibition of paintings by Josie Allen, 'Moons and Moonahs'.

Farmer's Market - fourth Saturday in each month.

24th July - FOCIS Annual General Meeting, Information Centre, 1 pm. Come along - we always need new faces on the Committee.

25th September - Committee Meeting, Information Centre, 1 pm.



FOCIS COMMITTEE 2003 - 2004

President: Ann Penaluna (03) 5956 9302

Vice President: Keith Hocking (03) 5821 9189

Treasurer/Public Officer: Roger Hollingworth,

Membership Secretary and General Secretary:

Jill Fitzroy Kelly (03) 5672 5235

FOCIS Members:

Staff have requested that Focis members make sure they have their 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 to monitor current memberships.

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.



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

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WINTER 2004



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