



# FOCIS

newsletter

Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.

WINTER 2005



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is hard to believe that a full year has passed since my election as President. This is a reminder that the Annual General meeting happens on the 23rd of July at 1:00pm details follow in this newsletter.

All members are welcome and new blood on the committee would be of enormous benefit to the society.

It is an opportunity for you to have input into the future of Churchill Island and to help preserve this monument to the past.

A lot has been happening on the Island and we had the privilege at our last meeting of being addressed by Dave Graham, ranger, and Mark Manteit, CEO of the Nature Park who gave presentations on the management commitment and plans for the Island and the achievements already in place.

A report on the presentations is included in this edition.

It was a little disappointing that so few members turned up as it was a great chance to hear the plans for the future and to ask questions.

FOCIS is a wonderful way to get involved with the maintenance and upkeep of this unique historic precinct whilst enjoying the company of a great band of dedicated volunteers, in a peaceful and beautiful location.

Please consider joining us.



## VOLUNTEER GUIDE PROGRAM

The following is a report from Mary Mitchell, one of our long serving, dedicated volunteers whose knowledge, stories and anecdotes make very interesting and informative reading-

Between 1936 and 1965 Churchill Island was owned and occupied by Dr Harry Jenkins with a son Ted, who was wheelchair bound. Ted was looked after by a nurse, Sister Campbell. Mrs Alice Jenkins died at an early age and not a lot is known about her.

I had the good fortune to be sharing duty with Yvonne Robson on the 27th April when Mrs Jenkins nephew Kevin Gahan and his wife Alison visited the island. He was not very well and stayed in the visitor centre but Mrs Gahan joined us in the homestead for a long chat. She and her husband run a farm which belonged to her family in western Victoria, having recently moved from a farm belonging to his family. Guess who bought the farm at Carramat which they had sold? The grandson of Samuel Amess!

She told us a story of Kevin as a teenager when he was sent to pick chicory on a nearby mainland farm. Wanting to visit the relatives on Churchill Island and as there was no bridge available, he and a friend tried to push Dr Jenkin's Bugatti car out of it's garage on the mainland to attract attention across the water. Alas, the very heavy car beat the strength of the two lads and it could not be done.



They subsequently learned that lighting a fire was the required signal.

After the deaths of Ted, then Harry, Sister Campbell inherited the island and when she decided to sell in 1973, Kevin Gahan wrote and asked if he could buy one of the cannon balls as he had been very taken with the cannon on earlier visits. The reply was that she would not sell him one but would give it to him. It has since been safely mounted on a stand and now sits on their mantelpiece.

What stories it could tell!

(One day an American visitor complained to me that Australia's assistance to the Shenandoah had contributed to the fall of their whaling industry.)

During World War 2 Ted Jenkins was frustrated not being able to enlist and was given the job of searching on his short wave radio for information regarding the enemy. This added to his interest in radio and gave him a chance to contribute to the war effort.

Mrs Gahan spent a lot of time looking at our farm machinery and excitedly reported that we had the same make of hay bailer her father had used and she and her brother used to help with it.

She was most impressed by the quality of FOCIS's restoration of the old machinery.

Needless to say, it was a great day!

(On the 20th April there was an article in the Herald Sun headed "The Gallipoli Diaries." The originals are in the possession of the Gahan family and were written by Alice Jenkin's brother, Private Studley Gahan, one of a number of brothers who served in the Great War.)

Mary Mitchell

## REPORT ON PINP ADDRESS, May 23rd meeting

First address was by DAVE GRAHAM, Ranger, Phillip Island Nature Park. (Dave did his horticultural training at Burnley College and has worked at C.I. for many years.)

Dave apologized for Julie Thomas, Volunteer Co-Ordinator at PINP, being unable to attend the meeting but said that as they were both involved in the process of drafting a detailed document which would cover each and every aspect of

volunteer work to be carried out on C.I. he could confidently pass on the news of what was happening in the Volunteer area.

It was envisaged that the final document would list all the tasks and the way they were to be carried out to cover all areas of C.I. This would include maintenance and cleaning of historical buildings (houses and sheds), historic gardens including house garden, orchard, vegetable plots, lavender beds, indigenous garden etc., animal and poultry care and welfare, machinery restoration etc. Training of guides for the historic precinct would also be included, and probably things they hadn't even thought of yet.

Dave said that he could see a real mutual advantage in having FOCIS Members involved in all these tasks and it would be good to be able to hold events such as "Family Working Bees" or "Garden Clean Up Days" followed by a bar-b-cue tea where everyone can mix together and share their expertise and ideas.

PINP is currently running a Traineeship Program with Newhaven College where twenty-five 15-17 year olds spend time at the various Nature Park attractions and gain hands-on experience in all aspects of running such enterprises.

He said that he and Julie looked forward to exchanging ideas and comments with FOCIS Members when the draft document is released around 22nd June 2005.

The President thanked Dave for his time and his enthusiasm for all things to do with C.I. and said that the Members would look forward to working together with PINP staff on future projects on C.I.

#### MARK MANTEIT, CEO PINP

Mark opened by saying that it was his intention to go through the C.I. Business Plan item by item as everyone would have received a copy in the mail prior to the meeting, but he would be happy to clarify any matters at the end of the presentation. He first wanted to list the many things that had been achieved at C.I. over the last 12 months e.g. renewed perimeter fencing & electric fencing, new cattle and sheep breeds, crop rotation of paddocks (resulting in a bumper hay crop), lavender beds, new watering system, some new signage, staff training in the field and in the café, new toilet/shower block, staff offices and volunteer centre.

In reply to a question, Mark said that C.I. will never be self-financing, so it needed all interested parties to decide how and what they saw as the future of C.I. What attractions, if any, would suite the present environment? A children's playground or educational facilities? More displays with inter-active programs? At present the building of a blacksmith's shop was being planned and this could be used to display many of the machines and old artifacts that are currently stored away. He added that the only way to determine C.I.'s future was by consultation with as many interested parties as can be found.

In reply to a question about native animals being re-introduced, Mark said that it was possible that they would be small marsupials e.g. echidnas, with all the safeguards that keeping these animals would require.

It was recognized that the road entrance was a continuing problem but to seal it would not be possible under current budget restraints but \$20,000 had been allocated in this budget to maintain it and it would be re-assessed when future budgets were being drawn up.

Moving on from C.I. matters Mark said that a full time secondary teacher was now on the staff and all educational aspects of the PINP attractions were being re-assessed.

The Sustainability Centre at Koala Conservation Centre was moving ahead and a Project Manager was being sort to take it to completion.

Mark said that he had been in touch with the Victorian Government just that week to finalize PINP's take over of Seal Rocks Centre at the Nobbies. The first action needed was to appoint an independent consulting engineer to advise what needed to be done to meet all the current building standards with respect to the structural integrity of the building. At this stage PINP will take over the ground floor level and expressions of interest will be sought in ways to use the large lower level. It is felt that such use should be in keeping with the site's locality and already suggestions such as a seahorse breeding centre, maritime museum, marine research centre had been made. Because of the need to close the road at night to protect the wildlife there would not be a fine dining restaurant but PINP staff would set up a café (with reasonably priced meals) and a retail outlet.

Mark closed by saying that the Penguin Foundation Inc. was up and running and this now meant there was a way for people to make tax free donations to the work being done in wildlife research, and encouraged all present to remember the P.F.I. when drawing up their wills.

The President thanked Mark for always making himself available to speak to FOCIS members about what was happening throughout the many areas for which PINP was responsible. And that as usual it was both informative and entertaining.

## ★ NEWS FLASH

### Phillip Island Nature Parks Tops in Ecotourism

Phillip Island Nature Parks, home to the world-famous Penguin Parade, has been awarded Australia's highest ecotourism certification, "Advanced Ecotourism", for all of its guiding and tours.

This includes the Penguin Parade and its suite of new viewing options: Penguins Plus Viewing Platform, Penguin Skybox and Ultimate Penguin Tour. It also covers the Koala Conservation Centre and Churchill Island as well as ranger-led eco tours and the Nature Park's extensive education and activity programs.

"This is a great achievement for the Nature Parks and an endorsement of the quality tours that we have. It certainly puts us in the top position in the number of Advanced Ecotourism products in Victoria," says Mark Manteit, CEO of Phillip Island Nature Parks.

"Visitors can be assured that the unique experiences at Phillip Island Nature Parks are at the peak of Ecotourism excellence."



Volunteer guides photographed at Churchill Island attending an information exchange meeting.





## RANGER REPORT

Churchill Island is greening up since the long awaited rain but unfortunately it is too cold for the grass to grow very much. The cattle are being fed hay already so we are lucky that we had a good hay season. We have a new calf that was born around three weeks ago.

The sheep are doing well and we have lambs due the second week in August. We do not have a ram since we purchased the Suffolk sheep so George and Shirley Admans from Buculla Suffolk Stud (who we brought them from) have been kind enough to lend us one. That has saved us a lot of money not having to buy our own.

The bird hide on the Island is getting a revamp by the Work for the Dole crew and they will also be doing some planting around that area with a new walking track to it. They have been cleaning up the paddocks behind the works yard of the branches that have fallen over the years and are doing a great job.

Dave Graham had the trainee group doing some weeding and mulching around Fishers wetland recently, they do a great job around the park also.

Neville



## FROM THE GARDEN

Winter is here again and it is a time when you see the garden in its true form, that is, there is no color or foliage to distract the eye from the contours and shape and structure of the garden as a whole. You see the the "bones" of the the landscape and you can see whether it works in terms of its structure. Once that is achieved then you can fill in with the "fabric." Churchill Island has always had good bone structure, thanks to the original gardeners who planted the magnificent and majestic historic trees. After years of neglect and predation from pest animals these were the things that remain constant. The fabric of the garden I feel is certainly coming together and responses from visitors is always very positive. Of course there is always plenty of work to do and sometimes it gets overwhelming, but having a chance to walk around with John Patrick (of TV fame) for the day recently was really inspiring and helpful. His knowledge on things horticultural is amazing and I think he was quite impressed with all the work that has happened here.

He said he would like to do a story on the "first garden" for his ABC gardening segment on TV which would be a feather in our cap in gardening circles. As people who love the landscape know, John Patrick has written numerous books and publications and he presents segments on Gardening Australia on TV and he does gardening tours every year to beautiful overseas locations. He said Provence in France is his favorite spot in the world and that they have a huge lavender industry there for perfume, so to see a little patch growing in front of the visitor centre reminded him a little bit of it.

I asked if he was interested in our Garden Lovers Festival later in the year and if it does not clash with any other of his commitments we may be able to have him as a presenter. Hopefully there will not be a huge downpour like last year!

So there are plenty of things happening.

A big thank you to my garden volunteers who come in and spend a bit of time in the garden with me, even if its just moral support! We always welcome new faces who would like to join us. We usually meet on a Wednesday in the morning but you can come anytime that suits you.

Lisa

## NEW MEMBERSHIP FEES & ENTITLEMENTS FOR 1st July 2005 to 30th June 2006

**Family** - \$25 pa (Up to 2 adults & 2 children (15 years and under), **Single Person** - \$15 pa, **Concession** - \$10 pa (Australian Pensions Card Holders).

Following a meeting with The Management of Phillip Island Nature Parks the following entitlements were agreed on:

-Visit Churchill Island any time during opening hours plus discounts for Special Events.

-Visit Penguin Parade & Koala Conservation Centre during opening hours once a year for new members and twice a year for ongoing members.

-10% discount for accompanying visitors to PINP attractions.

-10% discount on food and souvenirs sold to Members at PINP attractions.

-Participation in Churchill Island Projects.

-FOCIS Quarterly Newsletter.

Members are reminded that Membership Cards are not transferable. Identification may be requested at any time.

An Application for Membership Form is enclosed with this Newsletter. Membership Cards will be available from mid-June 2005.

Family Membership and Individual Membership cards will be issued.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.

To be held on **SATURDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> JULY 2005**

Education Room, C.I. Visitors Centre at 1.00 p.m.

Nomination Forms for election of Office Bearers and Committee Members available in Education Room from 12.00 noon. Nominations close at 12.45 p.m. on 23/07/05.

All Officer and Committee positions become vacant. Nominations are called for the following positions (those persons currently holding these positions are eligible for re-election):

President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary and Membership Secretary

A maximum of twenty (20) Committee Members

Including one representative nominated by each of the following:

Phillip Island Conservation Society Inc.

Phillip Island & District Historical Society Inc.

Friends of Koalas Society Inc.

So give some thought to whether or not you would like to be on the Committee and help steer the Society through what promises to be an interesting 12 months.

We are looking to do more "hands on" projects at C.I., arrange some social events and welcome any suggestions from members to make being a Friend of Churchill Island both enjoyable and worthwhile.

## 123 YOUR BUNCH OF DATES

456 23rd July 2005, 1:00pm Annual General Meeting

All members welcome

30th July, Farmers market

27th August, Farmers market

24th September, FOCIS meeting All welcome

24th September, Farmers market

25th September, Art Markart

Newsletter continued on back page



# DO YOU HAVE THE MISSING VIDEO?

The Secretary is looking for the video which Thierry Roland, Parks Victoria gave to FOCIS last year.

It features the Corals and Undersea Creatures of the Southern Ocean. (Sorry I do not have the title.)

Check your shelves, and if you have it can you please return it to Jill as other people are waiting to view it.



# BARB MARTIN BUSHBANK INC.

We have received an invitation to have a representative on the Barb Martin Bushbank Committee.

Committee Meetings are held at the Bush Bank (rear of K.C.C.) on the second Tuesday of each month at 4.00 p.m.

Would you like to be that representative? If so, contact Jill (ph/fax 5672 5235) and she will do the paperwork.



## FOCIS COMMITTEE 2004 - 2005

**President:** Neil Gladman (03) 5956 6050

**Vice President:** Keith Hocking (03) 5821 9189

**Treasurer/Public Officer:** Roger Hollingworth,

**Membership Secretary and General Secretary:**

Jill Fitzroy-Kelly (03) 5672 5235

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*



Friends of Churchill Island Society Newsletter

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

Print Post Approved PP033039/00001

Postage  
Paid  
Cowes  
3922

Surface  
Mail

**WINTER 2005**



# FOCIS

**Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.**

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