



FOCIS

newsletter

Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.

WINTER 2008



PRESIDENTS CORNER

FOCIS Membership Benefits

Following the request by PINP Management, we have completed a review, which was put to and passed as a resolution at the General Meeting held on May 24, 2008. Effective as and from July 1, 2008 FOCIS Membership Benefits will comprise:-

1. Unlimited visits to Churchill Island during normal business hours.
2. Discounted entry to special events (Price on application).
3. 25% discount off current public gate prices charged at the Penguin Parade and Koala Conservation Centre,
4. 20% discount off items purchased from PINP gift shops.
5. 10% Discount off purchases of food and beverages (alcoholic beverages and liquor excluded) purchased at PINP cafés. **NOTE: Discount is not available at The Nobbies Café.**
6. Discount off purchases of food and beverages (alcoholic beverages and liquor excluded) purchased at the Churchill Island café.

FOCIS AGM and 2008/9 Elections of Officers

Thank you to Members who attended General Meetings and/or participated in FOCIS activities during the past year. I would ask all members to respond to the questionnaire included on the back of the membership renewal form included with the Winter Newsletter. It is important that where applicable, members include comments giving real meaning to "yes" or "no" answers. The results of the questionnaire will provide the incoming committee with a clear understanding of what FOCIS means to members and the important planning objectives.

Do not delay your response - Do it now.

Thank you for your interest and participation.



CHURCHILL ISLAND MUSEUM / ARCHIVING CENTRE UPDATE

I recently attended a committee meeting of the Phillip Island & District Historical Society Inc, to discuss and seek support for the proposed Museum/Archiving Centre proposed for Churchill Island. I am delighted to inform members that we have received a letter of support from the PI & DHS, which agrees that the establishment of a museum on Churchill Island would complement the historic Amess Homestead. Most importantly, the PI & DHS is happy to offer the services of Gaye Cleeland to the steering committee.

The decision to proceed or not proceed is dependant on whether or not FOCIS Members are willing to form a steering committee to undertake essential research to establish the inventory of held historical items, artefact preservation equipment and techniques, photographic and electronic recording equipment, Inventory item description and recognition techniques and record keeping protocols and disciplines. The proposal offers opportunities for members to get involved and learn these skills and disciplines.

If you are willing to head or serve as a member of the steering committee, please contact Secretary Jill. (5956 7109)

FOCIS VISION STATEMENT

TO PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CHURCHILL ISLAND

FOCIS MISSION STATEMENT

- TO ENSURE ALL INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN AT CHURCHILL ISLAND ARE INFORMED BY OUR VISION TO PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE UNIQUE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CHURCHILL ISLAND.
- TO SUPPORT THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE HISTORIC WORKING FARM, HOMESTEAD BUILDINGS AND GARDEN.
- TO CONTINUE TO SHARE WITH MEMBERS OF STAFF THE HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE THAT IS AVAILABLE IN THE FOCIS MEMBERSHIP.
- TO ASSIST IN ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE IN HARMONY WITH THE FOCIS VISION STATEMENT.



WORKING HORSE FESTIVAL 2008

I would like to thank the many Members and friends who volunteered their time to the Festival. Over 40 members helped out over the 5 days (yes, we start on Thursday and finish Monday!).

Thank you :-

Maureen & Mick Barden	Ann & Peter Jelly
Ian & Dianne Barlow	Jan & Ian Jonas
Josie Billman	Kim Johnson
Ted Brown	Doreen Johnson
Nancy Brain	Daniel Lelong
Kevin Brew	Tonia Luther
Bruce Chambers	Brenda Otto
Chesterman Chalmers	Hillary Mackley
Laurie Chisholm	Marianne Pattinson
Pam Copeland	Ian & Betty Rankcom
Linda Dendle	Sharon Smart
Jan Gray	Fiona & Louise Smith
Anna Hepburn	Barbara & Jim Stephens
Sue Hollingworth	Christine Tompkins
Margaret Hunter	Andy & Lorraine Williams
Adrienne Hutchinson	Andrew Wheeler

(If I have missed you. Please accept my apology.)

Some Members took responsibility for various areas. Keith Hocking & Laurin Martin (Horses), Roger Hollingworth (Traffic), Christine Grayden (Information Tent), Fred Allen (Breakfasts) & Jan & Jean Hocking (Lunches) and their efforts are to be commended.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

26TH July 2008

Education Room, Churchill Island
Information Centre

1.30 p.m.

All Committee positions are up for
nomination.

Nomination Forms available from:

Jill Allen

Hon Secretary.,

Ph/fax 5956 7109

E-mail: nellaa32@waterfront.net.au

P. O. Box 852, Cowes 3922

I have had quite a lot of feedback from Members saying what they thought were the good and not so good aspects of the Festival. These have all been collated and were presented at the Festival Debrief held with P.I.N.P. earlier this month.

The consensus of opinion is that the Festival needs to get back to its "grass roots" with more emphasis on "things rural". This will be taken into account when planning for W. H. Festival 2009.

If you have any ideas of suitable entertainment/demonstrations/stalls please let me know and I will pass them on to the Committee.

Again, my thanks.

Jill Allen.



The magnificent Clydesdale working horses



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Winter is here again, as you walk briskly around the island to enjoy the fabulous views, or stroll to Amess house in a leisurely fashion, to enjoy the garden or to see the animals, remember that Carlo and his team are waiting in the café with a warm fire and delicious food to satisfy the inner person.

Carlo always puts much thought into his menus and comes up with some really lovely ideas, Whether you only want a coffee and cake or something more substantial to eat (a hearty soup and crusty bread always is appealing on these chilly winter days) you will always be satisfied.

CHURCHILL ISLAND PLANTING DAY SATURDAY 19TH JULY 2008

10.00 a.m 12.00 Noon.
(Morning tea provided.)
All welcome

* Wear sturdy boots & wet weather clothing.



FIONA MCCARTHY - FARM REPORT

As I sit to write this column, I have just been told that our good morning wallaby was killed by a car this morning inside the gate. Are speed humps, speed signs and nature reserve signs not enough to alert all motorists to slow down for wildlife on the Churchill Island road? Wildlife deaths on the highway between The Newhaven swamp and Fisher's Wetland are common, but the relevant road authorities are reluctant to reduce speed in this zone. How very sad that the same unnecessary death has occurred in our own slow zone which should be a safe haven for the Swamp Wallabies.

Where do I go from here? Churchill Island is looking lovely in its autumn glory. The piglets are becoming raucous and very energetic particularly at feeding time. Our ducklings have grown and join the wild ducks in the evening waddle to the dam. The many leaves from the fig tree, elm and others have been added to the compost and will make terrific mulch. On the jobs list rotting weather boards have been replaced on the old laundry and back wall of Amess house. New spouting has been put around Rogers' cottage and the works area.

Staff have been busy with events, weddings, tours and demonstrations of old time farm/household tasks. Oats and lucerne crops were sown by Dave Newman and his team of Clydesdales in early May.

The new Farm Assistant Tim Vella joined the team in March and is proving an invaluable help to Gordon with general farm maintenance. Tim was a trainee with the PINP 2007 student program and was successful in his application for the Farm Assistant job when advertised. He is an expert when it comes to milking Samantha; Tabitha our previous milker has been joined with Wallace.

The fire will be crackling in the cottage over winter so bring your marshmallows and say giddyay.

Fiona



REFLECTIONS OF YESTERYEAR

How many of you born after 1952 had seen horses pulling farm machinery before you saw it being done at our Working Horse Festival.? How many have leaned against the warm flank of a cow and milked her by hand? Do you realize that many of the skills demonstrated on Churchill Island are fast becoming things of the past?

Being a blacksmith, using a cross cut saw, collecting eggs from your own chooks, making butter etc. What we can experience here on Churchill Island is a most important part of Australian history and we must continue to set the stage where these heritage skills belong. We must not let the modern world sweep away these activities that help to explain what Australia has been and where we ourselves fit into the scheme of things.

We are so lucky to be part of this growth.

In the 1880's, a number of people selected land around Leongatha and towards the wild country of Wilson's Promontory and further down in Gippsland. Part of "the Prom" had been privately owned, but after 1906 it was used for agistment only, and in the winter season, nearby farmers could apply for permission to graze their cattle on certain areas to augment the feed supply. One of the exhibitors at our working horse festival comes from a family who made use of this situation, and at the start of winter the men would set off with mobs of cattle, being followed with horses and buggy and food supplies, adding meat and bread at Fish Creek. When they reached Shallow Inlet after many days of travel, the cattle could commence their trip along the beach until they reached the grazing area. This was easier going than through the bush, but had to be done at low tide and avoiding quick sands. At the end of winter, several days were spent mustering scattered cattle into a mob and the journey reversed. On reaching "Yanachie Station" stockyards the cattle were drafted into the mobs belonging to each owner and returned home. This is just one of the stories now 100 years old that is part of the farming heritage of Victoria and it is important that we understand about the hard work and determination that our fore bears put into their survival.

Exhibitors at our festival must have many stories like this in their family history, connected by time to our own history of the early days on Churchill Island. We must protect our heritage and share it with others, it is precious.

From a FOCIS member

Left: Clydesdale and adoring friends at the Working Horse Festival



REBECCA SANDERS REPORT

Dear All

As we speak I am hard at work, attempting to finish my first written chapter. Although my thesis as a whole will examine the way in which Churchill Island was understood and used over a two hundred year period (or thereabouts), this chapter will focus on Churchill Island's transformation into a place "for the people". It therefore focuses on efforts to purchase the island, and its early transformation under the auspices of the Victorian Conservation Trust.

It has been fascinating to look at the way in which Churchill Island was valued during the years 1973 to 1983. There was some early debate about the possibility of "returning" the island to its pre-European state, an idea I attribute to the growing strength of the environmental movement and historical understandings of so called 'natural landscapes' and nature more generally.

It has also been interesting to look at the way in which the Victorian Conservation Trust expected to be able to fund its vision for Churchill Island primarily through the fundraising efforts of the Churchill Island Restoration Group. While this group made significant contributions to Churchill Island's future, its efforts proved to be an impractical long term solution to the problem of funding Churchill Island's restoration and management. The records kept at Churchill Island of both successful and unsuccessful attempts to persuade Australian companies to bank role Churchill Island's transformation demonstrates the extraordinary extent of the Victorian Conservation Trust's dependence on donations.

Last though not least, I have been intrigued by the way in which the early restoration and conservation efforts on Churchill Island proceeded. The employment of Carroll Schulz, commissioning of a management plan, erection of a bird hide, tree planting and partial restoration of buildings all helped to transform the island into the historic conservation site that the Victorian Conservation Trust desired it to be. In many ways, the Trust's efforts were not only physical, but perceptual also. The Trust not only transformed Churchill Island's landscape, but people's understanding and opinion of it, as it encouraged visitors and donors alike to take an active interest in Churchill Island's historic and conservation potential.



EITET in action (Executive Information Tent Erection Team) President Fred, Treasurer Roger



Left:
Jim Stephens,
Christine Grayden,
Hillary Mackley
and
Margaret Hunter.
"I" is for
FOCIS
Information
(or listen
"Intently"? to
the music)



BRIEF REPORT FROM ULTAN O'DWYER

Communications and Events Executive PINP.
Chinese Amway Delegation.

Recently we hosted nearly 7000 Chinese Delegates at Churchill Island for the Amway Incentive Event. It was a tremendous success, providing employment to over 250 locals and the contribution FOCIS made to the event was outstanding!

Delegates fell in love with Churchill Island, especially the activities such as sheep shearing, blacksmiths, champion working dogs, teams of Clydesdale working horses, entertainment and a chance to try Billy tea and damper as part of the experience. The welcome they received in the old fashioned costumes from FOCIS volunteers was excellent, and your contribution was a major factor in Churchill Island being voted the number one destination for the delegates in the whole of Victoria during their visit!

Please also find an excellent article written on the event and our success at <http://www.bizparade.com.au/article/detail.php?id=243>

Ultan O'Dwyer



The Balloon Lady - always a favourite with the children at the Working Horse Festival (in extreme high heels)



Some of the nearly 7000 Amway visitors to Churchill Island (voted the best)



Fiona and an Amway visitor knitting wool from the spinning wheel



Col Spellings' ever popular working dogs in action at the Working Horse Festival



OPINION PIECE BY PAT BAIRD

Many of us have watched with growing concern over the past year or two as Churchill Island has been used more and more frequently as a venue for larger and larger events. It has been inappropriately labelled "Chill Island" which sends a chill of dread into many hearts. More recently it has had large white marquees erected which are visible across the bay, as well as up to 20 large buses parked. Extensive areas of pasture are used as parking space for the large events that take place.

My fear is that this trend will continue and that slowly the intrinsic integrity and historical fabric of this important piece of Victorian history will be damaged beyond repair.

I recognize that Churchill Island is costly to staff and maintain but strongly believe that costs would be significantly lowered if we were to NOT employ entertainers and external contractors to provide services for events that are TOO big and NOT RELEVANT to Churchill Island's essential nature. The Working Horse Festival, Markets, Seasonal and Garden Festivals are entirely appropriate and well supported. (Less so when accompanied by loud music) I am sure that if we use our creative thinking capacities we can come up with more suitable ideas. In the past low key events have produced acceptable income. Big is not necessarily better, particularly in view of the way our world is going right now, we need to emphasize low key activities. In fact Churchill Island is an ideal place to show how things can be done in a simpler and less power reliant way to bring to the public consciousness that it is entirely possible to live with much less power usage.

In my view the Working Horse Festival should be toned down with much less emphasis on noisy entertainment which is out of sync with the stated aims written into the PINP Management Plan 2006-2011.(Section 2, 2.1.7 - Churchill Island) which states "The future management and development of Churchill Island will focus on building on the strengths of the island - the peaceful and historic atmosphere, attractive settings and enhance(d) visitor experiences."

My fear is that we have moved very far from this stated aim. The once tranquil island is turning into an offensive neighbour, both visually and aurally.

If Phillip Islanders and Focis members want Churchill Island to retain its most important qualities, its tranquility and its peaceful historic ambience, we must speak up.

I urge members to fill in the questionnaire enclosed with this newsletter and return it to Focis ASAP if you have similar concerns. A small sub committee has been formed to assess member's responses to these important questions. If you wish to contact me direct, my email is patbobaird@waterfront.net.au. I will see that your concerns are passed on to Focis executive committee and PINP management.

Pat Baird

PS Perhaps we should keep in mind the lyrics of Joni Mitchell's 1967 Song---Big Yellow Taxi.

Don't you know it seems to go?

You don't know what you've got till it's gone.

They paved paradise, and put up a parking lot!!!

Look Mummy, there's a duck!
A goose looks on at a family enjoying the best of what Churchill Island offers at the Working Horse Festival.

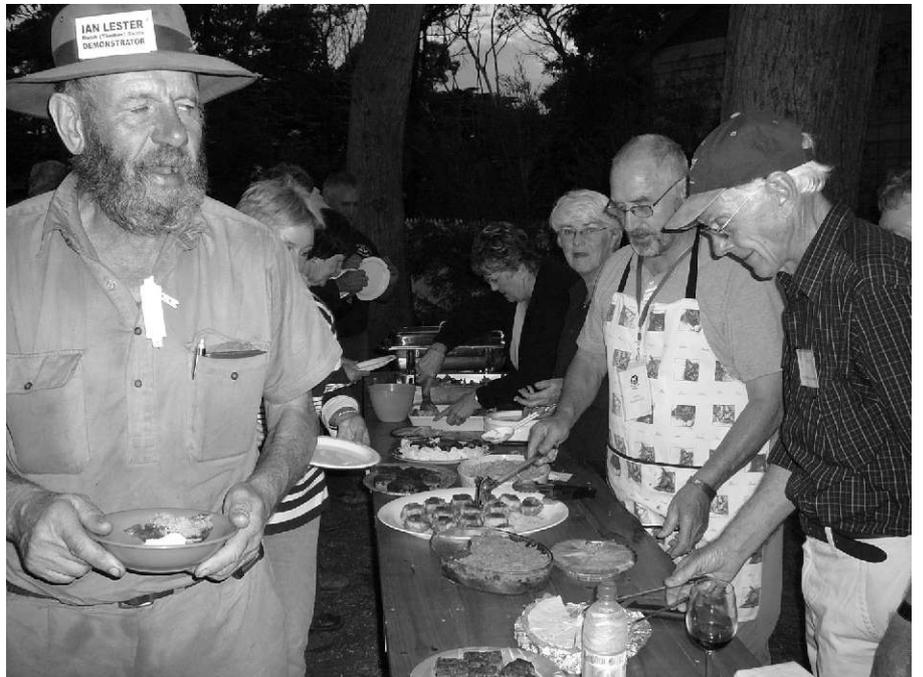




Left: Australia Fair
A Verbeek 73 Key
Travelling Concert Organ
in competition with other music



Right: Ian Lester, a regular exhibitor
at the Working Horse Festival
at the Delicious Desserts table



Left: 3D - Decisions, Deciding, Desserts
- in the twilight



Dear FOCIS members and the general public,
Invitation: To Replant and beautify the Visitor Centre surrounds.

Who: Join the Phillip Island Nature Park and Friends of Churchill Island in replanting around the Visitor Centre.

When: 19th July from 10.00am to 12.00 pm.
(A National Tree Day Event)

Where: Meeting out the front of CI Visitor Centre.

"Join us for morning tea, coffee and cake....."

Indigenous vegetation will be used so as to blend in with the surrounding environment and provide valuable habitat for native animal species.

If you are interested in helping out with the planting, turn up on the day or call to register your interest.

If you have any further enquiries please contact Jill Allen on 5956 7109 or myself on 5951 2829 or 0409 852 481.

Yours faithfully,
Mark Merryfull Revegetation Officer



The Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc. Newsletter
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WINTER 2008



The Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.

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