

Friends Of Churchill Island Society Inc.

FOCIS

NEWSLETTER

ABN 78667051020 INC. No. A 002 19007W

August AGM (See page 3)

GM 21/11/2020

40th birthday celebrations

10th October 2020.

Working bees:

Sat 12 September & Sat 14

**November both 8 a.m.-10 am -
house & cottages.**

NATURE PARKS ARE REOPENING ON FRIDAY 5 JUNE!

See page 6

From the Curator, Sam Happe who has been keeping an eye on the collection while the Island is closed.

"I am very pleased to report that the collection has surprisingly little dust or cobwebs on it. The items (and the rooms themselves) have remained clean - there was not all that much to clean. Everything is in the same condition it was left in, and once I performed a thorough cleaning today, I closed up blinds and covered up some items to minimise further UV damage or settling dust. I think having the doors completely closed up with the lights off has been very beneficial in reducing the spiders, moths, and other insects that like to call Amess House/ Rogers Cottage home."

Machinery shed interpretations.

The funds for this were supplied through FOCIS from donor members.

Final illustrations have been received

Posts are in the ground and signs will be printed and installed in the next few weeks.

The rope for dividing the spaces has been ordered.

This is very good news as we have been awaiting progress for some time and it is great that the available extra time has allowed it to progress to fruition..

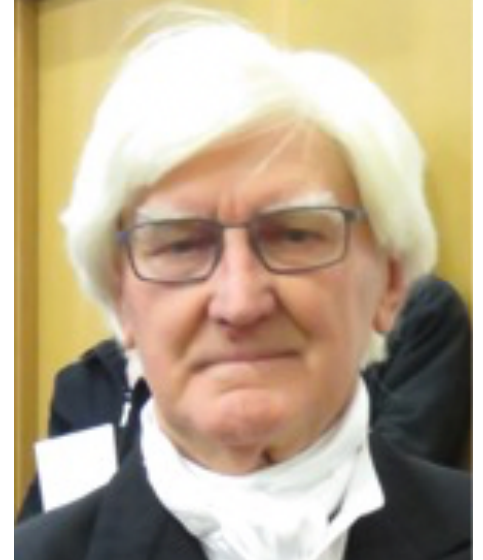
Letter from our President

Dear Members

I hope you are all well and surviving the Covid 19 lockdown. For me it has been a lifestyle change and at times very frustrating. However, on the positive side I have disposed of 2 recycle bins of unwanted paper-work from my office and shed.

Like me you are probably missing Churchill Island and FOCIS activities. At the time of writing, restrictions are now gradually being lifted and hopefully we will be able to restart our activities soon and have our AGM on August 15th.

As you may be aware our secretary Christine Grayden has been unwell and had a stint in Hospital and rehabilitation. Christine is home now and we wish her a timely recovery.



Look after yourselves and best wishes during this time of self-isolation. Remember there is always something to read about our beautiful little island on our website or Facebook page.

Graeme Clausen

Additional Payment Method

The Society is pleased to announce that we now have an additional payment method available on the FOCIS web site for membership subscriptions and donations.

This makes it much easier for users to pay using their Credit Card or Debit Card.

This action was taken because we found that some users were having problems when trying to make an online payment via PayPal. It's not too bad if the user already has a PayPal account but many people do not have a PayPal account and don't wish to have one. All they want to do is to pay by credit card or debit card.

In summary:

1. Instead of a 3-step process with PayPal, the user only has to perform 1 step.
2. Instead of the user having to enter 15 pieces of information to make a credit card or debit card payment via PayPal, the user only needs to enter 4 pieces of information. We are using Stripe to handle the Credit Card/ Debit Card payments: <https://stripe.com/au>

However, the only time you will see any reference to Stripe is when you receive a payment confirmation email from them when your Credit Card/Debit Card payment has been processed.

The PayPal option is still there for those people who prefer to pay using their PayPal account. Look for these options when renewing your membership online or making an online donation.

Please get in touch if you have any questions or concerns: treasurer@focis.org.au
Tom O'Dea, Treasurer

Message from the Committee about the 2020 AGM

The FOCIS 2020 AGM is currently scheduled for Saturday 15 August 2020. However, there may still be restrictions in place at that time which will prevent us from holding the meeting on that date. The Committee is considering other options, including the possibility of deferring the AGM until later in the year.

We are monitoring the situation and will keep members informed via the newsletter, or by email.

AROUND THE FARM

Chloe has sent me the following to let you know what the team have been up to at Churchill Island. Thanks Chloe for the initiative and thinking of us all!

I hope you enjoying the read as much as I did. Here it is:

Churchill Island has been enjoying a face lift during this unusual tourist free period. We have seen new coats of paint applied to the heritage buildings, chook shed, blacksmiths shop and stables. The signs are being oiled (thanks to Jeff for starting this!) making them look bright and brand new.

We are seeing some new landscaping and gardens built between the house and farm areas, to create a softer and more blended feeling between the two areas.

The Horse works pump has been repaired and refurbished, ready for use when we re open, and a garden has begun being built around the base.

We have plowed the paddock in front of the cafe, ready for a crop of Oats.

General farm maintenance and tidying is being caught up on and preparations are being made for the post and rail fence completions on the driveway.

There has been a large amount of tree work done around the property, with pruning and general tree health checks.

The animals have all been enjoying a holiday, including Dolly the pig who has been enjoying free run of the property, helping Kate in the garden by cleaning up the excess macadamia nuts and apples at lunch time.



FOCIS

The chickens and ducks are free range, with access to the veggie garden to help clean and fertilise the space for next crops. The ducks have also been helping rid the cabbage moss throughout the garden. The Guinea Pigs and Rabbit have had a nice big outdoor enclosure built and goats Tiger and Tim are still causing as much trouble as possible, spending most of their time.

Billy and Rip our working dogs are still getting their daily walks, but are also able to help around the farm and spend more time with farm staff whilst we are closed to the public.

George the cockatoo is enjoying his morning adventures and spends most the day wandering the garden.



We hope everyone is staying safe and well, and we look forward to welcoming you all back to see a fresh Churchill Island in the not so distant future!

Rachael Ferguson

Treasurers report,

The main items of income and expenditure during the last 4 months:

- 1 We received \$457.78 in Interest.
- 2 We received \$349.95 in cash donations from the Donations Box.
- 3 We spent \$256.04 on printing and postage of the newsletter (2 editions).

Tom O'Dea



We have lost two of our life members recently



FOCIS was sad to learn recently of the death of our founder Carroll Schulz. He was manager of Churchill Island from the late 1970s until 1993, and FOCIS was his brainchild. Carroll and his wife Amy (in voluntary role) worked as a team on the island, especially in the care, support and organisation of the many volunteers who helped out during their era. Carroll worked with FOCIS to apply for many important grants and to run many great events on Churchill Island. Apart from being one of nature's gentleman, and very conscientious, Carroll was a meticulous record keeper. Both Amy and Carroll were FOCIS Life Members until resigning from their roles a few years ago. Amy died 18 months ago. They will be both sadly missed.

Mary Mitchell was another FOCIS Life Member who has died recently. Mary was the much-loved Phillip Island kindergarten teacher for many years, and became a Churchill Island guide, along with her other community activities, especially at Smiths Beach where a reserve is named in her honor. Mary was very active on Churchill Island and in FOCIS, along with local environmental groups. For many years she assisted as a volunteer, shelving returned books in the library. A visit to Churchill Island or the library was made so much more enjoyable and meaningful if Mary was there to inform, help and share her love and enthusiasm of both. She was articulate and far-sighted, and will also be greatly missed.



Good news from the the Nature Parks.

WE'RE REOPENING ON FRIDAY 5 JUNE!

I am very excited to confirm that the Board agreed yesterday that we will be re-opening three of our venues from Friday 5 June.

The Penguin Parade, Koala Conservation Reserve and Churchill Island will re-open to visitors with restricted capacity, while the Nobbies visitor centre and Antarctic Journey experience are slated to re-open later in June.

The plan allows for up to a maximum of 100 visitors outdoors at each site, with a maximum of 20 inside the visitor centres at any one time. Based on these numbers, we can confidently implement appropriate physical distancing, and maintain enhanced cleaning and hygiene practices across our locations to ensure our team and visitors remain safe. We have also established a number of physical distancing measures at each site which we will talk to you about throughout next week.

Here's a quick summary of how it will look across the Nature Parks:

Penguin Parade We will offer General Viewing, Penguins Plus, Underground Viewing and the Ultimate Adventure Tour only. The Guided Ranger Tour and VIP Tour will not be available for the immediate future, however we will re-assess these two products within the next few weeks.

We are still working through the available options with regard to our Food & Beverage spaces at the Penguin Parade, however we can confirm that we will be opening the main Retail store from next Friday. We will update you once we have been able to finalise arrangements with Delaware North to offer some form of catering options.

Churchill Island will continue to offer farm demonstrations, without giving visitors the opportunity to participate in any hands-on activities such as cow milking and whip cracking. We also cannot guarantee sheep shearing every day until we secure a regular supply of wooly sheep! The retail space will be opening and we will confirm food and beverage operations over the next few days.

Koala Conservation Reserve will open largely unchanged. Visitors will still be able to visit the boardwalks and the woodland walking trail, subject to physical distancing being observed and practiced. The retail space will be opening and as above, we will confirm food and beverage operations once we have the details.

It is important to note that we will not have any on-site ticket sales available, and entry to all three venues for the general public will be through online ticket purchases only.

We are very excited to be able to start the process of opening.

VOLUNTEERING

As restrictions start to ease we are starting to plan for the recommencement of Volunteering. This will happen in a staged approach that will be guided by advice from the Chief Health Officer. Stay tuned for an update on this soon.



Gerald Buckley - life and times

by Christine Grayden
(continued)

In 1928 Gerald heard from his Melbourne business associates that Churchill Island was for sale. He took Bob Jeffery, whose work Buckley admired, with him to inspect the island. They came by ferry, stayed overnight at the Isle of Wight Hotel in Cowes, then Bert West (of Penguin Parade fame) drove them in his hire bus to Newhaven. From there they rowed over to Churchill Island. The handlers of the Amess sale had a Jimmy Laycock as caretaker for the island, but it was very run down and over-run with rabbits. However, Gerald had faced that situation on a much larger scale before of course, and was not at all deterred. He bought the island on the spot for £2,000 and asked Bob and his brother Ted to live there and develop it into a top dairy farm for him.

Gerald bought a herd of top Ayrshire cows and a bull named "Claude" who could only be handled by covering his eyes to calm him down. Unlike today when bulls are bred to be much quieter, ferocious bulls were quite common until the mid-20th centuries.

Access to the island was a big problem so Jack and Harry Cleeland of Cape Woolamai helped the Jeffery men lay a corduroy track of swamp tea tree laced together with plain wire and anchored with spikes driven into the mud. The track went from St Paul's Boys Home to the south east point of Churchill Island. When a guide post became visible as the tide went out, they knew it was time to cross with horse and cart. The cream was also taken across this track.

Gerald also owned 10 acres in Churchill Road where he had a shed to house a single-seater Overland car for the men's use. They also stayed in the shed if they had to wait overnight before getting back to Churchill Island. By the early 1930s they had Churchill Island in such good condition that they won a prize in the Shire of Phillip Island's prestigious "Better Farming" competition. Gerald was no doubt delighted.

On one of Gerald's visits to the island in 1935 he informed the brothers that he had decided to leave them Churchill Island in his will. He returned to Narrapumelap to his busy life and did not get around to changing his will. On February 19 he went to his kennels to chain one of his Pointers and apparently suffered a massive heart attack and died, just as his father Mars had done in 1905 aged 80. Gerald was missed a few hours later and eventually found under a tree near the kennels at 7 o'clock that night. He was 79.



Gerald Buckley giving rides in his new

FOCIS WEBSITE CO-ORDINATOR SOUGHT

Are you tech savvy? Would you like to contribute to FOCIS but unable to attend any of our working bees or meetings?

You can still help FOCIS in your own time and home by taking on the role of updating and 'tidying up' our website, which is now almost 10 years old and needs some TLC. Content and support provided.

If you are interested, please contact Tom O'Dea on webmaster@focis.org.au



The Friends of Churchill Island Society
Newsletter

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