



FRIENDS OF CHURCHILL ISLAND

Churchill Island Via San Remo, 3925 Victoria.



NEWSLETTER NO. 1

SPRING 1980

On behalf of the Victoria Conservation Trust, I offer a warm welcome to members of F.O.C.I.S.

The Friends of Churchill Island Society has been formed to enable interested people from all walks of life to assist in the restoration and development of Churchill Island off Phillip Island in Westernport Bay.

Churchill Island is one of Victoria's most historic places and one of Australia's most beautiful.

The Island's peaceful, fertile 57 hectares are a haven for wildlife and humans alike.

On this Island the first wheat was planted on Victorian soil and a cairn has been erected to commemorate this event. It is believed that the wooden block house erected on the Island in 1801 by Lieutenant James Grant of the "Lady Nelson" is the first building to be constructed in Victoria.

Surgeon George Bass in his tiny boat "The Tom Thumb" had discovered Churchill Island in 1798 during a hazardous voyage south from Sydney Town.

Lieutenant Grant named the Island for his friend, John Churchill, of Daulish in Devon, England, who had provided the seeds which Grant planted in 1801. On his return a year later Lieutenant Murray recorded in the ship's log his amazement at the success of the plantings which had included wheat, maize, peas, rice, onions, potatoes, peaches, nectarines and apples.

A colourful history of the Island has been written by Graham Pizzey and illustrated by Robert Ingpen. The book is available free to members of the Society.

Churchill Island is not an isolated area. It is an integral part of a coastal environment of special importance to the conservation of wildlife.

It is close to the Rhyll Inlet which is an outstanding feeding area for waders. The inlet extends inland to the fresh water Rhyll swamp, a valuable breeding area for native birds.

The Environmental Studies Centre of the University of Melbourne, on behalf of the Trust, has completed a detailed master plan for the Island's development.

*Honorary Secretary:
Carroll Schulz*