

FOCIS

NEWSLETTER

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may stop most of what NP want us to do. There will be some changes

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WELCOME TO MOORELAND CHARLIE

Thanks to Chloe for finding the opportunity, FOCIS has been able to purchase Charlie, an 11 year old Clydesdale gelding, from Dean Glass Racing in Garfield. Charlie is an experienced horse and has worked pulling carriages in Melbourne and Sovereign Hill. FOCIS arranged a medical examination which he passed with flying colours.

Charlie arrived on February 8 and was greeted by Pete, Alice, Chloe Woolley, Cecily and David Woodberry, David Maunders and Kate Wills.



Charlie was soon hitched up to the small wagon and driven around the farmyard by Alice, though Charlie soon knew the way and needed little direction. The wagon will need a new brake system to meet safety standards but

the restoration team seem able to undertake this. A hitching post is a priority and Pete will have this installed shortly.



Charlie was introduced to his paddock companion Nellie who was not impressed and was quite jealous for a while.

DATES:

2023

May 13

1:30pm General Meeting

June 10

10am -12pm Working Bee

August 12

1:30pm AGM

October 14

10-12pm Working Bee

November 18

1:30pm General Meeting

Charlie was soon also introduced to Nature Park CEO Catherine Basterfield and to the FOCIS committee.



It will be some weeks before farm staff are up to speed on working with Charlie but it is hoped that he will be demonstrating farm equipment and offering wagon rides before too long. He is keen to get back to work.

Charlie is a major investment for FOCIS and Treasurer Tom O'Dea has initiated a funding drive to try to recover some of the outlay.



SUCCESSFUL WORKING BEE ON 4 MARCH

Eleven stalwart FOCIS members gathered at 8 am on Saturday 4 March for the first working bee of 2023. Unfortunately, Kate Wills was unable to supervise garden work but left instructions for the beheading of hydrangeas and weeding of the grapevines. Ruth worked on the hydrangeas and vines ably assisted by new volunteer Jill Massey.



Linda and Robyn cleaned Rogers cottage



and David and Terry swept the guano from the half cellar.



Warwick, Daniel and Don addressed the

never-ending cleaning of the machinery shed while Tom tackled the cobwebs which return frequently all over.



Following the toil, we gathered for morning tea in Rogers cottage with a superb chocolate cake provided by Robyn. Thanks to all involved. Next Working Bee 10 June.

Thanks to all involved for a good effort with little guidance and instruction.

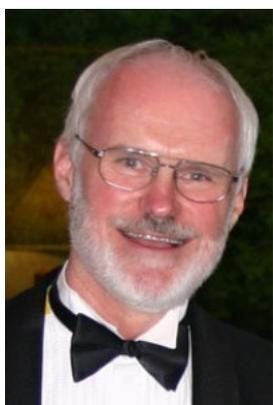
FAREWELL TO KATE WILLS

We were sad to hear of the departure of Kate our horticulturalist for the last several years. The gardens receive frequent positive comments from visitors and have featured on TV lifestyle programs such as *Gardening Australia* and *Postcards*.

It is however extremely disappointing to learn that her replacement will only be employed for half the time, two or three days per week. Some years ago, FOCIS successfully lobbied for the horticulturalist position to be full time and it is frustrating to hear that we will have to go through this again.

We lost many volunteers from the garden through Covid and were working to replace them. Volunteers can unwittingly do damage and need training and supervision from the professional which eats into her time. The Churchill Island gardens are follow a heritage plan in order to maintain their historic form. We hope that Nature Park management will reconsider this decision which can potentially lead to the degradation of these fine gardens.

TREASURER'S REPORT.



Membership numbers are holding steady. We have started asking, "How did you find out about us?" with the most common response being from a staff member or guide.

We are in a healthy financial position with enough income to cover our running costs and a bit left over so we can continue to contribute to various heritage activities.

FAREWELL TO LEAH TEMPANY



We are also sorry to lose the services of Leah Tempany who has made great contribution as general secretary of FOCIS over the last four years. Leah and her husband Warwick are undertaking a volunteer project in the South Pacific based in

Hawaii for the next eighteen months. As general secretary, Leah has effectively managed FOCIS by arranging meetings and working bees, dealing with meeting records and agendas, answering correspondence, submitting grant applications and many other tasks. She will be very much missed.

Photo: Leah with FOCIS president David Maunders

We've paid \$18,000 for the purchase of the Clydesdale Horse. This payment has been made from the Heritage Fund. In the new year, a further \$8,200 was paid from the Heritage Fund and the remaining \$8,000 was paid from the Operating Fund because we don't have enough money in the Heritage Fund to cover the full cost.

We now need to think about how we can replenish our funds.

Re the use of money from the Heritage Fund.

The Heritage Fund is referred to as a Public Fund.

The Tax Office has very strict rules about money going into a Public Fund and money being paid out of a Public Fund. We need to make sure we comply with these rules, otherwise we will lose the tax-deductibility status of the Fund.

Basically, the only money that can be held in the Public Fund is from donations, and interest earned on those donations. Any money in the Public Fund can only be used to further the Principal Purpose of the Association. Our Principal Purpose is “The

promotion of the moveable cultural heritage of Churchill Island”. Therefore, we need to make sure that any money paid out of the Fund complies with this requirement. In this case, the horse will be used for wagon rides and to demonstrate the use of the historic farm machinery on Churchill Island. Clearly, these are examples of activities that are promoting the moveable cultural heritage of Churchill Island, so we are complying with the rules.

Tom O’Dea.

PETE OFFICER’S REPORT



G'day FOCIS members

It was great to see a return to so many visitors to Churchill Island and our Nature Park attractions over the summer holidays. As I sit here in February, visitation has dropped off significantly so we're looking forward already to the next holiday season. Particularly, with Mooreland Charlie settling into his new home as we speak. Charlie is an 11-year-old Clydesdale gelding so it will be great to be able to offer buggy rides and demonstrations of historic farm equipment in the future. A big thank you to all people involved in FOCIS and a big pat on the back to get

him here and have some of that old magic return. Working horses have been a key part of our Churchill Island identity and we'd love to 're-spark' some of those old memories and create new ones.

We've had a huge events season covering weddings, Christmas parties, Ocean Sounds and it's been very pleasing to also see Sunday music is back. It's also great to have many new faces join our staff at Churchill Island such as Billy, Little Chloe and Erin so please them make feel welcome if you see them around.

I was very pleased to see a greater focus on our farm machinery restoration projects with new direction for the restoration team, so that moving forward we have a better understanding of what projects we need to prioritise. In particular, we'll be looking to restore the stump jump plough, hay wagon and wheat wagon so that they receive some much need attention.

All the best for an exciting 2023.

CURATOR'S REPORT



Dear FOCIS members

I hope everybody has had a great start to the new year. We had an excellent working bee before Christmas and my thanks to all involved in making Victorian era decorations for Amess House. I very much enjoyed spending time with everyone in the morning and the decorations added a lovely Christmas vibe to the Dining Room and Kitchen. I am extremely grateful to the wonderful volunteers that show such dedication and determination at these working bees in cleaning the scullery, Rogers Cottages, wash house and other areas of Amess House. It means a great deal to me to have this support. A big thank you also to Chloe for organising a fabulous BBQ lunch for everyone, Billy for his great cooking and all those who contributed to the lunch. My thanks also to David and Leah for all their support behind the scenes over the past year.

The excellent carol singing by the Phoenix Singers was also a wonderful contribution to the Christmas spirit on Churchill Island. We are immensely grateful to all those who gave their time to come and sing outside Rogers Cottage and Amess House.

Some exciting news to report is that Minnie has gone to Melbourne! The Minnie Lawrence sketchbook is currently being assessed so that a quote for services can be provided by the paper conservator at the

Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation (University of Melbourne). I delivered the sketchbook during January to the Centre which is housed at the National Archives/Public Records Office of Victoria building in North Melbourne.

I am awaiting a quote that recommends the work be approached in two stages. Firstly, to document the condition of the sketchbook and then dis-bind it and dry clean the pages before sending it off to be digitised. Once that is complete, the conservator can then rebind it together, having repaired the detached pages and the spine.

Thank you also to David and Karen who gave a talk to the residents at Banfields and used the opportunity to showcase pieces from our lace collection. I also had the chance to go through a sample of our beautiful lace collection to support the talk given by David and Karen to Banfields.

It has also been exciting to work with FOCIS and our PINP graphic design team to update two major signs for Amess House and Rogers Cottage. We are just in the process of proofing and arranging quotes and I'm sure everyone will be keen to see the new signs that will reflect current Churchill Island 'Time Unwinds' branding and the FOCIS logo.

Finally, it's been lovely to enjoy the gardens blooming over the summer. During the past few storms, we lost a lot of moonah tree population on Churchill Island near the ancient moonah settlement. Our horticulturalist Kate over the past winter, was able to get in 350 indigenous plants – 80 of these were moonah, with another 300 to go in this winter. This ensures that the future of this species is protected.

With thanks, Andrea

RESTORATION REPORT



The great news is that NP seem to be taking the restoration team seriously. Meeting with most of the crew were Rod, Peter and Helen from NP and we had a walk around discussing future projects.

Rod's aims for the team were far more ambitious than we had ever considered. Clive, being a professional project manager (retd.) will be asked to write up proposed projects etc with an eye to getting grants. Individual team members will be responsible for particular projects. The blue wagon will be restored as a static exhibit lifted on stands to get the wheels off the ground. The 4-wheel dray behind the shearing shed is on the list as is much of the older machinery in the weeds behind the new shed. The ploughs etc at the end of Pedro's shed are included in this. Professional sand blasting off site is the likely scenario. And I found another barely viable dray behind the cafe.....

Rod seemed to think that they have the budget, but there is, I think a year or 5s work in all this. He and Helen will make a priority list, and we may also be involved in some maintenance where appropriate. There is a snag in that the conditions and safety requirements for volunteers seem to have been written for guides etc, and the matter of project work (like the dray) not in the book so to speak. But there will be organisations that can just be copied in. At present the Stump Jump plough and the blue wagon are the priority, model in the administration of other similar with reconstruction of the Glass House when they get permission from Heritage Victoria. for a location, as the original one is

deep in the present garden. No doubt some of his other ideas will also clash. There is another project on a sensitive item involving public safety that is already under way.

The Wool Wagon remains had a big tree fall on it in a storm which broke it's strong back. So it has been covered and put aside as too dangerous to even stabilise as it could easily collapse and I was not happy about any of the team working on it without a proper assessment and mechanical support, lifting gear etc. Everything about it is very heavy and the potential for injury high. Rod said that that he thought the team needed a shed, with gantry and lifting gear and he even had a place just outside the heritage area to put it.

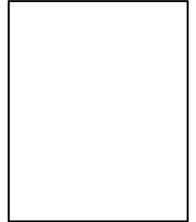
Finance of all this was not mentioned formally so it will be interesting to see what eventuates.
We live in hope, eh?
Cheers all,
Jeff

PRESIDENT'S PS

I have just heard that Cecily Woodberry and Bonnie Taylor have agreed to take the roles of General Secretary and Minutes Secretary respectively. We welcome them to the committee and look forward to hearing their ideas. Cecily organised the Carol Singing at Christmas and has found playable pianos for the drawing room and shearing shed for future musical events. Bonnie is a long standing FOCIS member. More details about them both in the next newsletter.

We look forward to showing members of the Nature Park Board around the island on 30 March and sharing some of the island's cultural heritage and work of FOCIS.

Nature Park has agreed to provide a touch screen in the visitors' centre to show videos such as 'Whispers from the Past' and Working Horses. We look forward to seeing this later in the year.



Friends Of Churchill Island Society Inc.

FOCIS