

FOCIS

General Meeting Minutes

1:30pm, Saturday 12th November 2022 at the Visitor's Centre Churchill Island

1) Welcome. We acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, the Bunurong/Boonwurrung people, and pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in our community today.

2) Attending:

David Maunders, Terry Holman, Tom O'Dea, Ruth O'Dea, Pauline Taylor, Don Johnstone, Leah Tempany, Warwick Tempany, Daniel Tempany, Irene McKell, Joy Woodman, Jan Cram, John Eddy, Annette Colpoys, Jeff Colpoys, Glenda Cameron and Ken Cameron.

Apologies:

Susan Trist, Diane Scukovic, David Van Dort, Graeme Clausen, Dianne and John Baird, Christine Grayden and Jeff Cole

3) That the minutes from the previous General Meeting of July 16th 2022 be accepted.
Moved Irene McKell / Seconded Pauline Taylor/ Carried

4) PINP Attraction Supervisor's Report - Read by David Maunders. Report attached.

5) Curator's Report - Read by Pauline Taylor. Report attached.

6) Executive Reports

a) President's Report – Attached

DM added that since the new NP board may not know much of CI history, the committee agreed to a gift of "History and Her Story" book for each board member along with an invitation to come for a guided tour of the historic farm.

DM added that the Christmas Carol singers may move around the farm, including a rendition of "Away In A Manger" in the stable.

General support was expressed towards purchase of a new, trained Clydesdale.

That FOCIS research the purchase of a new, trained Clydesdale.

Ruth O'Dea / Irene McKell / carried.

b) Treasurer's Report and Membership Secretary's Report by Tom O'Dea
FOCIS running costs are in the black. The main highlights are:

- The Term Deposit with the Cowes branch Bendigo Bank of \$40,862.00 invested for 12 months at 2.75% matures on 13 September 2023. Expected interest income = \$1,123.
- A grant of \$740.00 was received from Bass Coast Shire Council for the printing of the Large Print Edition of the Book. (Actual cost of printing 20 copies was \$740.00.)

- We've received an order from PINP for 100 copies of The Book. These have been delivered and the invoice has been sent. Payment of \$2,000 has not yet been received. It will appear in the next report.
- Cash from the Donations Box in Amess House = \$1,063.50 during the last 3 months.
- A major expense was a Custom Fabric Banner used at the "Whispers" performance = \$349.00.
- Another major expense was the conversion of the Harry Jenkins Super 8 films to digital video = \$560.00.
- And \$466.46 was spent from the Heritage Fund for purchase of materials for restoration projects.

Ruth O'Dea queried if the Clydesdale purchase could be from Heritage Funds – Tom was doubtful but will explore this possibility.

That the Treasurer's and Membership Secretary's Reports be accepted
TOD/PT/carried

- 7) Correspondence. A hard copy was available at the door. That the correspondence list be accepted. Moved DM / Seconded LT /
- 8) Business Arising from Previous Meeting - Nil
- 9) General Business
 - a) Restoration Report

Read by David Maunders. Report attached.

Ruth advised that the fly screen door directly in front of the front steps of Amess House has holes in it and queried if the restoration team could make a simple repair to help exclude insects from getting into the house. LT will email Peter Officer with this request.
 - b) Amess House 150th Anniversary Report

DM deferred this until the film and behind the scenes talk at the end of the meeting.
 - c) Dates for your calendar
 - NEXT SATURDAY – Working Bee combined with PINP volunteers (Cleaning outdoor machinery or decorating Amess House in Victorian era style) finishing with a BBQ lunch. Meet under the veranda near Fiddler's Green at 10am. Please RSVP for catering purposes.
 - 2023 February 11th – Next General Meeting
 - March 4th – Working Bee (Post-moth season clean)
 - d) PT showed a framed poem written by E Leiberman and printed by FOCIS, asking if anyone knew the background of it. Jan Cram offered to research for her.

Showing of the video, "*Whispers from the Past*" including a behind the scenes photostory by Laura Brearley with commentary by David Maunders and afternoon tea.

President's Report (FOCIS General Meeting 12 November 2022)

The day after our AGM we performed our play *Whispers from the Past* to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Amess House. Rain forced us to the shearing shed but both performances were well attended and well appreciated. The chairman of PI Nature Park Board attended on performance and commented that he had learned more about the history of Churchill Island. Realising that the Board might have a limited understanding of our history, the committee decided to donate a copy of *Churchill Island History and Herstory* to each member of the Board and the CEO. This was well received by the staff when I delivered them, but we have not yet had an official acknowledgement.

Nature Park has been delivered their second order of Churchill Island History and Herstory. This means we have sold more than half of our print run of 500 within a year. Summer is yet to come.

The film version of *Whispers from the Past* was finished in October and uploaded to our website. This has received favourable feedback. Our thanks to Terry Melvin for his hard work on this. We are showing this later in the meeting.

We acquitted the grant from Bass Coast Shire to print the large print edition and copies were donated to aged care facilities and libraries. As a result, we received an invitation from Banfields Aged Care to give a talk on Churchill Island history in period costume. Karen Black and I will make this presentation in January.

Phillip Island Nature Park received a second Living Heritage Grant from the state government of \$198,000 to for conservation works to Amess House, Amess Barn, the Cellar, the Cottage Kitchen and Laundry, and Rogers Collage at Churchill Island. This was not a FOCIS initiative though we gave written support for which we were acknowledged. Jarvis Weston, Nature Park person in charge, as offered to talk to our February meeting on what is planned.

I have had an exchange of correspondence with Kate Cleeland about carol singing at Churchill Island just before Christmas. A small mixed choir, conducted by Cecily Woodbury will sing in period costume around the Farm on 17 and 18 December at 1pm. This will complement the Christmas decoration working bee led by Andrea and Kate Wills (19 November).

This week Leah and I attended our regular quarterly liaison meeting with Pete and Andrea. We agreed on a number of possible joint projects for the coming year:

1. Revision of information banners on veranda and in Rogers Cottage. I have revised the text; Andrea will edit and arrange layout and design with NP. We will cost and Pete will see if NP will pay or we will decide if FOCIS will fund.
2. Touch screen in Visitors Centre to show videos: *Whispers from the Past*, *Working Horses* and 1801 re-enactment. Suggest asking Simon Eddy to set up system. This is a possible project for a grant. The historical society are undertaking similar projects.
3. We are agreed that wagon rides pulled by a Clydesdale are a highlight for many visitors. Sid and Max are getting a bit old for this; Nellie has not been trained and is probably too old to start. We would like to explore raising funds for a trained Clydesdale (up to \$20,000). This would also require an investment in staff training which Pete would try to cover. We will need a major fund-raising effort.

A number of restoration projects are in hand (Jeff will report) and Pedro's shed will at last be used to exhibit machinery.

David

Curator's Report, Andrea Cleland (**FOCIS General Meeting 12 November 2022**)

Dear FOCIS members

The inclement weather over the past month have provided some much-needed time for the cleaning of Amess House and our collection, particularly following the dust storms. You will hopefully see Amess House looking fresh and welcoming to visitors. It's great to see the beautiful ice chest that has been beautifully restored by Jeff and team also now on display in the kitchen. My deep gratitude to Kate Wills for her amazing contribution, hard work and dedication to ensuring the ongoing day to day maintenance of the house and gardens of Churchill Island. My deep thanks also to all the Churchill Island team and volunteers for the fabulous work they do in the house, gardens and demonstrations throughout the week.

I'm extremely happy to report that that we have just started the initiative of preserving files in the Volly Hut into storage boxes that meet National Archives of Australia (NAA) standards. We are very lucky to have Marg, a dedicated volunteer, with archival experience guiding the process. We will be starting with Victorian Conservation Trust files which is very exciting, and it's important to keep in mind, this will be a long and lengthy process. On another happy note, I have completed the bulk of the 2022 stocktake of currently listed objects room by room in Amess House and Rogers Cottages, as well as National Trust objects in our garden and other buildings. This room by room stocktake covered objects we hold from the National Trust as well as from our collection.

I heartily echo Peter's congratulation to FOCIS for the valued contribution you have made through the performance and production of *Whispers From the Past* and welcome David as President. I look forward to our next working bee with a Christmas theme on Saturday 19th November. The Churchill Island elves have reportedly started to get things ready in the Volly Hut...

With best wishes and gratitude, Andrea

G'Day Focis Members

Wet weather saw the Shearing Shed spring to life with a great performance of "Whispers From the Past"! Congratulations to all involved on celebrating 150 years of Amess House and the planting of the Norfolk Island Pine Homestead Tree. It's also great to see the play is now also available as a filmed production, further bringing to life the early years of Amess House as a holiday retreat.

With another successful September school holidays behind us, our team has been working hard to support the start of a very busy events season with our first lot of weddings being held. We are also close to finishing the shed in the works area that will be used to store equipment for events. That will free us up to further use Pedros' Shed as a covered area to permanently display some of our valuable historic machinery. We are looking at moving in the stationary baler and then mounting the engine that was originally with it, now that it's been repaired. The sulky on the southern end of the shed will also be brought in under cover. We're working through how best to be able to open the doors so that we have a permanently accessible covered display for visitors to engage with.

It's great that our fantastic Interchange Gippsland Farm Assistant Volunteers were recognized for their approach to Safety & Wellbeing at the recent PINP Excellence Awards. We also are deeply grateful for all our volunteers who contribute so much to Churchill Island from wool spinning to blacksmithing to the restoration team. Speaking of restoration, we are stoked to hear that we have been successful in the Living Heritage Grants program of the State Government. The grant will enable some much-needed conservation works to Amess House, Amess Barn, Rogers Cottages, half-cellar and wash-house such as the Amess House roof and some of the weatherboards that have deteriorated. Thank you to FOCIS for providing support of our now successful application.

Lastly, welcome to David Maunders as he takes up the role of president and I look forward working with you all and the enthusiasm and dedication you all bring to Churchill Island.