

Friends Of Churchill Island Society Inc.

# FOCIS

## NEWSLETTER

ABN 78667051020 INC. No. A 002 19007W

**Dates to remember:**

**Working bees:**

Sat 31 Aug 8am – 10am - 12 –Mach shed

Sat 9 Nov 8am – 10am – Spring Clean

**General meeting on Saturday, 9th November at 1.30 p.m. Speaker to be advised.**

**Annual General Meeting**

**Saturday, 10th August, 2019 1.30 p.m., function room, Churchill Island Visitors Centre. Speaker will be Phillip Island Endangered Species Officer Tom Nixon on the re-introduction of a few endangered species to Phillip and Churchill islands.**

***All positions will be vacant. Please note that we need a new President as David Maunders will be retiring.***

### The Churchill Island cannon in action

Sadly due to accidental damage no longer possible.



## Presidents report

Winter is upon us and a time to prepare for the busier summer months. It has brought welcome rain needed by the gardens and paddocks alike. We had a successful working bee in May when the house was given a good inside dusting and clean. We have another on 8 June when we will give a thorough clean to the historic farm machinery before it forms part of the new exhibition. The sheds have been built and signage is being prepared. The entrance to the visitor's centre has been rearranged and will soon include more information and historical items. We are hoping that the Lady Nelson will be relocated there. Thanks are due to Jeff and Christine for preparing yet another interesting newsletter.

Good wishes,




## “Geology of Western Port and Churchill Island”

Mike Cleeland gave a Power Point talk at the May GM

Mike introduced himself by saying he was from a long-term island family, and his father Harry used to deal with Carroll Schulz, manager of Churchill Island in the early days of government ownership. Carroll wanted Harry's sheep to keep the grass down on the island, and Harry got some fresh grass for his sheep there. Mike and Harry used to drive the sheep along the main road and onto the island, but the main road got too busy and after trucking the sheep a few times, the arrangement ceased.

Mike started his talk with a slide of the geology of Victoria, which is about 600 million years old. Western Victoria is all lava about 4 million years or less old, and has some pockets of hot rocks offshore. Wilson's Promontory, Cape Woolamai, Strathbogie and other areas are granite of about 400 million years. Other, sedimentary rocks are "dinosaur rocks" of about 125 million years old.

Western Port is mostly lava. Volcanoes were a 'volcanic field' around the island and Mornington Peninsula. 80% basalt lava came from fissures not conical volcanoes. Fault lines formed where earthquakes happen - e.g. Tyabb fault. There is probably still movement in the system. Two 'sunklands' - Western Port and Port Phillip.

(continued page 6)



## FRIENDS OF CHURCHILL ISLAND SOCIETY

### MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING 11-05-2019

#### 1. Welcome & Acknowledgement

2. Present: David Maunders (chair), Terry Holman, Christine Grayden, Tom O'Dea, Jeff Cole, Graeme Clausen, Peter Brookes, Irene McKell, Ruth O'Dea, John Eddy, Anne Balfe, Linda Patterson, Peter Jelly, Ray Leivers, Gaye Cleeland, Di Scukovic

3. Apologies: Pauline Taylor, Peter and Christine Fensham, Sue & Roger Hollingworth, Robyn Holman

4. Report on Churchill Island activities – read by Christine for Kate Adams

#### 1. Budget and Business Planning

The senior management team and Board have been busy over the last month finalising the priority initiatives for 19-20 financial year with three main initiatives being:

- office move to Cowes and KCC

- Transition to the new Penguin Parade visitor centre with handover date is now confirmed as the 13th of July and the operations will commence in the building in approx. 10 days following

- IT and Communications systems

Once we have Board approval of proposed Capital works projects for CI we will communicate these with FOCIS.

The Churchill Island playground development has been postponed till 2020 due to other priorities.

2. The Marketing and Communications Manager position has been appointed with Daniel Petrillo now confirmed to commence on the 13th of May. Daniel is joining us from a diverse marketing background in tourism, charities and schools and will surely be a valued addition to our team.

#### 3. Sand Sculpting

In March the Nature Parks Board endorsed a proposal for a Sand Sculpting event that will take place from December 2019 to April 2020 based at the Penguin Parade. This event has been successful elsewhere in the State and will activate the Penguin Parade Visitor Centre during the day. The theme for the event will be adapted to tie through to our own conservation messaging.

4. The next major Interpretation Project will be at CI and will include changes in the visitor centre and development of signage for the heritage garden and buildings, farm area and walking track. We look forward to working with FOCIS on ideas, themes and development of content for heritage signage.

5. The upgrade to the road and walking track from bridge to first gate have been completed and are now compliant with Worksafe requirements. We'd like to remind all regular users to keep to the 20km/hr speed limit within the shared road/walking section. Trev and the team are ready to install the second section of the fencing along the upper paddock to ensure visitor and livestock safety.

6. The bridge works are planned for June and will be undertaken after operating hours to ensure there is no interruption to business as usual.

7. The Easter Fun Festival was a huge success with great weather and excellent attendance over both days. Visitors enjoyed a variety of activities including demonstrations from the wool spinners and wooden toy making with the Wonthaggi Wood Turners group.

8. Roll out of the new brand for welcome, wayfinding and regulatory signs will commence very soon so you will start to see changes to signage in a number of areas

9. Capital works projects include purchase of plant and equipment, cattle yard repairs, bio- security systems, and fencing. Pedro's shed is on the list but is low priority compared to other works. The farm machinery interps will come out of my interps budget and hopefully will be done by July at the latest.

The bridge works (June) will repair concrete spalling on the bridge to make it structural sound.

10. Minutes of last meeting 9.2.19 Ruth O'Dea/Graeme Clauscen *Carried* 6. Matters arising from last meeting:

- a) Farm machinery display extension of shed. To President's report
- b) Risk assessments now being done for working bees.

c) Glamping question: Christine has not done this yet. To report at next meeting. 10. Correspondence - dealt with by committee. List of inwards/outwards available.

11. General Business

- a) Falling membership: what can we do about this? The committee spent some time this morning discussing ideas which Christine has noted. Christine quickly read through them for the general meeting. Her notes are available on request. To be followed up by committee, on the FOCIS Facebook page, in the newsletter, and on the website.
- b) Jeff Cole, newsletter editor, asked the meeting if members can contribute items or ideas for extra information to go in the newsletter apart from the various reports. e.g. information about old colonist families who had dealings with Churchill Island. David suggested that we put in the newsletter a request that whoever stole the billiard table from the Amess House dining room in 1976 should bring it back!

And now a reminder about our

## MEMBER BENEFITS

**Members subscriptions are now due. Thank you to members who have already paid.**

**Subscription rates are per household: \$30 Family. \$15 Pensioner.**

**\$20 per single member. All donations \$2.00 or over are tax deductible**

**Did you know there are many benefits to being a member of FOCIS?**

**These are:**

- \*Free entry to Churchill Island at any time and discount for special events**
- \*25% off entry to other Phillip Island Nature Parks attractions - Penguin Parade, Koala Conservation Centre, Nobbies Centre.  
(EXCLUDES Eco Boat Tours)**
- \*10% off food at Churchill Island, Penguin Parade and KCC. (excludes alcohol)**
- \*Four general meetings per year with interesting speakers on relevant subjects.  
\*Seasonal Newsletter, email or post.**
- \*Opportunities to participate in the upkeep and conservation of Churchill Island through 4 well organised working bees per year.**

**WE VALUE YOUR SUPPORT!**

(Members need to present their signed card each time to get the discounts).

## Curator's Report

Melissa Hayes.

Recently, caring for the Churchill Island collections has involved renewing the National Trust of Victoria loan agreement for the 177 items on display in the heritage buildings and revising cleaning of the buildings and contents. A new cleaning schedule prepared by the Curator with PINP staff means there is now an understanding of all cleaning activities and their need for resourcing. The Curator cleans museum objects weekly with the consistent assistance of volunteers. There is now budget assigned for professional washing and dry cleaning, so the house drapes have been dry-cleaned after the busy tourist period.

The Machinery Shed build is almost complete and arrangement of machinery to be housed in the shed is the next step. Christine and David have been involved in discussions with the Curator about several options for a display. Meanwhile, changes to the retail area in the Churchill Island Visitors Centre, has shifted the Curators activity to renewing displays in this area.

Volunteer assistance continues to be of great value to managing the Churchill Island heritage collections. Those working in the archive to date have registered approximately 1900 photos and stored them in archival folders so they are preserved and more accessible for researchers. From February, two intern students began at Churchill Island. Natalia Antigueira is completing a Masters of Cultural Heritage at Deakin University and Samanther Mather who is studying her Graduate Diploma in Museum Studies at Deakin University. Natalia completed her Internship in mid-April (120 hours), followed by Samanther commencing her project to audit collection items. Natalia researched and prepared museum Significant Statements about John Rogers sea chest and the blanket box that belonged to the Amess family. The Assessment requires focussed research on important museum objects, or groups of objects to identify their significance for a collection and comparatively in relation to other museum collections.

The research also supports the objects provenance, interpretation stories and information for preservation. This is a short edited summary of some of Natalia's research:

*The sea chest was owned by John Rogers and passed on for the next three direct generations until its donation to the Churchill Island Heritage Farm in 2012. Leaving Cornwall in 1838 by ship, Rogers went aboard the Florentia, taking with him the sea chest, traveling to New South Wales and eventually Victoria, Australia. The sea chest is significant for its association with John Rogers, one of the first habitants of Churchill Island, responsible for the Island's early development as a functioning farm. The chest has interpretive potential to reflect upon the migration story for John Rogers and represents the method of bringing modest personal belongings on a voyage to Australia at that time.*

*This sea chest is not an unusual object for its type, but it is in good condition and particularly well documented for the time period and the group that it represents. The inscription is of particular interest and indicates John Rogers status. The statement "wanted on the voyage" is said to convey that he wanted his possessions with him in his cabin, rather than stowed, as was the case for most passengers. No such sea chests were found in the same condition as this in the same region of Victoria (April 2019). Additionally, the inscribed name and instructions are certainly rare in objects of the same type.*



(continued from page 1)

**“Geology of Western Port and Churchill Island”**

Even where the island has alluvium, it is still basalt underneath. We have a little 'dinosaur rock' at Rhyll. Churchill Island is basalt as well.

Churchill Island is very weathered basalt, which turns to clay as it weathers. It contains 10% iron, and eventually rusts.

The Nobbies has about six layers of lava flows visible in the cliff face on top of each other. Perhaps six volcanoes erupted once each, or three erupted twice each. In the 1950s drilling was done for water and they went down 903 feet 6 inches through lava all the way; in fact, 43 layers of lava, so volcanic fissure eruptions were very



Mike showed a slide of the vertical "organ pipes" at Sunderland Bay, caused by cracking of the rocks as they cool.

A slide of Pyramid Rock showed its volcano shape, but it is not a volcano as it has granite as its base and no vent. The sea erosion has caused the channel between Pyramid Rock and the island, and also the Rock's shape.

Mike showed the Colonades at Cape Woolamai, and warned that these rock formations are very unstable. He was at Kilcunda when a lump of rock the size of a piano fell out of the cliff face onto the beach.



The next slide showed the hexagonal columns at Kitty Miller Bay. Mike said sections can be bought at the Quoin Hill quarry. He is thinking of buying some and slicing it into sections for a floor at his new house.



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A series of slides showed the various dykes around the island, which came out of fissure eruptions. e.g. Berry's Beach. Mike has mapped the dykes on the island and they all run the same east-west direction (showed map). They do not correspond with the fault lines, however. One scientist has a theory that they were shapes caused by a huge meteorite landing in Bass Strait which formed circular impact marks, but Mike does not think that's what's happened.

Mike showed a slide from inside a cave at Forrest Caves. People were inside but Mike warned that the roof was only about 50 cm thick, and very unstable, so not a good idea to go inside.

At the Newhaven Bore the Lower Cretaceous rock was reached at 294 feet down - dinosaur rock. You would probably need to drill 100m to get to dinosaur rock under Churchill Island.

Another slide showed a fault line at Cape Paterson. The nearby Wonthaggi mines had many, many fault lines which were a huge



Mike showed The Arch at Kilcunda. This is an example of where faults are exposed on the coast creating areas of weakness which the waves wash away.

French Island contains some basalt, some dinosaur rock and sand. Mike has only ever found one dinosaur item there but is going over next week to further explore.

Mike showed an interesting slide containing three graphs showing sea level on the Earth at 30 million years; 5 millions years and 500,000 years. According to a theory by Milankovich, warm followed by ice age cycles occur every 100,000 years or so due to alteration of the Earth's axis. In answer to a question regarding how human activity relates to climate change, Mike said that the Earth is warming due to the doubling of CO2 in the last few decades through human activity, although according to the Earth's axis theory, it should be cooling.

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Mike posited that the island is moving north. This is because the south coast is eroding and the eroded material is being deposited on the north coast. Meanwhile, mangroves are responding to rising sea levels by migrating inland into saltmarsh.

Mike showed a slide where this was clearly happening. Mangrove migration is also evident at Tooradin.

*Thanks to Mike Cleeland for a very interesting insight into the geology of the Churchill Island area.*



The Friends of Churchill Island Society  
Newsletter

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