

Friends Of Churchill Island Society Inc.

FOCIS

NEWSLETTER

ABN 78667051020 INC. No. A 002 19007W

Dates to remember:

General Meeting:

May 8th

Working bees:

17th April, July 17, Oct 9th.

FOCIS photos 1980 to 2020 needed for a short commemorative documentary for our celebration and our YouTube channel. If you have any at home you would like to share with us they can be scanned and image emailed to producer Christine grayden email : cdgrayden@gmail.com. Or contact Christine for further information.

Letter from our President

Dear Members

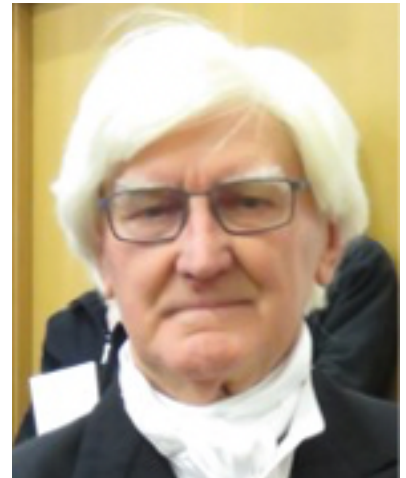
Hello all hope you are all well and enjoying the Autumn weather. We have recently sold our remaining stock of Pat Baird's book "Churchill Island and her History" . As a result we are in the planning stages of a reprint, some work is required before this can happen and we will keep you posted on progress.

FOCIS was represented at Phillip Island Nature Parks Open Day on Sunday. The FOCIS table was located under the Surf Lifesaving tent where our president Graeme presided. We placed the FOCIS sandwich board at the edge of the path to attract attention. We had about six serious enquires through the morning. My next door neighbours came as expected at 11.30 and I gave them a tour. They are seriously intending to take a family membership.

The Curator has resigned and we hope we can have some input into the recruitment of her replacement.

Regards to you all

Graeme Clausen
President



**Needed
New
FOCIS
Newsletter
Editor**

See page 8

FRIENDS OF CHURCHILL ISLAND INC.
General Meeting Minutes
30TH January 2021, 1.30 P.M.
The Nobbies Centre

Welcome & Acknowledgement:

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.

Present.

Graeme Clausen, Leah Tempny, Terry Holman, Tom O'Dea, Jeff Cole, Pauline Taylor, Ruth O'Dea, Warwick Tempny, David Maunders, Don Johnstone, Christine Grayden (via phone), Irene McKell, Jeff Nottle, Robyn Holman, Gaye Cleeland, Kate Adams.

Apologies.

Coral Bourke, Bonnie Taylor, Diane Scokovic, Lynne & David Lumsden, Peter & Glenyce Paul, Jan Jonas, Diane Baird, Susan Pearse, Peter & Christine Fensham, Marianne Cassar, Anne Davie, Peter Brookes, Cheryl Overton.

PINP Visitor Experience Manager Kate Adams report. (see page 4)

Business in a COVID normal environment

Strategic planning 2021-2023

Visitor experience projects at CI

Volunteers

David M endorsed PINP's plan to promote venues for weddings, conferences and other new initiatives to encourage return visits. He suggested FOCIS support through funding and applying for grants for various historical projects may be sympathetic to some of these plans.

David M expressed concern regarding the entrance gate ticketing system and potential for unpaid entry.

Kate A advised that the ticketing desk has been moved to the middle of the room with a view-line to the gate and PINP IT staff are also looking at a new booking system.

Curator's Report read by Kate Adams (see page 5 and 6)

Please note that the Lace Collection significance statement and Minnie Laurence Sketchbook significance statement contribute to the requirements for museum status.

Minutes of Last Meeting/AGM 29th August 2020 be accepted.

Ruth O'Dea/Pauline Taylor

Carried.

Matters Arising - Nil.

Reports from Executive Committee:

President's Report: (see page 1)

Treasurer's Report:

Total nett assets grew by a modest \$507 from \$27,784 as at 30 June 2020 to \$28,291 as at 31 December 2020.

One of our investments with RACV Finance is \$40,405.17 has been invested at 1.50% for 6 months with a maturity date of 20 February 2021. The Committee has this morning ratified that this investment be rolled over.

As at 31 December 2020, the inventory records show that we had 95 copies of Pat Baird's book available for sale. These are valued at cost at \$547.20.

Although we had total assets of \$57,524.00 at 31 December 2020, we have earmarked \$40,405.17 as our contribution to the new museum so the total available funds in the Operating Fund is \$17,118.83.


 FOCIS

The analysis of Running Costs shows that we are continuing to live within our means. Regular income (interest and subscriptions) of \$3,556 is more than enough to cover our overheads of \$1,122, leaving a surplus of \$2,434 for the current financial year.

Reminder to members of the deal for Pat Baird's book: 4 books for \$20 plus postage.

Membership Secretary's Report:

Motion that Treasurer's and Membership Secretary Reports are true and correct.

Moved: Tom O'Dea

Seconded: David Maunders

General Business

Thanks to Bonnie Taylor for nominating onto the FOCIS committee. Unfortunately she was unable to continue.

If anyone is interested in joining the committee, we'd be happy to hear from them.

David Maunders expressed his availability and was welcomed to the committee.

The FOCIS 40th birthday celebration was missed in 2020 due to COVID-19 lockdown.

Christine Grayden is offering to produce a Power Point presentation video during 2021 on the history of FOCIS to go on our YouTube channel. This offer was enthusiastically agreed upon.

David Maunders suggested that a physical get together should also be held.

GC – A physical activity would be held potentially on or near the 41st birthday in October which gives us time to plan. Ideas for that activity are sought from all members.

Terry suggested maybe the birthday event could include the launch of Christine's video

Upcoming Activities

Working bee tentative dates and scope are needed.

David M noted that we should liaise with **Sam Happe** (curator) on working bee opportunities.

Jeff C to write a list of potential working bee jobs for circulation and review. This list and any other suggestions will be discussed with the curator and PINP. It will inform FOCIS planning and scheduling of future working bees through 2021,

David M queried if we should have insurance for activities and working bees? Could this give us a little more freedom in events and activities we can hold?

Jeff Nottle researched appropriate cover and best price for PICS and decided on "Environment Victoria" at \$500/year plus a membership of \$50/year. Tom will look into this for FOCIS consideration.

Pat Baird's book

There were 95 books left. PINP have since bought all the remaining stock.*

A follow-up meeting to be arranged for Ben Driscoll (Manager Operations PINP), a new PINP marketing manager, Kate Adams (Visitor Experience Manager PINP) with Graeme Clausen and Leah Tempany to promote the partnership between PINP and FOCIS.

Does FOCIS initiate printing of a new edition?

Graeme has a quote from San Remo printers

Cheryl will acquire source files from Maddigans

Tom will assess source files when he gets them.

David Maunders and Christine will work to update the new edition

No other CI specific history book is in print.

We have a responsibility to preserve and promote the record to the extent that we can afford to do so.

All agreed in principle that we continue working towards an updated edition and reprint.

GC raised safe keeping of the Baird copyright letter (and other important documents) and asked Kate Adams if there was anywhere onsite at CI that FOCIS documents could be kept. She suggested the volunteers hut. Jeff recalled some fire proof filing cabinets there and also some storage off the kitchen.

A certificate was presented to FOCIS treasurer, Tom in appreciation for all he (and Ruth) do for FOCIS. (see page 000)

FOCIS

Close and afternoon tea - Thanks to Kate (PINP) and Patch (Delaware North) for the delicious food.

Next General Meeting: May 8th 1:30pm

Future meeting dates and venues will be advised in the newsletter, email and website.

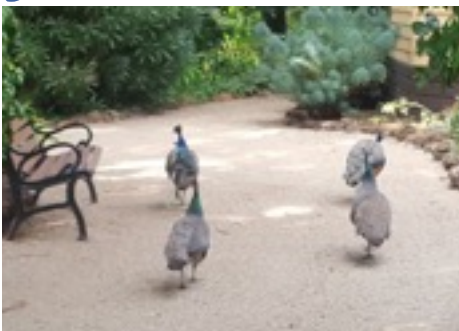
Kate Adams (Visitor Experience Manager, Phillip Island Nature Parks)

An informative presentation explaining the impacts of COVID-19 on Phillip Island Nature Parks; the challenges and responses was given by Kate with a powerpoint presentation accompanying it. With revenue loss of over \$7.4m (Jan-June 2020) State Government support has been vital. Staffing, workplaces, operations and safety plans have all been adjusted as circumstances changed.

During lockdown, a number of works were able to be tackled by redeployed staff, including the Animal management plan, Waste, water and fencing works, a Signage audit, Automated gate on bridge, Access control on visitor centre and Re-starting volunteers.

Due to loss of international travellers, target markets were refocussed towards domestic visitors, while remaining relevant to potential interstate and international markets. Accordingly, a number of new visitor experiences were planned including: a new nature play area, a pumpkin patch, black smithing, old games, cultural tours, EBB tour and a living maze.

Our thanks go to Kate, for her presentation. It was great to gain some understanding of what lockdown has meant for PINP and to embrace her hope for the future of this beautiful island.



New recruits to the peacock crew

All sorts of new recruits have joined the farm at Churchill Island during 2020. Here checking out their new home are the new group, they do seem to be quite keen on the island's benches.



Well, that was last year. Like most of 2020 it didn't happen.

But with luck we will have a postponed celebration later in the year, maybe in spring. Your committee looks forward to making a date to see you all soon.



Curators report.



Hello again,

I'd like to thank Kate in advance for reading out a rather long report on what has been a surprisingly busy period of time. I'm very sorry I can't be there with you today, but I do hope you're enjoying meeting at the Nobbies.


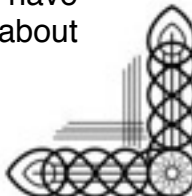
Well, we have a couple of irons in the fire at the moment. I suppose I'll start with the new exhibition we have up in the Visitors Centre which some of you may have seen. 'Unguarded Moments' is an exquisite little celebration of what Churchill Island was loved for during the Jenkins Era. Encouraging you to look closer, the exhibition includes photos of people relaxing and enjoying life on the Island with their friends and family. It is intimate, touching, and one which transforms the museum and heritage precinct from a static display into a living and breathing home. The photographs are drawn from the Arthur Evans album, and I must say it was exceptionally tough to limit down the selections! It will be up in the functions area of the Visitors Centre for the next little while, so make sure you check it out.

I have been working with a fellow member of Phillip Island Nature Parks who is researching and writing about the Janet Amess lace collection. The staff member was initially redeployed to help me with our Victorian Collections project, but she has a passion for lace so she has continued to work on it! She is helping identify the different machines, stitching, patterns, and eras from which the lace originates, and writing up some Historical Contexts which are available to view on Victorian Collections. This is invaluable research for me, as I am in the process of writing a statement of significance, justifying why we have this in our collection and what it adds to the Museum.

Cataloguing and digitising continues apace, and I again invite you to look at our collection on Victorian collections. I have a lot of photographs up there, and I want to be able to identify the people and mention who they are. You might even be there! If you do look and recognise someone, please forward the information to Leah Tempany secretary@focis.org.au

Our major project that we have been working on for the last few months relates to the Minnie Laurence sketchbook we have in our collection. First – as you know, it is in fairly poor condition, so I am going to be working on digitising it through a rare books and manuscripts scanner available at University of Melbourne. While the building is currently closed, they are hoping it will open up soon and when it does, we hope to digitise it so we are able to preserve the sketchbook while still accessing the gorgeous drawings.

David is working on a statement of significance on the sketchbook, and along with Christine, we are trying to trace who she is, and what she did with her life. I was going to give a very quick summary of the two possible women who may have been Minnie, and I hope that next update, I may be able to talk a little more about it.



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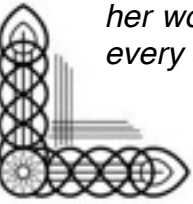
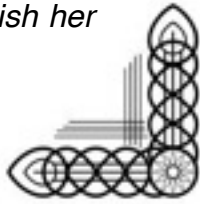
So, we currently think that Minnie may have been either Mabel or Ethel Laurence. Born in 1876 and 1874 respectively, these two sisters spent their childhoods in Melbourne, often travelling to Churchill Island over Christmas. Ethel was a musician, and Mabel worked as a nurse at the Women's Hospital in Carlton. In August 1906, along with a 'Miss Amess', both sisters left Australia on the Orotava, bound for Sri Lanka – or Ceylon as it was known then. Arriving in Colombo, Mabel promptly married Reverend Charles Henry Spurgeon Ward in September. He was also on the Orotava, although we don't know whether they already knew each other, or met on the journey. Together they had two children – Charles and Dorothy, born in 1907 and 1909 in Sri Lanka.

For the next decade, the two sisters worked in different schools in Colombo and along the southern coast of Sri Lanka. Mabel was the headmistress of what is now the Girls' School in Richmond Hill, with the 'help' of Ethel, as well as one in Matara. Both her and Ethel are credited as being consecutive headmistresses at the Newstead Girls School. These schools all still exist today, and the Newstead Girls School – now with over 3,500 pupils – has two of their school houses as 'Lawrence' and 'Ward'!

After this period it gets a little sketchy. We know that they all returned to Sydney on 15 April 1917. At some point, Mabel, her husband, and two children, must have returned to Ceylon, staying there for two more decades until 1936, when they journeyed to Cornwall where she died in 1937. We don't know what happened with Ethel, but we don't think she returned to Sri Lanka.

Hopefully we will be able to find more information about them, and be able to firmly attribute one of the sisters to the artist responsible for the beautiful sketches as well as the landscapes currently in Amess House. This is all very exciting, and I would love to be able to raise her profile a little bit more, and find out a little bit more about her life in Sri Lanka in the early 20th century.

Since this report was written Sam has resigned as our Curator and we thank her for her work. She has found a full time position in a Melbourne gallery and we wish her every success in her new job.

Updated Member Benefits

Free entry to CI,
25% discount on entry to Koala Conservation Reserve, Penguin Parade
and Antarctic Journey, and
25% discount on retail, food and beverages (excluding alcohol).

FOCIS

TOM O'DEA TREASURER'S CERTIFICATE PRESENTATION FOCIS GM 30.1.2021

Tom took over as treasurer at the AGM in 2011 from Roger Hollingworth. Apart from the usual treasurer's roles such as keeping all accounts up to date, thorough regular reporting to committee and general membership, preparation of all books for audit, budgeting, annual reporting to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission, etc., Tom has gone above and beyond his treasurer's role in many ways.

His extra duties have included :

- * He undertook the review of our constitution, required when legislation changed.

- * Took on the huge and detailed task of preparing our submission to the Register Of Cultural Organisations to finally have us accepted onto the register. This listing enabled FOCIS to offer tax deductibility on donations to our Public Fund.

- * Annual reporting and Online updates to Australian Charities and Not for profits Commission

- * website maintenance and updates.

- * Producing excellent discussion papers on FOCIS issues to enable informed decision-making by committee and members

And many other extra tasks...

When Christine was secretary in early 2020, she took the opportunity presented by the Commonwealth Bank to all community groups, regardless of where they banked, to apply for this certificate to officially acknowledge their wonderful treasurers. This Certificate is for Tom's treasurer's role. Of course, he is also our membership secretary with all that entails.



The certificate is made out to Tom's name. But we also want to thank Ruth for all her assistance to FOCIS and Tom over the 10 or so years of their involvement. We know they often work as a team on FOCIS matters. They have even paid their own overnight accommodation in order to participate in FOCIS working bees! And they've even been known to make chocolates for our working bee morning tea!

On behalf of FOCIS members I have pleasure in presenting this certificate of appreciation to our Treasurer, Tom O'Dea. We thank both you and Ruth for all of your work for FOCIS.



Wanted

FOCIS NEWSLETTER EDITOR

The FOCIS newsletter needs a new editor. I have been editor for 6 years and it's time for some new ideas and a new presentation.

The position is a committee one but with Zoom meetings now common actual attendance is not always essential. If you are interested contact

cheryl@focis.org.au



The Friends of Churchill Island Society
Newsletter

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