

Friends Of Churchill Island Society Inc.

# FOCIS

## NEWSLETTER

ABN 78667051020 INC. No. A 002 19007W

**Dates to remember:**  
**General Meeting:**  
**November 13th**  
**Working bee:**  
**October 9**

***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](mailto:cdgrayden@gmail.com). Or contact Christine***

## Letter from our President

Dear Members,

Another year in the grip of the Virus and Lockdowns, which have affected all of our lives, as well as the operations of F.O.C.I.S.

BUT we have survived.

We are planning a new edition of Pat Baird's Book on Churchill Island History. Thanks must go to Christine Grayden and David Maunders who have spent a very large number of hours on this project to get it to this stage. We are fortunate to have such qualified historians in our ranks. Their efforts have been over and above and I cannot thank them enough. My thanks also to members of the Committee and others who have contributed hours of their time to assist with this project. We have reached the stage where we have been able to apply for a grant to publish the third edition

Jeff Cole is underway on the restoration of the old Tipping Dray which is being done in the Amess Barn. This project has already attracted the interest of visitors to the Island and has excited the interest of the Island staff who have given Jeff lots of help and encouragement. Jeff's skill and ingenuity are the backbone of this project, and sincere thanks go to him for his tireless efforts.

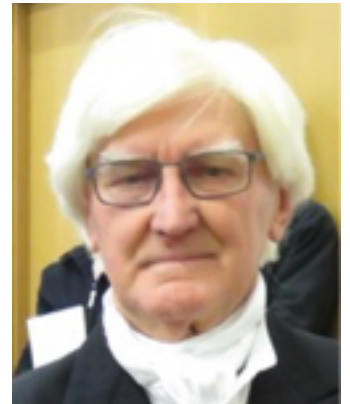
We have maintained our contact with P.I.N.P. and have had very constructive meetings with Kate Adams and Ben Driscoll, for which I thank them.

We are proceeding with plans to celebrate our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary later in the year, hopefully this will be possible. Details will be made available shortly.

I would also like to welcome Andrea Cleland the new Curator, to Churchill Island, thank her for her time in attending our AGM, and look forward to working with her in the future.

Please stay safe

Graeme Clausen



**Needed  
New  
FOCIS  
Newsletter  
Editor**  
See page 10

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
HELD ONLINE SATURDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2021, 2:00 P.M.  
MINUTES:

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) **Present:**

Graeme Clauscen, Terry and Robyn Holman, Tom and Ruth O’Dea, Jeff Cole, Pauline Taylor, David Maunders, Leah and Warwick Tempany, Anne Davie, Don Johnston, Christine Grayden, Roger Hollingworth, Ray, and Andrea Cleland.

**Apologies:**

Lynn and David Lumsden, Leigh & Margaret Hunter, Irene McKell, Diane Scukovic, Sue Hollingworth and John Eddy.

3) **Minutes from Previous Meetings** - General Meeting held Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2021 and AGM held Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2020. As the newsletter Moved Jeff / Seconded Roger / Carried

4) **Annual reports from Executive Committee:**

a) **President’s Report.** (See Pres letter front page of news letter)

That we accept the President’s report. Moved PT / Seconded JC / Confirmed

b) **Treasurer’s and**

c) **Membership Secretary’s Reports.**

FOCIS total assets grew by \$1,194 in the past 12 months and have remained steady in general since 2017.

Due to RACV ceasing to run term deposits, August 20th sees the RACV investment funds mature and move to a FOCIS bank account. Alternative term deposit options tie up funds in currently poor interest rates, making opportune moves difficult when interest rates improve.

All books have been sold therefore book assets are 0.

The Heritage Fund increased by \$614.05 for the last 12 months. It was noted that cash from the donations box totalled \$720.80 despite island closures. Also acknowledged was an expenditure of \$1500 towards the Tipping Dray project to be reported on later in the meeting.

Running Costs - This year has seen a surplus of \$1,820 despite another slightly decreased income. This surplus has been influenced by an increased uptake of electronic rather than paper newsletters and reduced admin costs. As a result, the servicing cost per household is \$15.94 which informs the recommended subscription rates.

The sales of “Churchill Island History and Her Story” edition 2 resulted in a total surplus of \$30.28. The book is considered a community service and our aim was to break even.

Memberships remain steady.

That the Treasurer’s and Membership Secretary’s Reports be accepted

Moved TOD / Seconded Christine Grayden / Carried

5) **PINP Report - Visitor Experience Manager, Kate Adams.**

Read by LT - see separate article

6) **Curator Report, Andrea Cleland**

Shared by Andrea - see separate article

7) **Appointment of Auditor.**

The report for year ending June 2020 was completed in June of this year due to lockdown delays. The report has been shared with the committee.

# FOCIS

It is proposed that we invite Ray Barker to be the auditor for the current financial year.

Moved TOD / Seconded JC / Carried

1) **Determine annual subscriptions**, taking into account recommendation from the Executive Committee It is proposed that membership fees stay as they are for the forthcoming year.

Proposed TOD / Seconded PT / Carried

2) **Ordinary Committee members**

Under rule 5.12 of the constitution, the AGM may approve the addition of ordinary committee members for the forthcoming year.

It is moved that two ordinary committee member positions be added to the committee for 2021-2.

Moved DM / Seconded TH / Carried

3) **Election of Members of the Executive Committee:**

President: One Nomination - Graeme Clausen, Moved DM / Seconded LT, Declared elected.

Vice President: One Nomination - Terry Holman, Moved GC / Seconded LT, Declared elected.

Secretary: One Nomination - Leah Tempany, Moved GC / Seconded DM, Declared elected.

Treasurer: One Nomination - Tom O'Dea, Moved GC / Seconded LT, Declared elected.

Membership Secretary: One Nomination - Tom O'Dea, Moved GC / Seconded LT, Declared elected.

Newsletter Editor: One Nomination - Jeff Cole, Moved GC / Seconded LT, Declared elected.

Phillip Island & District Historical Society Inc representative: None nominated. To be deferred until Historical Society AGM next month

Phillip Island Conservation Society Inc representative: One Nomination - Pauline Taylor, Moved GC / Seconded LT, Declared elected.

Friends Of Koalas: Declined a place on the committee

Ordinary Committee Members as nominated: One Nomination - David Maunders, Moved GC / Seconded LT, Declared elected.

4) **Appointment of committee members with authority to operate the Society's bank accounts.**

TOD moved that the President, Secretary and Treasurer be authorised to operate the Societies bank accounts, with any two of the three as signatories.

Seconded David / Carried

12) **Matters arising from previous General Meeting and AGM.**

a) Wanted - Newsletter Editor

Jeff Cole has been editor for 6 years and it's time for some new ideas and a new presentation. If you might be able to assist, please email Leah at [secretary@focis.org.au](mailto:secretary@focis.org.au).

b) Book update - see separate report

c) Dray Project update - see separate report

JC commented that the horses may be retired by the time it's finished. A new draft horse currently costs around \$20,000. The old FOCIS sign is still lost since the Barn was cleared out.

d) FOCIS Birthday Celebration - Photographs Wanted

40th birthday celebrations Youtube video project

Christine Grayden is looking for FOCIS images and historical information from past members and newsletters to create a video to help celebrate FOCIS's more than 40 years of great work. The online collection has proven difficult to sift through and we would really appreciate any FOCIS related photos that members may happen to have. It would be very helpful if they can be dated and the activity identified.

Christine welcomes any contributions FOCIS members may wish to make. Scanned images, memories, flyers, photos of T-shirts et cetera can be emailed directly to her at [cdgrayden@gmail.com](mailto:cdgrayden@gmail.com) or to [secretary@focis.org.au](mailto:secretary@focis.org.au).

a) Victorian Collections online volunteering resumes

Helen Masters has put the call out for volunteers. Help to add colour and life to more than 1000 artifacts and photographs. There's a Nature Parks online training module (see link below) which explains the kind of information needed, how to find it, and how to write a description. When you've finished the online training, email [volunteers@penguins.org.au](mailto:volunteers@penguins.org.au) and we'll send you the list we are currently working through. Don't forget to log your hours in MyImpact, because it absolutely counts as volunteering.

Training Module: <http://bttr.im/nlm3y>  
Email: [volunteers@penguins.org.au](mailto:volunteers@penguins.org.au)

13) General Business

CG reports that the FB page has a following of about 280 with some posts reaching 500-600 views. She updates Facebook every few days. The FOCIS You Tube Working Horse video has reached 4.7k views

14) Guest speaker: Dr Andrea Cleland, Churchill Island Curator, "*From a Pear Tree in Greece, to an Olive Tree on Churchill Island*". See page.....

15) Close

Next General Meeting: Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2021

## Treasurer's Report for the Period Ending 30 April 2021 1. Summary of Results

In summary, total nett assets grew by \$1,194 from \$27,784 as at 30 June 2020 to \$28,978 as at 30 June 2021. During the last 12 months we spent \$2,569 on Heritage activities with a total of \$47,940 spent on Heritage activities over the last 10 years.

We have now sold all remaining copies of the second edition of Pat Baird's book. The final figures show that we achieved a surplus of \$30.28.

Membership numbers fell by 1 from 126 paying memberships as at 30 June 2020 to 125 paying memberships as at 30 June 2021. The total number of paying **Members** as at 30 June 2021 was 235, an **increase** of 1.

Analysis of our running costs shows that we are living within our means with \$3,812 of regular income and \$1,820 of regular expenditure for last financial year.

Full figures available on the FOCIS website at <https://focis.org.au>



Last year was FOCIS's  
40th birthday.  
Postponed but not  
forgotten!

## Kate Adams PINP Report for Annual General Meeting 14/8/2021

We continue to manage the essential activities and supporting our staff through the open and closing caused by the Pandemic. We have particularly mindful of the health and wellbeing of our team during these challenging times. There is still quite a lot of work happening in Nature Parks so I will provide you with an overview of what I can for the AGM.

The Board has approved the budget and business plans for 21-22 FY with key initiatives focused on:

- Ensuring we continue to provide a high quality experience to our key market segments which are domestic only for the foreseeable future
- Exploring opportunities to diversify the business including conferences and events
- Taking a new approach to our marketing and sales in response to the change in market trends
- Seeking funding support from external sources given the financial impact from significantly decreased visitation
- Fostering a safe and inclusive culture for our staff, volunteers, contractors, community and visitors
- Continuing to deliver priorities in the 5 Year Conservation Plan

### *Covid Safe Workplace*

We are becoming well practiced at opening and closing of our sites in line with State Government advice and direction and a key part of this is having a Covid Safe Workplace Plan in place to ensure we are functioning in a way that keeps us all safe, maintains essential work while closed (tasks like looking after animals and plants, cleaning and site maintenance, and continuing critical research), and meets the restrictions set by the Department of Health and DELWP.

### *Churchill Island work projects*

- We have recently installed the swipe card system at Churchill Island meaning any staff, volunteers or contractors needing to access the visitor centre and office will need a swipe card. This helps us to monitor access and ensure security of our sites and is the final stage of rolling out this system across all of our sites. There will be no impact on Volunteers and you will be able to continue to access the areas in the farm.
- Trev and the team have done a wonderful job installing the old post and rail fencing along the main access road, with only the gates to go, they will complete this work very soon.
- The development of the Nature Play area is progressing slowly, we engaged a cultural heritage consultant to undertake the Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the project, a requirement under the Heritage Victoria permit process, and they recently completed the field assessments. They found some small artefacts which will now be Registered as Aboriginal Site with Aboriginal Victoria. We can then apply for the permit with Heritage Victoria and once granted, commence the installation of the play objects. Although a long and arduous process, we are confident this new recreational area will provide fun and engaging opportunities for visitors to Churchill Island, including local families.

# FOCIS

- Ben Driscoll is developing an Asset Maintenance Plan for the heritage precinct to ensure we are undertaking inspections, repairs and maintenance in line with the Heritage Act and Regulations. The plan will outline the activities required to assist us to look after and protect this important site and assets into the future.
- Our operations team ran a joint training exercise with the CFA in June to test the response to a structural fire on Churchill Island. The scenario of there being a fire in the historic precinct and visitor centre was tested as part of our emergency management plan.

I have been working on the Agreement between Nature Parks and FOCIS which outlines the responsibilities for each party to ensure we are meeting legal requirements, insurance cover, volunteering, working bee activities, and safety and risk assessment. I have sent a draft through to our risk and compliance team to look over. Once approved, I will work with Graeme to implement the agreement in support of the ongoing relationship between Nature Parks and FOCIS.

If you have any questions about any of the above please let me know.

Kate Adams, Visitor Experience Manager, PINP

Remember the new Peacocks that arrived just about when lockdowns did? Well they've grown up and are displaying to any camera they see. Come along and say hello



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Dear FOCIS Members.

I am delighted to join the Phillip Island Nature Parks team at Churchill Island as Museum Curator and have been busy settling into the role since I started at the end of May. Tuesday mornings usually begin by being greeted by an eager Dolly and Bird when I arrive at the office, and in the afternoon, it is a joy to watch the baby peachick chase its mother around the gardens and experience the changing light over the island. We had a steady increase in visitors up until the July school holidays and some lovely sunny afternoons.

There are so many wonderful aspects of my role and I feel very fortunate to be working in such a beautiful setting with people who are passionate about preserving our history and places that hold significant meaning to each of us in different ways. I have been getting to know some of the wonderful volunteers at Churchill Island who are so giving of their time and interest and thank them for making me feel so welcome. I have also been in touch with our former curator Sam Happe to thank her for the very thorough and thoughtful handover documents that have made it very easy to engage with the various facets of managing our collection. Some of these aspects of curatorship are new to be me but I am very keen to explore more closely the objects that hold significance to our collection, the stories behind who the objects belonged to and how we can bring these objects (or their stories) into greater focus for visitors to enjoy. There are also some practical constraints to consider in terms of protecting and conserving our collection, so I am very mindful of this. I am also keen to look into the digitisation of the delicate Minnie Laurence sketchbook and Sam has kindly offered her assistance if needed.



**Andrea Cleland**

In the day to day, my focus has been on the care and cleaning of the collection and it has been a wonderful way to acquaint myself with the many exquisite objects that we hold. I have begun the task of going through our registry to stocktake the items in our collection beginning in the Dining Room and the Main Bedroom in Amess House. In addition to checking the condition and location of each item, it is also with a view to place new labels on objects as some labels are deteriorating or are missing. There is also some greater information and photographs on the paper catalogue sheets in the Volly Hut that I would like to steadily update in our registry and enhance the information held on Victorian Collections. I have also been developing social media posts that engage with the history of Churchill Island - using both current and historical photographs.

In the longer term, I am in the initial stages of thinking about how we can develop an exhibition focusing on Sister Margaret Campbell - who she was and what objects may have been meaningful to her. I would welcome your thoughts on this and whether you have any personal reflections on Sister Campbell or memories of this period in Churchill Island's history.

We are also keen to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> year of FOCIS and are in initial discussions on this exciting opportunity including a display at Churchill Island.

## “From a Pear Tree in Greece, to an Olive Tree on Churchill Island”.

Churchill Island curator Andrea Cleland was asked to speak at our AGM about her background and what led her to her curatorship on Churchill Island. She shared an evocative presentation spanning from her past family history in Greece to her current family here, and the relationships we have to the places we live in.

Coming from a Greek immigrant family in Australia, not quite belonging in either Australia or Greece, Andrea grew up with an insider / outsider feeling which led to her fascination with identity and belonging. A 1980s Phillip Island holiday including a fateful Penguin Parade visit began a tie to this place that drew her back. In fact she bought her parent's Cape Woolamai property because she knew that “was where [she] wanted to be.”

Andrea's study, work and life adventures took her around the globe. Visiting Greece was a turning point for her because her father's stories were gifted to her there. The story that resonated was that of the pear tree planted for the birth of her grandfather. In the midst of war and poverty, Andrea's then 5yo father found solace and nourishment from climbing this tree and eating its pears. This sense of place and identity led to her PhD thesis titled: “The pear tree: family narratives of Greek Macedonian migration to Australia”, 2019.

Returning to Phillip Island after her PHD, Andrea began volunteering for the Nature Parks. Now as Curator on Churchill Island, the good people, the simple farm, the animals, remind her of Greece and “I gravitate to the olive tree, wondering where it's seeds came from...”

Andrea's young son has found his own connection through churning butter and animal feeding. We each find different ways to understand and identify with the place, and to lives lived on CI.

Andrea concluded,

*There's always a sense that history can be lost at any moment, but it's through that continuous transmission of stories that memories of place can be kept alive. We each have our own points of connection... and I invite you to reflect on your own belonging too. I look forward to engaging with all the wealth of knowledge that each of you bring particularly as we reflect on the past 40+ years of the amazing contribution by FOCIS.*



**THE FIRST FOCIS RESTORATION PROJECT FOR YEARS...  
DRAY REBUILD COMING ALONG**



**The old Amess Barn comes alive again...**

Amidst the chaos in the Amess Barn a rather large horse-drawn vehicle takes shape. In its time the barn has held Cob and Co. coaches, carts, motorcycles and at least two exotic European cars and had two locations on the shores of Western Port Bay. Now it is home to the rebuilding of one of the everyday horse-drawn working vehicles; one with a centuries long heritage of working farm and construction carts.

Of course what is important here is the demonstration of the build process and the restoration to the collection of a vehicle which possibly has a history on

Phillip Island of road making service, or perhaps, provided with jinker seat, the humble conveyance of Reverend Raff in the late nineteenth century as he visited his parishioners along Phillip Island's primitive roads.

Along the way the historic barn becomes once again a working space in the tradition of working barns and sheds on farmland in the cities. And let us not forget the horses that provided the power and their drivers. Out in all weathers, there's not much comfort and shelter on a dray!

The long timbers you can see are the shafts with the cross member between them to mount the tip tray locking mechanism. The shorter timbers on the outside of the base of the tipping frame, with their cross members act as a bump stop and mounting for the dray tub itself. When the dray was backed the unlocked tipping dray automatically dumped its load, then when pulled forwards the frame returned to its position and was locked down again ready for its next load. The grey castings on the bench are the mounts for the tipping locking mechanism.

# FOCIS

## Progress gets a boost...

One of the significant developments in the Dray rebuilding process has certainly been that we now have a team! Two great volunteers, Clive and Tim (both of whom have engineering backgrounds), have made an enormous difference handling the heavy components and taking on parts of the task, allowing me to do others. I had collected the wheels from the engineers before the lockdown and Helen Masters, Volunteer co-ordinator, and another staff member helped me get them off the trailer. Wheels this size are a three-person affair for safety! I had taken my high lift jack and other safety equipment and removed one of the old wheels. The 'new' wheels are actually older but in much better condition and suitable for use.



However, the metal axle boxes were a much bigger diameter than the old dray's axle set, so I had to make shell temporary bearings to account for the extra space. Considering its maximum likely use once rebuilt, these will be adequate till Tim machines up some tapered bearings. I fitted one wheel on a trial basis as I was by myself at that point, and it needed some tidying up and greasing before permanent fitting. Tim made another set of shell bearings and now the team have fitted the wheels permanently. Eventually a set of proper tapered bearings will be machined.

The refurbished original wooden axle rider has been fitted to the iron axle and then the tipping frame, chassis and shafts fitted to it. The wheel set is the work platform for the rest of the job. We will have a rolling chassis in a week or so when we sort out the fitting of the tip frame locking gear.



I endeavoured to source some 'vintage' parts for the shaft fittings known as 'Travelling Irons' from a dealer in



NSW. But Peter, Churchill Island blacksmith, has come to the rescue and is making the shaft fittings from scratch to match the photo above. Even better and more authentic having them made on Churchill Island.

I found what I regard as being interesting when removing the wheels: washer/spacer/bearings on the axle made from flat bar and bent round to a butt joint. Quite a skilled piece of work for a blacksmith I think. (See the accompanying photo) But back in the days before spare parts were readily available, blacksmiths could manufacture just about any part required for any machine!

# FOCIS

*Tim in full Covid incognito measuring, and again, and again..... Just in case!*

In the background are the original wheels from the Island's dray, Redgum but badly rusted and rotted. Fixable maybe with a great deal of work and the use of a heavy duty bandsaw and lots of epoxy. We are salvaging and using as much of the original wood and metal parts from the old dray and reusing them, Most of the heavier metal and a few wooden parts including the dray sides. The original heavy wooden axle rider can be seen in the photo below.



### **Covid or no Covid...**

As it happens Covid has not held up progress On the rebuild as much as you all might think as I injured my foot and my layup matched the Covid shut down exactly! And when I came good Clive and Tim arrived with perfect timing. When able, some of the staff on Churchill Island have also helped out - finding missing pieces, or manufacturing required parts.

### **Visitors' interest...**

Not too many people who come within "Coo-ee" of Amess Barn do not come

over to investigate what we could be up to. Many are on for a yarn and are curious to learn the process of how we are going about the rebuild. We are only too happy to share our knowledge and also learn of other people's experiences, And there is explanatory signage outside the barn. So come and visit us on Fridays and some Mondays when you may find Tim and Clive, and have a chat about this most interesting FOCIS project. We still have lots to do shaping timber parts such as the shafts, painting new parts one colour and old parts another for heritage purposes, attaching more 'jigsaw pieces' together. So you'll find us at Amess Barn on Fridays for quite some time yet!

Follow the progresss on <https://focis.org.au>

Best wishes from Jeff Cole (FOCIS dray rebuild project co-ordinator and chief volunteer), Tim and Clive)



## Wanted

### FOCIS NEWSLETTER EDITOR

The FOCIS newsletter needs a new editor. Jeff Cole has 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](mailto:cheryl@focis.org.au)



The Friends of Churchill Island Society  
Newsletter

If undelivered return to FOCIS  
PO Box 852. Cowes, 3922



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Friends of Churchill Island Newsletter

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