

# Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc (Est 1981)



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**Winter 2022, number 153**

## **Inside this edition:**

Message from the President, p.2  
Churchill Island Curator's report, p. 3  
Members' Activities and News, p. 4 – 6  
FOCIS bank balances as at 31. 5. 22, p. 6  
Photography feature: p. 7  
Back page feature panels: Find us on the internet,  
& membership/donation information p. 8

## **Message from the newsletter**

**editor:** We live in disrupted times!  
Our apologies for no newsletter last  
summer and autumn, but hopefully  
we will be back on track now.

Large print version? Please  
contact the editor,

Christine Grayden –

[cdgrayden@gmail.com](mailto:cdgrayden@gmail.com)

0400 900 612

## **Dates for your diary**

**General Meeting:** Saturday, 16 July 2022. Time: 1. 30 – 4 PM.

Venue: Churchill Island Visitor Centre function room. Reports  
from President, Treasurer, Churchill Island curator. General business. Speaker: Don Johnstone,  
FOCIS member and new Churchill Island guide: his boyhood life on Churchill Island. All  
welcome. Please RSVP by email Thursday, 14 July: [secretary@focis.org.au](mailto:secretary@focis.org.au)

**Annual General Meeting:** Saturday, 17 September 2022. Time: 1. 30 – 4 PM. Venue: Churchill  
Island Visitor Centre function room. Annual reports from President and Treasurer. Election of  
office bearers – all positions vacant. Any current member is entitled to nominate for the  
committee and vote at the AGM. General business. Speaker: to be advised. All welcome.  
Further details in next newsletter.

**“Whispers from the Past”:** Sunday, 18 September. Times: 11 AM and 1.30 PM. A play written  
and directed by FOCIS members to commemorate 150 years since the building of Amess House  
and the planting of the ‘Homestead Tree’ Norfolk Island Pine. Venue: fine weather, front  
eastern Veranda of Amess House. Wet weather venue: Churchill Island shearing shed. For  
description etc, **see p. 4 for more information.** RSVP attendance by 16.9.22

[secretary@focis.org.au](mailto:secretary@focis.org.au)

*Add these to  
your diary!*

## **Letter from our President, Graeme Clauscen:**

Dear members, It has been a while since our last Newsletter. However, we have not been standing still!

Earlier in the year we launched the 3<sup>rd</sup> and fully revised edition of the Churchill Island book, *Churchill Island history and her story*. It was a very good day and the weather was very kind. My thanks go to Leah our Secretary and Andrea Cleland the Curator for their efforts to make this day such a success. Special thanks to Sally O'Neil for launching the book for us. The book is available from Turn the Page bookshop in Cowes, Churchill Island Visitor Centre, and online through our website [focis.org.au](http://focis.org.au)



On the same day we launched the Tipping Dray project. I would like to thank Chloe for launching the Dray, done with great style and a bottle of Victoria Bitter! Also our grateful thanks to the Churchill Island staff for their help in setting up for the day. On behalf of everyone I would like to thank the FOCIS members involved in both of these significant projects.

During the last few months our collection of 8mm and 16mm film has been gradually digitized from DVD to USB and hard drive. Most of the film is from the Jenkins Era, however there are some for which we have yet to discover the contents, so it will be interesting to see what we have.

Preparation is underway to produce a LARGE PRINT Edition of the book. It will be available on request through the Online Shop when finished.

Jan Jonas, a long-time devoted Churchill Island volunteer and FOCIS Life Member, has moved to Brisbane and we wish her well.

Trevor Haywood has left Churchill Island after more than 10 years in the job, and we have a new Farm Manager. We wish Trevor well. Peter Officer, who has been on the Churchill Island staff for some years, is now the new Farm Manager. Thanks to Peter and his co-worker Chloe Dann for managing Churchill Island together over the summer holidays prior to Peter's official appointment.

Finally I have advised the Committee that I will be retiring from active Committee work and will not be standing for President again. I will provide a more detailed report for the AGM.

Best wishes, *Graeme Clauscen*



## Curator's report

From Churchill Island's museum curator –  
*Andrea Cleland*

Dear FOCIS Members

The summer days since the launch of *Churchill Island History and Her Story* in January seem very distant as winter sets in on our idyllic island. Aside from the usual day to day of cataloguing and care of the collection, there has been wonderful achievements through the involvement of your members. We took part in the Australian Heritage Festival through the National Trust to showcase the tipping dray and offer a tour of the house and garden. Although we didn't get many direct visitations as a result (most likely due to the timing), it did provide the chance for us to promote Churchill Island and what we do more generally and gain some learnings on the day. It has also been exciting to watch further restoration work continue on smaller projects on the island such as the ice chest and wooden horse. Leah and Warwick have also been undertaking an audit of the inventory of moveable objects included in the 2014 Churchill Island Conservation Management Plan.

<https://penguins.org.au/about/corporate-affairs/publications/management-plans/>

Graeme has also been highly supportive in further digitising the Arthur Evans films onto USB.

A highlight in May has also been the donation by Jack and Juneen Schulz of two beautifully documented folders of Carroll and Amy Schulz reflecting on their time on Churchill Island. The folders contain written accounts, photos and documents. Carroll and Amy lived on Churchill Island part-time during 1979 and then full-time from 1980, and also lived in the cabin from 1982 until 1993. Carroll and Amy managed and developed the island under the Victorian Conservation Trust, and were lifetime members of FOCIS. We are very grateful for the contribution made by the Schulz family to our collection and it was lovely for Graeme to be here while we showed them around and heard about their own recollections of Churchill Island.

Congratulations on the successful CHART grant and I am very excited about the museum curator role, now having a camera, stand and photo studio box to further document our collection. This will be instrumental in updating our catalogue records in Victorian Collections which require photos of a digital camera standard. I am also very much looking forward to the upcoming celebrations of Amess House that FOCIS have been working on.

As always, thank you for your support.

Best wishes, Andrea

## Members' Activities and News

### “Whispers from the past” – Special September event!

To celebrate 150 years since the building of Amess House and the planting of the Homestead Tree, FOCIS is presenting a performance depicting imagined scenes from the lives of some of the people who stayed on Churchill Island in the Amess era, from 1872 until 1907. The script has been written by David Maunders with Christine Grayden, drawing on the recently revised *Churchill Island : History and Her Story*, and historical sources. Actors are members of FOCIS, the Phillip Island community, and Churchill Island staff. Normal entry fees to Churchill Island will apply, though of course entry is free to FOCIS members. The date: Sunday 18 September at 11 am and 1.30 pm.

The performance will be staged on the veranda of Amess House, (pictured) or in the shearing shed if wet. The delightful scenes within this play include:

Samuel Amess showing his wife Jane the newly completed house; Baron von Mueller gifting a Norfolk Island Pine seedling;

Jane Amess and her cook planning a Christmas lunch;

*Australasian* journalist Bruni

interviewing Samuel Amess for his article “An island farm”; and a few other scenes showing the Amess family on holiday on Churchill Island.

Don't forget to let our secretary know that you are coming in case we need to tell you if circumstances change. [secretary@focis.org.au](mailto:secretary@focis.org.au)



Looking forward to seeing lots of you there !

### A new Churchill Island display coming?

Those FOCIS members and Churchill Island visitors familiar with stalwart FOCIS volunteer Jeff Cole will not be surprised to hear that Jeff has come up with another wonderful idea for a special display of Churchill Island's historic dairy equipment! And being a man of action, he has commenced work finding and listing the equipment, assessing the condition of each piece, and starting work on bringing it into top display condition.

Currently he is working on Churchill Island’s collection of cream and butter cans from its days as a dairy farm.



At left is the lid of the Jenkins cream can photographed for a cataloguing record in 2013. At right is the lid after Jeff’s initial cleaning last Friday, rust removed and some patina showing. Jeff has written down his memories of being with his grandparents when they made use every day of these items on their farm. Some other FOCIS members and Nature Parks volunteer coordinator Helen Masters are also brainstorming lots of exciting options with Jeff to create a great job of this! Here’s hoping the display gets off the ground!

**Churchill Island volunteer opportunities:**

Like so many heritage-listed venues, Churchill Island has always relied on volunteer help, even prior to when the government purchased the island in 1976. The management body for Churchill Island – Phillip Island Nature Parks – has a very active volunteer program managed by a full-time volunteer coordinator, Helen Masters. If you wish to volunteer on Churchill Island please email Helen/Katherine at [volunteers@penguins.org.au](mailto:volunteers@penguins.org.au) Here are a few ideas for Churchill Island volunteering:



1. Do you like speaking to people about our beautiful little island? You don’t need to be a Churchill Island expert to become a visitor experience guide because there is lots of information available on the [focis.org.au](http://focis.org.au) website, in the Churchill Island history book, plus over 2000 historical images from the Churchill Island collection available for the public to view at the online cataloguing program: [www.victoriancollections.net.au](http://www.victoriancollections.net.au) And you are mentored by an experienced Churchill Island guide for as long as you need to ‘find your feet’.  
 Pictured here are Churchill Island guides Karen and Wendy.

2. If you would rather work with your hands than do guiding, FOCIS restoration volunteer coordinator Jeff Cole is always after willing helpers! You will need to contact Helen Masters to sign on as a Nature Parks volunteer in order to help Jeff.

3. Churchill Island's curator, Andrea Cleland, would also welcome assistance with any number of archiving, cleaning and cataloguing tasks. Contact her at [curator@penguins.org.au](mailto:curator@penguins.org.au)

4. Meanwhile FOCIS volunteer Christine Grayden does home-based volunteering and will shortly commence a digitising project to scan all the old FOCIS newsletters not already on the FOCIS website. If you live locally and can offer Christine another set of hands, she would love to hear from you. Please email her at: [cdgrayden@gmail.com](mailto:cdgrayden@gmail.com) or phone her, 0400 900 612. Pictured is Christine holding up a small selection of the newsletters awaiting scanning.



**Farm machinery audit...** In other FOCIS news, our secretary Leah Tempany, husband Warwick (and sometimes their son), have been making an audit of all the historic farm machinery and various other items in the Churchill Island collection. It's a big job! It will be a wonderful resource when completed, forming the basis of future FOCIS restoration and maintenance projects.

**Another Churchill Island Restoration project:** Nature Parks volunteers Tim and Brian, who worked with FOCIS on the dray restoration project, are currently restoring an old ice chest which was located in the Amess half cellar and in a rather bad condition. It's been sanded, varnished and now the broken and corroded door fittings have been replaced with some rather beautiful brass fittings. New casters are on the way. Here are the before and after photos:



## Minutes of previous general meeting held February 16, 2022

are now available on the FOCIS website: <https://focis.org.au/minutes-of-general-meetings/> or contact the secretary for a copy to be emailed or posted to you: [secretary@focis.org.au](mailto:secretary@focis.org.au)

FOCIS BANK ACCOUNT BALANCES as at 31. 5. 22:

Operating fund: \$54,458.63

Heritage fund: \$12,608.40

## **Churchill Island, Autumn to Winter, 2022**

Nature's different moods: fog and reflections.

Birds watchful: Cormorants on shore and Cape Barren Goose on nest



*Photographed by FOCIS volunteer Jeff Cole on Churchill Island for another day's volunteering.*

Keep up to date with FOCIS activities, and Churchill Island happenings plus snippets of history on the FOCIS "Churchill Island Friends" Facebook page! <https://www.facebook.com/FOCISAust> Give the page a 'Like', and feel free to Like and comment on any of our posts.

Not on Facebook? You can view the posts on our website [www.focis.org.au](http://www.focis.org.au) on the right-hand side of the pages. And there is lots of other Churchill Island information on our website too! FOCIS also has 2 videos on our YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/FriendsofchurchillislandOrgAu>

Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.  
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If not delivered please return to:  
PO Box 852, COWES, 3922.

**SURFACE  
MAIL**



### **Membership renewal time!**

Thanks to our members who have already renewed their membership for 2022-2023. If you have not yet renewed, and/or you would like to sign up a friend or family member for a FOCIS membership, please go to the membership section of our website:

<https://focis.org.au/membership/> We have lots of options for paying your subscription.

**Donations time!** If you would like to donate to our Heritage fund (with which FOCIS funds restoration work) you can do so either while joining or renewing your membership, or by just making a donation. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible. If just donating, please go to the donations section on our website: <https://focis.org.au/donation/> Our thanks to those who have already donated! FOCIS is a registered charity, and listed under the Register of Cultural Organisations. **Not tech savvy?** Please contact [treasurer@focis.org.au](mailto:treasurer@focis.org.au) or phone/text/leave a message on: 0481 467 339 to discuss other options.