

# Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc (Est 1981)



PO Box 852, Cowes VIC, 3922,  
Australia E: [secretary@focis.org.au](mailto:secretary@focis.org.au)

**Spring 2022, number 154**

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Would you or someone you know like a Large print version of this newsletter? Please contact the editor, Christine Grayden – [cdgrayden@gmail.com](mailto:cdgrayden@gmail.com)  
0400 900 612

## Dates for your diary

**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 etc. Election of office bearers – all positions vacant. Any current member is entitled to nominate for the committee and vote at the AGM. General business. Presentation regarding Amess House over the years, and the major alterations and restorations it has seen. All welcome. If you wish to attend please RSVP to our Secretary Leah by Thursday afternoon 15 September: [secretary@focis.com.au](mailto:secretary@focis.com.au)

**“Whispers from the Past”:** Sunday, 18 September. Times: 11.30 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. 3 for more information.** RSVP attendance by 16.9.22  
[secretary@focis.org.au](mailto:secretary@focis.org.au)

**Working bee date:** November 19, Spring clean Amess House & Rogers Cottages. Decorating for the approaching festive season. Contact [secretary@focis.org.au](mailto:secretary@focis.org.au) if you would like to help out.

*See back page for our special AGM speaker!!*

## Letter from our President:

Dear Members,

I hope you will be able to attend the Annual General Meeting for 2022. This will be my last report as President as I will be retiring from the Committee after that meeting.

It has been a great pleasure to have been involved with FOCIS over the years and I have enjoyed my time as President, though I must say the last two or three years have had their challenges.

Through all this time and the changes that have taken place, FOCIS has survived, and I believe grown stronger.

There have been many changes to the Nature Park Staff over the last few years, but all along we have received help and support, particularly from the Staff on Churchill Island. Our thanks to you all.

This year has been eventful with the launch of the third edition of Pat Baird's book "Churchill Island and Her History", which was updated by Christine Grayden and David Maunders, who did a magnificent job. Also, on the same day the unveiling and launch of the Tipping Dray, and showing the wonderful work done by Jeff Cole, and his helpers.

Christine and David have also written a short play "Whispers from the Past" to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the building of Amess House and the planting of the Homestead Tree.

May I wish FOCIS continue its great work on Churchill Island to preserve the Heritage, and to the Members good wishes and keep up the good work.

*Graeme Clausen*



*Friends of Churchill Island Society members  
are invited to*

*"Whispers from the Past"*

*A play in 6 scenes presented by FOCIS members, friends and  
Churchill Island staff at Amess House, Churchill Island, to  
celebrate 150 years since the completion of Amess House and  
the planting of the Norfolk Island Pine Homestead tree.*

*(See next page for details)*



## Members' Activities and News

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

To celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the building of Amess House and the planting of the massive Norfolk Island Pine known as the ‘Homestead Tree’, FOCIS is presenting a short play written by David Maunders and Christine Grayden, to be performed on Sunday 18 September, 11.30 a.m. and 1.30 p.m. The play comprises six scenes based on information in our book, *Churchill Island History and Her Story*. Being directed by David Maunders, the play will be performed on the Amess House veranda or in the Churchill Island shearing shed if wet. A large banner featuring a picture of Amess House veranda has been ordered to set the scene in the shearing shed if needed. Our thanks to local photographer Gary Parnell for donating a beautiful image of the Amess House veranda for the backdrop.

The cast have learned their parts well and have prepared costumes of the period. Below are Helena, Kate, and Don and Mike, rehearsing recently on a cold, wet day inside the CI shearing shed. Photos: David Maunders, John Eddy. Photo of Veranda looking south – Lisa Schonberg.



A special video with the play set both inside the house and on the veranda, will be made by Cape Woolamai resident Terry Melvin with assistance Simon Eddy, to be available within the next few months for anyone to watch on the FOCIS YouTube channel.

We live in uncertain times so please let our secretary know that you are coming to one of the performances in case we need to tell you if circumstances change. [secretary@focis.org.au](mailto:secretary@focis.org.au) Also if you can, please check our Churchill Island Friends Facebook page from 9 AM on the morning of 18<sup>th</sup> September when we will confirm if the performances will proceed, or if unforeseen circumstances prevent that happening.

*Nevertheless we are looking forward to seeing lots of you there!*

## Restoration projects – by FOCIS member Jeff Cole and the other Churchill Island Restoration volunteers

Our restorers have been busy working on several projects. The rickety little old cupboard from the scullery has been pulled apart, sanded, re-varnished and put back together. You will see a difference when next you visit. Here is the cupboard before work and during work, which took place in Amess barn for all to see:



Other work being done in Amess barn is the cleaning up of Churchill Island’s collection of milk and cream cans, to become part of a “dairy trail” within the historic precinct. Here is the collection of cans



before and 2 of them following de-rusting and painting to protect them against the harsh salt air.





## Winter into Spring on Churchill Island

Several clutches of Cape Barren geese are growing like Topsy around Churchill Island at the moment!



And with all these peahens to keep our peacock company it won't be long before the patter of little peacock feet!

Photos from Jeff Cole.

## Large print edition of *Churchill Island History*

### *And Her Story* now out!

Thanks to a Quick Response Grant from Bass Coast Shire Council, FOCIS has been able to print 20 copies of this large print format. FOCIS will donate copies to the local nursing homes, library service and secondary schools. Both versions are available for purchase from the FOCIS website here: <https://focis.org.au/online-shop/> or phone the FOCIS shopkeeper Christine Grayden on 0400 900 612. If you would like to view the book you can do so at Turn the Page bookshop in Cowes. Proprietor Brendan is pictured with Christine in the bookshop with the display copy.



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

including all reports, 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)

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## FOCIS BANK ACCOUNT BALANCES as at 31.7. 2022:

Operating Fund: \$62,259.44

Heritage Fund: \$14,933.76

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## Would you or someone you know like to contribute as a FOCIS committee member? Want to know what is involved? FAQs:

### Q: How many meetings are held each year?

A: Generally the committee meets quarterly in the morning prior to each general meeting held in the afternoon of the same day. There are occasions when the committee needs extra meetings together.

### Q: Where are the meetings held?

A: Usually in the Churchill Island visitor centre function room. On occasion committee also meets in the private home of a committee member on Phillip Island or San Remo. During lockdowns, meetings have been held via the FOCIS Zoom account.



### Q: How long do meetings last?

A: Committee meetings go from 11:30 AM until approximately 12:45

PM on the same day that the general meeting starts at 1:30 PM and usually finishes by 3:30-4.00 PM. Lunch is provided or purchased in the café.

### Q: Will I be mentored as a new committee member?

A: Certainly. The FOCIS committee works collaboratively in a welcoming atmosphere. Feel free to ask any questions or give your input during meetings and to the president or secretary at any time!

### Q: What resources are available to support me as a committee member?

A:

- The FOCIS website holds much information to assist you, including an extensive “About Us” section where you will find the FOCIS Constitution and other valuable committee-related information. The website also holds an archive of our newsletters back to 1998 and considerable information about the history of Churchill Island in the “About the Island” section. The fully revised 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Churchill Island Street book: *Churchill Island History and Her Story* is also available to committee members.
- Since FOCIS has been a registered charity since 2013 and receives tax-deductible donations, our annual reports to the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission (ACNC) can be found here:



<https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity/charities/881ad63e-38af-e811-a960-000d3ad24282/profile>

The ACNC also has very clear guidance information for committee

members of small charities on their website here: <https://www.acnc.gov.au/tools/other-resources/acnc-small-charities-library>

FOCIS is also registered on the Register of Cultural Organisations. <https://www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/cultural-heritage/register-cultural-organisations>

**Q: What sort of roles can I take on as a committee member?**

A: We like to match committee members with their interests and skills, as well as give them a chance to develop others. Some opportunities include:

- Newsletter editor, or gathering some information and photos (phone photos acceptable) for whoever is the newsletter editor.
- Representing FOCIS on information stall at events such as the annual Phillip Island Nature Parks open day, or any festivals such as the Easter family festival (when they or similar events begin again).
- Assisting with content for, or managing the FOCIS Facebook page.
- Dealing with book orders as FOCIS shopkeeper.
- Arranging speakers for our quarterly general meetings.
- Assisting the Churchill Island curator Andrea Cleland with the FOCIS and Churchill Island collection items in the Churchill Island archives.
- Coordinating or assisting with the digitising of FOCIS archive material such as newsletters, documents and photographs.
- Storing and managing our data projector to ensure that it is available at meetings as required and is compatible with any presentation our speakers wish to make.
- Being “official photographer” for FOCIS meetings and events when available – even a good phone image is fine by us.



- Coordinating FOCIS working bees, or volunteering as a helper at our working bees.
- Providing refreshments at FOCIS meetings and events as required. (Expenses reimbursed upon receipt)
- Writing short articles with an image for the local newspapers about FOCIS activities.
- Coordinating or helping with planning and running of any special FOCIS events, such as social days for members, launch events for completed restoration projects, photo opportunities for grant providers – e.g. arranging afternoon tea or on-site informal event for representative of Bass Coast Shire Council if we receive a grant from them.

And there are **lots more opportunities** to be an active FOCIS committee member. You may have other skills you would like to contribute. So many reasons to join the FOCIS committee! Plus Churchill Island is a beautiful place to volunteer! **Why not put your hand up at the Forthcoming Annual General Meeting? We would love to have you on board!**



A happy and productive admin catch up was held recently between FOCIS and Churchill Island managers Phillip Island Nature Parks. FOCIS secretary Leah and committee members David and Jeff (who took the photo), pictured with CI Farm Activities Officer Peter Officer and curator Andrea Cleland. Also pictured is PINP volunteer co-ordinator, now home from visiting family in Canada, Helen Masters. L-r: Andrea, Helen, David, Peter and Leah.

Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.  
 Newsletter No.154, Spring. 2022.  
 If not delivered please return to:  
 PO Box 852, COWES, 3922.

**SURFACE  
 MAIL**



*We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live, work and learn, the Bunurong. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.*



***Our Special AGM guest speaker!!***

Sally O'Neill has a long history of involvement on Churchill Island, most significantly as co-ordinator of the major restoration of Amess House, Rogers Cottages, the building of the Visitor Centre and lots of other CI projects. Sally also ran most of the big festivals that occurred on CI over many years. We

look forward to hearing her speak at our AGM about the Amess House 1999-2000 restoration – “From the Stumps Up!”