

2022 | No 156  
Summer

Friends Of Churchill Island Society Inc.

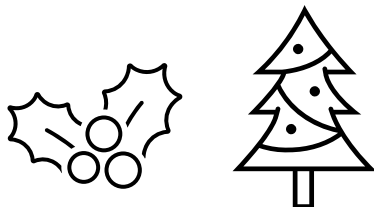
# FOCIS NEWSLETTER

Registration Number: A0021907W ABN: 78667051020 PO Box 852, COWES VIC 3922

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## From the President



*Merry Christmas to all our Members and a  
Happy New Year.*

The end of the year approaches. Our final general meeting viewed the video of Whispers from the Past, now available on the FOCIS website, [focis.org.au](http://focis.org.au). We held a working bee on Saturday 19 November where under the guidance of Andrea, papier mache baubles for the Christmas tree and homemade bon bons (crackers) were made. Other members gave the house a good clean.



The hard work was followed by a barbecue in the shearing shed (as rain threatened) organised by Chloe. This working bee combined forces of Nature Park and FOCIS volunteers in getting so much done due to a shared love of the island. We now have a spick and span machinery shed and Roger's Cottage. Perhaps combining

NP and FOCIS volunteers for a working bee and BBQ might become a regular event and encourage some new members.

.FOCIS has established goals for the coming year some of which may take longer.

**DATES:**

**2022**

**17, 18 December 1 pm**

***Carol Singing round the Farm***

**2023**

**February 11**

*1:30pm General Meeting*

**March 4**

*8-10am Working Bee post moth house clean*

**May 13**

*1:30pm General Meeting*

**June 10**

*10am -12pm Working Bee*

**August 12**

*1:30pm AGM*

**October 14**

*10-12pm Working Bee*

**November 18**

*1:30pm General Meeting*



screen to show some of our video collection, *Whispers from the Past*, the Working Horse video, the 1801 re-enactment and some digitised films from the Harry Jenkins era.

There is considerable interest in reinstating horse drawn wagon rides. A number of problems need to be overcome, including safety modifications to the wagon, probably purchasing another Clydesdale and ensuring staff allocation to the project. We are working closely with Churchill Island staff to see if these problems can be overcome

On 17 and 18 December, at 1 pm a group of carol singers will perform around the farm.

This group includes Kate and Mike Cleeland who performed brilliantly in *Whispers from the Past* and is conducted by Cecily Woodberry.

The singers will perform in historic dress (picture not of our actual singers).

Immediate projects include replacing the historic information banners on the veranda and in Rogers Cottage and establishing a



## Treasurer's Report

FOCIS running costs are in the black.  
The main highlights are:

The Term Deposit with the Cowes branch Bendigo Bank of \$40,862.00 invested for 12 months at 2.75% matures on 13 September 2023.

Expected interest income = \$1,123.

A grant of \$740.00 was received from Bass Coast Shire Council for the printing of the Large Print Edition of the Book. (Actual cost of printing 20 copies was \$740.00.)

We've received an order from PINP for 100 copies of The Book. These have been delivered and the invoice has been sent. Payment of \$2,000 has not yet been received. It will appear in the next report.

## Christmas Shopping @ FOCIS

Why not include a copy of our history *Churchill Island History and Herstory* as a Christmas gift? Normal print version now \$40 for two copies or large print special Christmas price \$36 (postage extra.) Go to [focis.org.au](http://focis.org.au) to order or scan QR code. Large print QR on p.7.

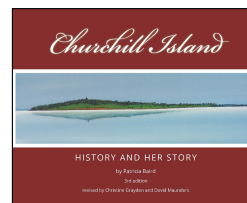


Cash from the Donations Box in Amess House = \$1,063.50 during the last 3 months.

A major expense was a Custom Fabric Banner used at the "Whispers" performance = \$349.00.

Another major expense was the conversion of the Harry Jenkins Super 8 films to digital video = \$560.00.

And \$466.46 was spent from the Heritage Fund for purchase of materials for restoration projects.



Price: 2 for \$40.00  
Pay using your Smartphone



<https://focis.org.au/third-edition>

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## Restoration Report

Jeff Cole



Work has started on the blue wagon.

It looks bad, it is, but when the restoration was done before it was donated to Churchill Island a new hardwood main spar and wishbone was installed, and that is the only reason it has not collapsed like the four-wheel dray behind the shearing shed. Some metal parts of that dray will be used in the restoration, especially the turntable which is the same size and in better condition. I was asked about the cost, I said 'for a rolling wagon \$50,000. Produced an interesting reaction but what we are going to produce is a static display with, in principle, a cover! After all those years in good condition but no shelter....and now? Good grief!.

It won't cost that but it will not be cheap, and it will be interesting to see the NP reaction. Photos are being taken, drawings will be prepared, work will be done in place. We are increasingly being impacted by H&S changes which, in the end



made during the rebuild of course. As you can see there is extensive work needed just to stabilise it. Interestingly the reason for the enthusiasm for its repair is safety. It's taken a while for that penny to drop! It is in the same condition that the dray was in when they removed it, for safety reasons.

Now, funding. If it can be classed as a part of the Island's 'business model', then NP may be able to get a Vic business grant, So plan is to use it, the horse trough and possibly a Clydesdale in the background as part of the wedding photo sets. Might work. Otherwise we are the grant go-to people, but I do not recommend it myself.

Two-year project at least, grants have to be concluded in one I think. On other matters we are still awaiting the first of the sequential moves, the clearing of the other half of Pedro's shed. Tim is doing a tad of painting on the dray metalwork prior to installing it on display, and the blacksmith needs to adjust the shaft fittings Peter made. Tim's work on the wheels has been exemplary, and I am using \$100 of my 'float' to donate to Wonthaggi Woodturners who have also done an amazing job of inside turning off centre to bring the wheels to within a few mm of true.

## Report from Pete Officer, Farm Manager

With another successful September school holidays behind us, our team has been working hard to support the start of a very busy events season with our first lot of weddings being held. We are also close to finishing the shed in the works area that will be used to store equipment for events. That will free us up to further use Pedro's Shed as a covered area to permanently display some of our valuable historic machinery. We are looking at moving in the stationary baler and then mounting the engine that was originally with it, now that it's been repaired. The sulky on the southern end of the shed will also be brought in under cover. We're working through how best to be able to open the doors so that we have a permanently accessible covered display for visitors to engage with.

It's great that our fantastic Interchange Gippsland Farm Assistant Volunteers were recognized for their approach to Safety & Wellbeing at the recent PINP Excellence Awards.



We also are deeply grateful for all our volunteers who contribute so much to Churchill Island from wool spinning to blacksmithing to the restoration team. Speaking of restoration, we are stoked to hear that we have been successful in the Living Heritage Grants program of the State Government. The grant will enable some much-needed conservation works to Amess House, Amess Barn, Rogers Cottages, half-cellar and wash-house such as the Amess House roof and some of the weatherboards that have deteriorated. Thank you to FOCIS for providing support of our now successful application.

## Curator's Report

The inclement weather over the past month have provided some much-needed time for the cleaning of Amess House and our collection, particularly following the dust storms. You will hopefully see Amess House looking fresh and welcoming to visitors. It's great to see the beautiful ice chest that has been beautifully restored by Jeff and team also now on display in the kitchen. My deep gratitude to Kate Wills for her amazing contribution, hard work and dedication to ensuring the ongoing day to day



maintenance of the house and gardens of Churchill Island. My deep thanks also to all the Churchill Island team and volunteers for the fabulous work they do in the house, gardens and demonstrations throughout the week.

I'm extremely happy to report that that we have just started the initiative of preserving files in the Volly Hut into storage boxes that meet National Archives of Australia (NAA) standards. We are very lucky to have Marg, a dedicated volunteer, with archival experience guiding the process. We will be starting with Victorian Conservation Trust files which is very exciting, and it's important to keep in mind, this will be a long and lengthy

process. On another happy note, I have completed the bulk of the 2022 stocktake of currently listed objects room by room in Amess House and Rogers Cottages, as well as National Trust objects in our garden and other buildings. This room by room stocktake covered objects we hold from the National Trust as well as from our collection.

Andrea Cleland

## We have heard...

A Furphy water cart recently sold in Echuca for \$61,300 believed to be more than double the previous record.



Story from ABC website.

This suggests that our historic farm machinery collection is very valuable. Our Furphy Water cart, with Churchill Island printed on it looks in much better condition than the record breaking one.



## Large Print Edition Well Received.

As a result of a Bass Coast Council Grant, we were able to distribute free copies of our History and Her Story large print edition to various aged care homes, libraries, schools and other places. Consequently, Banfields Aged Care has been reading the book in segments to their residents and invited us to offer a talk on Churchill Island history to their residents, preferably in period dress. Volunteer guide, Karen Black, and FOCIS president, David Maunders are looking forward to giving this presentation in January, 2023.

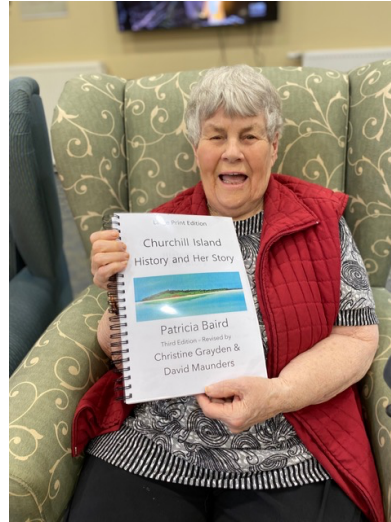


Robyn Montague has sent us pictures of residents with the book. She writes:

The lady pictured with me Robyn Montague, 103 year old Pauline O'Brien. Pauline has lived with us at Banfields for 6.5 years. Prior to that she has lived at Tenby point since 1968.



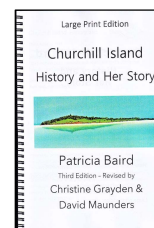
The other lady pictured is Valda Taylor who is new to Banfields. She loves living here and can't wait to explore the Island further. We are hoping to bring a group of residents out to Churchill Island for a meal and a walk around on the week of the 18<sup>th</sup>.



## That's all from 2022.

Deadline for our next edition is 1 March 2023. Remember that we are still looking for members to contribute to FOCIS management, through roles such as secretary, membership secretary and website maintenance. Please contact the president if you can help:

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



Price: \$ 36.00  
Pay using your Smartphone



<https://focis.org.au/large-print-edition>

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## Membership Fees

As a result of inflation and for FOCIS' sustainability, membership subscription rates will increase, starting July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, as follows:

Family Household rate = \$33.00 per year.

Single Adult Household rate = \$22.00 per year.

Concession Household rate = \$17.00 per year.

### Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.

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If not delivered, please return to:

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# FOCIS

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live.