



FRIENDS OF TASMAN ISLAND

NEWSLETTER No. 12

JULY 2014



They say time passes quickly when you're having fun but it's hard to believe that our last newsletter was back in November 2013. So much has happened since then.

There have been two working bees on Tasman Island, a strategic planning session at Eddystone Point and a small group of volunteers have started work on repacking the Cape Sorell lens. FoTI, in partnership with FoMI, also participated in an information and sales stand at the Island Ark conference. At the time of writing, the *Lighthouses of Tasmania* calendar is about to go to print and plans are afoot for a collaboration with the Launceston Walking Club for their *Do You Know Tasmania* show. So, as you can see it's been all go, go, go!

Read on to find out more

Erika Shankley

CHECK OUT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE AT <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfTasmanIsland>

Annual General Meeting, July 2014

The short 2014 AGM produced the usual shuffling of hats amongst core members!

- Thanks to La Prez, Carol Jackson, for her continuing dedication - leading FoTI through some difficult times as we plan for the next 3 years;
- Thanks, too, to Dee Webb, who remains our esteemed Treasurer;
- A special thanks to Carol who doubled as Secretary over the last couple of months;
- and to Greg Bell for volunteering to take over as Secretary.
- Without our Grant-writer extraordinaire, Di Smith, FoTI would be much the poorer. Thank you, Di!
- Having taken off the Secretary's hat, Erika Shankley continues to maintain FoTI's collection of historic and current photos and documents and remains FoTI's scribe.
- And, where would we be without works supervisor, Chris Creese, with his dedication to restoration work on and off Tasman Island.

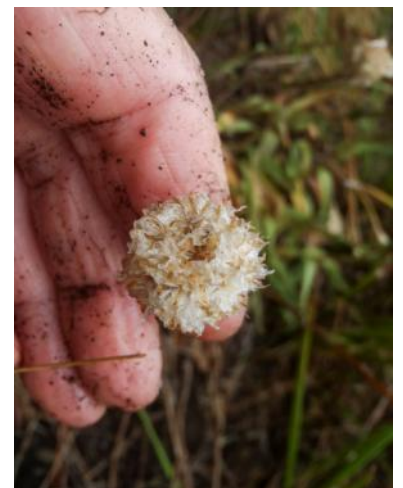
Since FoTI was formed in 2005, our achievement with the conservation and preservation of Tasman Island's natural and cultural heritage has to be seen to be believed. Congratulations and grateful thanks to those volunteers who worked to make it happen. Your dedication has saved the Parks & Wildlife Service and ultimately the Tasmanian Government, thousands and thousands of dollars and preserved Tasman Island's heritage for future generations!



- FoMI and FoTI conducted an information and sales stand in conjunction with the Island Ark conference in Hobart in March. As a result \$171 was added to our coffers. Thanks to the volunteers from FoTI and FoMI who helped.
- Welcome to FoTI's new PWS liaison officer, Noel Carmichael. Noel has been the Manager of the Macquarie Island Nature Reserve and World Heritage area, spending about 5 years on Macquarie. As well as Tasman, Noel is also working with volunteers at Maatsuyker Island.
- Noel visited Tasman in April, together with Philip Roope from Porchlight Films. Philip was scouting for possible locations for a film of the book *Light Between Oceans* by M.L. Stedman. It is rumoured that both Tasman Island and Cape Bruny could be locations for scenes in the film.
- Best wishes to former Wildcare Co-chair & FoTI member Will Forsyth who has at last returned home after a lengthy stay in hospital.
- At the time of writing, the 2015 edition of our spectacular limited-edition *Lighthouses of Tasmania* calendar is at the printers. Don't miss out ... get your order in early. Email friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com.
- A contingent of FoTI members attended a BBQ hosted by NRM South, during Volunteer Week.
- PWS hosted an afternoon tea at the Sustainable Living Centre in Mt Nelson as thanks to their many volunteers. Chris Creese accepted certificates on behalf of FoTI.
- FoTI will be collaborating with the Launceston Walking Club for a showing of their annual *Do You Know Tasmania* programme. Included in this year's show is a segment on Tasman Island with footage from visits in the 1960s and 1970s with an update taken on recent working bees by FoTI member Ian Ross. More news as it comes to hand. Keep these dates free: Friday and Saturday 10th & 11th October. The DYKT show has been an annual event since the 1950s & is well worth seeing.



Island Ark conference

Canoeists off
Tasman Island
Photo: John
Watson*Craspedia cynurica*, Billy Buttons,
not previously recorded on
Tasman Island

NRM South Volunteers BBQ

Chris (Rotalift), Lyndon O'Grady (AMSA) Noel Carmichael (PWS), Philip Roope (Porchlight Films)



FoTI's popular working bees on Tasman Island were held this year in March and April—both planning to share transport. Delegates from the Island Ark conference, held in Hobart in March, hoped to make a day trip out to Tasman and as usual we collaborated with Tasman Peninsular Rotary in April.



Apart from the usual mowing, repairs were made to beds prior to installing new mattresses, partly paid for thanks to a grant from Wildcare Inc.

Work on the completion guttering at Q1 and a new tank for Q2 spanned both working bees.—the tank being the last purchased with a grant for the Tasmanian Community Fund.

There was the usual programme of weeding, in the course of which a new plant for Tasman Island was discovered. Bob Graham and Nell Hilliard found several specimens of *Craspedia cynurica*, or Billy Buttons, endemic to the Tasman Peninsula and not previously recorded on Tasman Island.



Tasman Island's propensity for fog put paid to the planned visit by most of the delegates from the Island Ark conference. Fog was already spilling over Cape Pillar when the first contingent arrived. Then, Heli Resources pilot managed to find a gap to fly the first five FoTI volunteers over to Safety Cove, which was bathed in sunshine.



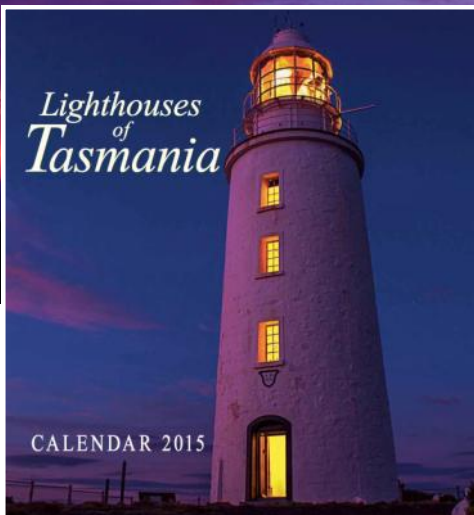
However, visibility on the island then closed in and further flights were aborted! The remaining five FoTI volunteers provided hospitality for the visitors who were unprepared for an enforced stay on the island. Despite the lack of toothbrushes, everyone enjoyed the menu at Hooter's Tasman Island restaurant and had a comfortable night.

Rotary's visit after the 2nd working bee went well and among the visitors were fellow volunteers from the Friends of South Solitary Island in NSW — Rob and Deidre Trezise. It was great to see Rob and Deidre again at FoTI's April meeting at the DSS a couple of nights later.



Thank you to AMSA, and especially Lyndon O'Grady, for the donation of the book *First Order, Australia's Highway of Lighthouses* by Garry Searle; an official AMSA lightstation flag; as well as a prototype of a cardboard kit model of the Tasman Island Lighthouse which will be available later in the year to celebrate the 100th anniversary of lighthouse service by the Australian Government in 2015.





*Sentinel it stands upon projecting cape,
And guards the reefs along the ocean's verge.
Starts into life a dim, gigantic shape,
Holding its lantern o'er the restless surge.*
Arthur Frederick King, lightkeeper

Building lighthouses around Tasmania's precipitous and isolated coastline must have been a daunting prospect. One newspaper correspondent wrote that *"the person who had suggested the construction of a light on the top [of Tasman Island] was not altogether compos mentis..."*

The difficulty of access to Tasman Island continued to cause comment when two members of the Hobart Marine Board ... *slipped and got a good ducking ...* when attempting to make a site inspection. Later that year, prospective building contractors also discovered the problems they might encounter when *"Some members of the party were unable to land, while those who succeeded ... were most forcibly impressed by the natural difficulties to be overcome in carrying out the contract."*

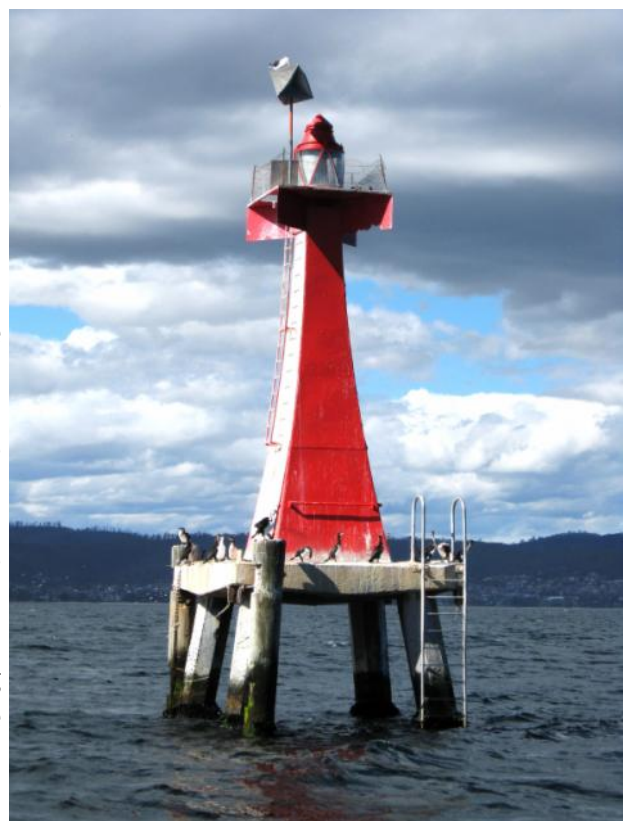
Modern-day occupational health and safety legislators would, no doubt, cringe at some of the conditions workers endured.

These unique and spectacular structures are once again celebrated along with those who built them. The latest edition of the *Lighthouses of Tasmania* calendar features stunning photographs of some of our iconic lighthouses. Images include lighthouses at Maatsuyker and Tasman Islands, Cape Bruny, Iron Pot, Eddystone Point, Low Head, Table Cape, Bluff Hill Point, Rocky Cape, Highfield Point and Cape Sorell. The historic lighthouse at Blinking Billy Point in Hobart and its replacement, the John Garrow light, are also featured.

Working in partnership with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, the dedicated Friends of Tasman Island volunteers carry out many hundreds of hours of work each year towards conservation and preservation of the natural and cultural heritage of Tasman Island.

The 2015 calendar, the 9th in the series produced by the Friends of Tasman Island, is an all Tasmanian production. Thanks to sponsorship from the Cascade Brewery Company, Australian Maritime Systems and Wildcare Inc the *Lighthouses of Tasmania* calendar is a major fundraiser.

Now a collectors' item, the 2015 calendar will soon be available in selected book shops, newsagents and other local stores round the State. Or you can secure your copy of this unique limited-edition by emailing friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com. For only \$20 + postage you will be helping to support ongoing work on Tasman Island.



At a celebration dinner after the AGM stories echoed life as it was when keepers and their families still lived on Tasman Island. Carol Jackson and Dee Webb, who grew up on Tasman, Elaine Bell whose mother, Eileen Johnston, was born on Tasman in 1920; and Mike Jenner who was a keeper in the 1970s. Bob Graham read a poem, written at a working bee in 2010 by his late wife, Helen Gee.

Ten Days on the Island (FoTI style)

Away south to Tasman for ten full days
Fair weather or foul the island's a craze
for *Friends* with a handle on Tasman's delights
So time fairly flies till the homeward flights

Day one saw a tank being rolled away
(there's to be a new one dropped in some day)
The old tank was lined for deposit of weeds
To ensure they all die, with no viable seeds

In verandah and laundry floors were scraped clean
Soon they shone bright with a new grey sheen
And windows too, and the old back door
Came in for some paint just like the floor

The first few days we were fine weather blest
Young Chris flung commands with hearty zest:
Fill the tank with weeds and mulch;
Toss that old lino in the tip at the gulch;

Cut yarrow seed heads as you pass;
Oh, and carry, too, a load of grass;
Fish oil tractor, tank stays and bolts;
House vents, verandah ties and rusty faults...

Collect good bricks, and see that they're clean
Move that old timber ...watch your spleen!
Then the day for indoor jobs is here –
cause mist, then wind, then drops appear...

A wild dog day, I hear Chris say
The cliffs and crags are slaty grey
There's a window sash that needs repair
(But Scott's outside, he loves it there)

Erika's cooking more scumptious food
And baking bread, in a kitchen mood
Anne is sweeping through the hall
And other bods are lazing; on call...

They're just sipping tea, being tempted and fed
While Scott keeps moving, "from B to Z"
Stacks of timber, stone and brick
Quick to report every quirk or trick

Now brushcutting's resumed at the old fowl yard
Exposing timber, p'raps a heritage shard
Mike's in his element cutting and raking
and carting the fern till his back be breaking

The day the tsunami hit the isle
we dragged out netting, quite a pile,
collected seeds as the strong wind blew
then resorted to window painting anew

Where the relief keepers' chimney long hit the turf
The Rob'n Bob Express are proving their worth
The pile of cleaned bricks at Q1&3 grew
In readiness for a house restoration crew

Next Rob'n Bob explored the ruin
And no-one knew just what they were doin'
When out they hauled a heap of nails
and a mantle piece....ye holy grails!

A turn buckle too beneath the rubble
and plumbing fittings well worth the trouble
There seems no end to the heritage find
On fish oil tonight the Tasman's cats will dine!

There were *recitations, songs and dance*
And Scott assumed his Tasman trance
His hors d'oeuvres at *Honkers* did truly astound!
As ideas for the future were bounced around

One volunteer is worth ten pressed men
(It's a naval expression used again and again)
So here's to the *Friends* and their mission bold
And time well spent in Tasman's fold!

John Cook's Story - Tasman Island, 1970

Somehow the Department of Shipping and Transport discovered that Lyn and John weren't married! An order came out by mail to Headkeeper, Cyril Griffiths: "John and Lynn were to be married immediately." "If not," the Department said, "John would be sacked."

With no priest on the island and it wasn't mail-boat day either—what to do? After a series of secretive radio calls to Geoff Martin (LH260), skipper of the *Sea Hound*, John arranged for a special delivery.

Unfortunately, the landing proved unworkable because of the weather and they had to use the zig zag. Luckily, John had been working on the track – otherwise Lyn might have refused! Nevertheless, Cyril offered to come down to assist with ropes.

Even though the tide was low, there was a steady swell. It was obvious that they would have to jump into the dinghy.

Sea Hound anchored out in the passage. Backing the dinghy towards the rocky shore the skipper yelled "Lyn get ready to jump on my command." (Note: Lyn was wearing a Kapok jacket!)

The sea surged over the slippery, kelp covered rocks. Geoff yells, "Jump!" Lyn hesitates – too late she lands in the water (with her kapok jacket, not a life jacket)! Now Lyn, was a non-swimmer and with the next wave her jacket fills up with water!

Cyril strips off!! Jumps in to rescue Lyn and swims her to the dinghy (At Low Head he was always in uniform so wonder if he was that day?). Helping Lyn into the dinghy Geoff and Cyril take her out to the *Sea Hound*. From a distance, John sees Lyn stripping off her sopping wet clothes (including her kapok jacket)!

Geoff and Cyril row back to the shore where John is waiting (not yet naked) but with his two small dogs, Fritz and Bonny, and his navy kit bags (water proof).

Cyril jumps ashore and Geoff backs off the dinghy. "Stay out there!!!" yells John. And then he strips off - Cyril's wife Eve was down at the landing but John was not embarrassed at all!

John yells to Geoff to come closer – he chucks the two dogs in the water, then the bag as far as he could throw it (fantastic football pass he reckons!); then jumps in and they all swim to the dinghy!

They finally arrive at Pirates Bay where John's brother picks them up for the drive to Hobart and the Registry Office (quickest and cheapest says John!)

"Guess who turns up as the witness to the marriage – Jim bloody Brent (Boss of Shipping and Transport – Tas) the man who had issued the order!!!!" remarks John.

After a two day honeymoon at Swansea it was back to Tasman.

And how much did it cost? \$50 for boat hire plus the usual registry fees!!

The Eagle

Within the confines of my mind
the eagle soars
Quiet the beat and pulsing of his wings.
feathered fingers twist and turn
to catch each breath of air.
Caught within
the slipstream of his flight
imagination
wanders.
Feelings long lost can live again
my soul begins to wake
to cast aside
the darkness of the night.

And
if below
the roaring surf
must break
in pain and anguish
on the cliffs ~
I understand.
But here,
above
the death throes of the sea
we walk together
winging harmony.
The eagle,
wind
and
me

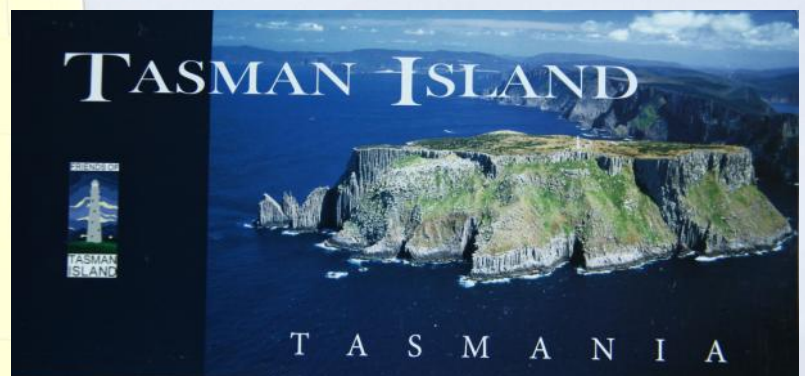
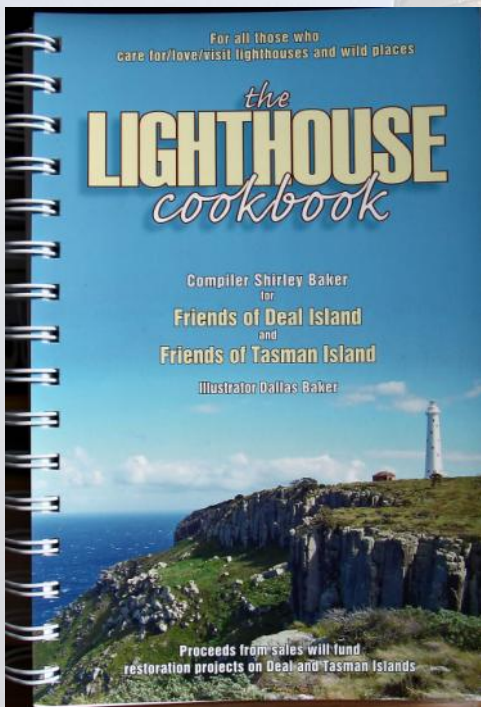
SUPPORT FoTI'S FUNDRAISING EFFORTS!

- Tasman Island beanies \$18.00
- Cards \$3.00 each
- Tasman Island hand book \$10.00
- Lighthouse Cookbook \$30.00
- Calendar (See Page 4) \$20.00 + postage



COMING SOON

- Miniature model of Tasman Island lighthouse



Selection of cards \$3.00 each



As part of their course at the School of Business and Economics, students at the University of Tasmania were studying sustainable tourism on Tasman Island. Carol and Erika spent an afternoon answering questions about Tasman Island and FoTI's work. A week later, Erika attended a presentation where groups of four students outlined a tourism proposal which they planned for the island. It was interesting that most of the groups were low-key in what they planned, and four out of the five groups involved FoTI!

FoTI has, for the last 12 months, been working on a Strategic Plan for the next three years. An initial planning session last year at the Mariners Cottage, was followed up with a 4-day planning weekend in May this year at the Eddystone Point lightstation.

Thank you to Wildcare's CEO, Malcolm McDonald who came down for the day to facilitate Saturday's workshop. A second workshop the following day focused on some of the perceived problems which may be experienced in achieving our goals.

Later meetings with the PWS General Manager, Peter Mooney, have resolved most issues and we expect the final tick-off for our 2014-2017 Strategic Plan soon.



*One volunteer is worth ten pressed men
(It's a naval expression used again and again)
So here's to the Friends and their mission bold
And time well spent in Tasman's fold!
Helen Gee, March, 2010*