



FRIENDS OF TASMAN ISLAND

NEWSLETTER



JULY 2013

No 11

A few words from the President

Hi everyone

I was taken aback when I realised this was our first FoTI newsletter for 2013 – an indication of how busy core members have been! It seems to have been a jam packed 6 months, including all the work involved with our combined Friends of Lighthouse groups stall at the Australian Wooden Boat Festival in February (FoTI raised over \$1500), the production of our annual major fundraising event, the *Lighthouses of Tasmania* 2014 Calendar and another 2 successful working bees on the island in March and April.

Thanks to all involved in our 2 working bees: the 20 volunteers, Parks staff, pilots and management from Heli- Resources and members from the Tasman Peninsula Branch of Rotary. Special thanks to the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), and in particular Lyndon O'Grady, for the significant effort and support received for both the filming of Tasman Island and another successful Tasman Peninsula Rotary fundraising event on Saturday 6 April 2013. The *Coast Australia* filming would not have proceeded if the tower couldn't be accessed and we are hoping that international coverage may generate more members and additional corporate or individual sponsorship to enable us to continue with the restoration of the keepers' quarters. Fingers crossed.

Coast Australia is an Australian version of the BAFTA award-winning British series *Coast*, to be produced by Great Southern Television. The 8 x 1 hour series hosted by internationally renowned British historian and television presenter Neil Oliver – along with a diverse group of Australian experts – will focus exclusively on Australia's stunning coastline. One episode features the south east coast of Tasmania with a focus on Tasman Island!

Other good news includes our finalist nomination for a Pride of Australia medal and an initial favourable response by the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery to FoTI's proposals to work in partnership along with AMSA and other interested stakeholders to store, restore and permanently display the Cape Sorell lens and Tasman Island lantern room within TMAG.

| <i>Inside this Issue</i> | <i>Pages</i> |
|--|---------------------|
| A few words from the president | 1 |
| Fundraising | 2-3 |
| John Cook & Rotary Day | 4 |
| FoTI Working Bees - March & April | 6-8 |
| Photo Gallery | 9-11 |
| Good night as guide calls it a day | 12 |
| Thanks from the Winners | 13 |
| School kids still love light houses | 14-15 |



Over the past few years it has been difficult for core members to maintain optimism and enthusiasm, even given our list of achievements. We felt we were at crossroads, a bit directionless and worn down - where to from here? Why are we doing this? At the end of July, Malcolm MacDonald, the first CEO of Wildcare Inc, facilitated our Strategic Planning Day: *FoTI the next three years*. Ten core members joined by Sally Salier and Will Forsyth from Wildcare Board of Management, spent the day discussing and drafting the strategic focus for FoTI for the next 3 years. FoTI's Strategic Plan 2013 - 2016 will be available for comment in the coming month. A huge thank you to Malcolm and the Wildcare Board for facilitating this critical event and I am sure many other Wildcare groups will benefit down the track.

FoTI's coffers are nearly empty so it's timely that our 2014 Calendar is on sale now. Thanks to a grant from Wildcare the *Lighthouses of Tasmania* 2014 Calendar is an all Tasmanian production with Tasmanian photographers contributing images, designed by 40 Degrees South Publishing and printed in Hobart. For many years the arrival of the Calendars from China has been delayed often for many months and impacting on the sales. The Calendar has a few new features- the monthly images cover the whole page, each calendar is shrink wrapped for protection from finger prints (retail outlets' suggestion) with a thin cardboard insert (to maximise appearance in shops and is also protection for our postage sales). ***If you can help with the promotion or distribution of the Calendars please contact me by email: friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com***

Finally our thoughts and well wishes go to our No 1 member, former Tasman Island Head Keeper, John Cook and his wonderful partner and wife Lorraine. For the first time since the annual Rotary fundraising trips began John was unable to make his annual pilgrimage to Tasman Island this year to entertain and educate visitors with his knowledge and stories of the island and light keeping.

Enjoy reading the newsletter, thanks to contributors, Erika Shankley and Karl Rowbottom, and Dee for design and layout.

Please pass our newsletter onto family, friends and work colleagues who may be interested. People can contact me on friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com or 03 6265 9785 (home) if you want to join FoTI, volunteer for one of our memorable working bees or have a story about Tasman you wish to share- I would love to hear from you.

**Carol Jackson
FoTI President**

Tasman Island Beanies for Sale



NEW STOCK ARRIVED

If you missed out last time!

Cost: \$15
(GST incl) plus p&h

Send cheque payable to

WILDCARE INC (FoTI)

Post to:

Friends of Tasman Island
6 Seventh Avenue
DODGES FERRY TAS 7173

Include your postal address details



*Carol and Karl
modelling the
beanies on the
last working bee
to Tasman*



Lighthouses of.
Tasmania

**On Sale
Now**

Calendar 2014

**Limited edition calendar featuring the lighthouses of Tasmania
Purchasing this collectors' item will help with the restoration
and preservation of the iconic Tasman Island lightstation**

Karl Rowbottom's Perspective

This year, for the first time in 8 years, John Cook, one of the last of the kero keepers, did not play an integral role in the annual Rotary fundraising Trip to Tasman Island. John, as we know, has entertained hundreds of visitors to the island with his tales of his life as a lighthouse keeper and the characters he has met along the way while in the job. John thought long and hard about this decision and the time, it appears, has come for John to call it a day for this event.

It also appears that he has passed the torch on to me and I'm deeply honoured that he trusts me in this position and rest assured John I will do my best to keep the history of the keepers alive although my experience pales in comparison to yours, then again you have been a very good teacher my friend.

John has put a lot of time in schools, nursing homes, museums and even on telly making sure that the keepers and their families' life style is not forgotten. On behalf of all former keepers everywhere as well as FoTI, FoMI and FoDI a huge and humble thanks to John W. Cook.

With this year's Rotary Day we had a couple of firsts. First being the transport arrangements - using a much bigger helicopter, a 12-seater Sikorsky! Second but not least was a visit to the island by former lighthouse kid Joyce Eade. Joyce spent time on Tasman with her father, Walter Williams, during WW2. Joyce, as a child, lived on every light station except Maatsuyker - her Dad said 'Maat was no place for a little girl'. Of course this would have been of the times when a keeper didn't have to have his wife with him; Joyce informed me that her mother didn't like the isolation of lighthouse life and lived in Hobart.

She told me a story about a time as a seven year old at Cape Sorell when she poked her arm through the prisms and couldn't get it out as the optics were in operation and only extricated her arm before she ran out walkway on the internal balcony.... she never told her Dad.

Joyce was unable to climb the tower on Tasman but she was determined to see her old home in Quarters #1. She was a bit surprised to see the condition of the old place as she remembered it as a child; I think anyone who has lived on Tasman gets this shock when they see the buildings for the first time in many years. She is very appreciative of FoTI volunteers and their efforts in restoration of the buildings on Tasman. I later took her to Quarters#3 for a drink and rest and she told me that it was the first time she had ever been in these quarters. The dear lady did have a mishap boarding the helicopter and did her shin in but that didn't stop her and she told me some days later that she was glad to have made the effort to get to Tasman.

Some of my time on Rotary Day was taken up escorting Joyce to places she was able to go and in between helped Lyndon O'Grady with tours of the tower and splendid views were to be had by all and I doubt any one went away disappointed. Chris Creese, or "Crooked man", as we callously called him had done himself a back injury before going out to Tasman and struggled through the entire working bee and even at the end of our trip said to me, "I don't want to go home". Such is the allure of Tasman Island.

Karl Rowbottom (Grumpy Old Keeper)

Foggy day in March on Tasman Island



Photographer: Chris Creese - 2nd March 2013

From Ashley Rushton, Regional Manager, PWS South on receipt of FoTI 2013 April Working Bee Report

'Thanks so much for update... it never ceases to amaze me how much volunteer passion and effort goes into the assisted management of some of our more remote & heritage areas that without such updates as the one provided can slip by me without thanking those involved for their continued efforts. So yes – thanks to all and I look forward to seeing you on TV (and seeing the British reaction to the stories and our incredible coastal locations). Regards Ash'

FoTI has held 2 working bees this year: 4 – 11 March and 28 March – 6 April 2013. The first working bee dates were rescheduled and shortened to fit in with the *Coast Australia* Film Crew. Planning and preparation for the first working bee, was exacerbated by the catastrophic bushfires on the Tasman Peninsula in January. It also included all the additional organisation needed to facilitate a full day of filming by the *Coast Australia* film crew; unfortunately the first attempt was abandoned after two days of waiting for the fog to lift on Tasman and filming rescheduled to coincide with the Easter working bee.

Volunteer Hours:

For the 2 working bees there was over 1,000 volunteer hours expended. At \$25 per hour this equates to a dollar value of over \$25,700 for work done by FoTI volunteers.

Visitors:

Tasman became positively crowded over the long-weekend of the first working bee when two separate groups of canoeists landed on the island. One couple even spiced up their visit with a bit of rock climbing! A couple of cruise ships sailed past the island, both to and from Hobart, and volunteer Andrew Boon was able to talk on his hand-held VHF marine-band radio to the Pacific Pearl as she steamed out of Port Arthur.

Four *Coast Australia* film crew plus AMSA's Lyndon O'Grady and Dave Pillinger, Heliresources' pilot joined the second working bee for the whole day on Friday 5 April with another 50 visitors plus AMSA & Rotary people on Saturday 6 April.

Work completed:

Besides the usual weeding tasks, mowing and brush cutting around the helipad, houses, tracks between buildings and the top of the haulage there was plenty of routine maintenance work including furniture repairs, replacing window latches, painting and cleaning, repairing and refitting ceiling vents, freeing up windows and replacing sash cords, repaired leaking tank, installing additional smoke alarms and testing all existing alarms.



Rakers Greg & Sue Brushcutter Gary

During the first 2013 working bee, Andrew Boon completed most of the outstanding electrical work from his March/April 2011 visit, as well as recording all new electrical work undertaken and a list of outstanding work to be completed next time Andrew or another electrician joins a working bee.



Andrew Boon Electrical work Q3

Installing roof tie downstraps in ceilings of the 3 keepers' quarters has been a high priority job delayed due to the difficulty in finding a supplier for the materials specified in the Catch Up Maintenance Plan (CUMP). Although the CUMP suggested a design for the straps, some time was spent finding the best method until a workable design was produced that could be reasonably easily installed in the difficult and uncomfortable conditions in the roof space. 85 brackets were manufactured on the island and 25 were fitted to Q2. With this work done it should be relatively easy to complete the job in the next couple of working bees.

- Q2 Completed installation of roof tie downs as per CUMP
- Roof tie down straps

Supplementary roof tie down straps as recommended by the CUMP were fitted to Q3 and Q1 (Q2 was done on the previous working bee). Q1 was completed as per the CUMP but on fitting the straps to Q3 many more loose fastenings were found than expected necessitating the installation of more straps than specified. Q1 and Q2 will be revisited on the next working bee and more straps added if required.



March Working Bee Team: Chris, Nick, Greg, Andrew, Gary, Glenda, Tony, Sue, Elaine, Erika



Handrail for Q1 Will & Ian



Karl Heavycut mower



Sash cord lessons Chris & Gary

Water Tank Project – funded by Tas Community Fund

Q1

- Installed new water tank.
- Drained and cut up old leaking tank, pieces stacked for future removal. It was decided to do this job as the tank had no top and 2 Forest Ravens and an Owl were found drowned in it.

Q2

- Installed strainer in water tank to prevent debris from roof entering tank.

Q3

- Made and fitted top to water tank to prevent birds getting in. Used second hand materials from removed tank at Q1.



Removing tank Q1 Tony Sue & Gary



Tony & Sue wallowing in mud



Tank for Q1



New tank Q1 Ian Karl Will Chris & Robin

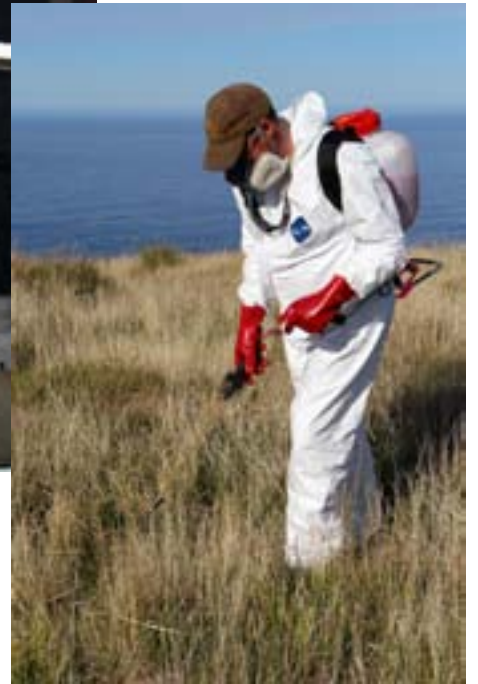
Working Bee Photo Gallery



Gwen brushcutting Q3



Sue painting front verandah Q1



Weeder Tony Thiele



Gary Brushcutting



Blast from the past D Ingram



Gary Sue & Elaine with her mother Eileen Johnston's birthday cake



Eileen Dad Jean & Les Tasman Island 1930 Photo AC Mitchell

Happy Birthday Tasman Island



Easter working bee team Birthday celebrations Tasman light Birthday



Tasman Island's birthday cake made by Jo & Karl



*Tasman Island keeper, keeper's wife and lighthouse kid:
Patricia Carol & Karl*



Filming: Brendan Moar & FoTI member & former Tasman Lightkeeper, Karl Rowbottom



Coast Australia filming at Haulage



Patricia Ruston

WANTED: One operator to conduct tours of a working lighthouse in Tasmania.

The Table Cape lighthouse is the only working Commonwealth operated lighthouse in the state with public access. The three tour groups had a look inside and took the spectacular views from the top as guide Karl Rowbottom took his last visitors through the 124 year old lighthouse. No more tours will be held until a new operator is found.

Mr Rowbottom, who had been the keeper of the lighthouses at remote Tasman Island and at Low Head, said it was important Tasmania's lighthouse history was kept alive and he hoped a new operator would come forward. The tender will be advertised soon.



LIGHTS OUT:

Tour guide Karl Rowbottom is outside the Table Cape Lighthouse, which will be closed until a new operator is found.

Photograph: Ross Marsden

Table Cape Lighthouse was opened to the public in 2010 and the tours had been run by Van Diemen Quality Bulbs, which owns a tulip farm nearby.

Mr Rowbottom was one of the three guides who took people up the 25m high lighthouse, which has views extending to Stanley and to Low Head, north of Launceston.

The lighthouse was built in 1988 after several ships were damaged when they hit Table Cape on their way to Wynyard to collect produce. Three keepers lived on site for the first 30 years of the lighthouse's operation but automation of the lighting system meant they were no longer needed.

Thanks from the winners of the Australian Wooden Boat Festival Raffle

Friends of Tasman, Maatsuyker and Deal Islands once again combined forces to have a fundraising raffle at the 2013 Australian Wooden Boat Festival. Our stalls were often besieged by eager people wanting to buy tickets and the raffle was a sell-out. Prizes were drawn by Elaine Bell, great-grand daughter of the first Superintendent of the Tasman Island Lighthouse, George Johnston. His son Les was also a keeper & Elaine's mother, Eileen, was born on Tasman in 1920.

First Prize, 'Low Head Lighthouse Bullseye' sculpture by Tasmanian artist Rebecca Coote was won by Ian Jeanneret. Ian, a photographer & former owner of the Goulburn Street Gallery, has followed Rebecca Coote's work & is very pleased with his win. It will grace my home, along with another steel sculpture by Sally Brown.

Thanks again to Rebecca for her generous and stunning donation. Rebecca is making a new body of sculptural work this year about Tasmanian lighthouses and will let us know when they are being exhibited. (www.rebeccacoote.com)

Glenda Anderson was the lucky winner of the second prize - joining the annual Tasman Peninsula Rotary fundraising helicopter trips to Tasman Island in April & spending 2 hours on one of the most isolated & spectacular lighthouse stations in Australia. This included lunch and guided tour of the lighthouse, keepers' quarters and parts of the island. Her



2nd prize Winner Glenda Anderson was thrilled with her trip to Tasman Island

response:

I just wanted to drop you a line to say a big thank you to everyone involved in Saturday's trip to Tasman Island. What an amazing place it is. I felt so privileged to have been part of it. It was so well organised, from the tea and coffee offered when we arrived, the chairs to await our helicopter trip and lunch to those

who may have wanted something before they embarked. To the tireless volunteers from Rotary who stayed for the whole day to the wonderful FOTI volunteers who gave their time on the island before we got there. What spectacular scenery on the trip over, whilst on the island and on the way back. I have been raving about it to everyone I come into contact with. Thank you so much for a trip of a lifetime and all the best in the future.

Jenny Markovitch, 3rd prize winner, joined a fabulous day trip to Maatsuyker Island on a Friends of Maatsuyker Island's scheduled visit on the 11 March and experienced the spectacular south coast of Tasmania

and spent time on remote Maatsuyker Island with a tour of the Lighthouse and Light station.

Jenny loved her prize – so much so that she made a donation to FOMI!



Jenny (centre) enjoyed a spectacular return trip hugging the SW coast



Maatsuyker Day trip crew with Caretakers Deb and Craig Searle (right and 4th from right) and Raffle winner Jenny (3rd from left)

Many school groups visited our stalls on the first day of the Festival. As a primary school teacher, Sharon Baird enjoyed winning the fourth prize as a valuable resource for her students - A collection of lighthouse books – including a set of John Ibbotson's Lighthouses of Australia books*, The Lighthouse Cookbook compiled by Shirley Baker for Friends of Deal and Friends of Tasman Islands, Trauti and David Reynolds' Reflections Deal Island Spring 2006 & Friends of Tasman and Friends of Maatsuyker Islands' Handbooks and cards. (*www.lighthouses.com.au)

Over the years, a few of our members have given presentations on Tasman Island and other Tasmanian lighthouses to the public, through the Tasmanian Maritime Museum, U3A, School for Seniors and various community and service groups. It is a great way to publicise our group and our work, especially now we have 3 magnificent banners courtesy of a grant from Wildcare Inc (and hours of hard work by Erika, Carol and Dee in image selection, caption writing and editing). Recently we have had much younger audiences.

In April this year, Carol entertained Grade 1/2 children at Dodges Ferry Primary Schools with stories of her childhood as a lighthouse kid on Tasman, Irapuna (Eddystone Point) and Low Head. Carol received a bundle of 'letters' from the students the following week and was entertained herself by the specific things the children remembered and liked.



Erika and Chris were recently invited to speak about lighthouses to children at their local school. They were amazed at the work which went into the model lighthouses at Mt Nelson Primary. There were a number of Low Heads, Mersey Bluffs & Iron Pot lighthouses with their distinctive red stripes. Also a Goose Island - her grandfather had apparently been a keeper there & several Cape Bruny lights.

Also Macquarie Heads as well as a number of imaginative towers. It was impressive that a few of the children had a bit of an understanding of the workings of a lighthouse.

Our banners were set up in the foyer together with Chris's model of the Tasman Lighthouse, flashing on and off. (Former Lighthouse Keeper Tony Parsey's stunning scale working model of the original Tasman Island tower) Chris gave a short question & answer session to the children about the lighthouse.



Erika's PowerPoint presentation of Tasmanian lighthouses went down well - particularly the Low Head foghorn bit, complete with sound. She also showed the short newsreel "The Lightkeeper" which features a couple of families with children on Maatsuyker in the 1940s.



