



# FRIENDS OF TASMAN ISLAND

## NEWSLETTER



APRIL 2011

No 6

Hi everyone

The 2011 Wooden Boat Festival stall with Friends of Maatsuyker and Deal Islands was a great success – thanks to the dedicated band of volunteers from all 3 groups who staffed our well presented displays and merchandise tables, talking with hundreds of people every day about the natural and cultural values of these remote islands. Loads of valuable networking, names and contacts of potential new members taken and heaps of raffle tickets were sold. Sales from our Friends of Tasman Island (FoTI) merchandise, including our new Tasman Island Handbook, will help fund future working bees.

FoTI acknowledges the support given by WildCare to assist the 3 groups to put on such a professional display, and this was reflected in the massive increase in our sales – our presence at the Wooden Boat Festival will reap rewards for the 3 islands and their groups.

There are 3 working bees planned for 2011. The first working bee for 2011 is already underway – the wild weather has not stopped them – messages from the team leader reports weeders, brushcutters and rakers still at work and a birthday party for the light's 105th birthday was held last weekend. Last month, the feral cat monitoring team reported storm damage to Quarters 3 front porch – we assume that while unoccupied, the door to the eastern verandah of Q3 had been blown open during strong northerlies. This resulted in the outer walls being blown off their foundations. The cat team had braced the walls and on the raffle-winners visit on 22nd February, stalwart FoTI member, Chris Creese, screwed the door shut to prevent a re-occurrence. Hopefully the wind abates this week so repairs can be carried out before the 50 - 60 paid visitors arrive on the Rotary Open Day on Saturday 9 April.

The late April working bee team has been finalised and we are currently oversubscribed for the November Working Bee. I would like to hear from people who would consider joining an extended working bee in 2012 – 3 to 4 weeks.

This newsletter features the first of Tales from Tasman by lightkeeper John Cook, one of the last of the original kero keepers – these tales are excerpts from John's upcoming book about his time served as a keeper on various Tasmanian Lighthouses

Contact me [friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com) if you have a story to tell or share about Tasman Island or are interested in becoming more involved in any of our projects on and off the island.

I hope you enjoyed reading this newsletter – any feedback welcome

**Carol Jackson**  
**FoTI President**



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## 2011 Raffle Prize Winners

Chris Wisby, ABC Radio 936 announcer and solid supporter of the work undertaken by the Friends of Tasman, Maatsuyker and Deal Island Groups, drew the winning tickets of the 2011 raffle on the last day of the Australian Wooden Boat Festival. The lucky first prize winner, a helicopter trip for 2 to Tasman Island with guided tour and lunch, was Jacyn Fehlberg, daughter of FoTI volunteers, Glenda and Ron.

Erin Curry drew the second prize and will soon join a fabulous day trip to Maatsuyker Island on one of Friends of Maatsuyker Island's scheduled visits

Third prize, a professionally framed and stunning aerial image of Deal Island by renowned lighthouse

photographer John Ibbotson together with a set of John Ibbotson's Lighthouses of Australia books was won by Erin Curry.

Elizabeth Toohey, as fourth prize winner will enjoy the Cascade Brewery 'froth and food' tour with a few friends or a brewery tour & lunch in the landscaped gardens

Thanks to Helicopter Resources, the Cascade Brewery and John Ibbotson for their contributions towards the prizes and special thanks to the tireless ticket sellers, both before and during the Wooden Boat Festival. All profits from the combined raffle will go directly to work on the 3 islands

by Erika Shankley

Despite the preceding days of gales, snow and rain, Tuesday 22nd February dawned fine with light winds. This was the day that FoTI's inaugural raffle prize winners, Eve and Ray Foreman, made an all too brief visit to Tasman Island. Visitors from Queensland, they combined their trip with a visit to the Wooden Boat Festival.



*First glimpse of Tasman Island*

Accompanied by FoTI's Erika Shankley, Chris Creese and Tim Kingston, pilot Simon Taylor from Helicopter Resources gave the visitors a bird's-eye-view of the island with its imposing lighthouse standing tall above steep cliffs plunging 250 metres straight down to the sea.



*Chris Creese, Ray Foreman, Tim Kingston, Eve Foreman & Erika Shankley in front of Quarters No 3 and Tasman Island lighthouse*

After meeting with Parks' Cat Eradication team who were on the island for a monitoring visit, the group inspected the lightkeepers' quarters with Eve and Ray being impressed at the work which FoTI had

accomplished in five short years. Then we walked down the track to the top of the Haulage to take in yet another magnificent view. The tourist vessels down in the Tasman Passage were dwarfed by the ramparts of the Blade and Cape Pillar which Eve and Ray remembered from a previous visit, sailing in their yacht Fontana.

While on the island we also inspected recent storm damage to the verandah of Q3, scheduled for repair at the next working bee.



*Eve and Ray Foreman - 2010 Raffle Prize Winners*

After enjoying a delicious special lunch prepared by FoTI's President, Carol Jackson, and a bottle of Tasmanian wine, all too soon we were shepherded onto the helicopter and were flying back to Cambridge.

Many thanks to those who worked so hard to make the 2010 raffle such a success; to Carol for the prize winners' lunch; and to Simon Taylor for the giving our visitors such a wonderful scenic flight. And thank you to Eve & Ray for being such appreciative visitors.

# Tales of Tasman

***John Cook is currently writing a book about his time as a light keeper on various Tasmanian lighthouses. FoTI is privileged to be able to enjoy some of his stories about Tasman Island before publication. In the first of excerpts from his books, John tells us the story of moving from Eddystone Point to Tasman.***

.....Then the day came that the Head Light keeper on Swan Island, Cyril Griffiths, told us by radio that the Cape Pillar was at Swan Island, and would be at Eddystone the following day and to have all our gear and effects ready for loading, weather permitting.

Well it was a last minute frenzy to get everything ready including the thought that our new life was now really beginning. We were being taken by here to a ship then put on an isolated island which did not have any romantic beaches like you see in brochures, but 900 foot (275 metres) cliffs all around it. Our excitement was building up not only for going to this mysterious island but also with the journey on this ship which we looked forward to seeing.

The next day we were up at sunrise and there anchored off shore, out from the Gulch, was the MV Cape Pillar. What a smart looking vessel she was too, all white with clean lines and her flag flying proudly. Half way from the ship to the shore a funny looking vessel was approaching with a very blunt bow and low in the water, this I was soon to learn is what is called a LARC standing for Lighter Amphibious Resupply Cargo. This is an amphibious vessel that has 4 large wheels and a propeller.

As the Gulch had a rocky shore, a track had been cleared for it on a previous occasion at a small beach a little to the west of the Gulch, known as LARC Beach; it was here she was heading for. I immediately ran inside and told Lyn what was happening. So we started placing all our effects outside the front gate, ready for loading, which would not take place till later as there were items for the station and returns to go the ship before they picked our stuff up.

I have mentioned that we went fishing (at Eddystone) in the old station boat, a double ended, clinker built

small whale boat with a 15hp outboard. Now this boat had been seriously neglected over the previous years. It was originally issued to the light station to work the monthly mail boat prior to the road from Gladstone coming through.

When my predecessor arrived here it was not in a usable condition so he asked the department thru the head keeper for the necessary materials to prepare it which they refused. Harry Austin, the keeper then purchased the materials himself and repaired the boat which he then considered his. However, due to a conflict of interest with the department over moving him to Tasman Island which had been his last posting prior to coming to Eddystone, he resigned.



*The LARC coming ashore*

Therefore the Head keeper, Nick, decided it was his. But no; he was ordered to send it back to Hobart on the Cape Pillar. This upset Nick no end; he was hopping mad and said to me that he would put an axe into it or better still some sugar in the fuel tank of the outboard motor.

The time came to load our goods and chattels onto the LARC, completed in a couple of trips out to the ship then us on the last one along with our animals. A seaman from the Cape Pillar was detailed off to take the 'station boat' out to the Cape Pillar under its own power after we had left on the last trip of the LARC. We arrived out at the ship and lifted aboard and the Cape Pillar made ready for sea.

We could see the station boat with its single occupant leaving the Gulch and coming steadily towards us. It was well clear of the shore when it lost way and, with

wind and tide, started drifting rapidly to the South. We could clearly see the seaman desperately trying to restart the motor without any luck; to make matters worse the wind was freshening from the North. Up on the forecastle of the Cape Pillar there was mad urgency to raise the anchor and go after thus fats drifting boat. The Cape Pillar got underway and off down south we went and were soon alongside the runaway boat much to the relief of the seaman. Tackle went down and she was hoisted inboard, along with a good humoured heckling from the ship's crew towards the occupant of the whale boat. I never did find out the reason for the motor failing, but have always suspected Nick ended up putting his sugar in the petrol.

It was now time to have a look round the Cape Pillar. She was one of three sister ships built for the Commonwealth Lighthouse Service at the State Dockyard in Newcastle, NSW; they were of 2100 tons with all the modern facilities including a helicopter pad. Single berth, air conditioned quarters were provided for all crew members with excellent accommodation for twelve passengers- mainly light keepers and their families , mechanics, technical officers and engineers.

Our cabin was very comfortable and out on deck kennels were provided for Bonnie and Fritzzy our two dogs, the chooks were already in the crate I had made for them, their canaries were in their cage under cover, as all animals had to be housed on deck. But there was Jedda, our little joey. We had foreseen this problem, coming up with the idea of concealing her PCV cooler bag and taking her into our cabin; this was no trouble as we were bottle feeding her but if course this was against ships' regulations.

After the evening meal we were in our cabin when there was a knock at the door; it was one of the crew.

Now the crew was a diverse lot with Scots, Irish, English and Australians. The chap at the door was a Scot with a very broad accent. He whispered to me that he had heard we had a wee kangaroo in our cabin, he had never seen one, could he have a wee look and promised not to tell anyone. We let him see his first kangaroo. I never did find out how the word got out that Jedda was in the cabin with us though I suspected Nick may have mentioned it to one of the crew back at Eddystone Point. Well!!! There was a continual stream of visitors to our cabin all promising



*The LARC: The cargo space is in the centre, a damp spot at times*

not to breathe a word about us having a joey in the cabin!

After a good night's sleep in our comfortable cabin we were awake at first light and up on deck for our first glimpse of Tasman Island. She was off our starboard bow, like a 'sea born Uluru', a massive stone fortress protruding out of the sea. This island is the guardian of Storm Bay and the approaches to the Derwent; it is the most majestic of the Tasmanian light stations and the most dangerous. It stands in rugged grandeur off the south east coast of Tasmania.



Following in the footsteps of Friends of Maatsuyker Island, Friends of Tasman Island (FoTI) has recently published the Tasman Island Handbook. This 52 page booklet, conveniently sized to fit into a standard DL sized envelope, will inform Tasmanians and visitors from the mainland and overseas of the incredible natural and cultural heritage of Tasman Island.

With contributions and images from individual FoTI members, scientists, John Ibbotson and other professional photographers, Bureau of Meteorology, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, the handbook has been beautifully designed by Tasman Island lighthouse kid, Dee Webb and highlights the island's breathtaking beauty. It provides a good cross section of information on the Aboriginal and European history, geology, fauna and flora, the marine environment and current management of the island.

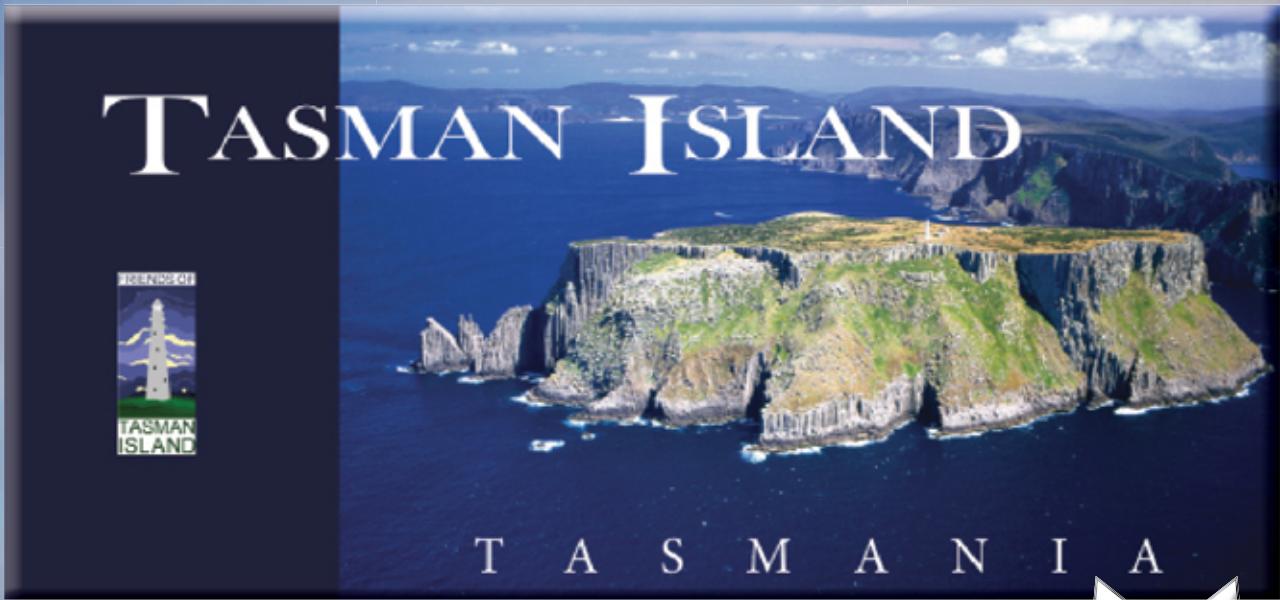
The Tasman Island Handbook will promote the work undertaken by FoTI encouraging increased volunteer involvement in the group and hopefully facilitate further corporate sponsorship to enable restoration work on the island to continue.

At \$10, the Tasman Island Handbook is ideal for fortunate visitors to the island, a perfect memento for former lighthouse families, Tasman Peninsula locals, tourists who travel and/or fish around Tasman Island and all those pharaophiles with a passion for lighthouse islands.

A successful submission to Wildcare Inc provided some assistance with printing costs – Thanks again Wildcare. To purchase a copy and support FoTI just complete attached order form and email to [friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com).

# Help support Friends of Tasman Island

Friends of Tasman Island (WildCare Inc) is a group of volunteers committed to the restoration of the cultural and natural heritage of Tasman Island



## Tasman Island Handbook

**\$10**

*52 pages of information and stunning images*

*Aboriginal & European History*

*Lightkeepers*

*Natural History*

*Marine Environment*

*Climate & Weather*

*Access*

*Shipwrecks*

*Fauna & Flora*

*Birds*



# Tasman Island Cards



© Alice Bennett

Dee, Carol and Erika have also been busy choosing images, gaining permission from selected photographers, designing etc to produce a set of great gift cards, (with envelope and cellophane bag). The images are displayed below.

To purchase cards complete order form attached to your newsletter email.



© Alice Bennett

**The cards cost  
\$2.50 each  
or  
\$20 for a set of the  
10 cards  
(postage included for up  
to 10 cards).**



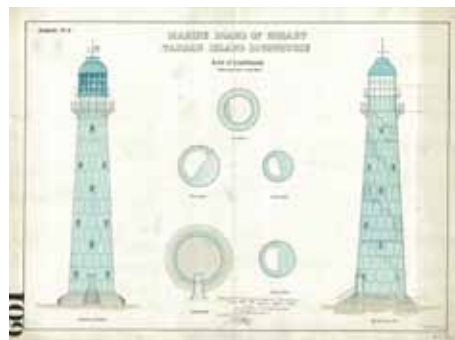
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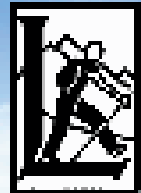
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**THE LAUNCESTON WALKING CLUB INC.**  
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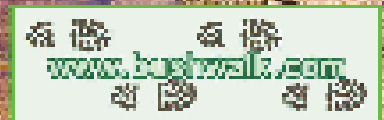
# DO YOU KNOW TASMANIA

## PROGRAM INCLUDES

- The Weld River
- Pick of Our Patron's Pics 2
- Giant Eucalypts
- Strolling the Southern Ranges
- MOVIE: "They Built a Hut" (from DVD Vol. 1)
- Hounslow Heath Highlights
- MOVIE: "The Tasman Light" (from DVD Vol. 2)
- Wilderness on Wheels
- SIX RIVERS Adventure
- Tassie Rivers Quiz

.... and our Movie Collection DVD's Vols 1 & 2 will be available.

## SPONSORED by



# Fri 15<sup>th</sup> & Sat 16<sup>th</sup> APRIL @ 7.45pm

**"50 & BETTER CENTRE," 108 BATHURST ST., HOBART**  
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