



FRIENDS OF TASMAN ISLAND

NEWSLETTER



AUGUST 2011

No 7

Hi everyone

We all like to be appreciated so I would like to share this letter to FoTI from the chair of the Rotary Club of Tasman Peninsula, Don Clark:

The Rotary Club of Tasman Peninsula has asked me to convey our sincere thanks for the support and friendship that your group share with our club. The working bees that you conduct on the island prior to our annual helicopter flights really enhances the visitors' experience and the feedback we have had this year as in other years has been fantastic and for that we are very grateful.

The relationship we have developed over the years with your group has been one our club values highly and we look forward to that continuing bond for many years to come.

FoTI also really appreciated the generous cheque for \$1000 that accompanied this letter. FoTI's genuine partnership with Rotary is both valued and valuable – Every April FoTI volunteers 'piggyback' on the Rotary helicopters to get off the island saving FoTI approx \$2000 in transport costs.

We also received some positive feedback from Shane Pinner who has been on Tasman Island several times, filming cat eradication work, scrabbling up and down cliffs in the middle of the night with camera gear. He commented on the great work we are doing.

Off the island, FoTI member Erika Shankley has been promoting Tasman Island and FoTI with numerous presentations to various community groups. Erika's recent Maritime Museum Lunchtime Talk at the Royal Society Rooms, Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery - Non Compos Mentis! Tasman Island & the FoTI Years – was a great presentation and very well attended.

If you are a member of another group who may be interested in having Erika as a guest speaker please contact her by email erika.shankley@gmail.com

Hope you enjoy reading the newsletter!

Carol Jackson
FoTI President

<i>Inside this Issue</i>	<i>Page</i>
A few words from the president	1
Winning Artist	2
Trip to Table Cape lighthouse	3
Tasmanian Honour Roll for Women	4
Tales from lightkeepers	5
Poems by Karl Rowbottom	7
Easter Working Bee	9
Fundraising	10



Winning Artist

Congratulation to FOTI member and working bee volunteer David Edgar

David was a finalist in the recent Hobart Art Prize with his charcoal drawing titled *Left Behind*, inspired by the cliffs of Tasman Island.

FoTI members & their friends are welcome.



You and your friends
are invited to attend



Left Behind

Drawings by
David Edgar

To be opened by
Dr Wayne Brookes
Artist and Educator
Friday 2 September at 6:00pm

Exhibition continues until 28 September 2011
Image: *Left Behind* 13, 110 x 110cm, charcoal on paper, by David Edgar.

Handmark Gallery Pty Ltd, 77 Salamanca Place, Hobart, Tas, 7000
6223 7895 - info@handmarkgallery.com - www.handmarkgallery.com

A Satisfied Customer and another 'lighthouse kid'

Congratulations on your very informative book on Tasman Island that I have just read. I must say that I was very interested in the Aboriginal History, the Fauna and the sea life. I knew the Light characteristics having visited the station in 1950 via the SS Cape York. I think that J Jackson was the Head Keeper at the time. We had bad weather and put into Port Arthur for three days before we could dispatch the supplies, a long time ago!

We then went on to Maatsuyker which I had the chance to take a brief look at as our time was short.

My name is Keith Banks I grew up on the lighthouses as my parents were Light keepers from 1937 -1951 on Cape Everard now (Point Hicks) Gabo Island and Wilsons Promontory until my father took ill and retired. I'm an original member of Lighthouses of Australia. Thank you again for a good read and a job well done.

Regards Keith Banks

Trip to Table Cape Lighthouse – 1 & 2 October³



BOOK NOW
limited spaces

Why not join Friends of Tasman Island for a weekend away?

Former Tasman Island Light keeper and FoTI member, Karl Rowbottom, will be our Table Cape Lighthouse tour guide from 9am to 11am Saturday 1 October and will also open the tower for us again from 9am Sunday 2 October for extra photography (and for those who can't make it Saturday). The tulips should be blooming but we have avoided the masses that turn up for the official tulip festival scheduled for the following weekend.

The times arranged will allow the group a full tour plus plenty of time for questions and good browse around the tower before 11am when the main rush of tourists starts. Karl has been looking at various places to help the photographers gain some good shots. Cost for tour of lighthouse only (tulip farm not included) \$11 pp. There will be a maximum of 22 people.

You will need to arrange your own transport and accommodation. Karl has recommended three: Leisureville or the Beach Retreat Tourist Park at Wynyard and the Somerset Beachside Cabins and Caravan Park

There is a temporary coffee shop at the Tulip Farm where members may buy a light snack and a cuppa. There are also souvenirs and usually some local art work on display.

Stanley is only 45 minutes away; the old Green Hills Point Lighthouse is on display in the town near the wharf. The present light is cut off by private property. The Rocky Cape Light is in the nearby National Park; on a fine day it is easily seen from the Table Cape tower.

You need to reserve your spot by contacting Erika by emailing erika.shankley@gmail.com or by phoning 62233510



Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women

Congratulations to Helen Gee who was recently added to the Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women, inducted for her service to the environment – some of us have had the pleasure of being on working bees on Tasman with Helen – ardent weeder, resident poet and artist. Her poems and watercolour drawings have featured in previous newsletters; Helen also kindly gave permission to use some of her watercolours of Tasman for both the handbook and gift cards.

Helen is widely recognised as one of the leading conservationists in Tasmania and has been an activist since the campaign to save Lake Pedder from 1967 to 1972. She is a founding member of the Wilderness Society and was the Convenor of the Lake Pedder Restoration Committee. Helen has been a campaign officer for the Tasmanian National Parks Association, a Convenor of the South East Forest Protection Group, a Councillor with the Australian Conservation



Watercolour by Helen Gee

Foundation, and member of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Consultative Committee.

Helen has been involved with many environmental struggles over the past 40 years and was a crucial contributor to the declaration of the Douglas-Apsley National Park in 1989. She has spear-headed campaigns to gain broader recognition of the biodiversity significance of Tasmania's dry eucalypt forests on the east coast in particular the Wielangta Forest of South East Tasmania.

Helen has compiled and edited a number of books which have documented the struggles to conserve



Watercolour by Helen Gee

Tasmania's natural heritage including *The South West Book: a Tasmanian wilderness* (1978), *The Franklin: Tasmania's last wild river* (1978) and *For the forests: a history of the Tasmanian forest campaigns* (2001).

In 2003, Helen was a part of the group of conservationists and historians involved in the discovery of the Recherche Bay gardens which were established by the d'Entrecasteaux expedition in May 1792.

Helen's most recent editorial endeavours have been *Rivers of Verse: A Tasmanian Journey 1800-2004* (2004) and *Ronnie: Tasmanian Songman* (2009).

Despite this impressive record of activity, Helen has also managed to spend decades assisting her partner Bob on their east coast grazing property where they raised two children.

Karl Rowbottom was posted to Tasman Island in the early 1970's and worked with FoTI members Carol and Dee's father, Jack Jackson who was the Headkeeper at the time.

Karl recently passed on this story and photos about their Dad and his new tank.

"The tank was bought out from Port Arthur, I didn't know it was coming until your Dad said it was and I don't know whether or not he bought it or was given to him but I don't think it belonged to the Dept. (The Department of Shipping and Transport)



*Carol and Dee's father (Jack Jackson) with the 'new' tank
– note the immaculate backyard*

It came out on a boat called the Tia Maria owned by Stan Hayward, he was like a backup mail boat man. The Tia Maria was more of a pleasure craft and a nice looking tub; they sat the tank on the hand rails and it was quite a sight - this tank wallowing across the sea towards Tasman.

David Ingram (another keeper) lowered us down to the landing and your Dad and I unloaded the tank to the landing which was a bit of a tussle then on to the haulage trolley. It took up a lot of room on the haulage but managed to get it passed the trolley coming down. Jack and I walked up with it.

We got to No 1 Quarters where your Dad had already built the platform. We decided to weigh it down by filling it to the third rung thinking this would save it from the wind. It didn't!

That night the wind got up and No 1 got one of those strange air currents running through which lifted the tank, water and all, and threw it over the shed into the chook yard. The only damage to the shed you will notice was a piece of spouting broken off near the tractor.

Your Dad told me the next morning it had scared the s--t out of him and your Mum. I did hear a loud boom like thunder about 9pm but thought it was the sea pounding into a sea cave."



*That night the wind got upand threw it over the shed
into the chook yard*

Editor's note: Erika Shankley was told by Australian Maritime Safety Authority workers that when the tank blew away from Quarters 3, they were too scared to go outside & look!

John Thompson - Relief Keeper

I was born in Hobart in 1946 and grew up in Bellerive, directly opposite the port, and from an early age was fascinated by ships and anything connected with them. I had a vague plan to be a ship's officer, a vocation to which I would have been singularly unsuited. I saw my first lighthouse when I was 12. My parents took me and my younger sister to Flinders Island on the government-owned trading ketch, the "Naracoopa",

It was unimaginable that about eight years later I would have been sitting up there operating the light. When I was in my last year at high school in 1964 I got an international health certificate as the kindly local shipping agent's, Crosby's, said I would need one, if I was to pick up a vacancy on one of the Norwegian tramps which brought phosphate from Nauru to Risdon. As it happened no Norwegian tramps required an untrained, non-unionised dreamer and I started University tanned, but broke and the same individual I was three months before. A friend, however, did much better. He started University tanned, but remarkably wealthy having spent 8 weeks at Eddystone Point lighthouse. His father happened to be Jim Brent, the Personnel Officer at the Department of Shipping and Transport.

Through this connection, the following December I went off to Maatsuyker Island for seven weeks and became hooked on lighthouses and in January 1967

Like all light keepers, John Thompson has many memories and stories about Tasman, here's one John shared with Carol and Dee recently

I was having lunch with some friends on a deck in West Hobart yesterday when a sudden, totally unexpected south easterly gust picked up a furled sun umbrella and slammed it down on the table between me and my drink, with no damage to either.

It reminded me of a little incident I had totally forgotten. On my first visit to Tasman Island January-February 1967, I inadvertently set the light on fire during one watch. The head-keeper at the time, Alan Rushton, thought it might be a good idea, if we conducted a fire drill, so next morning I sprinted up the tower while he and John



1972 Christmas Party in the tower

Hopefully not John's watch

I made my first trip to Tasman Island and became hooked on Tasman. I was to work there nine times as a relief light keeper until 1977 when, with Tasman about to be automated, I set off for a job in Tehran. At one time or another I worked at Cape Bruny, Maatsuyker, Eddystone Point and Swan Island, but Tasman was always my favourite and is as beautiful as any other place I have seen in the world.

Martin, the other keeper, stood side by side below to observe the operation. I grabbed the rope and clipped it on to the railing. The clip was huge and made of brass and did not easily fit completely on to the railing, so rather than chip the paint work, I half clipped it on and then heaved the rope over the side. It descended towards the other two, reached the ground and with an almighty jerk snaked back upwards until it reached the railing, flicked off the clip which plummeted down falling between the two of them. A foot either side and one of them would have been dead. All Alan said was "I tell you what mate, if there was fire up there now, you'd be rooted".

Island Farewell

by Karl Rowbottom

(Former Keeper leaving Tasman Island 1972)

A final goodbye, goodbye good friends,
 Like a giant greasy hand the cable tightens,
 And takes me away against my will,
 Yes, me and the basket shared many a thrill,
 Although I feel weightless my heart is like lead,
 The boat is like a coffin, it waits for the dead,
 Now I have stopped moving and it's time for the drop,
 I see the boat come under, the skipper reverses the prop,
 Its engine is screaming and down, down I go,
 Thump on the deck, release that hook, no time to be slow
 I jump out, the relief keeper climbs in,
 We head for the hook, in protest is starting to spin
 A rope misses the hook, something's not right
 And the keeper at once realises his plight,
 The basket rolls sideways, he slumps to the deck,
 He is alright and all is correct.
 On the second run the greasy hand lifts him to the sky,
 My job taken from me I internally say,
 And now we head seaward, oh island I look back at you,
 I see your fortress of cliffs, the greens and the blue.
 On a mountain of sea the bow makes a spray,
 I know by its fury you want me to stay.
 The people say it is better for me here, and all is so well,
 But they know that inside I'm a black, hollow shell.



Karl - 2011 Tasman Island

*John Cook (former Head Keeper) and
 Karl Rowbottom (former Assistant Keeper)
 worked together on Tasman in 1971.*

*Picture here 40 years later on the
 2011 Rotary Day*



Back to a Keeper's Time

*by Karl Rowbottom
(Former Tasman Island Lightkeeper)
Tasman Island 2011*

Burst through cloud, burst through time
 Modern chopper brings me back to island mine
 Mighty tower stands free and proud
 My heart like a drum is beating loud
 Again I stand on your lofty heights
 Where I fought storm and tempest many nights
 Winds so strong and raising strife
 And a night I nearly lost my life
 Modern time and so much change
 Man and technology must fiddle, rearrange
 Panels solar do batteries charge
 Look so small beside tower large
 Cast iron stair on cast iron wall
 Wind above I hear your call
 On balcony high I did stand to watch the starry night
 To watch the stars be chased away by the morning light
 Buildings crumble against natures grip
 Wind at random, what next to rip
 Albatross far below enjoys a master's
 And time has come for me to go before the approach of night
 I climb into a magic chair
 And soon I'm flying through the air
 On windy blast tiny chopper does twist and turn
 Before my days are over again to Tasman I shall return



Editors Note: Karl Rowbottom and his partner Jo Ainslie (pictured above) are returning to Tasman Island as part of the November 2011 working bee.

What happens on a FoTI working bee

The following has been taken from Erika Shankley's report for our second working bee on Tasman for 2011 (Easter) to give those readers who haven't been on one, an insight of the range of work undertaken by FoTI volunteers:



The Team

The numerous jobs were all in accordance with the Tasman Island Catch Up Maintenance Plan. The main thrust of this working bee was the removal of an accumulation of weeds and rubbish from the island using funds from a NRM South grant. (Thanks NRM South!)

Nearly 2 tonnes of weeds and rubbish was accumulated, bagged and lifted off the island. FoTI was also able to backload 350kg of bricks plus some timber for future reconstruction works on the island. Some bagged lino remains, all now stacked in the back verandah of Q2, awaiting removal at a later date.

Storm damage to eastern verandah Quarters 3: The verandah is now stabilised but further work will be required to replace broken and cracked cement sheets. In the meantime these have been temporarily repaired with galvanized and corrugated iron sheeting. A bolt has been installed which should prevent the door blowing open again.

Mowing and Brush cutting: In the interests of fire safety, preservation of structures and presentation, all areas around the light station precinct, as far as,

and including, the top of The Haulage were mowed and brush cut. In addition, the track and surrounds of the Bureau of Meteorology weather station were mowed & brush cut, as well as the area around the helipad and lighthouse. To facilitate mowing and remove tripping hazards, some rocks were removed from tracks round the settlement and to improve drainage, gutters along the side of the main track were cleared by brushcutting and sprayed with weed killer.



Rubbish clean up

Weeding

Using funds from a Caring for Country grant, an extensive program of weed removal on Tasman Island has been on-going since 2009. Every Working bee since has had a dedicated weeding team. This working bee saw three bags full of brassica weed, hand weeding dandelions, spraying yarrow around Q3, removal of Californian thistles on the east side of the track near Q1 and old blackberry canes to be burnt. Bagged 23kg of Montbretia bulbs and sent them off the island. Well done weeders!

Easter 2011 - Working Bee

Other tasks completed included:\

Quarters 1

- After the removal of embedded rubbish the mown/brush cut area around Q1 was extended
- The heritage fuchsia was given an application of Seasol fertiliser (Carol and Dee's mother planted this fuschia in 1972!)
- Usable timber at the back of Q1 was stacked under cover on the verandah
- Drains cleared

Quarters 2

- Continuation of guttering work
- Fascia boards scraped & painted on back wall
- Some walls at back painted
- Investigated rusty hinges on toilet door for future repairs
- Drains cleared
- Walls & architraves washed



New gutters for Q2

Quarters 3

- Eased back door again
- Separate tap installed for filtered drinking water
- Skirtings washed down
- Water pipe from back tank re-routed to remove tripping hazard
- Adjusted pump pressure
- Inventory of cupboard in Laundry/Inventory of Kitchen food & equipment

Oil Store

- Repaired, eased & painted door.
- Tool shed tidied & tools oiled with linseed oil
- Brush cutters greased



Repairs to Q3 front verandah

Royal Wedding

A fitting finale to the working bee was an evening of festivities to celebrate the Royal Wedding.



Celebrating the Royal Wedding

Wildlife Observations

Yellow-tailed black Cockatoos are a feature of Tasman Island with multiple sightings. A flock of over 40 were seen on our last day. Three wedge-tailed eagles were seen soaring together, overhead;

Other birds seen included a Sea Eagle, Forest Ravens, Crescent Honey Eaters and several sightings of Richard's Pitpit Following on last year's sighting of a wily silky-coated lagomorph, yet another strange beastie was seen on the island on Easter Sunday - the illusive *Bilbius tasmanicus* – which turned out to be a very tasty morsel



Guttering work continues



Rubbish and weed removal - thanks to funding by NRM South



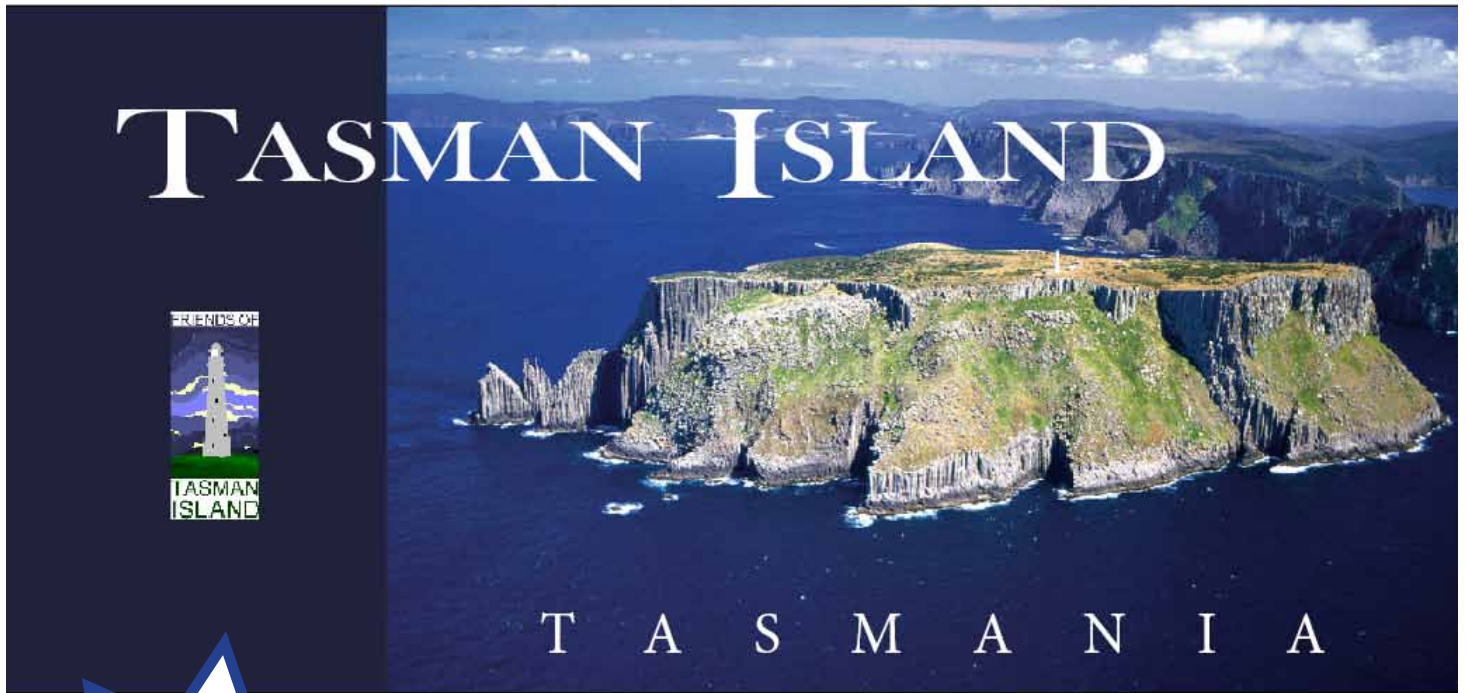
Back of Quarters 2 - the best it has looked in decades - well done

The volunteers, most first timers on Tasman Island, were taken on a familiarisation walk on our first afternoon on the island. Later in the week we viewed the seal rookery at the bottom of the ZigZag track and walked down the old haulage way to the Landing to assist Parks field officer Daral Peterson land on the rocks.

In excess of 650 person-hours of work was contributed by volunteers over the 10 day period, with about half this attributed to rubbish collection. Add to that the amount of work both before and after the working bee, an estimated 700 person-hours were contributed by FoTI volunteers towards the preservation and protection of the natural and cultural values of Tasman Island.

Thank you to everyone on the team for yet another successful working bee. As usual, we appreciate the assistance of our partners, PWS, particularly Stuart Dudgeon, and the team from Taranna who supervised operations at Safety Cove. Thanks also to Nick Creese for delivering materials to Parks 5 Mile Beach depot while we were on the island.

Interested in being considered for a future working bee? – just contact FoTI by emailing friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com



\$10

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.



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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).



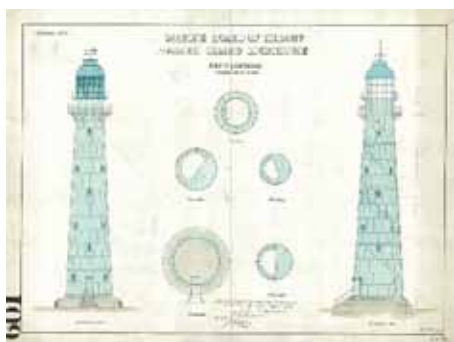
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