



FRIENDS OF TASMAN ISLAND NEWSLETTER



FEBRUARY 2012

No 8

At last! The next FoTI newsletter – I missed the Christmas deadline, I missed the New Year deadline so....Happy Chinese New Year to everyone! Year of the Dragon – In ancient China, the celestial Dragon represents an emperor and power. Today, it is the ultimate auspicious symbol signifying success and happiness. May the celestial Dragon bring great good luck to everyone.

A very harmonious and hard working team enjoyed 10 days on Tasman Island for November 2011 working bee. First timers - Peter Gouldthorpe, Diane Roughsedge, Keith and Anne Fleming (from Queensland) and Jo Ainslie (partner of ex Tasman Keeper 1971 and 1972, Karl Rowbottom) joined experienced 'Tasman Islanders' – Karl, Carol Jackson and FoTI stalwarts, Erika Shankley and Chris Creese.

The team arrived safely on 11 November – some of us slightly apprehensive knowing it was the pilot's first time 'doing Tasman'. The helicopter left at 11 am precisely so there was no minute's silence for Remembrance Day!

The team 'ate like shearers' and worked almost as hard. We also found time to smell the flowers, watch the whales play and safely explore the island on afternoon walks. In this edition a photo gallery of the working bee together with excerpts from Diane's weed report and Chris' works report gives you a good idea of our achievements.

Thought I'd share some comments from a few participants:

Carol said at the first briefing we would all hate each other at some stage...it never happened ...a

very friendly and harmonious time...a fantastic time spent on one of the Earth's very special places

New friendships, laughter, lots of it, great food ...I now know my weeds And reacquainted with the brush cutter after 25 years. The views from every window, the walks filled with nearly a 1000 shots... I'll be back...thank you...

Would love to have gone on watch. A great working bee. No words in the world will really describe Tasman Island. I served with Head Keeper Jack Jackson and to spend time with his daughter Carol and telling stories about Jack and a life style long goneTasman Island forever!

What a great group...I have enjoyed everybody's company and look forward to ongoing friendships... Ten days went too quickly...I could stay forever

I hope you enjoy the newsletter – please pass onto family and friends who may be interested in joining FoTI and/or participating in one of our working bees

As always a big thank you to Dee for making the newsletter look so slick and Erika for her articles and photos.

**Carol Jackson
FoTI President**

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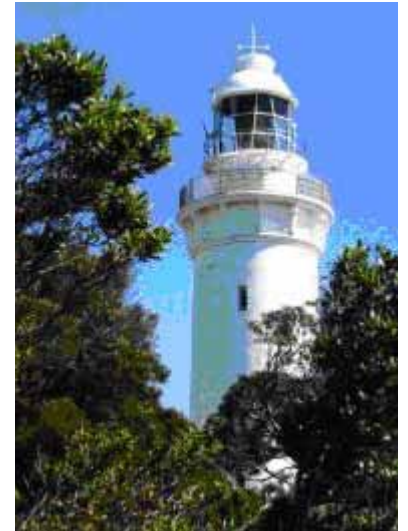


A FABULOUS day of PHAROLOGY FOR FOTI

by Erika Shankley



A postcard of Table Cape Lighthouse, left (TAHO, date unknown) & Table Cape Lighthouse, October 2011, in identical location, at right



We could not believe our luck! The showers had been left behind and it was wall-to-wall blue sky. Table Cape was a blaze of colour. On the headland the tower of the lighthouse rose up behind rows of tulips of all colours of the rainbow, contrasting with the emerald green fields and rich red soil of Tasmania's north-west coast.

It was a small group of only four FoTI members – Erika, Chris, Sally and Ailsa – who had been able to accept the invitation for a special tour and we converged on the Table Cape Lighthouse at the unusually early hour of 9am.



Chris, Erika, Sally and Alisa

For Ailsa it was somewhat of a pilgrimage – her great grandfather, Robert Huckson and great uncle Robert Hutchison were the architects who had designed the lighthouse!

In September 2010 Table Cape Lighthouse had become the first Commonwealth-owned, operational lighthouse in Tasmania to be opened to the public.

Operated by David Roberts- Thomson who grew up on the neighbouring farm, Van Diemen Quality Bulbs, the tours showcase both the lighthouse as well as the farm, which has been in the family for over 100 years.

Also joining us was Table Cape Lighthouse tour guide, Karl Rowbottom, a former keeper of the Tasman Island Lighthouse as well as a FoTI member. Visitors to Quarters 3 on Tasman Island may have noticed his name inscribed in the concrete in the back storeroom!



Bass and Flinders had sailed past this spectacular flat-topped promontory in 1798 and it wasn't long before timber and the rich red soil brought European settlers to the Table Cape area. Known as Tion-Benoke by the original inhabitants - the Tommeginer people - they were the last Aboriginal people to mount battles against settlers.

Standing in front of the light tower there was little to show where the three keepers' brick cottages once stood – just a few foundation stones, a clump of ancient cordylines and a bay tree. Nearby was the grave of 14-month old Bertie Jackson, the first head keeper's son, who died on 17 August 1888, less than three weeks after the lighthouse was opened. An entry in the log book notes: "Wind south. A strong breeze and misty weather. Employed in the

A FABULOUS day of PHAROLOGY FOR FOTI

lighthouse and cleaning up about station. At 5.10 p.m. Bertie Jackson, son of the head lightkeeper, departed this life aged one year and two months.”

Bertie was just one of many lighthouse children and a school was established with lessons held in a small hut which doubled as the teacher’s accommodation.

Calls for a lighthouse came soon after settlement and when the 167 ton brig Emma Prescott was wrecked in 1867, Parliamentarian and local landowner, C.B.M. Fenton, kept a light burning in the window of his house at Freestone Cove as a guide to mariners. An increase in shipping into the nearby Inglis River saw the formation of the Marine Board of Table Cape and in 1869 they contracted William Peart to erect iron beacons to guide shipping into the river. Construction of the first lighthouse on the north-west coast at Table Cape commenced in 1888.

Built in two sections - the foundation, retaining wall and brick tower was erected by John Luck of Devonport and the lantern room and optics were manufactured by Chance Brothers of Birmingham in England, shipped to Tasmania and re-assembled



on site by Duff Brothers of Hobart. “It is perhaps left to history to wonder,” quipped one correspondent, “what the Marine Board was thinking, leaving such an important building to Luck and Chance!” The light was finally lit on 1st August, 1888.

A unique aspect of the white 25 metre tower is the circular trench and retaining wall, below-ground-level base and access bridge to a main entry door set above ground level.

Crossing the bridge we entered the tower where the internal brickwork, once painted with lime-wash, is now bare.

Climbing up the 70 cast iron steps of the spiral stairway we paused at each of the two landings, before reaching the lantern room.

Here we found ourselves beneath the large 2nd order Fresnel lens and light apparatus. We learned that the lighthouse had originally been lit by paraffin but was changed to mineral colza oil after experiments by head keeper Robert Jackson. When the light was demanned in 1920 it was converted to acetylene. The operation was automated by means of a ‘Sun Valve’ which allowed the light to only flash at night and a ‘Dalen Flasher’ - a device that only took gas during the flash of the light. In 1979 mains electricity



was connected and an electric lamp and battery

bank installed. The current lamp assembly has six lamps of which only one is used at a time, with the other five as spares. The lamp-changer can

automatically detect when a lamp is blown, activating the next lamp to rotate into place. The white light with two red sectors now flashes in a sequence of two flashes every 10 seconds and can be seen up to 32 nautical miles away.

Out on the balcony we basked in the sunshine





and enjoyed the extensive views along the coast, east towards Low Head and on the horizon to the west we could pick out the three separate peaks of Three Hummock Island over 100 kilometers away.



Getting that 'perfect shot' sometimes finds photographers in contorted positions. Erika was spotted lying on the ground

while trying to get an interesting angle and Karl led us on a bush-bash to the cliff top for another view of the lighthouse.

We were somewhat uneasy as we perched on top of a rocky outcrop with a sheer drop, 150 metres to the sea. We remembered the sad story of Wilfred King, son of an assistant keeper, who had fallen to his



Chris and Karl on the balcony

death in March 1902 - while doing what young boys love to do – pushing a rock over the edge! Luckily we managed to avoid a similar fate and got some superb photos!

Our two hours of history, anecdotes and other



interesting snippets of information was over too soon. After coffee at the bulb farm, Sally & Ailsa returned to the 'real' world & home.

Erika & Chris, however, had a few more days to spare. Continuing the lighthouse theme, we had a quick look at the Rocky Cape Lighthouse before enjoying a meal and evening of reminiscences with Karl & his partner Jo.



Rocky Cape

Our pharology tour continued the following day when we drove to Macquarie Heads near Strahan where we had good views of the Bonnet and Entrance Island lighthouses.



Many thanks to those who contributed to such a great weekend - Carol for the initial organisation & for ordering such superb weather(!); Karl for an excellent tour of the lighthouse— you obviously enjoy your job; and also to Karl and Jo thanks for a terrific meal and



Bonnet Island Lighthouse

chin-wag.

It was a wonderful weekend!



Lakes Entrance Lighthouse

Horse with “No Name”

John Edward McCullum had been lightkeeper on Deal Island, King Island, Low Head, Iron Pot, Cape Sorell and Entrance Island lighthouse at Hells Gates, Macquarie Harbour before serving as Head Keeper on Tasman Island from about 1927 till he retired from the lighthouse service in 1929.

The Log book entry on 8 November 1929 shows that Head Keeper McCullum, wife, daughter [Sylvia] and child [Betty] also temp assist J. McCullum [son] left for Hobart on the lighthouse supply ship “Lady Loch” .

He is pictured in the photo outside Quarters 1 with his daughter Sylvia and the station horse.

Apart from operating the whim prior to mechanisation, the horse pulled a trolley laden with supplies from the



top of the haulage, along the wooden tracks (shown in the photo) to the houses, lighthouse & oil store. Does anyone know the horse's name?

The Tower Song

Those of us on the November working bee really enjoyed listening to Karl Rowbottom's Tasman Island stories (Karl's life on Tasman Island will be featured in upcoming editions of Prism)

Walking back with Karl from the oil store past the tower one morning, Karl asked me what I called the sound the wind makes around the tower – we always called it singing I responded – every tower had a different song.....



Two Islanders – Carol Jackson - lighthouse kid, Karl Rowbottom - lighthouse keeper

The Tower's Song

Listen hard, look aloft
 Hear a sound so sweet and soft
 No bird or human throat
 Can sing the sound of the tower's note
 The Keeper's nights are cold and long
 As he listens to the tower's song
 To the laymen its just the sound of wind
 Just a noisy sort of din
 The only one who hear the song
 Are the Keeper's and their kin

By Karl Rowbottom (Former Tasman Island Light keeper)

LEFT BEHIND

*An exhibition of charcoal drawings by David Edgar
at Handmark Gallery*

A crowd packed the Handmark Gallery, eager to see David Edgar's latest charcoal drawings. His exhibition, *Left Behind*, displayed 14 large framed and unframed panels which reveal his fascination with Tasman Island.

Like many members of the Friends of Tasman Island (FoTI), David has a passion for this dramatic island! In his artist's statement he wrote: "Visiting and drawing [Tasman Island] engenders within me a deeper connection..." and that "... after 10 years of travelling to it I feel like this connection is still young but with time it reveals itself more and more each day."



One of a dedicated group of volunteers who do ongoing conservation and restoration work on Tasman Island, David has been on a number of working bees. While at work David absorbs the island's rugged grandeur, later capturing its essence



in his sketch book. Then, back in his studio, he transposes his feelings into charcoal drawings which encapsulate the fundamental nature of Tasman.

Currently, David works exclusively with charcoal on paper and Tasman Island's precipitous cliffs dominate his large-scale drawings. In his opening remarks at the exhibition, Dr Wayne Brookes waxed lyrical, "David brandishes his charcoal rather triumphantly..." he said. "His journal, his camera and sketch-book document isolation, imprisonment, entrapment and obsession."

This exhibition is one of many which David has had over the years with Tasman Island now featuring almost exclusively in his work. *Drawing the Edge* was nominated for the Hobart Art Prize in 2009 and *Left Behind* in 2011 – both charcoal drawings featuring Tasman Island. His Master of Fine Arts exhibition in 2010 also featured Tasman Island with a monumental display totally covering the walls of the Plimsoll Gallery. As Wayne Brookes said "...the memory of his Masters lingers. What ocular alchemy was this; he installed the great outdoors, indoors. By filling the entire Plimsoll Gallery with incredibly vast charcoal appliances, he literally flayed the island's dolerite epidermis and amassed the hides within the Plimsoll cavity."

David's drawings reflect his intense feelings in the isolation and natural immensity of Tasman Island. Thank you, David, for sharing your artist's eye view of the island with us.

Erika Shankley

Living in History



LIVING IN HISTORY

Tasmania's historic homes, the people who built them, and those who live in them now

Alice Bennett & Georgia Warner

Allen & Unwin, 2011

A couple of years ago the book, *Country Houses of Tasmania*, gave us a peek behind the front gate of some of Tasmania's historic colonial estates, with stunning photographs by Alice Bennett and text by Georgia Warner. It became a Tasmanian best-seller and a second book was soon planned.

In the meantime, the Friends of Tasman Island welcomed Alice as a volunteer on Tasman Island. Helping to install a new tank beside Q3, wielding a caulking gun or cleaning windows, Alice worked alongside other FoTI volunteers as well as capturing some spectacular images of the island and its historic lightstation.

Co-author Georgia Warner and other members of the family also made a quick visit to soak up the atmosphere, before whisking Alice away - her mother, Sue, staying on to complete the working bee.

As a result, their second collaboration - *Living in History, Tasmania's historic homes, the people who built them, and those who live in them now* - is of special interest to members of FoTI. Featured is a double-page spread at the front of the book of Tasman Island and its iconic lighthouse, followed by a complete chapter with spectacular photos and stories about the island and the people who once lived there.



Alice working as a volunteer on a FoTI working bee



One of the many beautiful photos from the book

The book also has chapters on other significant historic homes in Tasmania, their history and stories from the current inhabitants. Alice's husband, Tom Gray's own home - Fulham - was built in 1835 and has been in his family since 1929; and Bowood, renovated by members of the Creese family – second-cousins to our own Chris Creese - have particular personal interest.

A large crowd had gathered at Fullers Bookshop, sipping champagne and tucking into large platters of oysters au naturele, for the official launch of the book.

The authors - photographer, Alice Bennett, daughter of well-known wilderness photographer Richard Bennett, has established a reputation as an accomplished photographer; and writer, Georgia Warner, moved to Tasmania from Western Australia to work as a journalist and media advisor. However, it was her love of history and human interest stories that inspired her to collaborate with Alice.



The authors - Alice Bennet and Georgia Warner

Former west coast resident, Sue Hines, now Allen & Unwin's Trade Publishing Director, congratulated them on their professionalism before the ABC's Chris Wisbey was invited to launch the book. In a 'show and tell' Chris produced some artefacts found during renovations to his own house - buttons, marbles and even a silver thimble. What stories could they tell, he wondered?



Chris Wisbey

Alice was effusive in her comments about Tasman Island and the work that FoTI is doing. It was thanks to FoTI, she said, that she had the opportunity to get an insight into life on the island and experience, first hand, the spectacular scenery. Stories told by former lightkeeper John Cook added a personal touch to this chapter.

Many other people shared their homes and contributed stories. Living in History tells some of these stories through sumptuous photos of Tasmania's most historically and architecturally significant buildings, complemented by text that transports the reader back in time and takes them through to the present, where the current generation of homeowners is literally living in history.



Erika getting her copy signed

November 2011 - Working Bee

Excerpts from Works Report – Chris Creese

Mowing

Due to the high spring growth a large amount of our time was spent mowing, brushcutting and raking the various fire breaks and tracks. Areas cut include the helipad, around all houses and other buildings, weather station and tracks between buildings and to the top of the haulage. The amount of time spent doing this task impinges on the time available for other important maintenance tasks.



Machinery

Generator, mower and brush cutters were inspected prior to starting work and were serviced at the completion of works. A visual inspection was made of the gas system, water pumps, extension cords and other electrical equipment.

Works Completed

Quarters 1 (Headkeeper's House)

- Cut up two old water tanks to allow access for fascia and gutter repairs and stacked pieces ready for removal from the island



- Repaired water pipes ready to connect proposed new water tank

- Repaired water supply to reinstate running water in kitchen, bathroom and toilet cistern
- Temporarily braced loose posts on western verandah
- Eased front and back doors
- Levered back into position and refastened loose wall framing and weather boards on room S17(CUMP)
- Continued refastening, replacing and painting fascias and soffits to allow gutter replacement



Cleared earth along south wall to prevent water ingress

Quarters 2

- Cut up old water tank and stacked with two others ready for removal from the island
- Cleaned out last remaining tank and repaired leaks with hydroseal and malthiod
- Repaired water pipes ready to connect proposed new water tank
- Repaired water supply to reinstate running water in kitchen, bathroom and toilet cistern
- Repaired toilet door

November 2011 - Working Bee

- Removed top sash from window in room S5 for use as a pattern for making a replacement for missing sash in the adjoining window



Quarters 3

- Installation of valves to give reliable hot water supply to kitchen and laundry
- Began replacement of eroded bricks

Other

- Unpacked and stacked bricks that were delivered in April 2011
- Unpacked sand and cement and transported to oil store for storage



Excerpts from Weed Report – Diane Roughsedge

Most of the entire time it was too windy for spraying, 2 calm days other than the day we arrived and the day we left. Ann Fleming worked 5 days with me in between dividing her time helping with the raking etc. Ann had an eagle eye in finding quite a few of the thistles, which was great. Two days covering the area north of Q1 were spent on a 'seek and destroy' California thistle mission – including both sides of the track.

The Track to the Haulage on the RHS was sprayed again for drain clearance as suggested by former weeding team; both sides of the drain were sprayed. The black plastic on the old water/weed tank was pulled back – a small amount of regrowth was found and resprayed along with six bags of weed collected. General spraying was done around the foundations of the three houses, fence lines, outbuildings, helicopter pad and weather station.



Quite a large infestation of 'baby' yarrow was found outside the fence line of Q3 heading back towards the lighthouse. Because it had been suggested that the yarrow be looked for before

the mowing was done, it was a 'hands and knees' job.



Only one 40cm Hebe plant was found, hiding behind a water tank at Q1 against the rear wall. No pelargonium plants were found outside the garden fence lines. One lonely little succulent plant was found down over the hill from Q3 garden, it was removed. The area from Q1 to Q2 thru to the pigshed was checked thoroughly for Arum Lily. It was a slow process thru hip high bracken fern, but no lilies found. A few small wild turnip plants were found around Q1 and hand pulled.

Val Jackson's fuchsia at Quarter's 1 is doing well, it was mulched, Erika again gave it some TLC.

The main plant in the garden of Q 3 was looking quite ordinary so was given a weeding, a hardy



haircut and good mulching.

The grave site of 'Jedda' the wallaby was cleared, bush clipped etc.

