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It has been a busy few months for FoTI - a lot has been on the calendar since the last newsletter.

- In February, some members attended the opening of Osborne Aviation's new quarters at Port Arthur;
- and we shared a stand at the Australian Wooden Boat Festival;
- In April FoTI held its 25th working bee - a silver jubilee milestone to be proud of;
- Thanks to AMSA's Lyndon O'Grady, FoTI was the recipient of some lighthouse equipment which had been stored at Inveresk;
- Some of these items were later traded with Chance Brothers Engineering in Melbourne for other items in their collection;
- Work has also continued on the repacking of the Cape Sorell lens .

So read all about it

FoTI Meetings are held at the Derwent Sailing Squadron at 5pm on the third Thursday of the month and are full of informed discussion and camaraderie. Sometimes there's entertainment with a video of items of interest like our working bees on Tasman Island. A meal is also available after the meeting. Why not join us!

Erika



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



Official opening of Osborne Aviation’s Port Arthur base

Several FoTI members attended the official opening of Osborne Aviation’s new base just outside Port Arthur. Their proximity to Tasman Island makes them a cheaper option and FoTI first flew with them for the November working bee last year.



Tom Osborne at the opening

Australian Wooden Boat Festival 10-13 February 2017

As usual the AWBF was an exciting time and a busy 4 days. As usual, the three Island groups - Friends of Maatsuyker, Tasman & Deal - combined to run an information and sales stand at this year’s festival. Somehow everything fitted into a 3x3 metre tent and there was still room for the steady stream of interested visitors. Sales were brisk, and highlighted where we should concentrate our efforts in future. FoTI’s share of the profits has topped up our coffers.



Business was brisk!



FoTI member, Chris Creese, was on board his yacht Neptune



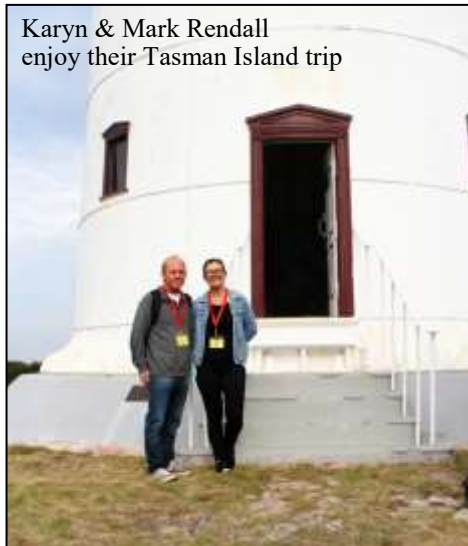
Three Presidents — Carol Jackson (FoTI), Marina Campbell (FoMI) & Bob Tyson (FoDI)



Louise Gillfedder draws the winning tickets

Raffle Winners enjoy extended stay on Tasman

Karyn & Mark Rendall, our raffle winners, were lucky that they were booked on the first flight out of Safety Cove. ‘Mark & I both had a wonderful time,’ Karyn said. They enjoyed the helicopter trip with its stunning views and were able to tour the lighthouse before the mist rolled in. ‘The sea mist certainly made it more of an adventure’ they said, ‘and added to the incredible beauty of the island.’



Karyn & Mark Rendall enjoy their Tasman Island trip

They were among the 30 or so people stranded on the island, due to a sudden change in the weather. They enjoyed an extended morning tea/lunch, firstly at Quarters 3, then at Quarters 1, before finally taking off for Safety Cove as the fog thickened.

‘FoTI do a fantastic job,’ they said, ‘... working in such an extreme environment ...’ Would they do it again? Yes — ‘Thank you so much to FoTI and to Rotary for an unforgettable experience. We hope to be able to join you again for another trip to Tasman in the future.’

All photos by Erika Shankley



Heli Resources’ pilots did a superb job evacuating the visitors in poor visibility

MHOoT workshop

No, we weren't learning to be an elephant driver! Erika, Rachel and Steve attended this workshop, organised by Maritime Heritage Organisations of Tasmania in conjunction with the Australian National Maritime Museum and the Australian Maritime Museum Council. A morning of presentations and a visit to the *Sydney Cove* exhibit at Inveresk set the scene. The afternoon's workshop was about seeking ideas for the "*Submerged: stories of Australia's shipwrecks*" project. The flat-pack exhibition - based on a series of pull-out banners - is due to start touring various venues around Australia during 2018.



FoTI's Penny & Bob Tyson listen to a presentation by Em Blaney from ANMM



A job well done - Chris, Greg & Gary

CAPE SORELL LENS

Thanks to AMSA & their Heritage Officer, Lyndon O'Grady, the Friends of Tasman Island are now custodians of the 2nd Order Fresnel lens from the Cape Sorell lighthouse. This has languished in storage for many years and needed some TLC. The FoTI team - Chris Creese, Gary Gay & Greg Bell, completed Phase 1 last year with the construction of new padded crates. Phase 2 has now commenced with the cleaning and repacking of the lower 7 segments of the lens. Still to be done are the Bull's eyes & upper segments.



Gary polishes a lens segment

FoTI is actively considering proposals to display the lens, as well as the original lantern room from the Tasman Island lighthouse which FoTI rescued from the Hobart Cat Centre in 2009.



Thanks AMSA!

INVERESK, FOTI & CHANCE BROTHERS

In December FoTI volunteers met at the QVMAG precinct at Inveresk to collect lighthouse paraphernalia which had been donated to FoTI by AMSA for future restoration and display. FoTI has subsequently traded some of these items with Chance Brothers engineers in Melbourne for items more suited to our projects. Items were exchanged, appropriately, in the car park below the Mersey Bluff lighthouse and



even heavy rain didn't dampen the enthusiasm!

All photos by Erika Shankley

Trading lighthouse paraphernalia in the rain - Tim & Joe from Chance Brothers with FoTI's Chris Creese





Erika Shankley

Amanda Thomson

There have been two photographic competitions this year, running almost concurrently.

NRM South's *Caring for our Environment* competition attracted a number of entrants, including two from FoTI. The theme for Wildcare's Craig Saunders photo competition's was "Who is doing what in the bush?". This also attracted a number of entries - some of which can be seen in the latest edition of *Wildtimes* or on Wildcare's Facebook page.

Unfortunately, none of our FoTI participants had the winning entry, although Erika's photo of Phil Cuthbertson, Shirley Fish & Sue Walker staggering under the weight of weeds was one of the runners-up. Here's a selection ...



Amanda Thomson

Amanda Thomson



Erika Shankley

Erika Shankley

Erika Shankley



Mick, Chris,
Ian, Tony, Jo, Rob,
Brett, Lyndon, Ron,
Rohan, Rachel, Carol, Glenda, Erika

Congratulations to FoTI and its volunteers on celebrating its working bee Silver Jubilee with the 25th being held on Tasman Island from 13-22 April 2017! FoTI's first working bee was held in March 2006 - an event which, appropriately, coincided with the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Tasman Island lighthouse. Depending on finance, there have been one, two or three working bees each year since then. An amazing achievement! Here's a few pictures of our 10 days on the island



A mower's job is never done



A squadron of Black Cockatoos



The waltz of the rakes ...



Using the new GIS system to plot weeds

Photos from FoTI's Facebook page & Erika Shankley



Our home away from home - Quarters 3



Found in grass at Q3



The new gas stove in operation



Glenda & Rachel cook up a storm



A weeder's job is never done either!



Rachel, Carol & Rohan celebrate their birthdays



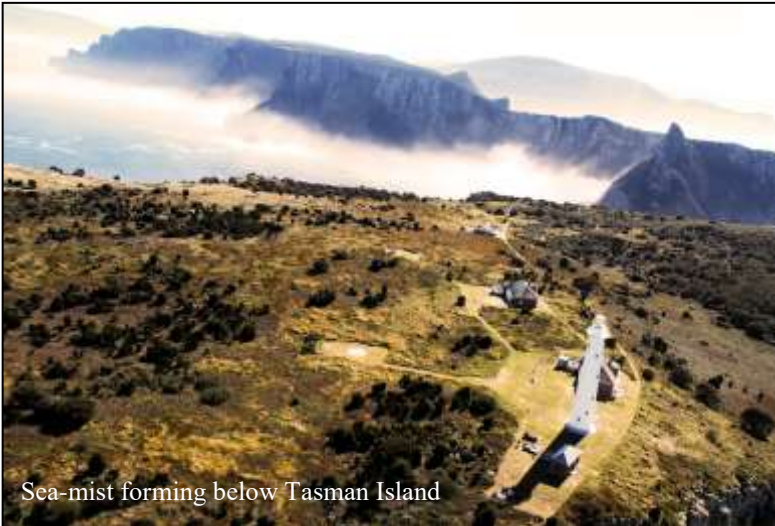
A walk on the wild side



Tasman Island Millipede



Neil Robertson Stretcher



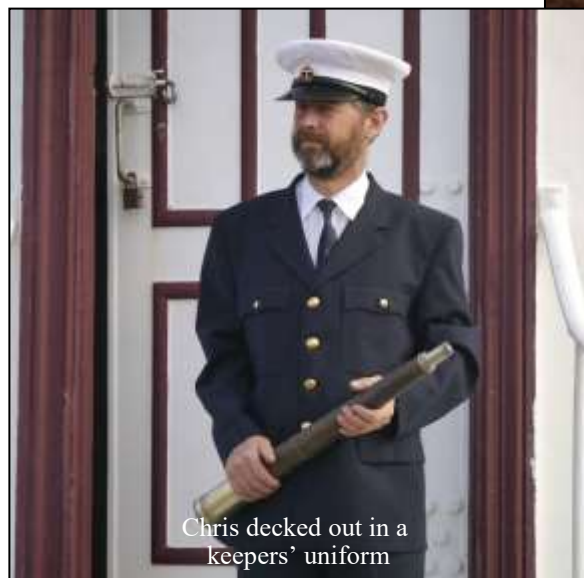
Sea-mist forming below Tasman Island



Rotting floor boards Q1



Jeddda's Grave



Chris decked out in a keepers' uniform



Taking off from Quarters 1 in the fog



Copyright Fairfax



It's amazing what we can learn through Facebook.

At top left is Alan Lambert's photo of Relief Keeper John Tregenza persuading the lightstation horse to pull the trolley up to the lightstation. This photo, taken on 3 May 1950, is how things were transported across the island before the arrival of a tractor.



A new era began with the arrival of a Fiat tractor. Former lighthouse kid, and later crew on the *Cape York*, Bob Barrett, described via Facebook how the Fiat arrived on the island in December 1964, travelling up the haulage in 3 separate loads before being put together and driven up the tramway track to the lighthouse.



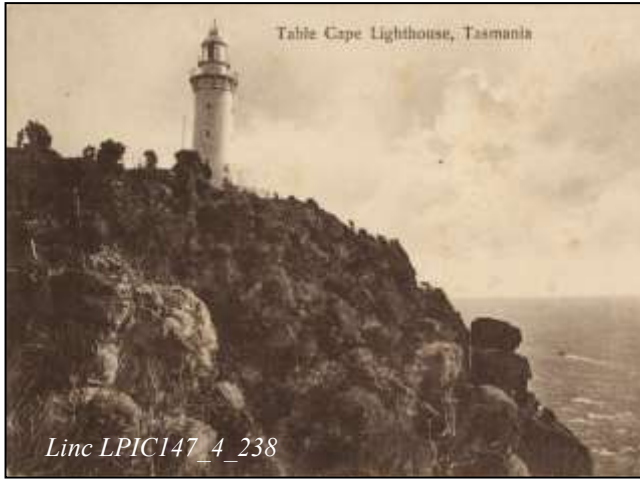
It didn't last all that long, though, as former lightkeeper, Karl Rowbottom recalled. It had been out of commission for some time before the arrival of a David Brown tractor in the late 60s or early 1970s.



As you can see, there wasn't much of the Fiat left when FoTI started work on the island - the march of time and the elements has all but obliterated it.

Photos: Erika Shankley, Fairfax Media, Karl Rowbottom, John Cook collection





Even in this age of modern travel, lighthouses can be very lonely and remote. Let's cast our minds back, forget about the early motor vehicle, and start from the 16th century and through to the early 20th century when the only transport was your own legs, horse and buggy and a ship or small boat. These were the only way one could travel to even the remotest lighthouses and back then, a lot of coastal lighthouses and lighthouse families could be as remote and easily be forgotten to the rest of the world and if we factor in a death at any of these places the feeling of isolation must have increased beyond tenfold.

One such lighthouse is on the north west coast of Tasmania at Table Cape which is situated about seven kilometres from the town of Wynyard. During the lighthouse's 32 years of manned history, 1888-

1920, three deaths occurred involving two children and one adult. Today, the Table Cape Lighthouse is only a few minute's drive from the town centre but that wasn't the case in 1888 when, Bertram, son of Head Lighthouse Keeper, Robert Jackson and wife Mary, died of dysentery at the age of fourteen months and about a fortnight after the lighthouse was put into operation. Little Bertram is buried just inside the station's gate and a short distance from the site of Robert and Mary's home. The lighthouse construction had just been completed and the winter had been particularly wet in 1888 and the bush track from Wynyard, after the carting of all the materials through the steep winding hills, had turned into a quagmire and it was reported that horses and bullocks would sometimes be bogged up to their bellies in mud so no doubt retrieving the child's body would have been very distressing for all concerned. The Wynyard funeral director or undertaker as they were more commonly called in those days decided to defy the odds and took a small coffin on his horse up onto the Cape where it was decided that Bertram should be interred on the station's grounds. The grave is now viewed by hundreds of tourists all year round and they ponder on how different and stark life was like for these people.



Photo Erika Shankley

This story leads us to another child's death at the Cape, his name was Wilfred Alexander King. Wilfred was the son of Arthur and Margaret (Maggie) King. Arthur was an assistant keeper to Robert Jackson. Young Wilfred was eight years and five months old and on the 19th of March 1902 met a very tragic end. Like all young boys he would have liked rolling large rocks off the edge of the cliff to watch them shatter on the rocky shoreline below. Former Lighthouse Tour Manager, David Roberts-Thomson, who grew up on the Cape, said nearly every child that has lived there has rolled rocks over the cliffs at some time and these days one is hard pressed to find any large loose rocks left, which is true.

The full story of Wilfred was slowly disappearing to local knowledge and it was only because of the chance meeting on one of my tours with Ms Pamela King, Wilfred's niece from Hobart, that I learned more. On the day of his death,



Wilfred was playing just a little east of the front of the tower when he grabbed a large boulder that was loose and about to go. Unfortunately for Wilfred he was on the wrong side of the rock and when it let go it took the little fellow over the 150 metre drop with it. The accident must have happened in the afternoon because when Wilfred was discovered missing a search of the area was mounted but no sign of Wilfred was to be found. One little boy who was barely old enough to speak must have witnessed what had happened and tried to tell the adults what had occurred but his rantings were just considered that of a distraught child and he was shut inside out of the way, even in his later years he could still vividly recall the event. Recently Pamela was talking to a relative who told her that it took great effort to stop Arthur descending the cliff in the dark but instead he kept an all night vigil on the cliff edge, it must have been a very long and horrific night for Arthur and Maggie. The body of Wilfred King was discovered at the base of the cliff the next morning by his father and was described as badly damaged and he was buried in the old Jenner Street Cemetery in Wynyard.



Wilfred Alexander King

His grave over the years, although still visible and unmarked, was being lost to view and history. Pamela told me where he was buried but even with photographs and a cemetery map it took me several weeks to locate the grave and with permission of the King family I have since restored it. When I located the headstone it was laying buried flat under soil and leaf litter and in very good condition. Wilfred's parents transferred to Eddystone Point a short time after his demise. Wilfred's death must have played on Arthur's mind and the poor man later suffered a nervous breakdown. After his recovery, Arthur went on to become Head Keeper on several lights and retired from Cape Bruny in 1931 and he and Margaret lived in retirement in Sandy Bay overlooking the Derwent River. On 16th March 1991 the ashes of Arthur and Maggie King were scattered by his granddaughters at Cape Bruny.

The last death at the Cape was that of Robert Jackson himself. Robert and Arthur King were both former naval officers turned lighthouse keepers. Robert had left Table Cape for Eddystone Point in 1898. Robert served on Swan Island and other stations only to return to the Cape in 1911 There are conflicting stories as to where Robert died, the most popular one says that he died in his quarters but on researching old newspapers one day (printed circa 1970's) I chanced on a story written by his son Bertram the Second. According to this account, Bertram the Second said he found his father dead in the tower at about 5.45am on 3rd of November 1911. A notice in a 1911 newspaper said that he had died of pneumonia aged 69. How he could have climbed up the tower with pneumonia is beyond me but they were men of a different and tougher breed. The graves of Robert and Mary had been overgrown and hidden from view for many years but have been restored to a certain extent over the last few years. Robert and Mary are buried in the adjacent corner of the cemetery to young Wilfred King.



Head Keeper Robert Jackson



Wilfred King's headstone after restoration by Karl Rowbottom
Photo Erika Shankley

Any lighthouse station can have its tragedies, it didn't matter who was born or who died the light would shine out every night. These days one can become unconcerned about the isolation of light stations like Table Cape had been in the early days. If any grave is discovered I encourage everyone to make it known to the local historical society, friends of a lighthouse group or some such organisation or lighthouse families or their history could easily disappear forever. It may come as a surprise that I have discovered that there is an element of younger people coming through the ranks who don't know even what a lighthouse is for, let alone the history of the families who lived that life - to me that is a sad reflection on today's society.



Photo Erika Shankley

Head Keeper, Robert Jackson & his wife Mary are buried in the same cemetery as Wilfred King

Sources

- Ms. Pamela King
- Advocate Newspaper
- Kathleen M. Stanley's *Guiding Lights*
- Photos Karl Rowbottom and Mercury newspaper

In 1963, Dick O'Neil conducted a review of the lighthouse supply function of the then Department of Shipping & Transport. In the course of his review he travelled on board the Lighthouse supply vessel *SS Cape York* to Tasman Island.

He writes: 'The visit to Tasman Island off the south east coast of Tasmania is worth recalling. Although it was a manned station, the method of taking stores ashore was by a basket on a line between the coast of the island and a large rock in the sea.

The arrangement was for this was a bosun's chair [sic] to be winched to a small platform half way up a steep cliff face. From the platform a small tramway line ran to the top of a cliff where a 1923 Ronaldson Tippett engine made in Ballarat pulled a cable attached to a small flat trolley to the top. Communication was by an old fashioned telephone.



Tasman Landing



Tasman Landing

The morning we arrived we went ashore at daybreak. By breakfast time the Regional Lighthouse Engineer and his staff had dismantled the bosun's chair [sic] for maintenance so that we went back to the ship by motor boat to dine.

The workers ashore (mainly the ships crew) were highly amused when they saw the guy from the Public Service Board stuck with one foot on the motor boat and the other foot on shore. There was quite a heavy swell and it was only the skill of the Mate who was manoeuvring the motor boat that saved me from being crushed.

Later that morning I was back on the platform half way up the cliff when I was asked whether I would like to go up to the top. I agreed and the lighthouse mechanic who was to accompany me and I duly mounted the little trolley to be pulled to the top.

When I say mounted, the method of transporting was for the two passengers to lie on their backs with their feet braced against a board. Half way up it became obvious to my companion that I was very nervous. He compounded my nervousness by recounting a couple of instances when the cable had broken and the little trolley on which we were prostrate raced out of control down the cliff, hitting the terminus on the platform at full pelt, and then literally flew through the air the remaining twenty metres or so into the ocean.



Loading supplies at Clifly Island

I was awfully glad and breathed a great sigh of relief when we reached the top safely. It was then I saw that an old engine built in Ballarat by Ronaldson Tippett in 1923, the year I was born, had provided the power for us to be towed to the top! My companion was highly amused at the whole incident.'



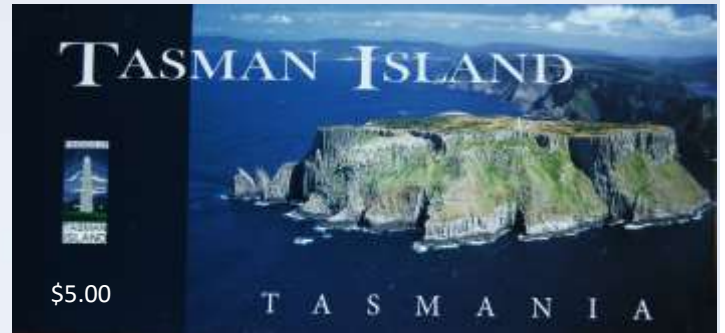
Dick continued, 'It was also an education to meet Lighthouse Keepers and their families. I recall being quite surprised to find that they were just normal people! Most of them were ex sailors. The Director of Lighthouses, Gordon Laycock, knew all these people personally and took an avid interest in their welfare. One of the features of the Lighthouse Service was a very strong sense of belonging at all levels.'

This was part of an article originally published in the *LoA Bulletin*, August 2001 - all photos by Dick O'Neill

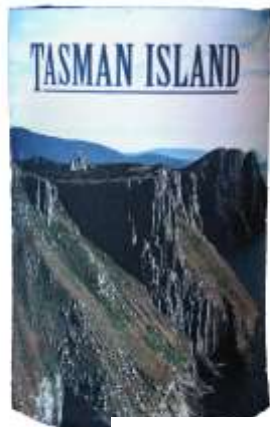
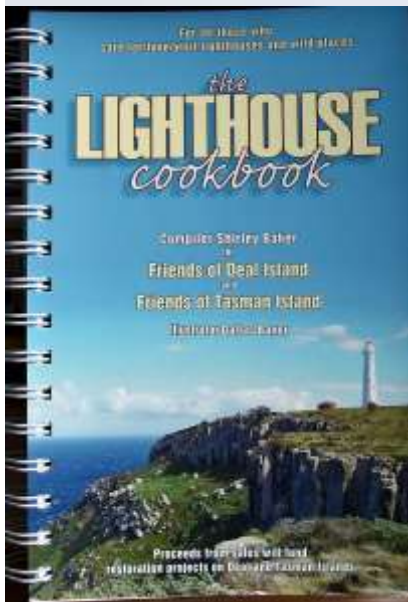
View from the cliff-top at Tasman Island

SUPPORT FoTI'S FUNDRAISING EFFORTS!

- Tasman Island beanies \$15.00
 - Gift cards \$3.00 each
 - Tasman Island hand book \$5.00
 - Lighthouse Cookbook \$20.00
 - Cardboard model kit of Tasman Island lighthouse \$5.00
 - Stubby holder \$10.00
- All items + postage*



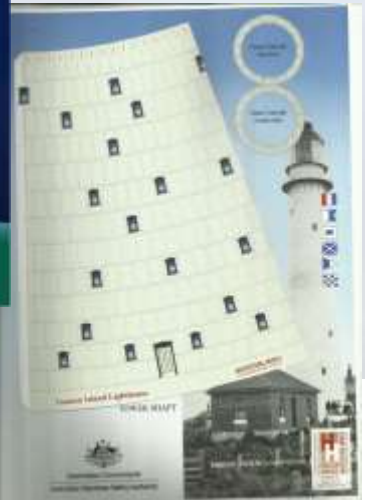
\$20.00



Build your own
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Cardboard model kits
\$5.00



Stubby holder \$10



NEW!
Beanies \$15



Selection of
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The ghost of lightkeepers' past . . .

FoTI Works Co-ordinator, Chris Creese, looks the part! His great uncle, Joseph Creese, was a ship's captain and Deputy Harbourmaster. He retired at aged 56 and then became a light keeper at Cape Bruny, Deal and Goose Islands and was one of the last keepers stationed on the Iron Pot. He also served as a lighthouse inspector and visited Tasman Island in that capacity.

Chris is wearing a genuine keeper's uniform, worn by long-term keeper, Cyril Griffiths, who served at Low Head from 1970-1990. The telescope under his arm is believed to be the original telescope from Tasman Island, donated by John Cook to Carol Jackson and on loan to Chris for the occasion. *(Photos Erika Shankley)*



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