



FRIENDS OF TASMAN ISLAND

# NEWSLETTER 28



March, 2023

Edited by Erika Shankley

*FoTI is part of the Wildcare network, the largest incorporated environmental volunteer organisation in Tasmania  
We work in partnership with Parks & Wildlife Service Tasmania, caring for the natural and cultural values of Tasman Island*

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FoTI volunteers pack up after another successful working bee (as seen from the lighthouse balcony)

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Photos: Erika Shankley, Amanda Thomson, Chis Creese, Brett Hall, Ann Wessing, Els Wakefield, Keith Martin-Smith, Tim Kingston, Alan Hwer, David Witt

**Want to learn more about volunteering on Tasman Island?**

<https://wildcaretas.org.au/branches/friends-of-tasman-island/>

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[www.tasmanisland.org.au](http://www.tasmanisland.org.au)

# Read all about it!

For FoTI volunteers it has been a busy few months so far this year.

- January saw the first of a series of special weed working bees to eradicate Californian thistle — sponsored thanks to our partners, Tasmania's Parks & Wildlife Service;
- Later in January volunteers were again on the island for an Integrated Biological Survey of fauna and flora funded by the Elsie Cameron Foundation;
- Scarcely home again, the three Wildcare Island groups— Friends of Maatsuyker, Deal & Tasman Islands — ran a very successful fund-raising stall at the Australian Wooden Boat Festival;
- In early March, FoTI volunteers again headed for Tasman, this time to continue their conservation and restoration work on the built and natural heritage of the island;
- And on the final day of the working bee—Saturday 11th March— nearly 100 visitors converged on Tasman Island for Tasman Peninsula Rotary Club's annual fund-raiser. As an added bonus, the lighthouse was open for inspection.

## WEEDING REPORT January 2023

Brett Hall, Ann Wessing, Nikki Hutchings & Jo Castillo

This was the first specialised Weeding Working Bee undertaken by FoTI on Tasman Island. It was highly successful, and I would like to thank all the weeders for their hard work, diligence, and good humour during the trip. It was very clear that we were having a big impact on reducing priority weeds. Without this working bee in between the regular FoTI working bees it is unlikely that both the Californian thistle and the Wild radish would be eradicated from the island. There was quite challenging weather (windy, foggy/misty) during our stay even though it was mid-summer! So, we believe the amount of time allocated (seven days) is about right to ensure all spraying can be completed.



Weeders: Ann, Nikki, Jo & Brett

At this working bee we started using red stakes to mark the Californian thistle 'hot spots'. A stake was used for every patch where the number of thistles treated exceeded ten. Overall, we marked 19 'hot spots' that contained the number of recorded thistles within a three to four metre radius of the stake. A total of **403** Californian thistles were located using this technique, which represents 25% of the thistles treated. So, we believe this will be very helpful in future for weeders and will allow Parks & Wildlife to monitor some of these sites when they visit the island.

A big thank you to PWS for providing transport over to Tasman Island for this inaugural FoTI Weeding Working Bee in summer. Ranger Sam Lennox has been of great support. We had identified there was a problem that there is too big a time gap between the normal spring and autumn working bees to prevent some weeds setting seed, particularly the Californian thistles and the Wild radish. This problem was further underlined when we also found a few Yarrow plants with seed heads during this working bee. The main focus was to be on the Californian thistles as they are a declared weed and our number one priority.

The island has dried off a fair bit since our last visit in November. The thistle locations however are still quite moist and 'Zone Two' is very wet in the far western and northern ends. There has been a lot of foliage growth since the spring working bee, in some places the grass had grown over 45cm in just two months. This was the most Cocksfoot grass we had ever seen on the island. It was quite difficult to find some of the boundary stakes as they had been covered over by the new growth!



Hot Spot stake

We had a slow start to spraying the thistles, as the weather was windy, foggy, misty and wet. So, we undertook plan B and moved to the Old Garden area to check the Wild radish numbers. There were plenty of juvenile seedlings and 1,583 were pulled out. Plus 15 mature plants with seed heads that had to be cut off and removed from the island.

A total of **1,598** Wild radish plants were removed, so much for the focus being on the thistles! This number indeed was 10 more than the final Californian thistle tally. All the known weed sites were checked using the Fulcrum app and it was very pleasing that none of the marked sites showed any evidence of the priority weed species that have already been eradicated from Tasman Island by FoTI weeders over the years.

## A Week of Weeding in Paradise

Ann Wessing



Sunrise

Having been included as a first-time weeder on Tasman Island in mid-January, I've come away with lots of impressions, memories and photos, and a desire to return!

The flight out was spectacular, with plunging cliffs and gulches, glinting sea and vivid colours. Quiet descended as the chopper departed, and we unlocked buildings, sorted cargo, stored food, and arranged rooms. I had the whole of Q2 to choose from and settled on an east facing view over the verandah. Luxury! although like all old houses, it chatters in bad weather. I learned later that a friend lived in Q2 as a lighthouse child – no wonder it has a good feeling.

That afternoon we walked the eastern edge, enjoying views back to the lighthouse and Q3, and finding edible plants with Jo. The Blade and Cape Pillar dominated views to the north, and returning along the main track, Brett pointed out zones that we planned to weed for thistles. The grass had grown waist to chest high and looked daunting! Sometimes you wish for a grazing animal or two...

The second day delivered cloud, poor visibility and howling wind, making spraying out of the question. That led to an expedition down the Zigzag track – an exercise in route finding - and a chance to observe seals and pups on the rocks below. In the afternoon we weeded the old vegetable garden, taking advantage of the sheltered hollow away from the wind.

Thereafter the days settled into a pattern: Brett filled spraysacks and allocated weeding zones; we worked for all or part of a day depending on weather and explored in between. Meals had been pre-cooked and frozen by Ingrid and we were endlessly grateful for her generosity and cooking skill, particularly at the close of a long tiring day. As it has done for generations, the Q3 kitchen was a regular scene of eating, talking, laughter, sharing ideas and stories, and sorting out the problems of the world.

Another day we climbed down the haulage to the landing at sunrise and ate breakfast while watching seals and whales— including a calf learning to breach. On the western walk we found the unique Tasman Island *Allocasurina* with an upright form, and one afternoon, we explored the Lost World – complete with old water tanks and drink cans.

Weeding work focussed mainly on Californian thistle in the grassed zones around Q1, along with other weeds such as dock and escaped garden plants along the paths. I've lost count of how many hundred we sprayed, but vividly remember following tracks (floundering) through the high grass in overalls, gloves, sunscreen and mask, carrying a spraysack, a bag for the thistle heads, and secateurs in the hot sun, and wondering if this was a good idea... It's reassuring to know that there are no snakes on Tasman Island!! However there's an upside to everything: while checking for weeds on the western side of Q1 we observed a Lewin's rail chick – possibly recently hatched – foraging and preening in the grass.

Our week went fast, and the final day delivered a spectacular sunrise before we flew off. I've learned much about weeding, and with many thanks to Brett, Josephine, Nikki, Ingrid and FoTI, I'm hooked.



A windy day at the ZigZag!



Thanks to Dave Davenport for passing on this tongue-twister!

*Theophilus Thistle, the thistle sifter,  
In sifting a full of un-sifted,  
Thrust three thousand thistles through the thick of his thumb.  
Now if Theophilus Thistle, the successful thistle sifter,  
Thrust's three thousand thistles through the thick of his thumb,  
Then success to the successful thistle sifter.*



Heads down, bums up

chosen interest.

While this was going on, normal maintenance was carried out by other members of the team, including the ubiquitous mowing and brushcutting.

Amanda Thomson continues ...

## Integrated Biological Survey of Tasman Island January, 26<sup>th</sup> - 3th February 2023

Despite the difficulties accruing a team, we ended up with an excellent group of dedicated people and the survey went ahead.

This trip was initially intended to be a follow up of the Hamish Saunders Report from a trip to Tasman Island in 2005, but due to many factors became a survey dependent on the team's expertise. The Hamish Saunders trip included a team of scientists, including students, who trapped and collected samples which went to Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG). We all used the previous report to work from and add to. It remains good base data. Trips since then have involved observation and photographs but little to no collecting. This was an opportunity to amass new data, updating since the removal of feral cats and with the significant increase in growth of vegetation following the end of grazing on the island.

We were very fortunate to have with us Associate Professor Geoff Allen, now retired, to do the entomological trapping and collecting. Using a variety of Malaise traps, light bucket trap, plate and pitfall traps, he has collected numerous specimens for TMAG. Together with help from Dr Keith Martin-Smith, who has on a previous trip, added numerous new species to iNaturalist. Thanks to TMAG, Cathy Byrne and Simon Grove for their assistance in providing equipment including a fridge to house and collect the specimens and now to identifying them!



Looking for snails

Dr Kevin Bonham, making his first trip to Tasman Island, is an expert in native snails amongst others! He has added at least 3 new land snails, now totalling 14 known species!

Anna McEldowney and Annabel Carle, both passionate about plants, applied themselves, working tirelessly - looking at, researching, collaborating and pressing specimens for TMAG. They formed a great working team! Still working to complete their observations off island! We were all impressed as they slaved away each night conferring! They confirmed the presence of

*Carex hirta* (noted by Penny Tyson 2007) a new weed species for Australia and the island which will now demand attention, plus found both new native and introduced spp.

Els Wakefield a dedicated 'birder', Tasmanian bird advocate, Botanist and artist! We all gained from Els's knowledge of Tasmanian birds. She is a mine of interesting facts and anecdotes. The last night after dinner at dusk watching the Shearwaters return to their nests on the island, their wailing calls and black shadows across the sky was one of the most memorable experiences. Thanks Els for all your sharing and photographs.

Sandy Leighton, a very experienced, quiet achiever. Sandy was leader for some of our round the island familiarisation walks. She helped Carol with the meal preparation and was a huge help in brushcutting, assisting Chris to get the mountains of grass down to manageable levels. Always there to support, identify, or do what was required. A very valuable member of the team.

## FOTI WORKING BEE No 38

FoTI's 38th working bee got under way on 26th January and, thanks to Parks & Osborne Aviation, were on Tasman in time for morning tea. Activities on the island were a little different this time—volunteers were conducting an Integrated Biological Survey, sponsored by the Elsie Cameron Foundation. Volunteers with varied interests in nature made up most of the team and plants and animals of all kinds received attention. Guided walks were led to most parts of the island with lots of time spent with heads down, bum up, studying their



Mowing at Q1



Light trap



Closer inspection!

Dr Keith Martin-Smith, Linda Lever and Peter Gouldthorpe swapped with the first 5-dayers arriving on the Tuesday. Sadly, we had to leave a day early on Friday due to the weather forecast, their time was short and the weather variable. But we all made the most of it.

Linda Lever a member of the Wildcare office was a valuable member of the team throwing her hand into everything from collecting specimens, observing, helping in the kitchen, making a thorough inventory of the pantry and being enthusiastically helpful everywhere. She'll be back!

Peter Gouldthorpe, an exceptional artist, (who designed our lighthouse tea towels) also came for the last few days. After a walk selecting a subject, Peter settled down, forced inside by the weather to work on an iconic image of Cape Pillar. Next, again working out of the wind, he produced a view of the Tasman lighthouse and presented it to Chris Creese, our 'on island' Team Leader who was thrilled. A pleasure to have Peter's company and camaraderie. Was fun to watch his canvas's fill up



Peter Gouldthorpe paints the view



Cup cakes with a view

Carol Jackson – a lighthouse kid amongst many varied hats and expertise (including being our President) - was Cook for this trip. She did an exceptional job of presenting us with lots of her home-grown fruits and vegies, made into delicious, healthy meals. We all came back healthier and fitter, thank you! And most importantly she has been the advocate for pursuing the importance of the natural values of Tasman Island. Without her this would never have happened.

Chris Creese is our Team Leader – so good to always have you there on Tasman, knowing the island intimately and able to fix anything. Chris patiently led the field naturalists around the island waiting as they dived into rocks and logs and searched for anything and everything! A different crew to the usual working bee!

For me, a wonderful trip having all these passionate people on the island doing what I love – looking and finding new things. My favourite observations this time were having Tree Martins zooming down the track heading towards you and swerving at the last minute, as you duck! Having a very special array of clouds one day – including a spectacular 'roll cloud', and *Kelvin Helmholtz* wave clouds! These latter regarded as No. 1 in a cloud observer's portfolio! Seeing Flower wasps (not previously recorded) and finding a Louse fly . Plus finding the endemic Tasman Island Cricket! Very exciting after many years of looking and not finding it. Every trip leads to something new!



Roll cloud

Thank you! To all the specialists, for your contributions in making this such a success. I think we all gained knowledge and appreciation of each other's expertise. I certainly did. Am looking forward to everyone's reports and the lists of new species.

It's thanks to funding from the Elsie Cameron Foundation that the survey was able to go ahead. And also thanks to Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife, particularly Sam Lennox, for all his help, and to Osbourne for getting us safely on and off the island!



Peter photographs Keith, Amanda & Geoff on an entomological expedition

## Nine Days on Tasman Island

*Els Wakefield*

A single Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo heralded the arrival of our group onto Tasman Island on 26 January 2023. I had been invited to survey the birds and this was my first visit to the island. I had heard that the island contained lots of Lewin's Rails but I was surprised to discover a head and a wing, the remains of a dead one on the balcony of the First Quarters (Q1). Two Swamp Harriers were constantly circling the island but the Forest Ravens that perched on the roof of each building could equally have been responsible.

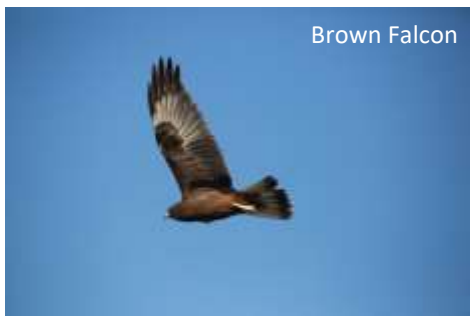
As we unpacked and explored our new home, I noticed Tree Martins constantly flying back and forth from the top of the island to the steep cliffs below, obviously feeding young. Below the cliffs I could make out occasional Kelp Gulls, Silver Gulls and Gannets flying above the waves 250m below. Walking between the buildings I noticed Silvereyes and Greenfinch perched in the bushes and a New Holland Honeyeater.

At dusk it was time for the thousands of shearwaters to arrive. Some early arrivals flew in from behind me where I stood on the edge of the cliffs and dropped into the breeding area sloping down to the sea. Among their calls was a different one that both Sandy Leighton and I heard distinctly. This was a Soft-plumaged Petrel that I had heard before on Goose Island in Bass Strait where it also arrived earlier in the evening before the shearwaters. Soft-Plumaged Petrels also breed on Maatsuyker Island.



Welcome Swallow

The following morning of 27 January, when we explored the south east part of the island, we came across some dismembered Fairy Prions but also a live one caught up in a strand of grass. After I untangled the bird, it stretched its wings and seemed ok so we left it to find its burrow. From the high cliffs we watched five Shy Albatross, two Silver Gulls, a Kelp Gull and two Australasian Gannets hunting above the water below the cliffs. I heard the call of a Flame Robin behind us but it remained hidden. On the return walk we saw two Green Rosellas and six Common Starlings. In the afternoon I heard my first Lewin's Rail calling from a grass-covered drain beside the track below Q3. Their numerous footprints were visible along the length of the muddy base.



Brown Falcon

Throughout my visit I disturbed a juvenile Lewin's Rail that ran from the mown area into the grass and on two separate occasions, an adult that flew up from beside the mown path near Q2, its legs hanging down, to disappear into the grass a few metres away. I suspect they were two different birds.

On the morning of 28<sup>th</sup> the group walked to the south west corner of the island. Here we found a small white egg, possibly from a Fairy Prion, which had probably been dropped by a raptor, pointy end down, into the middle of a clump of grass. After lunch I joined Kevin Bonham and Amanda Thomson on a snail hunt south of the lighthouse where we watched two Brown Falcon flying overhead as well as five or six Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos feeding on top of the Banksia bushes.

On the morning of 29 January, I secreted myself beside the small pond north of Q3. Here I photographed male, female and a juvenile Greenfinch, and a party of Beautiful Firetails all drinking from the edge of the pond and preening in the bushes overhanging the water. A New Holland Honeyeater, a juvenile Crescent Honeyeater and Green Rosellas also flew in for a drink. A group of four Green Rosellas seemed to be hanging around the main quarters, perched on the roof and the chimneys as if they may have been breeding inside the building.

After a walk to the top of the haulage area where we watched a juvenile Sea Eagle flying around the empty nest cup on the cliffs below, I returned to the pond where a group of Welcome Swallows came in to drink and preen in the bushes. A Brown Goshawk flew overhead. Six Forest Ravens passed by. The Tree Martins were skimming the water to drink or have a quick splash but they did not linger. As I left the pond, a Swamp Harrier perched on a low tree beside the path to pose for a few close up photographs.



European Greenfinch

Back at the lighthouse, I caught a glimpse of a heavily striped Brown Quail that ran from the mowed area into the long grass. I wondered if it may have been a Stubble Quail. Amanda Thomson reported seeing a Blue-winged Parrot flying up from near the top of the haulage area. We watched a Wedge-tailed Eagle that did a sortie over the island.



Firetail finch

On 30 January we saw an adult Sea Eagle put up four Swamp Harriers near the top of the haulage area. Those who had walked down to the water reported seeing a small colony of Silver Gulls with large chicks and Black-faced Cormorants. At the top of the haulage I saw a male Blackbird and heard Kelp Gulls calling below.



Green Rosella

Back at the area north of the lighthouse, I watched some young Tree Martins waiting in a low tree for the adults to feed them. They had bright yellow gapes that opened wide when the parents arrived with food.

On 31 January I saw another Lewin's Rail fly off near Q2 and watched an adult Sea Eagle flying near the Blade on Cape Pillar. From the kitchen window in Q1 we counted 33 Black Cockatoos flying across from the mainland into the Banksia trees and returning to the mainland again at dusk. Sandy Leighton reported seeing a Brush Bronzewing a species that had not previously been recorded on the island.

On 1 January Keith Martin-Smith and Geoff Allen also reported hearing a Soft-plumaged Petrel. Peter Gouldthorpe reported the juvenile Sea Eagle on the nest at the base of the cliffs near the haulage area. On 2 January, from Lost World at the south western end of the island, we looked down on a seal haul-out where five Shy Albatross, a Gannet, a Short-tailed Shearwater and a Pacific Gull were flying over the water.



#### KEITH MARTIN-SMITH :

I was lucky enough to join the Tasman Island Integrated Biological Survey for the period 31 Jan-3 Feb 2023, having already spent 10 days on the island during 2022. I'm a bit of an invertebrate generalist with a soft spot for native wasps and spiders. Since I was joining the survey in the middle, Geoff Allen & Amanda Thomson had already done a great job of establishing sampling locations around the island for malaise, pitfall and pan traps. These different sampling methods target different types of invertebrate – malaise traps catch flying insects such as wasps, flies and moths, whereas pitfall traps catch spiders, ground beetles and landhoppers. When I arrived, we established a new site on the eastern side of the island with a slam trap (similar to a malaise trap) and pan and pitfall traps. The rest of the time on the island I spent beating and sweeping in many locations, checking sampling traps and using light traps in the night. Locations of all the trap locations are shown in the map below.

Identifying all of the invertebrates will take some time, but just from preliminary sorting we have collected the following orders: Hymenoptera (wasps, bees & ants), Diptera (flies), Lepidoptera (moths), Coleoptera (beetles), Hemiptera (true bugs), Blattodea (cockroaches), Neuroptera (lacewings), Orthoptera (crickets & grasshoppers), Thysanoptera (thrips), Collembola (springtails), Acari (mites), Amphipoda (landhoppers) & Araneomorpha (modern spiders).



Trap sampling locations

**Australian Wooden Boat Festival**

After a 4-year hiatus due to Covid restrictions, the three island groups— Friends of Tasman, Deal and Maatsuyker Island— were once again sharing a tent on Hobart’s waterfront. The Australian Wooden Boat Festival was in full swing over four days in February. Nestled behind Mures alongside Victoria Dock, a bevy of volunteers promoted their restoration and conservation of the built and natural heritage on some of Tasmania’s most spectacular islands.

On sale was a plethora of merchandise, with a lighthouse or island theme, produced by each group to raise funds for their work. An on-line raffle leading up to and run concurrently with the festival was drawn on the last day. The prize-winners were ecstatic!



Wildcare group’s tent at left



Products for sale on back wall of tent

Our roomier tent was thanks to a grant from Wildcare. Many thanks also to Wildcare’s Linda Lever for her help in guiding our faltering steps with modern technology and, of course, the volunteers themselves.

Thanks to everyone, FoTI’s fundraising was very successful.



Chris draws the raffle

**Rotary Day, 11 March 2023**

The Rotary Club of Tasman Peninsula’s annual fund-raiser to Tasman Island went off like clockwork. The weather was perfect and there were plenty of happy smiling faces coming and going all day. Crowds gathered outside the lighthouse, open for inspection thanks to Australian Maritime Systems, with former keeper Karl Rowbottom conducting tours.

Back at Safety Cove, FoTI volunteers were raising funds for work on the island with a stall selling lighthouse and island memorabilia.

A visit by a film crew from the ABC created a stir when they arrived on the island. They were filming as part of a segment on the Tasman Peninsula for *Back Roads* to be screened later in the year. Carol and Karl were stars for the day together with shots of Tasman’s spectacular scenery.

After inspecting the lighthouse, FoTI’s working bee volunteers were able to share the flights off the island, free of charge, thanks to Rotary. A very successful day.



Erika chats with Rick while a helicopter takes off overhead



ABC film crew in action



Lighthouse tours



**FOTI'S 39th WORKING BEE—March 2023**

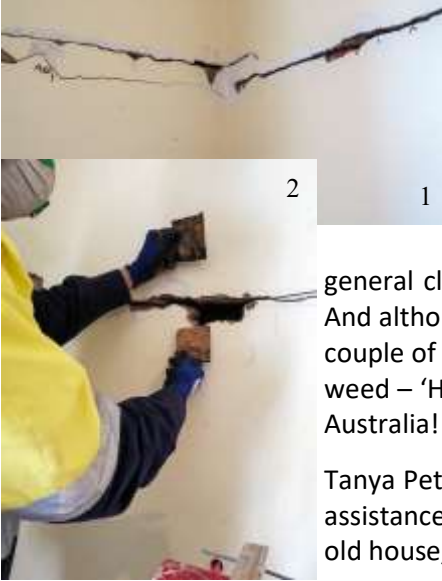
Amanda Thomson

This March Working Bee has been a different experience. We had the company of the 'Petersen mob' - siblings, whose father Terry was a Lighthouse Keeper on Tasman Island in the 1965-67s. Plus David Witt, also a Keeper on the island just before its automation in the 1970's. David is also a drummer, and impromptu musical gigs were almost a daily feature! As a Keeper, David's observations were tuned in to wind direction, weather and sea patterns, such as the 'Herringbone Sea' we saw on Day 3. These observations and many memories and feelings were shared, giving the rest of us a different perspective of the island – a feel for some of the realities of actually living there!



The team lines up along the Landing

1 & 2 Repairs to internal wall cracks due to rusted iron plates in construction



My role as Field Naturalist didn't quite pan out – instead I recorded the Californian thistles. Nevertheless, always on the lookout, I have recorded another 67 observations on iNaturalist. Of these, 15 maybe new for the island.

It was one of my windiest trips – with gusts of up around 100km/hr one day. But it was the usual mix of weather, a bit of everything – not always conducive to outside jobs. Despite this, work continued in or out with painting being done outside Q2. Steve and Chris working on a long-term project to fix the cracks in the walls (Q2 and Q3 first) and tying down the roofs. Chris will document this story at a later date. Much mowing and brushcutting , rationalising timber piles and general cleaning up. Weeding followed on from a newly introduced January Weeding trip. And although some were found the numbers were drastically reduced by their great work. A couple of new sites of Monbretia and Gladioli were found, new Wild radish seedlings. A new weed – 'Hammer Sedge/*Carex hirta*' has been found on the island, the only known plants in Australia! This will become a priority, requiring consultation and planning with Parks.

Tanya Petersen volunteering as a first time cook and did a splendid job with some brotherly assistance! She knew how to feed hungry workers! Sleeping in her old room and being in her old house, with her brothers was special for her and her siblings.



Chris did a particularly sensitive job in considering the enormity of the visit for the Petersen mob. Showing them the island at every opportunity, managing their work duties and above all giving them the time they needed to absorb and reflect in this special place. Plus supervising us all, and continuing his own works!

Thank you to Sam at Parks for all his liaising and orientating us before the trip. To Anita, from Parks, who came out and assisted with unpacking and saw the island for the first time. To Jason, the pilot, who always gives us safe passage and wonderful views on the way!

Thank you to everyone for their hard work (especially Steve) and the entertainment provided by the talented Petersen men and David Witt. So much fun!

3 & 4 Tasman's windy weather needs roof tie-downs!



At right, Tanya & brother Rick, members of the Petersen family who lived on Tasman in the early 1960s, cooked great meals for FoTI's volunteers



## Weeding in March, Tasman Island

Amanda Thomson

Weeders: Rick Petersen, David Witt, Amanda Thomson

We continued the great work of the weeders from the January weeding trip, and found far less, a testament to their work. Plus interesting to see in a short time interval how much has resurfaced. Sprayed about 233 Californian thistles, a bit less than half these were in flower. Zones 3 and 4 north west of Q1 were the hottest locations. Beside Q1 and behind.

More Wild radish seedlings had emerged. We removed around 260 from the old vegetable garden area. Rick also found a new siting of Wild radish outside Zone 1A, a huge bush. This was removed but much seed remains and will need to be monitored for a number of years as the seed is long-lived. Area marked with a stake and coloured ribbon. Photos on the fulcrum.

No blackberries seen at the old location south of the top of the Haulage. No Gladioli found at the old site near the Helipad.

New sites of Monbretia and Gladioli found. 13 Monbretia plants and 35 corms removed from next to the Sheep Dip. 13 stems and numerous corms of Gladioli located behind the Pond (thanks to Sandy Leighton and Annabel Carl who advised me to investigate). Again many corms remain in the soil and will need to be monitored. Area cleared and photos on fulcrum.

All Californian thistle was sprayed, heads removed if in flower. All weeds were bagged and removed from the island. The Monbretia and Gladioli were sent for formal identification via Annabel Carl. As too were 'Carex hirta, or Hammer Sedge' specimens, a new weed plant in large numbers on the island and their first known location in Australia!



Hammer sedge (Carex hirta) the only known sighting in Australia

Thank you to David Witt who weeded for the first 3 days, till his knee complained about the terrain. Special thanks to Rick who did all the spraying and did an excellent spotting job. My contribution was to record our findings, finally re-mastering the fulcrum. Also checking out the old locations and finding a few new ones.



Despite a wobbly start, I think we all did a good job of annihilating those that dared showed their heads! Big thank you to Brett Hall for his patience, ongoing advice and assistance before, during and after the trip!

The preservation of native species (like those at left) on Tasman Island is enhanced by the weeding programme first introduced in 2009.



Looking for Californian thistles



Rick & the giant Wild radish!

## HOME TO TASMAN ISLAND

*The Petersen family*

It's unnatural to be in 3 places at once but we were emotionally and physically in a time warp. A labyrinth of past, present and future. Our recent unexpected return to Tasman Island evoked some hefty emotions. These were intertwined somewhere between our childhood as 'Children of the light' and gratitude for the privilege of being here on Tasman Island together again. It was through Carol's shout-out for volunteers that we, the Petersen mob (Tanya, Rick, Perry and Brett) were able to say "Yes", get a guernsey and chip in with the FOTI team in March '23.



Petersen family, March 2023



Petersen boys 2023

We could contribute our childhood memories of living on Tasman Island 55 years ago and our current skills and knowledge. So off we go, slicing, kneading, painting, snipping, spraying, lifting, transporting, sharpening, disinfecting, and introducing What3Words Geocode System. A win-win.

This volunteering again had us taking another place in the history of Tasman Island and there is no doubt we have aspirations for our loved ones and children, with their own unique skills, to be involved in the future of Tasman Island and FoTI.

In amongst the efforts of the working day, Chris afforded us the privilege of quality family time. Having found our eldest sister's name, hand-written by her 55 years ago, he shared this with us.



Lightkeepers Frank Morrah, Maurice Lee & Terry Petersen, circa 1965

Seeing "Maree Ellen" penciled on a much-too-high-for-one-so-young brick, what a profound moment in time. But what time? I'm transported back 55 years in an instant.

On our last morning on the island, Chris joined the Petersen mob and we set off at first-light from our home for a walk of gratitude to acknowledge what we had been given as part of the FoTI team. We had time to appreciate the contribution of Mum, Dad and our sisters, Maree Ellen and Amanda, who are no longer with us. We gave thanks for the unique collection of opportunities given when we are willing to say "Yes".



Petersen family, 2023

On our return to Tasman Island, so many things were just the same.

Mum's kitchen window looking North to Cape Pillar and Dad's cast iron steps taking him into the lighthouse. The wind, lazy skinks, the endless lumpy milk. But it's the things you can't see that have allowed these to stay the same. It is the dedicated efforts of FoTI, Parks and Wildlife and their volunteers that continued for decades while the Petersen kids were growing up. Those efforts have enabled our Island home to stay as we remember it as kids. The ongoing collaboration and support of the Rotary Club and all they have done for the Tasman Peninsula have enriched the Tasman Island community. For that we, the Petersen siblings, are appreciative for sure.

### and Rick adds ...

What a privilege beyond measure, we have had bestowed upon us as a family, to return to our iconic Island Home,

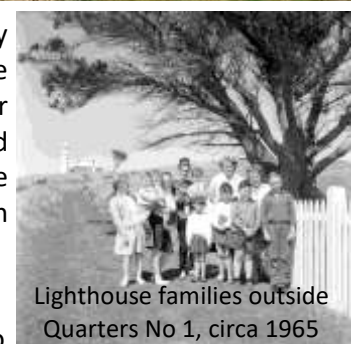
It is with sincere gratitude and respect to the FoTI family that we have been included in, having what we can only described as a profound privilege to walk in the footsteps of our Mother and Father and other keepers of the light.

They that took on the intrepid task of providing safe passage for the southern seafarers as well as the equally important task raising a family in often incredibly trying conditions.

We valued the opportunity to work along side other FoTI members, former keepers, naturalists, historians, heritage preservers, this brings a deeper sense of pride, joining our extended families who treasure this part of our history, we thank you all for your warm welcome!

And look forward to once again assisting in anyway possible

Massive thanks to Chris, Carol and Erika for your faith, trust and empathy! *In good light ...*



Lighthouse families outside Quarters No 1, circa 1965

**FROM LIGHTKEEPER TO FOTI VOLUNTEER**

*David Witt*



Misty at Tasman Island, 1975

Having just returned from a working bee on Tasman Island I have been asked to report on my experience after 48 years of absence. I was amazed the verdant growth of plant life, many species of which I have never seen before, as the island in 1975 was virtually bare as a result of sheep grazing, the '67 bush fires and previous keepers cutting firewood.

I arrived on Tasman with my wife Monica and our baby Kane after travelling from Eddystone Point via the Lighthouse supply vessel *Cape Pillar*. We were transferring places with Bob Ikin and his family who were off to Maatsuyker. That day was hectic as we had to get all our worldly goods off the ship and up to Quarters 3 via workboat, flying fox, haulage way and tractor. Also 30 tons of briquettes, several 200-litre drums of kero and diesel and settle my family into our new home, then do my watch that night.



2023

The Head Keeper was Jack Jackson (father of Carol), Dave Ingram and I were the two keepers. Head Keeper's shift was light up till 10.00 pm, and then the keepers swapped week about, 10 till 3 and 3 till sunrise. Jack and Dave were great workmates and our families soon harmonized.

The things that I was shocked to see, this time, was the state of disrepair of the houses. It is a shame that it took so long before anyone realized the significance of

heritage. Thanks to FoTI and Parks, repair and care is being undertaken. Special mention must be made to Erika, Chris and Carol for their enduring passion.

On reflection, what was missing was the "soul of lighthouse life" which included the smells, the kero in the tower, the freshly baked bread and warmth of the stove, the baby's room, the Ingram kids, my old devoted Labrador *Misty*, the chooks, the sheep, the tractor, the constant purr of the Lister generator etc. etc.. To be corrected we did have freshly baked bread on this working bee made lovingly by Tanya Petersen.

As much as I enjoyed the working bee that soul has been destroyed by modern technology. Monica and I were fortunate to have had the experience which, at times, was not the idyllic and romantic lifestyle some would believe. Weather, wind, fog and drizzle for days, loneliness, lack of immediate family support and a sometimes heartless Department of Transport made life a challenge at times. I have no regrets.

Thanks FoTI for the chance to visit and help in the preservation of this special place.



Riding the Haulage 1975



Haulage 2023



Mail boat off Anchor Rock, 1975



March 2023—David reminisces of times past

## Cultural History of Tasman Island

Erika Shankley

We are constantly learning more about the history of Tasman Island. That we can do so is thanks to organisations such as the Tasmanian Archives, Trove, Australian Maritime Safety Authority, various published books, reports and documents as well as many former lightkeepers and their families.

From time to time FoTI receives enquiries from university researchers or people interested in various aspects of the workings of the lightstation for presentation to interest groups.

Such was a recent enquiry from a UTAS student who was investigating industrial tramways in southern Tasmania. He remarked that the Haulage on Tasman Island *“was the longest lasting and arguable most impressive of the various haulage tramways found around Tasmania.”* From FoTI’s collection of historic documents and images we were able to provide him with information about various aspects of Tasman’s haulage system and tramway and pinpoint dates when various changes occurred.



More recently, a visitor to Tasman on Rotary day asked questions about communications on Tasman Island. From our collection we were able to provide a chronological overview of how keepers made contact with the outside world – by flag signalling, pigeons, radio and of course in more modern times, mobile phone.



Finding such information can be time-consuming, but there can be benefits for FoTI too — an improvement of our knowledge of the island and its history. Our collection of historic photos and a short history of Tasman Island and its lightstation can be found at [www.tasmanisland.org.au](http://www.tasmanisland.org.au).



Photos thanks to AMSA, Tasmanian Archives & Alan Lambert Collection Age Newspaper



### MYSTERY OBJECT!

Test your observation skills! Photographed on Rotary Day. Do you know what it is and where it is located?

If you climbed the spiral staircase in the lighthouse, you might have caught sight of this unique door handle on one of the landings as ascending the tower.

There's something about islands and remote places that brings out the artist in our volunteers. Over the years FoTI working bees have seen Tasmanian artists Luke Wagner, Peter Gouldthorpe, David Edgar, Sue Lovegrove, Diane Masters, Veronica Steane, Helen Gee, Amanda Thomson & Skeat Andrews experience the spectacular natural beauty of Tasman Island while they work.



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- 1 Peter Gouldthorpe
- 2 Diane Masters
- 3 Skeat Andrews
- 4 David Edgar
- 5 Diane Masters
- 6 Helen Gee
- 7 Helen Gee
- 8 Luke Wagner
- 9 Veronica Steane
- 10 Amanda Thomson
- 11 Sue Lovegrove
- 12 Luke Wagner
- 13 Artists in Residence

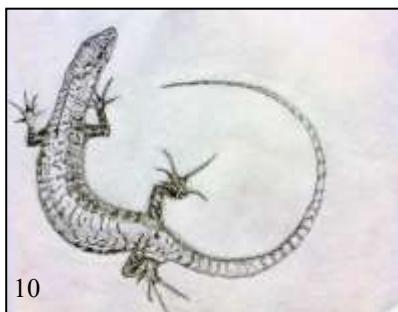


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# Artists in our Midst



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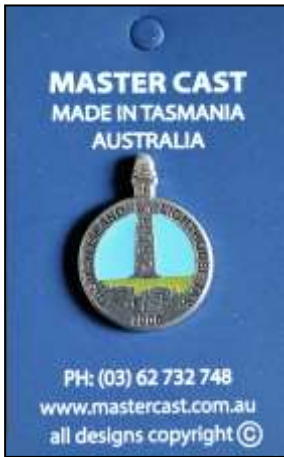
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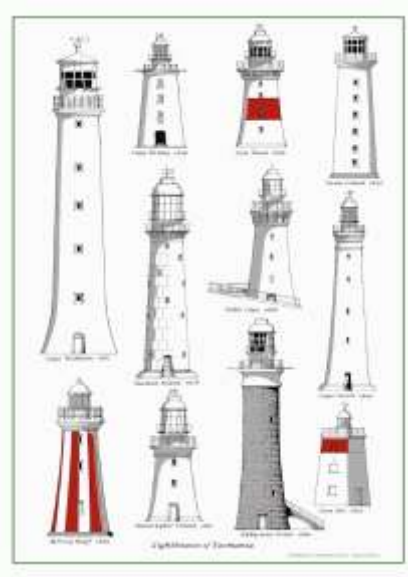


Supporters Patch  
Featuring FoTI's logo  
designed by Gavin Reynolds



For all lighthouse lovers & collectors of lighthouse memorabilia, this is for you: A cast of the original Tasman Island tower, custom made in Tasmania

Lapel Pin: \$13 within Australia



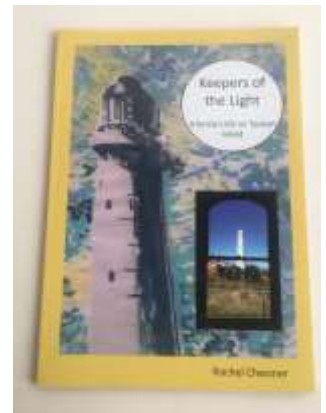
EXCLUSIVE TO FoTI  
Lighthouses of Tasmania tea towel  
Designed by Peter Gouldthorpe  
\$15

Available at the Wildcare shop  
<https://wildcaretas.org.au/shop/>

Postage free within Australia



Supporter's Pack includes:  
Lighthouses of Tasmania tea towel, Cardboard Lighthouse kit, Tasman Island pocket book, FoTI supporters patch, Tasman Island bookmarks & cards  
\$50



Keepers of the Light:  
A family's life on  
Tasman Island by  
Rachel Chesmer  
\$20 including postage  
within Australia

FoTI's page in the Wildcare shop looks a bit sparse at the moment. We have sold out of many of our greeting cards and with the retirement of Luke Wagner, who printed the cards for us—free of charge (thanks very much Luke) - we are now taking the opportunity to reorganise the collection. Some of the old faithfuls will reappear but there will also be some new images. And we are also looking for a new printer.



### FoTI MEETINGS:

FoTI volunteers meet at 5.30 pm on the third Thursday of each month at the Bellerive Yacht Club, 64 Cambridge Road, Bellerive. Zoom sessions are held from time to time with special presentations of interest. All welcome. We look forward to seeing you there.

### WILDCARE BRANCH PAGE:

FoTI is one of the many volunteer groups which make up Wildcare in Tasmania, currently with 164 active members. Check out our Branch page & photos of our activities in the Gallery. Go to <https://wildcaretas.org.au/branches/friends-of-tasman-island/> to read all about us and click on *Gallery* to see the photos.



The increase in vegetation is apparent in these comparative aerial photos of Tasman Island  
Above: Photo taken in the 1950s by Alan Hewer on a flight piloted by Lloyd Jones .  
Below: Tasman Island—photo taken by Tim Kingston in 2014.



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*

