



# NEWSLETTER 30

April, 2024

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*



What's that out there? A view from the eastern cliffs

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Thanks to contributors: Erika Shankley, Brett Hall, Ian Terry, Anne Goldizen, Rob Banfield, Chris Creese

Photos: Erika Shankley, Chris Creese, Brett Hall, Ian Ross, Anne & Alan Goldizen, Ian Terry, Rob Banfield

Thank you Carol, Amanda & Nikki for casting your eagle-eyes over the Newsletter .

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

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

<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfTasmanIsland/>

email [friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com)

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

**WHO'S WHO ...**  
A Committee reshuffle

FoTI's volunteer work doesn't stop when we leave Tasman Island. It just continues on here at home!

Following the retirement of our esteemed Secretary, Kerryn, and Treasurer, Mike, earlier this year there has been a reshuffle of our office bearers.

- President – Carol Jackson
- Vice President – Rob Banfield
- Treasurer – Brett Hall
- Secretary – Tony Osmond
- Merchandise Manager – Ingrid Boone
- Island Clerk of Works – Chris Creese
- Buildings Restoration Leader – Dave Davenport
- Field Naturalists Projects Leader – Amanda Thomson
- Media & Promotions Coordinator – Brett Hall
- Weed Management Leader – Brett Hall
- History and Publications - Erika Shankley
- Webpage Manager – Mike Jenner

It was recommended that General Meetings be held every second month, with Committee Meetings quarterly. Operational leaders to meet as needed.

If you would like to help — let us know — there's plenty of work to share around!

Thank you to Mike & Kerryn who - by my recollection - served over 10 years as treasurer and secretary! A well-deserved retirement. And a huge vote of thanks to our President, Carol, the lighthouse kid "nearly born on Tasman Island" who has inspired FoTI volunteers to the success story we have become as we work in partnership with Tasmania's Parks & Wildlife Service towards the conservation and restoration of spectacular Tasman Island and its lightstation.



Mike & Kerryn



Rob



Ingrid



Carol



Amanda



Chris



Erika



Brett



Dave



Tony

## WORKING BEE 41—SUMMER WEEDING

Brett Hall, Nikki Hutchings, Lee Cameron, Don Cameron

Since the last working bee was completed on December 2nd, Tasman Island received 63 mm of rain in December and 22 mm in January. So, with warmer temperatures also experienced, conditions have been ideal for plant growth. That was certainly true for the *Carex hirta* as it has grown almost one cm per day in a brush cut site over that 5-week period. Other areas that were not brush cut level with the ground were triple the size which would mean they have grown around 2 cm per day!



*Carex hirta* (Hairy Sedge)



*Carex hirta* treatment

There were very few annual grasses present, most likely due to the dry winter and cool start to spring, so the perennial grasses out-competed them. This also meant the thistles had a slower start, with no Spear Thistles found and smaller Californian Thistles for this time of year.

New sites for Scarlet Gladiolus and Montbretia were identified and removed. They would most likely not have been identifiable outside of this January working bee. It was also noted that all the priority weed populations would have increased without having the summer working bee. We have concluded that this working bee is an essential part of the annual Tasman Island weeding program.



Spray boundary markers

This was a very productive working bee. Overall, 1,316 weeds were treated/removed. In addition, a bag full of seed/grass/bulbs collected and an area of 288 sqm of Hairy Sedge spray treated. That makes this working bee very valuable to the effectiveness of the annual weeding program on the island. Indeed, without this working bee all the priority weed populations would have increased except for the Spear Thistle. Importantly, new sites for Scarlet Gladiolus and Montbretia were identified and removed that most likely would not have been identifiable outside of this January working bee.

Thanks to the weeding team for another great job! Also, a shout out to Sam Lennox and Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife who continue to support and fund the transport for this working bee.



A fabulous view as Lee & Nikki compare notes

## FOTI WORKING BEE 42

March 2024

After a spell of tempestuous weather FoTI's team of volunteers finally arrived on Tasman Island.



Brushcutting

Despite not having any major projects lined up, there were plenty of maintenance jobs to keep everyone busy.

As usual there was plenty of mowing. All the usual areas were mown or brush cut. The Greenfield mower and two brush cutters were used (the third brush cutter broke down on the first day) The job was far easier than last November, the lack of rain meant the grass was short and dry making mowing much easier.

Then it was onto other jobs:

- ◆ Checked houses for damage or urgent repairs.
- ◆ Checked mower, brush cutters, generator etc before starting, and serviced at finish.
- ◆ Assembled 2 Aldo Leopold seats.
- ◆ Assessed and recorded museum artifacts. See report from Ian and Nikki.
- ◆ Q2 laundry window repairs, replaced rotted sill and other rotted parts of window frame, prepared and painted.
- ◆ Repaired several lounge chairs.
- ◆ Repaired other items of household furniture.
- ◆ Stabilised and repaired sheep dip fences.
- ◆ Relocated old tank full of junk from sheep dip to new rubbish storage area amongst big banksias behind Oil Store.
- ◆ Fascia and eaves on south side of Q2, repaired, and filled defects; prepared and painted.
- ◆ Dismantle and clean carburetor on Honda generator.
- ◆ Clean walls in Q3.
- ◆ General clean up, removing books, documents etc accumulated in recent years.
- ◆ Prepare and paint Q3 toilet door due to paint being damaged.
- ◆ Q3 back verandah south wall; Refitted loose weatherboards and painted.
- ◆ Replaced loose weatherboards on Q1 south wall.
- ◆ Q3 Front porch door sticking, removed door and planed bottom.
- ◆ Trimmed sedge and shrubs overhanging mown tracks north of Q1 where encroaching sedge is forcing the track into the gutter beside the track.
- ◆ Filled Boot wash station at helipad with solution.
- ◆ Weeding, see full report from Rob Banfield.
- ◆ Cut points on weed marker stakes and paint white.

With mixed feelings the team arose to a stunning blue sky day ... It was our last for this

working bee. After checking and rechecking and inventorying tanks, fuel, food, furniture, chemicals etc we polished up Q2 and Q3 to a sparkle. We headed down to Q2 to learn all about museum curating. We were treated to some selected stunning exhibits and an understanding of their special skills ... many thanks to Nikki and Ian for their eight days of toil, research and care. A final polish and lock up before that ten minute journey back to civilisation. A huge thanks to our skilled WB42 volunteers, our supporters, Parks staff, helicopter staff and our off-island volunteers. As usual Tasman Island looked better for our visit and chipped little bits off all our hearts ... until next time.

The sunset heralds our final day



FoTI volunteers outside Q3



Museum



Sheep dip



Wally's window

## Tasman Island – a first-timers' eye-view

Anne and Alan Goldizen

We loved our first working bee on Tasman Island! There may be no other island quite like it anywhere, with such high and almost vertical cliffs all the way around it, the lighthouse and three lighthouse keepers' houses and the beautiful views in all directions. The walks that Chris led us on were wonderful, but even while we were working outside, brushcutting or weeding, we enjoyed the peace and quiet of being almost alone in this marvellous place, with our team of nine people the only mammalian inhabitants on the island.



Dawn light, Lightkeeper's Quarters No 1

Our walk down the haulage track, watching the old ABC program about the lighthouse keepers and their families, and our wildest weather day - with 120 km/hr wind gusts - gave us a lot to think about. We had brought home to us both how wonderful and how difficult life on the island would have been in the old days.



Our tour guide, Chris, found the role a bit tiring!

We came away from Tasman Island with a deep admiration for how much FoTI has accomplished during their 40+ working bees. Seeing the current dilapidated condition of the lower lighthouse keepers' quarters (Q1) made clear just how much work has been put into maintaining and rebuilding parts of the other two houses. Rob's descriptions of the quantities of weeds that used to be on the island make the weeding program look very impressive. Despite hours of searches, Rob and Anne found very few of the weeds we were looking for.

We enjoyed the company of the other members of this working bee very much. The selection committee did a great job of choosing a wide variety of people and keeping a good balance of experienced and new volunteers. Everyone had their jobs to do or searched out work when they didn't. The entire crew was keen to help with kitchen and household tasks and jumped to

help whenever needed. Everyone worked hard, but at a sensible pace and with lots of breaks. All shared their knowledge of the island (and knew so much). The folks from TMAG were a particular addition to the group, and we always enjoyed the history discussions they sparked with the old hands like Chris and Rob.

Our experience at Tasman Island has left us with both gratitude for the privilege of being on the island and a deep desire to go back if we can. We would love another opportunity to enjoy the island's marvellous beauty and remoteness, and to help with preserving its unique history.

Left: Catering & cooking for a team of nine volunteers is no tall order. Anne cooks up a storm!

Right: Brushcutting & mowing are major jobs each working bee. Alan wields the whipper-snipper to clear the tracks



**ABC BACK ROADS**

Tuesday 26 March 2024

ABC reporter, Joe O'Brien and a camera crew, visited Tasman Island on Rotary Day at the end of the March 2023 working bee. The ABC joined the Rotary crowds and interviewed lighthouse kid (and FoTI President) Carol, former lightkeeper (and FoTI member) Karl and 'Island Clerk of Works', Chris. It finally came to our screens in March this year. If you missed it, it's still available on ABC iview.



**ISLAND LIZARD**

*Peregrine*, The Mercury 21 February 1948

Plants and animals on islands often differ in some respects from the forms inhabiting the adjacent mainland, a fact which makes islands a rather fascinating thing to the naturalist. Recently, Tasman Island, in the extreme south-east, yielded a lizard rather striking in appearance which may prove a new species, or at any rate a new sub-species. The lizard, illustrated with this article, has been received by Mr A. M. Hewer, Hobart, through the efforts of Mr Jacobs, who was lighthouse-keeper at Tasman Island for some years. Mr Hewer has supplied me with some notes on this latest addition to his lizard collection, and Mr Norman Laird produced its picture.

When the specimen arrived, early in December, it appeared at first glance to be *Lygosoma casuarinae*, one of the most handsomely marked of Tasmanian lizards. Its colour is light yellowish brown with darker brown markings, the under surface being bright yellow, marked with black. It is about 10 in. long, and is thriving on a diet of slugs and snails. "Mr Jacobs tells me he has seen specimens as long as 15 in," Mr Hewer writes. This would suggest that it is a new lizard, as the mainland species usually grows to about 12 in and is seldom seen over this length! "The most noticeable feature is the tail. In *Lygosoma casuarinae* the tail is slightly more than half the total length of the lizard, but in the Tasman Island variety it is only one-third of the total length. There are also some slight variations in the head scales. However, it would be impossible to say definitely that it is a new lizard until at least a dozen specimens have been checked.

"Like all Tasmanian lizards, it is completely harmless, and on account of its diet, would be a great asset in any garden." Yachtsmen, fishermen, and others who occasionally land on outlying islands could assist Mr Hewer in his study of lizards ...."

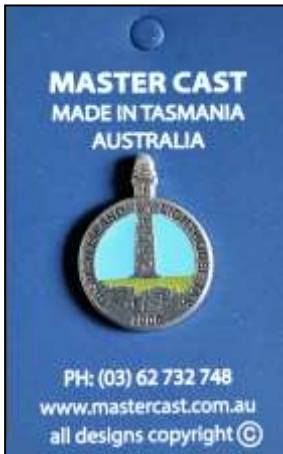
\* \* \* \*



She-oak skink (*Cyclodomorphus casuarinae*) found on Tasman during the November working bee in 2020

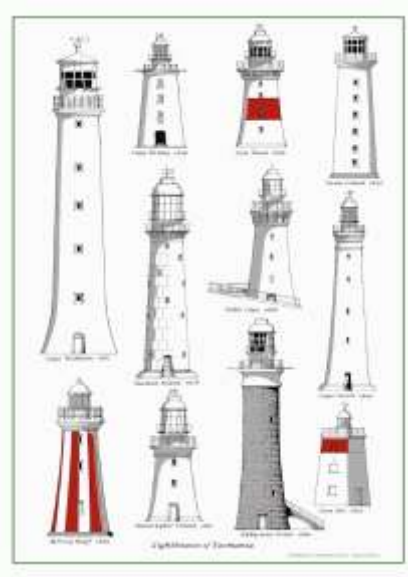


Supporters Patch  
Featuring FoTI's logo  
designed by Gavin Reynolds



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



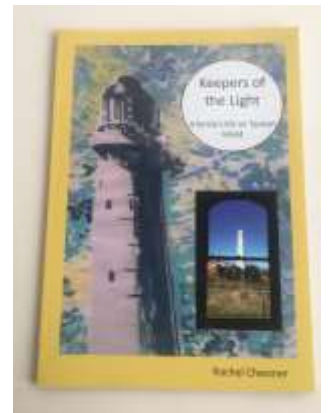
**EXCLUSIVE TO FOTI**  
**Lighthouses of Tasmania tea towel**  
Designed by Peter Gouldthorpe  
\$21.50

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 members & supporters meet every second month at the Bellerive Yacht Club (or you can join by Zoom). These meetings are now held from 6.00—7.30pm on the third Thursday of April, June, August, October & December 2024. The meetings will include a special presentation of interest, short reports from Committee members and operational leaders and a meal afterwards. All welcome. We look forward to seeing you there. Check our Facebook page for details <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfTasmanIsland/>

**WILDCARE BRANCH PAGE:**

FoTI is one of the many volunteer groups which make up Wildcare in Tasmania, currently with over 160 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.

## TASMAN ISLAND MUSEUM

Since FoTI's first working bee in March/April 2006 when we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Tasman Island lighthouse, volunteers have found relics of island life in the course of their conservation and restoration work. The collection has been assembled in Lightkeeper's Quarters No 2 and this year was professionally curated, thanks to Ian Terry and Nikki King Smith, who formerly worked at TMAG. The collection offers insights into life on the island in the 20th century.



The Barrett family crate joins other historic artefacts in the museum in Lightkeepers Quarters 2.

Bob Barrett said in a Facebook posting, "Having a good look at the picture and my size I reckon it was in the early to mid 60's, when we returned to Tasman.

'Whistler' and I made friends again, Dad gave me the job of giving him his daily ration (depending on the time of the year and his work load), mucking out his stable, and brushing him down; as a reward on certain day's/load's I was allowed to, on special days, to load and drive him up the tram way, unload and take the Tram car and him back to the Whim, (He didn't need any driving up the tram way as he could be loaded at the Whim, sent on his way and he would stop at each house and await to be unloaded and sent on his way to the next house).

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*

