



# FRIENDS OF TASMAN ISLAND



## NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2010

No 5

### A few words from our President

Hi everyone

A bumper issue and probably our last newsletter for 2010 so hope you enjoy the read. Please pass on to family & friends who may be interested.

A small core of FoTI members have been very busy since our last newsletter in July - writing grant submissions, updating the FOTI information brochure, planning for the 2011 Wooden Boat Festival stall with Friends of Maatsuyker and Deal Islands, promoting and distributing our major annual fundraiser – the Tasmanian Lighthouses 2011 Calendar *Low Head and the Leading Lights*, more preparatory work for restoration of the Tasman Island Lantern Room project, the 2012 FoTI Calendar committee has been meeting regularly and final preparations for the next working bee on the island in November are well underway.

People will be pleased to hear that we are going to 'lock-in' dates for the three 2011 working bees at our next meeting, allowing potential volunteers to plan their availability to come on one of our always memorable trips.

At our last social meeting in August a good number of members were entertained by Tony Parsey, ex Lighthouse Keeper with some of his stories and memories and were also enthralled by his brilliant scale working model of the original Tasman Island tower. Tony is kindly lending us the Tasman tower as a main exhibit for the Wooden Boat Festival. We also voyaged south with Henk Brolmsa as he shared his experiences of working one summer in Antarctica via a great slideshow presentation. Thanks Tony & Henk & I look forward to organising more social evenings in 2011.

Contact me [friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com) if you have a story to tell or share about Tasman Island or are interested in becoming more involved in any of our projects on and off the island.

### Tasman Island light station September 2010



Aerial shot of the top of Tasman taken by our friend, advisor and supporter, Lyndon O'Grady, from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, during a recent site inspection.

As a regular visitor to the island over many, many years Lyndon has watched with pleasure the results of five years of work undertaken by FoTI including the complete restoration of the oil store shed, enormous amounts of cleaning up of the station and its buildings, track recovery and maintenance, halting the deterioration of the keepers' quarters caused by weather and no human presence for 3 decades and the restoration work on Quarters No 3 where volunteers stay.

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## Two recipes from Erika Shankley one of our regular chefs at Hooters -Tasman Island's 5 Star Restaurant:

### Thai Pumpkin & Coconut Soup

#### Ingredients:

800g pumpkin, diced  
1 large carrot, diced  
1 large onion, chopped  
1 to 2 tablespoons Thai red curry paste  
1 bunch coriander (roots & leaves) or alternatively, bunch parsley  
1 Litre vegetable stock  
1 tin coconut cream

#### Method:

Put diced pumpkin, carrot, onion, curry paste & coriander in pot  
Add stock & bring to boil, simmer till all vegetables are tender  
Blend till smooth, add coconut cream & reheat but do not boil.  
Serve topped with coriander leaves.



### Easy Scones



#### Ingredients:

This recipe originated from Helene Brown and was passed to Chris who gave it to me. The scones are a sure-fire success!

4 cups SR flour, sifted  
2 eggs  
2 tablespoons sugar  
1 cup cream  
2/3 cup milk

#### Method:

Heat oven to 200 degrees C  
Mix together eggs, sugar, cream & milk. Knife this mixture through the flour to form a dough. Lightly work dough on a floured bench top & pat out to 3/4 inches thickness. Cut with scone cutter or knife (approx 20). Lightly sprinkle with a little caster sugar to crisp up the tops & arrange 1/2 inch apart on a greased baking tray. Bake for about 12 mins in centre of oven.

## South Solitary Island Film Review

Mary Finsterer's haunting theme music from the Australian film *South Solitary* was playing on ABC FM as I drove to the State Cinema.

Memories came flooding back. The year was 2002 and I was on Maatsuyker Island as a voluntary caretaker. A visitor, we were told, was to accompany the ranger on his monthly inspection of the island. Script writer and film maker, Shirley Barrett, had had the germ of an idea – a film about life on a remote island lightstation in the '20s, after the Great War. Where better to base her story than Maatsuyker Island!

The day was unusually fine – not at all what Shirley expected from Australia's most southerly lightstation. We spent the day, together, showing her the original light tower, built in 1891, with its double airlock front door, clockwork mechanism with weights which had to be wound up every half an hour and its magnificent prism made up of 540 separate pieces of precisely cut glass. Then we toured the island inspecting the keepers' houses, the pigeon loft, and the old haulage.

Some years later the then Minister for Economic Development, Paula Wreidt, announced with great fanfare that the "Big budget movie *South Solitary*, set to be filmed in a remote Tasmanian lighthouse, is expected to draw big Hollywood names, with reports circulating that Golden Globe nominee Maggie Gyllenhaal and British star Paul Bettany will star in the film."<sup>1</sup>

Shirley already had a string of TV credits as a director, including episodes of *Police Rescue*, *Heartbreak High* and *A Country Practice* and her first film *Love Serenade* was winner of the Camera d'Or at the 1996 Cannes Film Festival for the best first feature film.

However, the logistics of shooting a film at such a remote location proved too difficult and instead, the budget was pared down to a mere \$6.5 million with *South Solitary* being filmed at three Victorian locations – Portland, Cape Otway and Cape Nelson. The film was premiered at the Sydney Film Festival in June this year.

Reviews have been many and various. "If you're thinking - why on earth would I watch an entire movie dedicated to lighthouse-keeping? ... think again", says one reviewer. "There's enough scandal, secrecy and psychosis to entertain most in Shirley Barrett's new film *South Solitary*." And Stuart Diwell remarked in the *Sunday Tasmanian's* Movie Guide "It makes a nice change that my most positive review for the week is an Australian movie."

This film is one of those rare occasions when life on an Australian lightstation is highlighted in a credible manner, albeit with all the nuances between the disparate characters who live there.



Australian actors, Barry Otto and his daughter Miranda, star in the film – Barry as George Wadsworth, the crusty head lightkeeper - a stickler for attention to detail - and Miranda, his on-screen niece

<sup>1</sup> ABC News 24 June 2008

## South Solitary Island Film Review

Meredith, escaping from her past. Both did a lot of research into the roles and give fine, convincing performances. Tasmanian actor, Essie Davis plays the long-suffering wife of rebellious womaniser Harry (Rohan Nichol), an assistant keeper, while Annie Martin gives a tremendous performance as Nettie, their mischievous daughter, with her quirky collection of scabs. New Zealander Marton Csokas, as Jack Fleet, gives a compelling performance as the third light keeper - reticent, brooding and battle scarred from the Great War.

Some reviewers complained about the pace of the film, with the burgeoning love story only surfacing in the closing sequences. However, the film was inspired by true stories gleaned from light-keepers log books from Maatsuyker, Tasman and Deal Island, amongst others, before the days of telephone, television and satellite communications. Pigeon post and semaphore were the only forms of contact with the outside world and the pace of life was necessarily slower.



For the pharophiles amongst the audience the scenes in the light tower, lantern room and haulage are very well done. The mind boggles, however, if keepers on Maatsuyker or Tasman had to winch the laden trolleys up by hand! The scene in the lanternroom where Meredith with assistant keeper Jack Fleet light the kerosene lamp is particularly evocative – reminiscent of a similar scene in A Big Country with our own John Cook, whose name appears in the credits.

In South Solitary Shirley Barrett has a strong cast whose performances add authenticity to the script. I found my attention held throughout the film and wanting to know more about those lighthouse islands. A sequel perhaps?

**Review by Erika Shankley**

## Fundraising

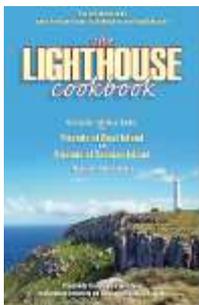
Fundraising is important, but **we need more help from all our members**. If you have experienced a working bee on the island then you are indeed one of the privileged few.

To hold working bees on the island requires funds. The funds are mainly for helicopter hire, gas for the heating and hot water, petrol for the generator & brush cutters as well as materials for our working bee projects. While many of the materials including new tanks, fascia boards and guttering are funded by successful grant submissions the rest is covered by money we raise.

Two of our major fundraisers, the Lighthouse Cookbook and the annual Calendar are now on sale. Christmas is coming up, so everyone, please purchase one of our major fundraising products to support volunteer work on the islands.

### The Lighthouse Cookbook

#### On Sale Now – Selling Fast



Only 19.95 plus postage and handling – also available in selected bookshops throughout Tasmania.

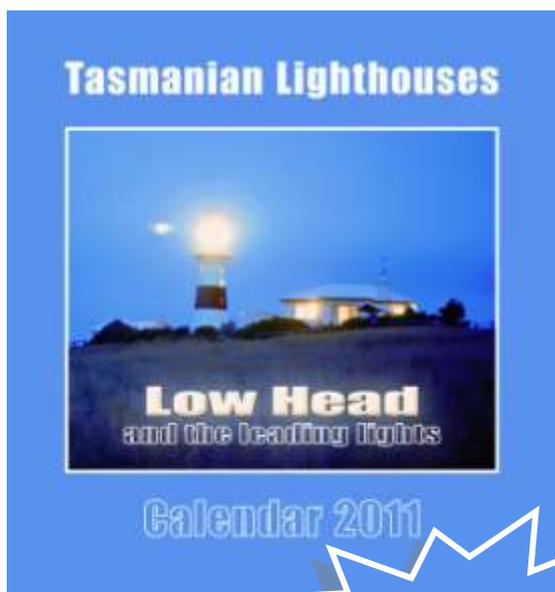
A fabulous compilation of tried and true recipes for all the lovers of the outdoors, wild places and good food.

Email: [lighthousecookbook@bigpond.com](mailto:lighthousecookbook@bigpond.com) or phone 03 6223 6761 to place your order

All proceeds from the sale of **the Lighthouse cookbook** will fund restoration work by volunteers on Deal Island and Tasman Island Light stations.

### Tasmanian Lighthouses

#### Low Head Lighthouse Calendar 2011



### Beanies

#### Tasman Island Beanies for Sale



If you missed out last time!  
Cost: \$15 (GST incl) plus p&h  
Place order by emailing  
[deewebb@live.com.au](mailto:deewebb@live.com.au)

Details for payment and delivery will be sent on the placement of order.

#### 2012 Calendar – Calling for Images!

Friends of Tasman Island will be producing the 2012 Tasmanian Lighthouses Calendar. The calendar will feature Tasman Island as well as other iconic lighthouses around Tasmania.

We have already received generous permission from professional photographers John Ibbotson, Richard & Alice Bennett, and Jo Shemesh to reproduce selected images.

**Every calendar has also featured spectacular or interesting photos from our volunteers and caretakers** so if you, or someone you know, has a high resolution image of any of our Tasmanian lighthouses and would like their photo considered for selection please send by email to [lighthousesoftasmania@mail.com](mailto:lighthousesoftasmania@mail.com) (or for further information) **no later than Wednesday 3**

**November**. The calendar committee will meet on 7 November 2010 for selection of images.

Ongoing appreciation to our generous Calendar Sponsors: Cascade Brewery, Australian Maritime Services & Forty Degrees South

Email [friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com) for an order form for the Low Head Calendar (also details postage costs)

You can also purchase the 2011 Low Head Lighthouse Calendar at the good book shops in Hobart and Launceston, the Devonport Bookshop and several outlets in George Town and the Museum at the Pilot Station, Low Head.

## November 2010 Working Bee preparations full steam ahead

We now have a full team of 10 volunteers for our next working bee 12-21 November and organisation is going very well.

The team has a multitude of skills. The two team leaders, Erika & Chris have had many trips to Tasman. Our weeders, John Hamilton & Jean Taylor are well known to Parks for their landcare and weeding work, Nick Creese is a land surveyor, Steve Earl a painter, Brenda Kenyon a spray painter & general handyperson & Ian McKendrick an electrician. Tim & young Ned are willing gofers. A good mixture of experienced FoTI volunteers and first timers.

Parks is providing logistical support with heli lifts and will also be sharing return helicopter costs as they have their November 'cat checking trip' commencing on our planned return date – working effectively together, great to see.

Helicopter Resources has kindly agreed to have a briefing session on helicopter protocol & safety procedures before the working bee. This is particularly important for those who have not travelled by helicopter before.

The Works program includes

- Mowing & brushcutting as always! - fire safety measures, maintaining building integrity & tidy up;
- Weeding – part of an ongoing weed program funded by Caring for our Country Community Action Grant;
- Installation of small tank at back of Quarters 3; (from Tasmanian Community Fund)
- Continuation of electrical work started at the April 2010 working bee
- Installation of fascia & soffit & preparation for guttering Quarters 2
- External Painting (to maintain integrity of woodwork);
- Internal painting as necessary

While raising money in a variety of ways to fund ongoing working bees on the island is time consuming, organising everything for a working bee takes a huge amount of effort as well – ongoing liaising and logistical planning with Parks and Heli Resources, finalising the works plan with approval of Parks, purchasing or hiring of materials and equipment, selection and briefing the working bee members, forms and more forms to be completed (volunteer registration and, medical disclosure forms, helicopter itinerary form, Job Safety Analysis forms etc), shopping for 10 people for 10 days, allocating roles and responsibilities within the team, – phew!!

Often there is work we do before we leave for a working bee so we don't waste valuable time on the island....one recent Saturday, a group of FoTI members had a working bee to prepare and paint timber and to clean a stack of RD bricks, that were well spotted and purchased by Chris Creese from the Glenorchy Tip Shop. These will also be transported to Tasman where they will be used in the restoration of brickwork in the 3 houses. The same company made the original bricks on Tasman. It was a case of many hands make light work with both the painting & brick cleaning completed before enjoying a leisurely BBQ in the sunshine. A special thanks to David & Annette's two children, Sam & Gigi, who wielded the paintbrush like professionals!



*FoTI volunteers Trauti, David, Gigi, Annette & Sam*

### It must run in the blood.....

Around preparing for the November working bee, and writing articles to promote the 2011 Calendar stalwart FoTI member, Erika Shankley is slowly working on the FoTI image data base and spent an interesting few hours at the National Archives recently reading a couple of early Tasman Island log books. The earliest log in their possession starts in 1908.

Of interest to Erika were the log entries regarding the arrival of the *Moonah* with stores at 6.30am on Saturday 2nd May 1908. On board was **Captain Creese** who inspected the station. On 30 July he again arrived at Tasman Island, this time on the *Moogarra* and made another inspection of the station.

This is one of our core members, Chris Creese's great, great (not sure how many greats) Uncle Joseph Creese, who was a ship's captain and also served on Goose Island.

It seems like lighthouses & Tasman Island is in Chris's blood!!

## Greetings from Pommiland – FoTI member Derek Thornley

I made contact with Derek Thornley early this year thanks to Denise Shulz from Lighthouses of Australia. Derek was seeking to contact my sister Dee and I, or any of the **Tom Barrett family** as he worked on Tasman island for 8 weeks during the summer school holiday of 1963/64 – He even had a trip to Maatsuyver Island!



*On the fishing boat going to Tasman Island (1963)*

Derek has kindly forwarded some photos of his time on the island to share. He was employed to help repair the flying fox platform that had partially burnt down because of spontaneous combustion.



*Derek outside Q1 (1963)*

Derek lived with Head keeper Tom Barrett & family.

*"It was a wonderful experience I shall never forget....The best part of the venture (for me) was to the journey there on a smelly old fishing boat, followed by a scary lift in the flying-fox on to the island. Then finally up the rickety old wooden track to the top of the island, to be met by your wonderful horse that then pulled all the produce around to the houses!!!! - so it's sad that that has all come to an end. Seems like we were the lucky ones Carol!!!!*



*The Barrett Family and others in front of the Headkeeper's Quarters Q1*

Derek and his wife hope to make a trip to Tasmania soon and would dearly love to get back to the island – via a working bee or the annual Rotary trip. Lets hope it happens!!

If you wish to contact Derek re his time on Tasman email him on [Budlynda64@aol.com](mailto:Budlynda64@aol.com)

## Tasman Island keeper now guide at Table Cape Lighthouse



Some of you may have read the recent article *Light Appeal – Keeping the dream alive in the Saturday Magazine* (Mercury October 16 2010) with a wonderful picture of ex Tasman Island keeper Karl Rowbottom gracing its front cover.

The article reports how Karl informed his father at the age of 4 he was going to be a lighthouse keeper one day. "Twenty years later he achieved that dream and became a keeper on Tasman Island. However it was a time when lighthouses were being automated and Rowbottom lived his dream life for only two years. But now he's again finally working at a lighthouse...this time as a tour guide at the newly opened Table Cape lighthouse – the only Commonwealth operated lighthouse in Tasmania to allow public access for tours."

President's note – that is with the exception of the Tasman Island tower which has been opened to the public for one day each year, for several years now, courtesy of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, and weather permitting of course! Its an annual fund raising event for the Tasman Peninsula Branch of Rotary, who work in partnership with Friends of Tasman Island to guarantee a memorable and safe few hours on the island for up to 100 "paying guests".

Each year John Cook, another keeper on Tasman entertains guests with his stories of Tasman and life as a light keeper – bet Karl loves his new job as well. Hopefully we will be able to publish some of Karl's lighthouse poems in future issues.

To book a Table Cape lighthouse tour, call Van Diemen Quality Bulbs on 03 6442 2012.

**Friends of Tasman Island are planning a weekend trip to Table Cape next spring, to coincide with the blooming tulips of course, let me know if you want to be kept informed** by emailing me [friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com)

