



The Penguin

Newsletter of Phillip Island Conservation Society Fourth
Quarter,
December 2006



Newsletter

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Dates for your Diary

Sat 6 Jan 2007: **Children's Environment Morning** 11 a.m. - 12 noon. Meeting Room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. "Red Cross to the Rescue". What happens when human habitat gets destroyed? Junior Red Cross delegate Billie Urquhart is our speaker, followed by art/craft

Sat 6 Jan: **Habitat Day Friends of Koalas (FOK)** 10 a.m. Meet at North end Oswin Roberts for ragwort pulling.

Sat 13 Jan: **PICS AGM** Annual Reports. 8 pm. Meeting Room, Heritage Centre, Cowes.

Fri 19 Jan: **FoK Annual General Meeting** 8 p.m. Enquiries: Patsy Hunt 5952 2407

Sat 3 Feb: **Children's Environment Morning**: 11 am - 12 noon. Meeting Room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. "Habitat Games" and art/craft with Urban Landcare officer/PICS member Lisa Wangman.

Sat 3 Feb: **FOK Habitat Day**: 10 a.m. Working Bee at Barb Martin Bush Bank, enter at Koala Conservation Centre.

Sat 3 Feb: **Friends of Churchill Island (FOCIS) General Meeting** 1 p.m. Visitor's Centre, C.I.

Sat 17 Feb: **Seasonal Walk.** Point Sambell (on right, past Cat Bay) Meet at car park, 2 p.m.

Sat 3 Mar: **Children's Environment Morning:** 11 a.m.- 12 noon Meeting room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. Ranger Rebecca on "Living in a burrow".

Sat 3 Mar: **FOK Habitat Day:** Oswin Roberts Reserve remove guards and weeding.

Sat 7 Apr: **Children's Environment Morning:** 11am - 12 noon Meeting room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. Waterwatch Melanie with water experiments.

Sat 14 Apr: **General Meeting.** Subject: tidal energy (speaker TBA) 8 p.m. Meeting Room, Cowes.

Sun 15 Apr: **Working Bee:** Five Ways. Cleaning, weeding. Meet at 10 a.m. Refreshments provided.

Sat 5 May: **Children's Environment Morning:** 11am - 12 noon, Meeting Room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. PICS Mike Cleeland on "Dinosaur Habitat".

Sat 19 May: **Seasonal Walk:** A "Green building". Location TBA in next newsletter. 2 p.m.

Sat 2 June: **Children's Environment Morning:** 11am - 12 noon, Meeting Room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. PI Scouts leader will tell us about "Safe Camping".

Sat 7 July: **General Meeting.** Port of Hastings update. 8 p.m. Meeting Room, Heritage Centre, Cowes

Sun 8 July: **Working Bee:** Red Rocks Coast Action. Meet at Red Rocks car park, 10 a.m. BBQ to follow

Sat 18 Aug: **Seasonal Walk:** "Bimbadeen", a prize-winning Landcare property. Meet there on Back Beach Rd (between Pyramid Rock Rd and Berry Beach Rd, on north side) 2 p.m.

Sat 29 Sep: **General Meeting.** Wind and solar energy. Speakers TBA. 8 p.m. Meeting Room, Heritage Centre, Cowes.

Sun 30 Sep: **Working Bee:** Red Rocks Coast Action. Meet at Red Rocks car park, 10 a.m. BBQ to follow.

Sat 17 Nov: **Seasonal Walk:** Nobbies building and environs. Meet at main entrance 2 p.m.

Sat 20 Jan 2008 - the year of our 40th birthday!! **Annual General Meeting** 8 p.m. Meeting Room, Cowes.

Barb Martin Bush Bank: Sales and volunteers - every Wednesday plus 1st Saturday of each month 10 - 1. Phone Co-ordinator Bec 0407 348 807.

Friends of Koalas (FOK) Habitat Days: First Sat of every month at 10 a.m. Contact Patsy Hunt ph 5952 2407

Koala Count at the Koala Conservation Centre, second Tuesday of every month at 10am. Contact Patsy Hunt ph 5952 2407

Biosphere - Bass Coast Round Table meets at San Remo on the third Friday of every month at 8 p.m. Contact Neil Beddoe, ph 5952 1575

Friends of Churchill Island (FOCIS): Phone Sec Jill Allen: 5956 7109, or email: nellaa32@waterfront.net.au

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

Almost the end of 2006 - and what a year it has been! Global warming, drought, bushfires, huge planning issues - seemingly problems no matter where we live.

For me personally it has been a year with lots of time for thinking, as one of my eyes has been troublesome, and I've been unable to do much reading. As I've listened to the radio, listened to people talking to me, listened to people talking around me on public transport and in public places, it's apparent that everyone's life seems to be one of rush, rush, rush! And that all of us needs times and places of quiet; something which Phillip Island is ideally placed to provide to its own residents and holiday home families, the international visitors, and, very importantly, the one day trippers from the nearby metropolitan area.

As members of PICS our special responsibility is to "Save Wildlife for Tomorrow", and it's not just habitat for wildlife that should be saved, but habitat for humans as well; habitat which includes "places of quiet".

The Summer Newsletter of the Smith's Beachcomber Association includes a poem by David R Van Dort on the Linfox proposal. The last verse reads:

"How much more open coastal land central
to a community's well-being, physical and mental,
must be sacrificed to such developmental

frenzy? Are community views just incidental?"

I wish you the joy and peace of Christmas, some "time off" to gather your energy, and lots of enthusiasm as we face the challenges of 2007.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Hancock, President.

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Linfox Appeal - the VCAT Directions Hearing

About 15 objectors and "parties to the Appeal" were present in Room G1 at VCAT on Friday November 24, including two legal representatives for Linfox and Andrew Mason for Bass Coast Shire Council. VCAT's Deputy President stated that this was a "sizeable, contentious case" and wanted to know straight away from Linfox's representatives whether they intended to substitute amended plans. They said "yes". They had already applied previously to have the Directions Hearing deferred, but were refused permission.

Madam Deputy President then said that the amended plans must be made available by the end of February. There will also be an Administrative Mention (a further preliminary hearing before the main Hearing) at the end of March, where parties to the case can indicate how much time they will need during the main hearing for their arguments. The case itself will not start before April 30.

Andrew Mason asked that the case be heard in Bass Coast, but Madam Deputy President wasn't enthusiastic about that, although the inspection, of course, would be on Phillip Island! She also said that all witness material must be distributed 20 days, not 10 as usual, before the main hearing. Tony Raunic for Linfox told Madam DP that they have engaged Mr. Chris Townshend and Mr. Canovan as their barristers.

So - Round One, no score. Thanks again for the wonderful support and interest being shown. Phillip Island needs and deserves it!

Marg Johnson

Furthermore: We have received many generous donations into our Public Fund recently, with messages of support for our case in VCAT, including:

"Good Luck with your fight - behind you all the way."

"With my best wishes - in the name of justice!"

"Thank you for everything you're always doing."

"...all of PIC'S activities are eminently worthwhile"

"Best of luck. It's worth fighting for."

"Good luck with your fight!"

"I do hope that PICS hearing is successful."

"Hope for a miracle."

Our heartfelt thanks for your financial support, feedback and messages of support.

Christine Grayden.

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Children's Environment Mornings

We have so far run three CEMs this season. Four children attended our first morning on "Mangroves" with a great Power Point presentation and activities put together by member and CEM assistant Skye Winder.

PINP ranger Graeme Burgan ran the next CEM on "Things that go Bump in the Surf" for 6 children, all of whom had a great time waxing his surf board! Skye and I ran an "experiments" morning for 7 children who enjoyed meteorological, geological and chemistry experiments - they literally wouldn't stop!!

Please feel free to bring your children or grandchildren or visiting children, or drop in yourselves for a look any time. See dates section. Enquiries to Christine 5956 8501.

Christine and Skye.

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PICS HISTORY

Congratulations to our Secretary, Marg Johnson, who put in a terrific funding submission to Bass Coast Shire Council and was successful in securing a \$5,000 community grant for us to assist in publishing the PICS History. A sub-committee of Greg and Marg Johnson, Margaret Hancock, Penny Manning and myself has been formed and we have settled on a draft format.

I have subsequently commenced writing within the format. Professor David and Jocelyn Bradley have agreed to edit the book for us.

At this point in time we also have \$962 in designated funds from previous donations towards the History. If you wish to donate towards this project, due for completion during next year, you may do so by donating to the Phillip Island Conservation Society General Fund and specifying your wish that your donation be used for this purpose. (Note: Donations to the tax deductible Public Fund cannot be earmarked by the donor for a specific purpose.)

Christine Grayden.

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NOTE FROM THE TREASURER

Many thanks to those who paid their subscriptions this year, and to the many who also included donations, both to the General Fund and the Public Fund.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2007 ARE NOW DUE. Your payment early in the year would be greatly appreciated, as this allows us to have a better idea of our budget for the year.

Christine Grayden, Treasurer.

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"Come for a Walk!"

This book, full of interesting information and maps of walks on Phillip Island, has been such a successful seller that the Editorial Committee is already able to distribute profits to various environmental and historical groups on Phillip Island - and the summer selling season is yet to come!

PICS has been given sufficient funds to put in place some relevant signage at Red Rocks to notify people of the Coast Action work and how to care for the area.

Our thanks to the hard-working committee who did such a great job with the book, which has filled a definite need on Phillip Island and is widely available.

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SPRING SEASONAL WALK

Carnivorous Plant Hunt led by George Caspar



In pleasant sunny conditions, 12 participants in the walk met George at the Conservation Hill carpark. George is an expert on carnivorous plants, and an active member of the Victorian Carnivorous Plant Society.

Before we began the walk, George gave us a brief overview of carnivorous plants. He told us they occupy a specific niche where the supply of plant nutrients in the soil is impoverished and hence limiting to plant growth. Light and water, however, need to be in abundance. Such areas are often waterlogged, open areas, where there has been some disturbance, but little or no application of fertilizer. Carnivorous plants supplement their supply of nutrients by catching and digesting small insects.

Sundews (*Drosera species*) are the most common carnivorous plants found on Phillip Island. They catch small insects using a 'flypaper' technique. Their leaves are covered with hairs which have special glands on top of them that secrete a drop of glistening sticky 'goo'. Insects coming in contact with this goo get stuck, the hairs of the leaf close around them and digestive enzymes are secreted by the leaf to break down the prey. Narcotic chemicals are also secreted to subdue the insect. In this way, the plant supplements its nutrient intake from poor soil.

Bladderworts (*Utricularia species*) probably also occur on Phillip Island, but George hasn't found any yet. They actually catch their prey in water, using a triggered inverting bladder. Another type of carnivorous plant, the Pitcher Plants, relies on their prey slipping down into a vase of digesting liquid. Western Australia is home to our one Australian species.

We began our search in open areas between and around swamp Paperbark just east of Conservation Hill, but without success. Grasses readily out-compete sundews, and, in any case, the onset of drought and extremely low spring rainfall has not encouraged growth of those plants that like wet areas. Discovery of a shed snakeskin and a small wallaby skull

created interest, however.

We continued on to Rhyll Cricket Ground, and were not disappointed. The playing surface of the ground is a haven for a range of wildflowers, including onion orchids, sun orchids, yellow everlastings and Burchardia. Scattered throughout were numerous upright sundews of the species *Drosera peltata* var. *foliosa*. These plants have leaves spread up a stem, and, in season, white flowers. We used magnifying glasses to inspect the hairy glandular leaves, dotted here and there with the tiny bodies of hapless prey. George was able to extract seed from capsules on these plants for us to examine using the lenses.



Another sundew species also present, *Drosera auriculata*, has pink flowers and red pigment in the stems. Growing up to 20 cm high, they dry out during a dry season to a dark grey colour. (*Drosera peltata* var. *foliosa* dries out to a black colour.)

On the edge of the playing field closest to the road, George found a third species for us. You would need an expert to point out to you the tiny Pygmy Drosera (*Drosera pygmaea*) as it grows as a flat rosette of leaves no bigger than a fingernail. This was in an area that is frequently waterlogged in normal years. The plant is the only species of pigmy Drosera outside Western Australia, and has some fascinating features. The leaves are red and in good seasons it produces white flowers and seeds that are very hardy, able to survive for many years. In dry conditions the central bud, protected by white hairs, lies dormant through the heat and dryness of summer, to resume growth again when rains return. Unlike the other two species we had seen (which are also perennials), it does not produce an underground tuber as its survival mechanism.

In addition to seed, the little plant has another way of spreading. Leaves can become modified to form structures called 'gemmae' which can propagate as new plants when separated from the parent. Amazingly, the stalks of the 'gemmae' become spring loaded, and at the smallest

disturbance can catapult the gemmae several feet away from the parent plant, allowing rapid colonization of new ground.

Our fascinating walk concluded back at the carpark with a discussion of why some carnivorous plants are under threat. George explained that habitat destruction (loss of wetlands, etc) was the biggest problem, and the extensive use of fertilizer on agricultural land made many areas unsuitable. There is also a small problem of poaching in WA, where carnivorous plants are removed from the wild to satisfy a lucrative overseas market.

More information can be found on the excellent website of the Victorian Carnivorous Plants Society: www.vcps.au.com (*sic*) This site is full of all sorts of details about identifying and growing carnivorous plant species, as well as details about the Society. George hopes to soon produce a book on the Victorian Carnivorous Plants, so we wish him well.

John Eddy.

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National Trust: Bass Coast Branch

Tour of Bass Hills National Trust Classified Sites - 29 July 2006

The event commenced at the Kilcunda Hotel with speakers Libby Skidmore, President of Bass Historical Society, and Barry Sibly, Bass Valley Landcare President and local farmer discussing the early history of the Bass Hills region and nature of its landscape at this time.

After car pooling the group proceeded through Dalyston to the "Bass Hill Trust Classified Area" for views over Westernport Bay and the South Coast and then descended through the "Gorge Creek Classified Area" to Glen Forbs. The group then drove to Loch via Kernot passing through the "Bass Valley National Trust Classified Area" for afternoon tea at the Offset Café.

The return trip was through the hills via Krowea and Archies creek with detour to Anderson Hill for panoramic views over the Bass Valley and Westernport Bay. Barry Sibly, our guide for the afternoon, pointed out several examples of Landcare Projects throughout the drive.

The event concluded at the Kilcunda Hotel with some members staying on for an evening meal and chat.

Bass Coast Branch Tour of Phillip Island National Trust Classified Sites, 7 October 2006

After meeting and car-pooling at the Newhaven Rotunda the group visited Cape Woolamai Surf Club to view the "Cape Woolamai Classified Area", stopping at the store on the Phillip Island Road for views of the "Churchill Island and Swan Bay Classified Area".

The "Pyramid Rock and Southern Coastline Classified area" was inspected from the Pyramid Rock carpark, Summerland's South Coast Road viewing platform and carpark overlooking Summerland Bay.

Afternoon Tea was enjoyed at the Silverleaves Store.

The drive concluded at the Newhaven Boys Home for vistas of the "Churchill Island and Swan Bay Classified Area". Our Speaker/Guide for this event was Mike Cleeland, PICS/Landcare member and expert on geology and local history of the area.

The day ended with dinner at the San Remo Hotel where Julie Box spoke of history of the area and growing up on the Island, Mike Cleeland discussed its geology and Malcolm Brodie concluded the evening with a poem.

Ross Lloyd

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ISLAND-WIDE KOALA COUNT

The recent Island-wide koala count relied on members of the public inspecting their own and nearby properties and phoning in any sightings, along with PI Nature Park staff inspecting public land. The total number of koalas sighted for Phillip Island for that weekend was **13**, including two in Oswin Roberts Reserve. Obviously there are some koalas that get missed, but it's also possible that some have been counted twice. PI Nature Park staff are now analyzing the results of the count, and mortality records, to gain a clearer picture of the real status of koalas on Phillip Island. At this stage it would seem to be quite grim.

Information from Patsy Hunt, Friends of Koalas.

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"WILD NEIGHBOURS"

Ian Temby has kindly presented PICS with a copy of his book "Wild Neighbours", a humane approach to living with wildlife. This excellent book is available for 4 weeks loan to PICS members by contacting the editors, Christine and John, ph: 5956 8501. Or better still, buy a copy of your own from The

ABC Shop, or by writing to Ian at 29 Edwin Rd, Templestowe, 3106. Ian works as a wildlife damage control officer for the Department of Sustainability and Environment, and his book is full of positive suggestions based on his work and research.

In the print version of the newsletter, there is an article titled 'The Ruhr of Australia'. This article could not be reproduced in the online version. Print copies of *The Penguin* are available at the Cowes Library.

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MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING, HERITAGE CENTRE, COWES, on 23.09.06, at 8pm.

1. The President, M. Hancock, welcomed members and visitors, especially the evening's speaker Ian Temby, and opened the meeting.
2. Present: 23 as per Register
3. Apologies: 7 as per Register
4. Minutes of the previous General Meeting, 24.06.06, received; *moved* G. Johnson, *seconded*, O. Bolitho, *carried*.
5. Business arising:
 - 5.1 PINP management plan. Our concerns, as far as we know, have been recognised. Final plan soon to be released.
6. Treasurer's report received; *moved* C. Grayden, *seconded*, J. Eddy, *carried*.
7. Correspondence received; *moved*, M. Johnson, *seconded*, G. Cleeland, *carried*.
 - 7.1. Inwards: Yaringa/French Island/Churchill Island Marine National Parks - comment needed by 30.09.06.

Bass Coast Shire Council - funding workshops:
San Remo 4.10.06, 7.00pm-9.00pm; Cowes 17.10.06, 1.00pm-3.00pm.
 - 7.2. Outwards: Planning amendment C46.
8. General business:
 - 8.1. Provision for fire services for tugs at Port of Hastings - Gillian Collins has addressed a public meeting convened by Rosy Buchanan, MLA. Gillian's report to PICS regarding the removal of

the Fire Safety Tug from stand-by operation was read to the meeting.

8.2. Linfox. The Council has refused the 506 units plus golf course development application at the racetrack. It was proposed to establish a working group with M. Johnson and A. Davie being the contacts. Linfox has 21 days to appeal the Council decision.

8.3. The Sands. A zoning change from Tourist Precinct to Rural Activity.

8.4. Proposal by Pattons for a recycling facility in Gap Road.

8.5. The cruelty of duck shooting which is banned in three states but not Victoria although 70% of Victorians are against it.

8.6. The heavy-handed destruction of casuarinas and eucalypts along the Back Beach Road bike path was noted with concern. M. Johnson *moved* that PICS write to VicRoads, BCSC and DSE complaining about the devastation, requesting PICS involvement in a more constructive approach. *Seconded, A. Davie. Carried.*

8.7. The President requested suggestions for her questions to candidates.

8.8. C. Grayden exhibited a fascinating map of the area dating from 1929.

9. Guest speaker - Ian Temby gave a comprehensive and most informative power-point presentation based in part on his book ***Wild neighbours: the humane approach to living with wildlife***, published by Citrus Press, 2005. His talk covered kangaroos, seals, wombats, possums, silver gulls, cockatoos, the grey-headed flying fox, koalas, wallabies and rabbits. Ian donated a copy of his book to the Society.

10. Vote of thanks - John Eddy mentioned that it was in 1984, at his first PICS meeting, that Ian Temby last spoke to the members.

11. Dates: Working Bee 24.09.06; National Trust Bass Coast Branch, Phillip Island tour 7.10.06; Meet the Candidates 17.11.06; AGM 20.01.07

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 14.1.06

(Following the General Meeting)

1. APOLOGIES and Attendance as at General Meeting

2. A.G.M. Minutes 11.1.05 received. 1. G Johnson
2.R.Dyall. Carried

3. The President's report received: 1. M. Hancock 2. J.

Eddy. Carried

4. The Treasurer's report received: 1. C. Grayden 2. M. Johnson. Carried
5. The Secretary announced that prior nominations received, and that no Election was necessary.

PRESIDENT: Margaret Hancock

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT: TBC

JUNIOR VICE PRESIDENT: Penny Manning

SECRETARY: Marg Johnson

MINUTE SECRETARY: Gae Cleeland, TBC

TREASURER: Christine Grayden

COMMITTEE: Anne Davie, John Jansson, Greg Johnson, Pauline Taylor

6. Next A.G.M. 20.1.07.
7. Meeting closed at 10.20 p.m.

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Download the [Membership Renewal Form](#) and send it in today if you have not renewed your subscription, or if you want to become a new member. The [Public Fund](#) donation form can be downloaded for your contribution to this fund. Feel free to share these with a friend or neighbour.

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PICS CONTACTS

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