

# PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC



## “The Penguin” Newsletter

First Quarter: March 2012

Editors: Christine Grayden & John Eddy

[cgrayden@waterfront.net.au](mailto:cgrayden@waterfront.net.au) PH: 5956 8501

WEB SITE: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~piconsoc>

### Dates for Your Diary 2012

Sat 14 April: General Meeting. Heritage Centre Meeting Room, 7.30 p.m. Speaker Christine Grayden on the Nature Notes of Mary Potter (nee Anderson) of Bass, San Remo and Phillip Island, 1915.

Sun 15 April: Red Rocks Coast Action. Meet at car park 10 a.m.

Sat 7 July: General Meeting. Heritage Centre Meeting Room. 7.30 p.m. Speaker TBA.

Sun 8 July: Red Rocks Coast Action. Planting morning. Meet at car park 10 a.m.

Wed 29 Aug: “Western Port” day: Parish Hall 10 – 3. m/t, lunch, all day tea and coffee provided. Donation welcome. Organised by PICS. Details of speakers TBA.

Sun 30 Sep: Red Rocks Coast Action. Weed control. Meet at car park 10 a.m.

Fri 5 Oct: “Meet the Candidates” forum Council Elections. Heritage Centre meeting room; 7.30 p.m.

Sat 6 Oct: General Meeting. Heritage Centre Meeting Room. 7.30 p.m. Speaker TBA.

Sat 12<sup>th</sup> Jan 2013: AGM.

**Enquiries for all events:** Christine Grayden, ph 5956 8501 m 0400 900 612 e: [cgrayden@waterfront.net.au](mailto:cgrayden@waterfront.net.au)

**Barb Martin Bush Bank:** Sales and volunteers – every Wednesday + 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of each month 10 – 1. Phone Anne Davie ph 5956 8216

**Friends of Koalas (FOK) Habitat Days:** First Sat of every month at 10 a.m. **Koala Count** at the Koala Conservation Centre, second Tuesday of every month at 10 a.m. 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 Jane Jobe, convenor: 0409 530 898

**Friends of Churchill Island (FOCIS):** email: [webmaster@friendsofchurchillisland.org.au](mailto:webmaster@friendsofchurchillisland.org.au)

**Groundswell** Bass Coast Climate Change action group: Neil Rankine 5672 1185 [neilnola@netspace.net.au](mailto:neilnola@netspace.net.au)

**Bird Life Bass Coast:** [spmaddigan@gmail.com](mailto:spmaddigan@gmail.com)

#### GENERAL MEETING: SAT APRIL 14, 2012

#### HERITAGE CENTRE MEETING ROOM COWES

Speaker: Christine Grayden. Topic: “The Nature Notes of Mary Potter (nee Anderson) about Bass, San Remo and PI, 1915”

Meet & greet nibbles & drinks, 7.00 p.m. Meeting starts 7.30 p.m.

All are welcome!

#### Committee for 2012

President: Anne Davie (media contact 5956 8216) e: [bimbadeen@nex.net.au](mailto:bimbadeen@nex.net.au)

Vice President: Pauline Taylor ph 5952 5485

Secretary: Christine Grayden, ph 5956 8501 e: [cgrayden@waterfront.net.au](mailto:cgrayden@waterfront.net.au)

Minutes Secretary: Gaye Cleeland (Margaret Hancock in Gaye’s absence)

Treasurer: Danielle Angel

Committee: Terry Nott, Steven Angel, John Jansson, Penny Manning (Chair of c/ee and sub c/ee meetings), Margaret Hancock.

*Welcome to new members: David & Mel, Lisa & Alia, Jane, Kim & Glenn and Lois*

## Letter from the President

Dear Members,

The well-attended AGM, early in Jan, resulted in some changes to the Committee for the next 12 months. Margaret Hancock, our illustrious President, has stepped down, after, I understand, 30 years at the helm. It is a remarkable effort and members present at the meeting, lauded Margaret for her commitment and legacy. It is great that she remains on the committee and will continue to wear her Planning Hat! The committee has decided that I should have a turn as President and I must say I have big shoes to fill!

Two new committee members have been warmly welcomed. They are Steve and Danielle Angel, who have a holiday home at Red Rocks. Danielle has agreed to be PICS Treasurer.

It was decided at the February Meeting to have an Environment Sub-committee of PICS. Penny Manning will chair this and committee meetings and I will Chair the General Meetings.

A successful PICS stall was held outside Coles store in Cowes, early in January. Members gave away plants from the Barb Martin Bushbank and information from the Bass Coast Shire and the local Environment Groups. PICS had a similar table of information at PINP's second Community Open Day at Churchill Island on Sunday, March 4<sup>th</sup>. The Day was seen as a great success and will now be an annual event on the Phillip Island Community Calendar.

The early autumn rains have delivered a carpet of green across the Island landscape and the numerous tree plantings are looking vibrant and healthy.

Many of the State Government's comments and decisions with regard to Planning and Environmental policies and programs are giving cause for concern and in some cases, alarm. We must as individuals and as a Group, be vigilant in making sure that the hard-fought gains are not lost.

*Anne Davie*

## STUDENTS' CORNER

1. What makes an animal a "Marsupial" (hint: most marsupials have pouches, but some just have folds of skin, so it's not the pouch!)
2. What is a "Cetacean"? (hint: they live in the sea, sometimes in rivers)
3. Name three indigenous Phillip Island plants...  
(See end of newsletter for answers)
4. What is your favorite natural place on Phillip Island? You can write a few paragraphs for your answer and send it to Christine at [cgrayden@waterfront.net.au](mailto:cgrayden@waterfront.net.au) and we'll publish it in the June newsletter and on the website!

## Tribute Speech by Anne Davie for Margaret Hancock PICS President 1982-2011

"In cricket terms, Margaret's effort of 30 years as PICS President, was by any measure, a remarkable innings and as the younger generation would say, awesome. Margaret was a foundation PICS member when it was formed in 1968. She served on the Committee until she took over as President in 1982. PICS was incorporated in 1986 and since that time until 2008, as stated in Christine Grayden's book An Island Worth Conserving, PICS actively participated in over 60 planning activities, including mediation sessions, written submissions, VCAT, the formulation of policy.etc. And I am certain the Margaret would have been an active participant in all of these!"

Anne then referred to some of the major campaigns and some VCAT appearances over the last 3 decades. These included the Canal proposal at Ventnor in 1988, the Public Meeting Jan 1989 re- large special events coming to the Island. i.e. Motor Cycle Grand Prix and the absurd Logan Park at Newhaven.

"It was in December 2001 that Judge Wood at VCAT refused a permit for the construction of a large hotel/ motel at the Isle of Wight. In conclusion he said : " No economic reasons advanced in the proposal could outweigh the adverse consequences." Because the Bass Coast Shire had supported the application and had contacted the Minister with regards to the VCAT refusal, a large Public Meeting was held in March the following year, when residents said that if the Bass Coast Shire is not committed to good planning outcomes for the Island, Phillip Island must Stand Alone.

"Margaret, Phillip island would not look as it does today but for your leadership and commitment. Dame Joan Sutherland is Australia's La Stupenda and Margaret Hancock is Phillip Island's La Stupenda of Conservation! Thank you from us all." *Anne Davie, 14.1.2012*

*A feature article about Margaret will appear in the next edition of Penguin.*

## PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2011

### BARB MARTIN BUSHBANK REPORT PICS AGM 2012

It is with pleasure that I report another satisfying year of production and supply at the Bushbank.

Under the capable leadership of the wonderful Co-ordinator, Jenny Toy, the Bushbank continues to be a place of pride and pleasure. The transition of managing the production as the weather conditions changed from a drought to a wet situation overnight, proved to be quite a challenge but with Jenny's enthusiasm and the incredible contribution of the dedicated volunteers, the last 12 months have seen supply back on track. Phillip Island Landcare, including Urban Landcare, continues to be a significant client as well as Coast Action and PINP. It has been particularly pleasing supplying stock from the Bushbank for the vegetation restoration at Summerlands. In the last 12 months the Bushbank has been successful in gaining a grant from the Bendigo Bank and the Bass Coast Shire's Community Grants, to assist with ongoing works. The committee is grateful to PICS, who funded the purchase of 2mats, placed at the entrances, to disinfect the shoes of people coming into the Bushbank.

During the year, Year 9 students from the Newhaven Environment Centre, under the supervision of Jenny and the College staff, assisted with various activities at the Bushbank. Of course the Committee hopes that these young people are tomorrow's volunteers! For the first time a group of students from the Bass Coast Special School have been attending, with their teachers, for an hour each Wednesday. Teachers and parents have told of the positive outcomes from this initiative and the program will continue in 2012.

As I was going through my Bushbank file, I came across the Barb Martin Bushbank Constitution and thought this was a good occasion to re-visit the objectives that were put in place in 1999:

- To assist our member groups in restoring Phillip Island's vegetation cover from less than 8% to 30 %.
- To produce enough indigenous plants to meet the requirements of community groups and local authorities on Phillip Island.
- To help maintain Phillip Island's biodiversity via seed preservation and the production of a broad range of indigenous plants.
- To promote the use of local provenance indigenous plants in revegetation works and gardens .
- To involve as many volunteers from the local and wider community as possible.
- To educate the broader community on the benefits of indigenous plants.



The Barb Martin Bushbank has certainly delivered on its objectives and is proud of its role in the preservation of the Island's indigenous flora for the present and for the years to come.

*Anne Davie, PICS Bushbank Committee Rep.*

## CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Unfortunately Children's Environment Mornings had to be stopped because PICS does not have public liability insurance, which would cost us \$1400 per year. However, after the summer season I will discuss this with BCSC Environment officer Derek Hibbert and see if we can come to some arrangement with the Shire to offer the program jointly so that they cover the insurance.

The BCSC's World Environment Day schools expo did not proceed in 2011 basically because it was organised too late for schools to fit it into the schedule. It is doubtful whether PICS would have been involved anyway, as they did not want any displays, only activities.

The PICS puppet decorating tables ran again for the Sustainable Living Festival on June 18, and many children spent up to an hour at a time sitting coloring in their calico puppets or just drawing on butcher's paper provided, while their parents were free to have a good look around. It works very well and if we have another Sustainable Living Festival put on by PI Urban Landcare for 2012, PICS will be there again. Thanks to my helpers Pauline and Elizabeth.

Last Sat, 7<sup>th</sup> January, PICS organised for the Animals of Oz to visit, funded by BCSC Environment Dept, as our bid for a community grant had been unsuccessful. Lee in charge put on two batches of fantastic educational talks for the children, who sat entranced, happily answered the questions, and some even got up and bravely fed the Tawny Frogmouth and Kookaburra some small dead mice. Each animal was kept comfortably in a covered container until it was their turn to be displayed and talked about. Lee taught the children how to stroke the animals with their forefinger, so there was no roughness allowed. This was an excellent experience for the 60 children who attended. PICS hopes that the BCSC Environment Dept may be able to fund Animals of Oz annually.

*Christine Grayden.*

## RED ROCKS COAST CARE:

Six successful working bees were held during 2011, continuing our work on revegetation, weed control and rubbish clean-up. Attendances averaged 5 people per working bee, with planting days being better-supported. We thank our volunteers for their willing work. 300 plants were put in, mainly filling gaps.

Seed of Coast Beard-Heath was collected during the January working bee, and used to set up a propagation experiment that will continue through 2012. The aim is to find conditions that promote germination of this difficult species. During 2011, some success was achieved with acid treatments and sunlight exposure, and we now have over 100 seedlings of this species in tubes. Some will be passed on to the Bush Bank, the remainder will be planted at Red Rocks next July.

The Red Rocks Botanical Survey, completed by Alison Oates, was officially launched in July, and distributed. Several significant plant communities were identified, and one rare plant (Coast Saltwort). 90 indigenous species and 90 exotic species were listed, the latter including some serious weeds. We hope to develop a proper management plan during 2012, as recommended in the report. We have also started the slow process to have the National Trust include several old growth Coast Banksias included in the Significant Trees Register.



The design of the Red Rocks signage, being in part funded by proceeds from the "Come For A Walk" book, was finalised mid-year, but we are still waiting for the Shire Council to install these signs in the barbeque shelter. We had hoped to have them in place before Christmas, but that did not eventuate.

Control of woody weeds and thistles by the cut-and -paint method continued, and our main area is now almost free of woody weeds. However, the spread of the ground creeper, Blue Periwinkle, with recent wet

years, is a great concern. The Shire Council environmental staff have sought special grant funding to start the necessary spraying, but so far control has not commenced.

During December, we applied for a “Communities for Nature” grant of \$13,000 to erect a short stairway at the end of the Appley Ave track, down to the beach. Foot traffic here has carved a deep gully in the dunes, threatening adjacent moonahs and other coastal vegetation. Christine Grayden put in many hours filling in the difficult on-line application form, and deserves our sincere thanks.

Thanks also to the Bass Coast Shire council for their on-going support, particularly Natural Resources Officer, Dave Martin, and Coast and Bushland Coordinator, Derek Hibbert, who provide all the advice, equipment and plants we need.

*John Eddy, Red Rocks Coast Care coordinator*

#### PICS SEASONAL WALKS:

We held four walks in 2011: Rhyll northern foreshore, Red Rocks, Churchill Island North Point, and San Remo across Phillip Island bridge. Although our numbers are small, the walks are enjoyable. I also realise that many readers of the newsletter enjoy reading the descriptions of the walk each time.

However, I have become more and more concerned about the lack of public liability insurance. The walks are publicly advertised in the newsletter and on our web site, and any member of the public can join in. I am unwilling to continue advertising the walks without appropriate insurance. Perhaps we could meet informally as a group of like-minded people, notified through an email list, and nothing to do with PICS. I will leave it up to the committee to try and find some way out of this difficult situation.

*John Eddy, walks leader.*

#### FRIENDS OF THE KOALAS:

Five years after the last island-wide count we are asking for your help in an endeavour to obtain some indication of how many free-range koalas remain on Phillip Island. The count conducted on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> December found 10 koalas outside the KCC. Five were in Oswin Roberts and two in Ventnor Koala Reserve. FOK has had recent reports of koalas mainly in the Rhyll area and Ventnor. It was a real bonus to have recent photographs of koalas on the former Swan Bay caravan park site at Rhyll when we attended VCAT in October. VCAT has rejected this application but the second stage of the proposed development, including plans for a hotel, units, café, etc, will probably be going to VCAT in early 2012.

The Senate Report into the Status, Health and Sustainability of Australia’s koala population was released in October but the Federal Environment Minister has postponed his decision on whether to make the koala a nationally threatened species until February 2012 to consider the report and seek more advice.

As 2011 draws to a close I would like to thank our committee members and regular volunteers for their support and dedication during the year. However, if FOK is to continue to be of value in fighting to preserve habitat for koalas and other wildlife on Phillip Island and further afield, we urgently need new volunteers for the committee and for habitat days and koala counts.

*Patsy Hunt, President FOK.*

## RED ROCKS COAST CARE

Red Rocks Coast Care operates under the auspices of PICS and in conjunction with the Bass Coast Shire Council and Department of Sustainability and Environment. RSVP: John Eddy, Red Rocks Coast Action Co-ordinator, ph 5956 8501.

On Friday 24<sup>th</sup> February, two PICS members were walking along the fire track and heard banging coming from the direction of the Banksia grove. They followed the sounds and were dismayed to find the sound was

hammering by a group of five young men building a large, wooden platform four metres up, in one of the oldest large Banksias in the area – a tree which we hope to have heritage listed. When asked what they thought they were doing, they replied: “Building a cubby... didn’t you have cubbies when you were kids?” The members pursued the matter through the council rangers and through Cr Peter Paul, who has a campaign against annexation of foreshore, of which this was a blatant example. Environment officer Derek Hibbert became involved and the structure was removed by the end of the following week, by a qualified builder. Derek had explanatory signage installed at the tree, but the signage was removed and in one case vandalized a few days later. The signage has since been reinstalled. This incident shows that we need to be ever-vigilant. *Christine.*



## HOODED PLOVER SUCCESS AT RED ROCKS

From Left: Maurice Schenkel with PICS members Patsy Hunt, Elizabeth Shaw, John Eddy, Sue Saliba and Bruno Chene in their Hooded Plover Watch volunteer shirts. All participated in watching over a pair of Hooded Plovers and their two chicks over December through to February at Red Rocks beaches – the first pair to breed there in over 20 years. The chicks were banded and successfully fledged. Congratulations to this dedicated crew!

### **Answers to Students’ Corner questions:**

1. An animal is a marsupial if it gives birth to unformed young, known as “jelly bean babies” because that’s what they look like. They crawl their way up the mum’s tummy and latch on to a teat, either in the pouch or in a fold in mum’s tummy. And that’s where they stay until they’re big enough to venture out of the pouch or away from mum’s tummy and onto her back.
2. Cetaceans are dolphins, porpoises and whales. Most of them live in the seas and oceans, but some dolphins live in rivers. They have even been seen in the Yarra River in Melbourne, hunting fish before going back into Port Phillip Bay.
3. There are several hundred species of indigenous plants on Phillip Island! Some of the best-known ones are Manna gum, Blue gum, Swamp gum, Swamp paperbark, Moonah, Coast tea tree, Coast Banksia, Coast Beard heath, Poa tussock, Sweet Bursaria, Grey Mangrove, etc.

MINUTES OF THE PICS GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE PARISH HALL, COWES ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 14<sup>TH</sup> 2012 AT 7.15 p.m.

WELCOME : President Margaret Hancock welcomed members and visitors

PRESENT : as per attendance book

APOLOGIES : As per attendance book

Guest Speaker : Greg Hunt CEO from the South East Councils Climate Change Alliance, gave a presentation re- the role and activities of the Alliance and the modelled effects of climate change on the Western Port area. The talk was followed by a brief question time.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING 1.10.11 Motion: That the Minutes be accepted

Moved: J Jansson Seconded T Nott Carried

BUSINESS ARISING :

1. Beverley Road Newhaven sub-division. No information available at this stage.
2. A Davie gave a Report re- the EPA's involvement with a noise monitoring exercise at the Phillip Island Motor Circuit. At this stage it is a work in progress.

CORRESPONDENCE : Nil

TREASURER'S REPORT : as presented

ANNUAL REPORT : PICS 44<sup>th</sup>, presented by President, M Hancock

OTHER REPORTS :

Bushbank - A Davie. Red Rocks Coast Action –J Eddy. Seasonal Walks - J Eddy. [The Committee will discuss insurance issues with regard to this activity] Animals of Oz - C Grayden Friends of Koalas - P Hunt

OTHER BUSINESS :

Letter to be sent to the Minister for the Environment re: the importance of the Summerland Buy Back

Moved : E Shaw Seconded : C Grayden. Carried

E Shaw reported that WESBOC has a new title, BirdLife Bass Coast

Alison Crichton has been appointed as the new Environment Manager for the BCS

G Burgan requested a letter of thanks be sent to Joan Kirner re- the completion of the Summerlands Buy Back

Cr Phil Wright spoke of the Council Elections at the end of this year, that the CEO is retiring soon, that Planning and Environment should be two separate sections within the council administration, that a rural strategy is being developed, that some steps are being taken to control bike and 4wd usage of Chinamen's Estate.

MEETING CLOSED AT 9.40

Phillip Island Conservation Society, Inc.

# The Penguin Newsletter

Fourth Quarter: Dec 2011

If undeliverable, return to:

PICS Inc.

PO Box 548

COWES, 3922

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**PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC**  
**Membership Renewal/Application**

**Membership Subscriptions:**

Single membership	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Wish to renew/apply for PICS membership	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
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Send cheque/money order made out to *Phillip Island Conservation Society Inc*, and mail to:  
The Treasurer, PO Box 548, COWES, 3922

**Please indicate how you are able to assist with the work of PICS:**

Committee member	Preparing submissions	Letter writing
Treasurer	Photocopying	Publicity
Minutes Secretary	Attending Shire meetings	Filing
Red Rocks Coast Action Co-ordinator	Children's Environment Morning	
Other _____		

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