

PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC



“The Penguin” Newsletter

Third Quarter: September 2012

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Dates for Your Diary 2012

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

Fri 5 Oct: “Meet the Candidates” forum Council Elections. St Philip’s Parish hall, Cowes; 7.30 p.m.

Sat 6 Oct: General Meeting. Heritage Centre Meeting Room. 7.30 p.m. Speaker Graeme Burgan, education ranger, PINP, on Shearwater Rescue and the forthcoming Shearwater “Biyandin” (Bunurong for shearwater) festival. Preceded by a beautiful Power Point presentation by our youngest member Alia Schonberg.

Sun 7th Oct: Red Rocks public meeting re: Appley Ave track access and weed control. And celebration of our beautiful new interpretative signage. Starts 11 a.m. RR car park (don’t forget – clocks forward 1 hour!)

Sat 10th Nov: Environment Groups Get together. Hosted by South Gippsland Conservation Society Inc at the Bunurong Environment Centre, Inverloch. Details available from Christine in a few weeks’ time.

Sat 12th Jan 2013: AGM, Parish Hall, Cowes.

Enquiries for all events: Christine Grayden, ph 5956 8501 m 0400 900 612 e: cgrayden@waterfront.net.au

Barb Martin Bush Bank: Sales and volunteers – every Wednesday + 1st 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

Groundswell Bass Coast Climate Change action group: Neil Rankine 5672 1185 neilnola@netspace.net.au

Bird Life Bass Coast: janetfleming1@bigpond.com

GENERAL MEETING: SAT OCT 6, 2012

HERITAGE CENTRE MEETING ROOM COWES

Updates, Power Point from Alia Schonberg and Speaker Graeme

Burgan on shearwater rescue and upcoming Biyandin festival

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

All are welcome!

Meet the Candidates Forum

Friday 5th October, 7.30 p.m. start, St Philip’s Parish Hall, cnr Thompson Ave and Church St Cowes. There is lots of interest in these council elections, so come along and hear your candidates and ask your question!

PICS COMMITTEE 2012

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

Vice President: Pauline Taylor ph 5952 5485

Secretary: Christine Grayden, ph 5956 8501 e: 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.

C/ee meets at 10.30 a.m. on 4th Sat of each month at Community Room, Parish Hall Cowes.

Letter to Members

Dear Members,

Over the last couple of months a general remark heard on Phillip Island has been: “Everyone’s away!” Well, not quite “everyone”; some of us are here. Amongst the absentees are PICS President Anne Davie who is in Europe, and Vice President Pauline Taylor who is in Queensland – so the editors have invited me to pick up my pen.

Whether or not “everyone is away”, the year rolls on, and the Shire Council election approaches. This election is different from previous ones, as, for the first time we have an organised team of candidates led by Alan Brown of Wonthaggi, who are endeavoring to defeat the sitting councillors who are seeking re-election. Our “Meet the Candidates” is set for Friday October 5 at 7.30 p.m. at the Parish Hall Cowes. Nominations for the election close on September 25 and the Ballot Papers will be posted out by the Victorian Electoral Commission on October 9.

“Meet the Candidates” will follow the usual format. All candidates will be given a short time to introduce themselves, and then it will be Question Time. The first question will be asked by the PICS President, then it’s over to the audience, and each candidate will be given an opportunity to answer every question. So, mark Friday October 5 on your calendar – and consider what question you may like to ask...

In between the showers and storms we are enjoying a luxuriant spring – the wattles are magnificent!

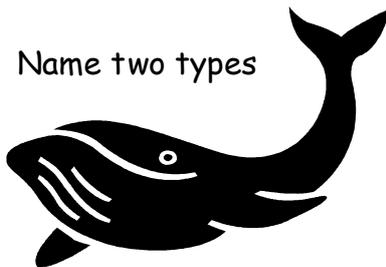
With best wishes,

Margaret Hancock.

STUDENTS' CORNER

1. What is the name of the deadly octopus that lives in parts of Western Port?
2. What is the name of the medium-sized black and white bird with red legs, bill and eyes, that lives and nests on some Phillip Island beaches? (Hint: not Hooded Plover)

3. Name two types of whales that visit the sea around Phillip Island...



CURRENT PLANNING MATTERS

WOOLAMAI HOUSE:

In August Penny Manning and I spent two and a half days at VCAT on behalf of PICS. The proposed housing subdivision fits within the Phillip Island & San Remo Design Framework, so PICS was not opposing the proposal but seeking safeguards for the adjacent foreshore, and for modification of street lighting to protect night flying birds.

It was a fascinating hearing, and the most important voice was that of the CFA. The land is adjacent to the Newhaven Swamp and is subject to rigorous restrictions which weren't in place when the current subdivision was planned. The end result is that a Permit will be granted but that the housing blocks near the Newhaven Swamp boundary have been taken out of the proposal.

LECHTE LAND/GOLF COURSE BACK 9

When Amendment C88, which sets the Settlement Boundaries for COWES, RHYLL AND VENTNOR, was passed, it allowed for exploration of the possibility of some housing development on the high ground of the land at the North East corner of the Coghlan/Rhyll Rd intersection. This land is commonly called the “LECHTE LAND”, and is adjacent to the Back Nine of the Cowes Golf Club.

PICS has grave concerns about ANY built development in this area, and possible ill effects on the Rhyll Inlet. At present we are awaiting information about what exactly is being proposed.

Margaret Hancock.

A Silver Anniversary

Next year, 2013, it will be twenty five years since the great planning battle of SALT WATER CREEK. There was a proposal for a canal/marina development, with associated ‘up market’ tourist facilities, for a canal being bulldozed across the beach, and rock walls (“training walls”) being built out into Western Port. There was also to be a pedestrian tunnel going UNDER the canal, or a pedestrian bridge (high enough for the masts of ocean-going yachts to go underneath!) OVER the canal!

YES! That was the proposal, and a mighty battle ensued. To mark the 25th Anniversary, PICS is planning a celebration over the Labour Day weekend in March. On Saturday March 9 we will have a “Bring and Share” dinner at 6.00 p.m. in the Parish Hall, *and* a display of memorabilia – please start sorting through your old photographs, T-shirts and banners – and on Sunday March 10 we are planning a picnic on the beach, and a walk through the Salt Water Creek Reserve.

If you would like to help in planning the celebration, please contact me, ph 5952 2557, or come to the PICS Committee Meeting on the fourth Saturday of the month at 10.30 a.m. in the Meeting Room at the Parish Hall.

Margaret Hancock.

WATTLE & BIRD POWER

How do you get people to care enough about Nature to want to save it? Threatened species, habitat in general and, indeed, the natural systems of the whole planet seem under threat from the activities of the human species. Both young and old have become so pre-occupied with the extraordinary inventions of information technology that engagement with the natural world has become increasingly distant. How do we promote a re-engagement?

Iconic species or genera of plants or animals can help to capture the attention of the public. To a degree, the koala and the penguin have done this for Phillip Island. With this in mind, the recent publication of the book: *A Celebration of Wattle: Australia's National Floral Emblem* by Maria Hitchcock is a most welcome contribution. The book was inspired by the author's struggle to have the Golden Wattle, *Acacia pycnantha*, officially proclaimed as Australia's National Floral Emblem. This did not actually happen until 1988, though ‘wattle’ in general was often assumed to be the floral emblem before that. A campaign followed to revive Wattle Day (1st September) as a day of national celebration, a time to reflect on our wonderful and unique floral heritage. The book largely supports that campaign, detailing the history of the Wattle Day movement, activities to celebrate Wattle Day, as well as much botanical information and details for propagating. It finishes with a comprehensive selection of poems, stories, songs and even a play, all dedicated to wattle. If we could convince the public to celebrate this iconic plant, we are one step closer to acknowledging the importance of the rest of the natural world.



In a similar way, the plans of the Western Port Biosphere to hold an annual *Biosphere Bird Search* in our area are welcomed. It will take place during the week 20-28 October in this inaugural year, and hopes to involve many schools around Western Port. The event is inspired by thirteen year old Harewood Lyall, who spent a day bird-watching with his tutor in October 1912 around the Harewood property on the northern shore of Western Port, and recorded 42 species. How many of these species could we find today? How have the species present changed in that century? Supported by Birdlife Australia and Biosis Research, the Biosphere Bird Search is a great opportunity for schools and community groups to work together to further our understanding of these intriguing and beautiful creatures and their habitats. More details can be found on the Biosphere website: www.biosphere.org.au Another step, perhaps, towards caring about, and hopefully for, Nature.

John Eddy.

RED ROCKS COASTCARE

At last! The sign! Suddenly there it is, on the wall of the shelter at the Red Rocks Picnic area, our long-awaited information sign. It will greatly help visitors appreciate the many wonderful natural features of the Red Rocks area. It is an attractive summary of aspects of geology, local history, flora, fauna and the work of Coastcare. Largely funded by the *Come for a Walk* book, and supported by Bass Coast Shire Council, the sign is well worth a visit.

We held two successful planting days in July, with close to 350 plants going in to strengthen dune coverage. This included 40 Coast Beard Heath which we propagated ourselves from seed. Thanks to Maria, Mark, Sophie, Chloe, Grace, Caitlin, Marilyn, Patsy, Maurice, Daryl, Adrian, Sue, Bruno and Elizabeth. Our next working bee, on Sunday 30th September at 10 a.m. will concentrate on weed control.

We are organising a Public Meeting and Site Inspection at Red Rocks for Sunday 7th October 11 a.m. to 12 noon (clocks forward please!) to give the community more details of our two major projects for this year. They are (1) constructing the stairway to the beach at Appley Avenue track (funded by a Communities for Nature Grant, DSE) and (2) the noxious weed control program (funded by a Coastcare Victoria grant, DSE). Work on both these projects is about to start, with contractors at the ready. After the meeting we will have a celebration for the signage. Hope to see you on the 7th.

Red Rocks Coastcare operates under the auspices of PICS and in conjunction with the Bass Coast Shire Council and Department of Sustainability and Environment. All enquiries to John Eddy, Red Rocks Coastcare Co-ordinator, ph 5956 8501.

John Eddy.

VALE ETHEL TEMBY & PEGGY SPRY

Long-time PICS member and staunch conservationist, Ethel Temby, has died recently at the age of 97. Ever a warrior for the environment, Ethel was still secretary of the Silverleaves Conservation Association up until her death, a position she had held for over 30 years. In 2009 she published *Growing History*, “a compilation of stories and comments from Silverleaves families” since the 1950s when Silverleaves was first subdivided. She was very much a ‘hands-on’ conservationist, placing limbs on the primary dune to help stop erosion, planting and tending trees in the Silverleaves reserve, and participating with her grandchildren in observation work for the PICS North Shore report. However, in the broader community she is most remembered as a champion of the disabled, particularly through her initiation and work with the support organisation STAR.

Peggy Spry, another very long-term active PICS member and conservationist, died recently in Tasmania, to where she had retired. Her partner asked that donations be made to PICS in lieu of flowers, and over \$150 was donated which we will use at Red Rocks. We extend our sincere sympathy to Ethel’s and Peggy’s families and many friends and associates.

MEETING WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSIONER

On Friday September 7 at the invitation of the Bass Coast Shire Council, PICS members Margaret Hancock and Christine Grayden joined staff from the Shire and representatives of Bass Coast Landcare and South Gippsland Conservation Society at a round-table meeting with the Victorian Environmental Sustainability Commissioner, Professor Kate Auty. <http://www.ces.vic.gov.au/about-ces/about-the-commissioner>

The meeting started with BCSC's Hannah Duncan Jones speaking on behalf of the planning and environment teams and outlining the major achievements of the shire in the last five or so years. These achievements included the structure plans which set town boundaries, considerable savings made by staff in energy and water consumption, maintenance of bush-lands and coasts and tackling private encroachment onto public land.

John Cummings, Chairman of Bass Coast Landcare Network, spoke of the achievements and many challenges facing the network, and of the great work done by dedicated staff and volunteers. The network is gradually getting dairy farmers on board, especially with regard to the extremely serious problem of landslips, some of which Kate was to view after the meeting.

Dave Sutton spoke of the work done by South Gippsland Conservation Society, including their education program which caters to 2,000 students from throughout Victoria each year. Dave expressed his grave concern that "in the one basket we have all the good environment work being done on difficult environmental problems, and in the other basket we have 'business as usual', with destruction and exploitation continuing more than ever".

Margaret spoke for PICS, saying that she remains positive as much has been achieved. She raised the issue of the development of Western Port as a major container terminal with all its attendant environmental problems and consequences which no one else had mentioned. Christine emphasized the importance of grants and volunteers to the environment, which cannot be improved without the help of both, but we are seeing a diminution of both.

Kate told us something of her background. She has lived in most states of Australia, with a varied employment background including Jillaroo, magistrate, lawyer, barrister, academic, consultant and has also been involved in environmental education curriculum development. Hers is a reporting role only to government, not, for example like the EPA, which has powers to pursue and fine those responsible for breaches of their act. She is currently working on making her reporting more accessible and readable, and distributed the Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO's "State of the Climate 2012" as an example of a highly accessible and important report. Go to <http://www.csiro.au/Outcomes/Climate/Understanding/State-of-the-Climite-2012.aspx>

Kate spent the rest of the day mostly with the Phillip Island Nature Park staff and board members. Margaret and I were most impressed with Kate and hope to have her as a speaker in the future. We presented her with a copy of *An Island Worth Conserving: A history of the Phillip Island Conservation Society, 1968-2008*. Congratulations to those involved in organising Kate's two-day visit to BCS.

Christine Grayden.



After the meeting with the Commissioner, from left Christine Grayden, PICS Secretary, Kate Auty, Margaret Hancock, PICS committee. Photo: Steve Feury, Bass Coast Shire Council.

Answers to Students' Corner questions:

1. The Blue-ringed octopus. Lots of information about octopi at <http://everythingoctopus.blogspot.com.au/2008/12/species-blue-ringed-octopus.html>
2. Pied Oystercatchers, *Haematopus longirostris*. Find out more at <http://australianmuseum.net.au/Pied-Oystercatcher>
3. The most common whales that visit our waters are Humpbacks and Southern Right Whales. Find out lots more about Australian whales at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/species/cetaceans/index.html>



Minutes of General Meeting held July 7, 2012 at 7.30 pm. Heritage Centre, Cowes

President Anne Davie opened the meeting at 7.35 pm and welcomed attendees.

1. **PRESENT** as per attendance book.
 2. **APOLOGIES** as per attendance book.
 3. **GUEST SPEAKERS** Award winners Anne and Bob Davie spoke about carbon neutral farming, giving a PowerPoint demonstration of trail-blazing activities at their Ventnor property Bimbadeen, beginning with dairying in 1956 and covering their change to beef, the salinity problem, extensive tree planting, the wildlife corridor, environment management system and carbon sequestration
<http://www.bimbadeenbrangus.com.au/index.php>
 4. **VOTE OF THANKS** was passed by acclamation.
 5. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS GENERAL MEETING** of 14.4.12 as circulated.
- MOTION:* That the Minutes be accepted.
MOVED: Margaret Hancock. *SECONDED:* John Eddy. *CARRIED.*

6. **BUSINESS ARISING**

Successful **Forum** on *Growth vs. Environmental Sustainability* held 22nd June in the Parish Hall Cowes attracted some 100 attendees, including many not seen at regular PICS gatherings, to hear 8 speakers and question time, with comprehensive coverage in a subsequent Advertiser.

Saltwater Creek –BCSC is believed to have funds to form a track and build a bridge about half way down the main channel. PICS awaits written confirmation.

A 25th anniversary celebration is planned for 2013 – a March bridge opening was suggested.

It was also suggested that a Management Committee be established, separate to that of the Ventnor Common. Its first task would be to establish a March date.

Concern was expressed regarding disturbance of the water birds in the north arm of the creek. It was suggested that careful placement of the location of the walking track combined with increased planting would help to alleviate concerns; the birds may become accustomed to increased activity in time. A bird hide or screen was suggested. PICS to consult with Birdlife Bass Coast <http://www.birdlife.org.au/locations/birdlife-bass-coast>

Red Rocks grants \$13,000 for Appley Ave track and beach access; \$5660 for weed control.

Red Rocks planting day Sunday 8th July 2012. Meet John Eddy at car park 10 am.

Meet the Candidates Friday 5th October at 7:30 pm. A monthly letter to the Advertiser was suggested.

7. **CORRESPONDENCE** as tabled :

In: Clean Ocean Foundation <http://www.cleanocean.org/> Membership renewal \$15 pa.

MOTION: to renew membership.

MOVED: M. Hancock, SECONDED: E. Shaw, CARRIED.

Smiths Beachcomber Association newsletter

http://home.vicnet.net.au/~sbassocn/SBA_Winter_Newsletter.pdf

Habitat magazine <http://www.acfonline.org.au/habitat-magazine>

Out: Dog exercise areas, letter to BCSC

To Forum speakers with Steve Piasente being personally thanked by the President.

MOTION: that the correspondence be received.

MOVED: J. Eddy. SECONDED: A. Oates. CARRIED.

8. **TREASURER'S REPORT:** tabled and emailed. Presented by the President in the absence of the Treasurer.

MOTION: that the Treasurer's Report be accepted.

MOVED: M. Hancock. SECONDED: E. Shaw. CARRIED.

9. GENERAL BUSINESS:

Response to PINP Environment Plan http://community.penguins.org.au/sites/default/files/EMP_3.pdf

Meet the Candidates forum Friday October 5th 7:30 pm Parish Hall Cowes.

Diesel spill from a drain on to rocks beside Cowes jetty. It was suggested that PICS might follow up with SES and/or EPA.

Birdlife Bass Coast <http://www.birdlife.org.au/locations/birdlife-bass-coast> Bessie Tyers is to retire at the next AGM, 10 am Saturday 14th July. Geoff Glare is to show photos, followed by BYO lunch.

MOTION: that a letter of thanks be sent to Bessie.

MOVED: M. Hancock. SECONDED: J. Eddy. CARRIED.

Friends of the Koalas <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~koalas/news.html> enjoyed a productive working bee this morning.

The Barb Martin Bushbank is "bubbling along" although Jenny Toy is away for 6 weeks.

Red Rocks Coast Action - 340 plants are ready for tomorrow's working bee at 10 am.

10. PLANNING ISSUES

Grollo Estate – M. Hancock has concerns regarding fencing, paths and lighting and proposes to attend VCAT hearing.

Cadogan land - The Age has received an FOI request.

NEXT GENERAL MEETING 7:30 pm Saturday October 6th 2012. Heritage Centre Meeting Room Cowes.

Proposed speaker – Alison Creighton, new environment manager for BCSC.

MEETING CLOSED at 9:10 pm.

Some climate change quotes sent from Ray Astbury of Groundswell, Bass Coast Shire climate action group:

All across the world, in every kind of environment and region known to man, increasingly dangerous weather patterns and devastating storms are abruptly putting an end to the long-running debate over whether or not climate change is real. Not only is it real, it's here, and its effects are giving rise to a frighteningly new global phenomenon: the man-made natural disaster. **Barack Obama**, speech, Apr. 3, 2006

'Future generations may well have occasion to ask themselves, "What were our parents thinking? Why didn't they wake up when they had a chance?" We have to hear that question from them, now.' **Al Gore**

We're in a giant car heading toward a brick wall and everyone's arguing over where they're going to sit.

David Suzuki

Phillip Island Conservation Society, Inc.

The Penguin Newsletter

Fourth Quarter: Dec 2011

If undeliverable, return to:

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COWES, 3922

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PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC
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- Wish to renew/apply for PICS membership \$ _____
- Make a donation to general fund \$ _____
- Enclose an overdue subscription \$ _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Send cheque/money order made out to *Phillip Island Conservation Society Inc*, and mail to:
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Please indicate how you are able to assist with the work of PICS:

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

PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC PUBLIC FUND

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- \$200
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Please make cheque/money order payable to *Phillip Island Conservation Society Public Fund* and mail to: The Treasurer, PO Box 548, COWES, Vic. 3922.

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