



The Penguin

Newsletter of Phillip Island Conservation Society Third
Quarter,
September 2010



Newsletter

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Dates for Your Diary 2010

Sat Oct 2 – **PICS General Meeting**. Speaker: Helen Rawson,
photographer: Phillip Island photography. Heritage Centre Meeting
Room, 8 p.m.

Sun Oct 10 – **n.b. change of date. Red Rocks Coast Action
Working Bee:** 10 a.m. Meet at car park. Weed control

Saturday 23rd October, 2010, from 11am to 3 pm. Bass Coast Shire
environment groups get together, hosted by South Gippsland
Conservation Society at Inverloch Angler's Club. *RSVP:* by 14th

October, 2010* by email: sgcs@desi.net.au or leave a clear
message on 5674 3738 Funding assistance by Bass Coast Shire
environment department.

Fri Nov 12 – **Meet the Candidates Forum** for Victorian State
Election. 7.30 p.m. at Heritage Centre, Cowes.

Sat Nov 20 – **Seasonal Walk** 2 p.m. Forrest Caves to new Surf
Beach viewing platform along the Esplanade. Meet at Forrest Caves
car park. (easy walking)

Sat Jan 15th 2011 – **PICS AGM. Please note later date than usual.**
Start with a bring and share meal, 6.30 p.m., then our speaker is Roz
Jessop, Environment Manager, Phillip Island Nature Park, on
Western Port waterbirds. Meeting and AGM to follow.

Barb Martin Bush Bank: Sales and volunteers - every Wednesday plus 1st Saturday of each month 10 - 1. Phone Anne Davie 5956 8216.

Friends of Koalas (FOK) Habitat Days: First Saturday 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 Jane Jobe, convenor, ph 0409 530 898.

Friends of Churchill Island (FOCIS): email: focis2009@hotmail.com.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

The BIG NEWS, of course, is the Bass Coast Shire Councillors' unanimous decision NOT to support a Vehicular Ferry Terminal at the Jetty Triangle site. Following the officers' recommendation and twenty one page report in favour of the site, it was most encouraging to hear each Councillor speak for the people and against the Terminal proposal. I am asking Christine to publish the motion which was unanimously passed. The full copy of the Council meeting minutes will be available at our next General Meeting on Saturday October 2.

The Vehicular Ferry, of course, has not gone away! The Minister for Planning can 'call the matter in', the proposed 'Exclusion Zone' between Erewhon Point and Mussel Rocks may or may not have 'legal legs'. The great push which has been going on for several years to establish the vehicular ferry operation between Stony Point and Cowes won't be just abandoned by whoever is doing the pushing.

It's reasonable to suppose that there will be a lull between now and the Victorian State election, but the vehicular ferry will be back on our agenda sooner or later.

Meantime we've learnt a lot about ferry terminals, their size, their construction and the legally required security fences, their ongoing maintenance costs; but we've learnt nothing about the individuals or agencies who are so determined to promote a seemingly financially unviable transport proposal.

The Vehicular Car Ferry is sure to be amongst the questions at the “Meet the Candidates” Forum for the Victorian State Election on Friday, November 12, at 7.30 p.m. in the Heritage Centre at Cowes.

Another issue which ‘keeps on keeping on’ is future development of the Port of Hastings – older members will remember Henry Bolte’s plans for a “little Ruhr” in the Western Port region. You may have read in ‘The Age’ on September 4 of the proposed plan by ASCIANO for creating short-term container capacity in Melbourne. PICS has just received from ASCIANO an alternative planning proposal for Victoria’s future container ports. When we are planning next year’s meetings, I hope that we will be able to include a speaker from ASCIANO, so that we will understand what may be in store for Western Port and its Ramsar listing.

I hope that you will be able to come to the General Meeting on the first Saturday in October when talented Phillip Island photographer Helen Rawson will be the Guest Speaker.

With best wishes,

Margaret Hancock, President.

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting 28 July 2010 Bass Coast Shire Council

Council Decision

Motion

Moved: Cr Peter Paul/Seconded: Cr Jane Dore Daly

1. That in relation to the Stony Point-Cowes Vehicular/Passenger Ferry Project, Council resolves not to proceed to the Statutory Planning Stage and

2. That in relation to any future proposals for the establishment of any ferry terminal in the Cowes area, Council resolved to investigate the appropriateness of establishing an exclusion zone between Erehwon Point and Mussel Rocks, for the purpose of excluding vehicular/passenger ferry terminal infrastructure in that zone.

CARRIED.

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SOLAR POWER

Energy Innovation Co-op is investigating a bulk order for solar panels & installation.

Our objectives: To ensure access to quality panels, accredited installers & potentially additional subsidies.

For more information, contact:

Susan Davies, 5657 3108 or email: susand@eico-op.com.au or

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RED ROCKS COAST ACTION

Please note the change of date by a week. We will now have our working bee on Sunday 10th October. Thanks to John, Ross, Gary, Daryl, Sue, Neil, William, Maria, Chloe, Sophie, Mark, Daniel, Talen and Olivia for planting trees and spreading brush matting at our last working bee.

If you have any snippets, nature notes, etc, to contribute to the PICS newsletter, please contact Christine (contact details p.1)

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PICS WINTER SEASONAL WALK: Red Rocks beach & fire access track

Despite being on Election Day and a chilly wind blowing, seven PICS members of various political hues found time to gather at Red Rocks for our Winter walk. Bursts of sunshine helped us on our way.

After studying the aerial photo of the coastline, and checking out the location and wording of proposed information signage for the area, we walked up to the western-most stairway and down to the beach. Red Rocks Coast Action, which operates under the auspices of PICS, obtained funding for this and other stairways in the area in several stages over the past 14 years. Plantings last year, replacing plants lost in the extreme dryness of Jan/Feb 2009, have established well.

Down on the beach we noted the reef of red tuff (solidified volcanic ash) extending from the cliff out across the shoreline at Penguin Rocks. It is this rock, high in iron content (don't tell the Chinese!) that gives the locality its name.

Heading North East, we climbed the next stairway, where Coast Action has been active this winter with planting and laying of brush matting to discourage people taking short cuts and hence causing blowouts in the dunes covering the bluffs. This is right in the middle of the significant moonah woodland.

We continued east from the carpark along the fire track noting

examples of well-established trees and shrubs (e.g. Boobialla, Moonah, coast Wattle) from Coast Action plantings over the past eight or so years. Woody weeds, such as Pittosporum, are now well controlled, thanks to years of work by Coast Action volunteers in conjunction with Bass Coast Shire. Numerous small birds were seen and heard along the track. The water reserve offered a scene of tranquility, full after good rains.

Now our course took us into the wilds of a wide section of coastal dunes across an old tip site from the 1920s. While aware of the hazards of broken glass and asbestos, our members were intrigued by bits of china, old bottles and other artifacts from a bygone era. Perhaps it should be designated a site of cultural significance? Most intriguing of all were several bottles melted flat by the intense heat of a fire, either on site or perhaps from some veteran Island fire place.

In wet years, drainage from the hinterland through a deep swale in the sand dunes becomes a continuous flowing stream to the beach, which most of our party crossed with difficulty. Our destination was a grove of large and ancient Coast Banksias (*Banksia integrifolia*), including two huge specimens of great character, possibly the most massive of their type on the whole of Phillip Island. Almost undoubtedly they are remnants of pre-settlement times. We spent some time photographing and admiring them before retracing our steps back to the main track and eventually down on to the beach. The 'red rocks' made their appearance again as intertidal rock platforms.

In the final stage of our walk back along the beach, we noted the lack of a foredune protecting Moonahs immediately east of the car park stairway where there is no fencing. Loss of sand here is due to the trampling of feet as beach visitors try to seek shade under the Moonahs. We resolved to ask the Shire to consider fencing here before the pressure of summer use. Birds seen or heard on the walk included fire tailed finches, a spotted pardalote, New Holland honeyeaters, little and red wattle birds, magpies, silvereyes, turtledoves and silver gulls.

We returned to the car park much invigorated by our one and a half hour trek.

John Eddy, 29.8.10

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Our 26th annual walk at Swan Lake

John Eddy and I met in 1984, and the first place we went together was Swan Lake on the first Sunday of Spring. John had never been there before and the area was a place dear to my heart, being a major replanting program for PICS for many years from 1969 onwards. We

have been going out there on or around that first Sunday in spring every year ever since, and in that time we have seen many changes to the lake and its environs.

When we first started going out it was not uncommon to see fox-killed carcasses of last season's mutton birds and rabbits scattered around. The vegetation, being about 15 years old, and all native to Australia, though not all indigenous to Phillip Island by any means, had either adapted well or was struggling to show up above the bowers of kikuyu grass that had spread there from the nearby golf course, circa 1920s. The wallabies were not nearly as numerous there then, so there was much more understorey. There were also still large patches of gorse which my uncle Keith Grayden later exterminated.

After a difficult first few months with our son (born July 87) it was nice to take him out there in September and be able to relax in the long warm grass on the hill on the western side of the lake. Four years later we had our daughter (born June 91) with us. The children looked forward to their annual trip to Swan Lake, often in gum boots and puddle suits with dip nets to catch and observe the tiny wriggling water creatures in petri dishes before gently releasing them back into the waters of the lake.

Of course, children grow and their interests change. Sometimes our daughter comes out with us still. Often in the last several years we have been met by struggling vegetation and the lake, which should at that stage of the year have been full, well down, with only the eastern arm holding much water. With the fox eradication program by first the Penguin Reserve Committee of Management, and then the Phillip Island Nature Park, having been on the go since 1985, there are few fox kills to be seen these days. And many more wallabies – in fact, unless you are unlucky enough to encounter noisy family groups on the walk, you will almost invariably see wallabies there.

Despite some of the vegetation senescing now, there is still a pleasingly large bird list – bush birds, water birds and raptors, as well as mutton birds in their season of course. The viewing hides built in 1996 make a big difference to the quality of the visiting experience, and allow us to observe much more without disturbing the birds.

2010 will be a memorable year for John and me. After approx 500 ml of rain this year the lake was well up, with tannin rich water up to the walkway, its surface thick with floating tea tree matter. Swans were everywhere, with dozens of cygnets in tow, and ducks with ducklings also to be seen. Cape Barren Geese grazed the lush grass of the mutton bird rookeries, and many swallows skimmed the water catching insects. The vegetation was bright green, with spinach dripping with small, aromatic yellow flowers, and clematis draping the branches of many trees. Even understorey was present, being able to keep ahead of the wallabies this year. Flycatchers and several different sorts of honeyeaters were present, while the ever-present

swamp harriers soared above. It certainly was a vision of plenty.

We look forward to many more trips out to Swan Lake, and also to the ever-changing landscape and water-scape we meet there each time we go. *Christine Grayden*

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Minutes of General Meeting held July 3, 2010

1. **Welcome.** The President, M. Hancock, welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 8.03 pm. Particularly welcomed was guest speaker Terence Nott, Architect and PICS committee member.

1. **Attendance.** As per attendance book.

1. **Apologies.** As per attendance book.

4. **Minutes of the previous General Meeting** 10 April 2010,

Moved: C. Grayden, seconded: J. Eddy, carried.

5. Business Arising:

1. **Ferry** – Rally tomorrow at the Cowes Recreation Reserve from 12 noon until 12.30. Preliminary meeting was held with the EDO <http://www.edo.org.au/edovic/>
2. **Transfer Station** – see p.45 of Council's minutes regarding a decision not to provide a garbage service.
3. **Newhaven Boys Home** – awaiting VCAT decision. PICS was represented at VCAT by M. Hancock and T. Nott. R. Lloyd represented the National Trust Bass Coast Branch. The Newhaven residents made good submissions.
4. **Tree Removal Coghlan Rd** – M. Hancock spent four days at VCAT.
5. **Supermarkets** – nothing further to report from VCAT.

6. Correspondence:

In:

1. **Ministers Madden and Jennings** regarding the ferry terminal.
2. **Dates of Plant Identification Workshops** at the Bunurong Environment Centre.
3. **Diane Baird** – accommodation voucher for 1 night at an Accor Hotel in Lt Bourke St
<http://www.accorhotels.com/gb/australia/index.shtml>

Out:

1. **Ministers Madden and Jennings** regarding the ferry terminal.

2. **Ports and Environs Advisory Committee** – comment on discussion paper.

Moved: A. Davie, seconded: O. Bolitho, carried.

7. Treasurer's Report: Tabled.

It was *moved*, A. Davie, *seconded*, T. Nott, that \$5000 in the Term Deposit account due 26.7.10, be rolled over, *carried*.

Moved: C. Grayden, seconded:

T. Nott, *carried*.

8. General Business:

1. **New regulations for PINP** include more restrictions on dogs.

It was noted that PINP has no legislative power over the use of surface water e.g. Rhyll Inlet.

2. P. Hunt outlined **DSE's animal protocols changes** in order to bring the States into line.

3. It is hoped that Ros Jessop of the PINP will present on **migratory birds at the October meeting**.

4. M. Hancock highly recommends an international prize winning book by **Dr Catherin Bull**, Elisabeth Murdoch Professor of Landscape Architecture, University of Melbourne, on contemporary open space in Australia entitled *New Conversations with an Old Landscape: Landscape Architecture in Contemporary Australia*.

5. **Notice of Banfields development proposal #100101** was published in the Advertiser.

6. **Red Rocks Coast Action pamphlet** to be handed out tomorrow at the Ventnor Store and the Information Centre.

7. Costings for a **reprint of *An Island Worth Conserving*** are to be brought to the next meeting by C. Grayden and J. Eddy.

8. A. Davie reports that the **Bushbank** is 'bubbling along'.

9. C. Grayden reports that she is not doing the **Children's Environment Mornings** this coming session but will be doing them over Christmas.

10. **Peter Huthwaite**, former Landcare President, has passed away. PICS to send condolences.

9. **Guest Speaker** Terence Nott, PICS committee member and architect with a practice in North Fitzroy.

10. **Vote of Thanks** from M. Hancock.

11. **Dates** - Meet the Candidates for Federal Election. August? 13-14?

Next Quarterly General Meeting Saturday October 2, 8.00 pm, Heritage Centre Cowes.

12. The meeting closed at 10 pm.

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Compiled by Roz Jessop, Environment Manager, PINP.

Editor's note: Now that the Summerlands Estate buy back is complete, it is timely to look at the long process that has led to this excellent outcome. These notes were compiled this year by Roz Jessop. More extracts will feature in future "Penguins".

With thanks to Roz.

Penguin Parade and Summerland Estate

Tours to the Penguin Parade began in the 1920's. In the 1930's the Spencer Jackson family donated 4 ha adjoining Summerland Beach to the Phillip Island Shire Council to assist in the protection of Little Penguins. The Shire reserved additional land shortly after and again in 1955 and formal regulations for the Penguin Parade were gazetted in 1956. From 1961 until 1981 the shire was the manager of the Penguin Parade. In 1981 a new Committee of Management was appointed to the Phillip Island Penguin Reserve. In 1982 crown land on the Summerland Peninsula was added to the Penguin Reserve. The Summerland Housing Estate will become part of the PINP when purchasing of blocks is complete in June 2010 - under the Penguin Protection Plan 1985.

History of the Summerland Peninsula

1920's - Phillip Island residents Bert West, Bern Denham and Bert Watchorn begin to take tourists to see the penguins by torchlight with the first public viewing in 1928. The first access road was built in late 1927 and the area was known to locals as 'Pat's Gully' [\[1\]](#).
Summerland Peninsula divided into 774 allotments for a housing estate.

1930 - **Four hectares of land is given to the people of Victoria by Mr and Mrs Spencer Jackson for the protection of 'Fairy Penguins'.**

1939 - **Suspension bridge to Phillip Island built.**

1950 - **Summerland Estate is seen to be having a serious impact on Little Penguins.**

1955 - **Department of Fisheries and Wildlife establish a large**

reserve over the penguin colony.

1961 - **Shire of Phillip Island in conjunction with National Parks and Wildlife Service assume responsibility as an interim committee, Bert West is manager. Fences and concrete viewing stands are erected.**

1966 - **Penguin Study Group is formed to record basic data and tag penguins.**

1969 - **Phillip Island suspension bridge replaced by new concrete bridge.**

1980 - **Phillip Island Shire calls for meeting to form Scientific Advisory Committee.**

1984 - **Phillip Island Penguin Reserve Committee of Management formed including Shire, tourism, scientific conservation and Department representatives.**

1985 - **Penguin Protection Plan announced including scientific research, preparation of a management plan, road closure and buyback of Summerland Peninsula.**

1988 - **Major redevelopment project including new (current) visitor centre and viewing facilities.**

1989 - **Phillip Island Penguin Reserve Management Plan released.**

1993 - **Penguin Reserve wins National Environmental Tourism award.**

1995 - **Addition of visitor facilities including new interpretive exhibition completed.**

1996 - **Penguin Parade becomes part of newly formed Phillip Island Nature Park.**

2000 - **Phillip Island Nature Park enters tourism Hall of Fame as Best Major Attraction in Vic. Phillip Island Nature Park Management Plan completed.**

2001 - **Summerland Peninsula Development Plan prepared.**

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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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