



# NEWSLETTER 34

April, 2026

Edited by Erika Shankley

*FoTI is part of the Wildcare network, the largest incorporated environmental volunteer organisation in Tasmania  
We work in partnership with Parks & Wildlife Service Tasmania, caring for the natural and cultural values of Tasman Island*



There's a pot of gold on the restored front verandah of lightkeeper's quarters No 3 at Tasman Island!

**FoTI's volunteers have been busy over the past few months—read all about it!**

### IN THIS ISSUE:

Tasman Island Lighthouse—120th anniversary .....	2
FoTI working bees .....	3
Field naturalising on Tasman Island.....	5
Rotary Day .....	6
Artists in our midst .....	7
FoTI Fundraising .....	8
Deal Island restoration .....	9
Maatsuyker Island restoration .....	9
Vale Penny Tyson.....	9
Caretaking at the Low Isles .....	10
Wildcare Shop .....	11
Parting Shots .....	12

Thanks to contributors: Erika Shankley, Amanda Thomson, Lee Cameron, Rick Petersen  
Photos: Erika Shankley, Amanda Thomson, Chris Creese, Rick Petersen, Simon Grove, other FoTI volunteers & Facebook photos,

**Learn more about volunteering on Tasman Island**  
<https://wildcaretas.org.au/branches/friends-of-tasman-island/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfTasmanIsland/>  
email [friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com)  
[www.tasmanisland.org.au](http://www.tasmanisland.org.au)

## TASMAN ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE—120TH ANNIVERSARY

Wildcare Friends of Tasman Island volunteers were on the island for their first working bee when the Tasman Island Lighthouse celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2006. After two years of intense construction work, the lighthouse, three keepers' quarters, a landing and precipitous haulage, were operational.

Hobart Marine Board Master Warden, AE Risby, performed the opening ceremony, no doubt one of the most memorable duties that he would have performed in his civic life. Some extracts from the family scrapbook, quoted in *Against the Odds* by Alex Graeme-Evans, describe **"The Union Company's S.S. Mahinapua, under charter to the Board, left Hobart at 4 a.m. and arrived at the island at 11 a.m., having called at Port Arthur en route. ... The passage down to the island was fine, and therefore a landing was effected with comparatively little difficulty .... Proceeding along the top of the island the first thing that strikes the eye is the excellent accommodation provided for the Superintendent and his assistants. Mrs Johnston (Superintendent's wife), describes it, and perhaps not inaptly in one respect, as the 'Siberia of the South' ...**

*The tower was then inspected, and the assertion that it is the finest structure of its kind on the Tasmanian coast was at once self-evident ... the total height of the tower is 85 ft., making it 905 feet above sea level, and the approximate weight is 147 tons... The light is on the incandescent principle, the illuminant (sic) used being kerosene ... a bright white light of 780,000 standard candle power is shown ... and is visible in a mean state of atmosphere at a distance of 36 miles."*

The opening ceremony was followed by lunch, **"with the dining table being adorned with a large iced cake representing the lighthouse."**

**"Shortly after 3 p.m. the party started on the return for the vessel, each member before departing being presented with a large bunch of wild berries by the Misses Johnson (sic) ... meantime a very strong south-westerly wind, accompanied by a high sea set in, and it was with considerable difficulty that those who ventured ashore succeeded in re-embarking on the steamer. Indeed, had it been left until a half hour later it would have been impossible to get off the island. With all hands on board the Mahinapua again set out for Port Arthur, and after an experience that was anything but pleasant, the tight little vessel was once more in still water. Here a substantial and elegantly served dinner ... was disposed of."**

According to family sources, at dusk on 2nd April 1906, it was Jessie, wife of Superintendent (Head Keeper) George Johnston, who lit the light for the first time.

**"The toast 'To the King' having been disposed of, the Master Warden proposed 'The success of the new lighthouse' ... This having been done, the Mahinapua proceeded towards Adventure Bay, for the purpose of allowing those on board to view the light. The weather was slightly dull, but notwithstanding that, the flash was clearly visible and a general expression of satisfaction was given."**

After seventy years, the lantern room and magnificent 1st Order Chance Brothers lens were removed in 1976 with the lens now on display at the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney. Lightkeepers finally left the island in May 1977.

FoTI volunteers Carol, Erika and Amanda have been working with the Assistant Curator of the Australian National Maritime Museum, Inger Sheil, on the history of the Tasman Island Lighthouse. The anniversary of lighting the lighthouse on 2nd April 1906 is celebrated with a new page on the ANMM website: <https://www.sea.museum/en/society-and-water/the-tasman-island-light>

There is also a posting on FoTI's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfTasmanIsland/> from AMSA and footage from ANMM's visit to Tasman Island on Rotary Day and a series of historic photos from our own collection. All very popular with many followers.



Left: Photo WJ Little, circa 1911. AOT  
Middle: Tasman Island Lighthouse, 276m above sea level  
Right: Chance Bros 1st Order lens on display at ANMM

FOTI WORKING BEES

Weeding

Unfortunately, FoTI's January weeding working bee faced several obstacles with the January dates becoming unviable financially, then our team leader had to withdraw due to health problems before the working bee was finally delayed by wild winds. Then as Chris was heading down to Eaglehawk Neck for the start of the working bee he became involved in a head-on collision with a Canadian tourist, driving on the wrong side of the road near Connelly's Marsh. Both drivers were shaken but, luckily, unhurt. Both cars were written off – Chris's beloved ute of 28 years was no more.

However, thanks to Rick (a former lighthouse kid), some weeding was done during the March working bee.

Rick said that the weather while he was weeding was a mixture of fog, drizzle and the usual wind. Overall, weed numbers were relatively low, compared with his previous visit in 2023. The island also appeared noticeably drier.

The primary priority weed encountered was Californian thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) which remains the main focus of eradication work. Numbers were manageable and widely scattered. However, larger numbers of wild radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum*) were found, mainly in concentrated patches, within the old vegetable garden plus a small additional patch (approx. eight plants) located in the vicinity of a large infestation removed during the 2023 working bee.



Terrain across much of the island remains physically demanding and difficult to negotiate, particularly with increased grass height this season. Until mowing was completed, many foot tracks were heavily overgrown, which slowed movement between weed sites. Despite this, Rick removed a total of 48 Californian thistle plants and about 300 wild radish plants. They were composted, with any viable seed material bagged and removed from the island. Thanks, Rick!

Restoration of Q3BV

Restoration work on the back verandah of Lightkeeper's Quarters No 3 commenced in late 2025. At a series of working bees at Dave's Paradigm Construction workshop, volunteers prepared timber and at FoTI's working bee #46, restored the bulk of Q3's back verandah (see Newsletter #33) - all except the finishing touches and the windows which were flown off island for more extensive repair work. In the meantime, Chris's faux windows filled the bill.



In the weeks before working bee #47, FoTI volunteers again gathered at Paradigm Construction's workshop. Here, the window frames had been repaired, and it was now time to do the glazing—with multiple panes of glass cut expertly by Lou.

FoTI working bee #47—February/March 2026

It was all systems go when the first contingent of nine volunteers flew out to Tasman Island to continue the restoration. Amongst this group was Peter Gouldthorpe, an artist and FoTI volunteer, one of 12 who had donated work for FoTI's 2026 Lighthouses of Tasmania Artists Calendar.



Recording history on the window frames

The repaired and glazed windows were gently lowered to the ground by Tasmanian Helicopters' pilot, Jason, and work began. Dave organised a few volunteers to continue the restoration of Q3BV and lighthouse kids, Tanya, Rick and Perry signed their names, as a historical record, on the inner side of the window frames, before installation. Rick then got stuck into a bit of weeding while Tanya mowed the grass and Perry wielded the brush cutter. Artist Peter, of course, did some painting!



Arist Peter with a brush in hand

set up a temporary laboratory in Q2. It was also great to share the Petersen's emotional journeys with the island where they lived as youngsters when their father was lightkeeper.

Flocks of Yellow-tailed black cockatoos headed to the banksias for their breakfast and Amanda and Simon (Curator of Invertebrates at TMAG), checked out the wildlife. Simon was collecting specimens for TMAG and had



Former lighthouse kids Perry, Tanya & Rick Petersen, return to Tasman as volunteers with FoTI

Part way through the 10-day working bee, four of the first volunteer team headed home while another group of three—artists David Edgar, Clifford How and Sue Lovegrove, who had also donated work to the calendar—arrived to continue the work. More painting of course, with some seen at their easel at the crack of dawn, capturing the spectacular scenery of Tasman Island.



FoTI working bees continued ...



Simon & Amanda check out the Insect life



Relic from the past

Like the rest of Tasmania, Tasman Island was exceptionally dry but during their visit, volunteers experienced varied weather conditions – sunshine, rain, fog and the wind for which Tasman Island is well known. However, they managed to find time for some short forays around the island – to the eastern cliffs, down the haulage to the landing, and to an area known as the *Last World* where a dense rainforest has wedged itself in between the collapsed dolerite columns. Even there, there were relics of the lighthouse days hidden in the scrub.

In the kitchen, Carol was producing delicious meals, ably assisted by Tanya, when she had finished mowing, painting etc.

The last day of the working bee arrived with FoTI volunteers assisting the Rotary Club of the Tasman Peninsula with their fundraising visit to the island. Over 100 visitors marvelled at the spectacular scenery, and, thanks to AMSA, the lighthouse was open for inspection. The Assistant Curator at the Australian National

Maritime Museum, Inger Shiel, recorded the event, now shared to FoTI's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/reel/4160180804198980> and the 120th anniversary of the lighthouse is celebrated on their webpage <https://www.sea.museum/en/society-and-water/the-tasman-island-light>.

There was a quick greeting for our FoTI friends, Jo and former keeper and lighthouse guide, Karl Rowbottom, before volunteers spread to different parts of the island to keep visitors informed and safe. Despite the intermittent showers which kept the temperature low, a good day was had by all.

By late afternoon the island fell strangely silent, the rattle of helicopters faded into the distance as Rotary's visitors left the island for another year and FoTI volunteers went home.

Thank you to the dedicated team of volunteers and all those who supported them – Sam our Parks Ranger, Jason, Tasmanian Helicopters' pilot, and the Rotary Club of the Tasman Peninsula with whom we shared our last day before they flew us off the island, free of charge.



The volunteers didn't go hungry!



Special thanks to Carol, our dedicated leader and fantastic cook who spent hours in the kitchen producing some delicious meals using home-grown produce.

The Rotary Club reports that, as a result of their fundraising trip to Tasman Island, they have been able to provide assistance in a number of areas:

- Our school with scholarships, awards, driver education, leadership programs and development of school infrastructure.
  - Local projects including support for our nursing home, assistance to residents who need a hand and physical projects important to the community.
- International projects including a garden and food nutrition project in East Timor, orphanages in Cambodia, eye camps in Nepal, the Rotary "End Polio Now" project and disaster relief in the form of Shelter Boxes. A huge thank you to all involved.



Left: 2nd contingent of volunteers  
Below: 1st contingent of volunteers



Right: Rick's photo Morning Light on Tasman featured as the ABC's weather photo & had 264 likes on FoTI's Facebook page  
Thank you, Dave, our heritage builder



## Field Naturalists Report - Tasman Island 2026 Feb-March

Amanda Thomson

On this trip we were privileged to have Dr Simon Grove, Senior Curator of Invertebrates at TMAG able to **take time off from his busy work schedule for the first five days. Simon used the 'Museum' in Q2 to set up a temporary lab**, having brought over a comprehensive set of equipment including a microscope, sorting trays, various nets, and sieve amongst other collecting paraphernalia. These were set up for use and observation by anyone curious.

**As it was Simon's first trip to Tasman Island, he required a guide for security and orientation. So luckily, I was accompanying him.** We made the most of the five days. Expert at using his sweep net, Simon collects flying insects by sweeping vegetation or even the air and then snapping the net over to prevent their escape, he then puts his head into the net and catches insects he wants to keep, popping them into collecting vials.



Other ways of collecting include using a beating net, **which we didn't use much. But a very efficient way to find invertebrates was a sieve, (which I hadn't seen used before).** Handfuls of litter are gathered and put into the top of the sieve, this is shaken and the smaller stuff drops through and collects in the pouch underneath. This is then emptied into clear plastic bags, taken back and spread out thinly in sorting trays. In these we found lots of variety - tiny snails, weevils, beetles, spiders, wasps, centipedes and millipedes and more. These were carefully removed and put into containers and into the freezer. Spiders were put into ethanol. The frozen specimens are later pinned with labels noting their location and **collection date, to be identified back at TMAG. It's a skilled process! We had one inclement** weather day which was good to catch up on the sorting and pinning of specimens and we had a number of volunteers visit - interested in what we were doing.



**We did set out yellow plate 'traps' but they were not very successful, mostly due to wind and rain. There was a particular 'Long-horned fairy moth' that Dr Cathy Byrne (Senior Curator of Zoology) wanted us to find and bring back alive (to be better pinned).** We managed to find these as well as some interesting wasps not recorded before on the island, in the same bush. If you have read his book **'Seasons in the South' you will know Simon's knowledge is extensive!**

It is too early to know how the collecting went overall as these samples will be identified back at **TMAG. I'm sure there will be many new and interesting additions to the database. It was a pleasure to**

have Simon on the island, generously sharing his time and knowledge, much was learned by me, and all of us when Simon gave us a night-time talk on invertebrates.

While waiting for his chopper to leave Simon managed to find one of our weeds – a Pinwheel succulent right outside Q3 beside the marking stake! Overlooked by us all for some time.

Sad to see Simon, Dave Davenport and Peter Gouldthorpe leave, but we welcomed Sue Lovegrove, David Edgar and Cliff How, all artists - Cliff making his first visit to Tasman Island. A very different five **days spent 'guiding' Sue, Dave and Cliff around the island. Getting lost in overgrown vegetation and visiting spectacular cliff edges, vistas that these three wished to absorb and sketch, mentally and/or physically.** An opportunity for me to spot birds of prey frequenting the cliff edges and to observe the plant communities in more detail. It was obvious that the island was very dry – the pond still empty and evidence of dying vegetation especially on the south-western edges of the island.



That night was a spectacular full moon turning to a Blood Moon when the Earth passed directly **between the sun and moon casting a red hue on the moon. This red, a "Rayleigh scattering" is the same that we see in sunrises and sunsets when the atmosphere bends red light into the Earth's shadow.** Followed by a splendid Milky Way, I tried to capture.

I collected some insect specimens from the base of the lighthouse where they collect in calmer, warmer weather, which we had for this latter part of the trip, including a new Lace bug *Tingis drakei*, *Tingidae*.



**Bird sightings included the regulars but only one sighting of a Lewin's Rail. Some heard, not seen much – Beautiful Firetail.** Birds of Prey like Swamp Harrier, Brown Goshawk, Peregrine Falcon and White-bellied Sea Eagles. An interesting observation was a tall Penguin species at the Landing which we were unable to identify. It was moulting and only seen once. Plus, the remains of a White-faced Heron found up on the Eastern cliffs by Sue Lovegrove!

Altogether another wonderful trip to an island that just keeps on revealing its inhabitants. A privilege to be there with others who donate their time and effort in restoring, preserving and revealing Tasman Island.

ROTARY DAY, 7 March 2026

A glimmer of sunlight kissed the horizon as we headed down to the Tasman Peninsula. However, by the time we arrived at Safety Cove, dark clouds had accumulated above our destination—**Tasman Island**. **Rotary's food van did brisk business as visitors waited for their flight, with over 100 people enjoying the spectacular scenery and climbing the lighthouse which, thanks to AMSA, was open for inspection.**



Leslie Johnston



Xmas Day, 1930, Tasman Island Elaine Bell collection

Amongst the visitors were some with links to Tasman Island. Leslie Johnston was interested to see where his great great grandfather, George Johnston, had served as Superintendent (Head Keeper) from 1906 before his retirement. Grandfather, Leslie Babington Johnston served three terms on Tasman—1917-2024 during which time his daughter Eileen was born on the island; 1929-1934; and again in 1937-1938.



Rotary food van at Safety Cove



McCullum family outside Q1 Allan McCullum collection

Jack McCullum, a descendent of lightkeeper John Edward McCullum, also spent a couple of hours on the island. His great grandfather had been a seaman before starting work as a lightkeeper at Deal Island in 1903. He was then transferred to Low Head, Cape Sorell, the Iron Pot and Currie on King Island. He was Superintendent (Head Keeper) on Tasman Island in 1927 when an accident while erecting a new crane caused the death of a rigger, and serious injuries for another. He retired from the lighthouse service in 1929.



Spending the day on Tasman was former lightkeeper, Bob Ikin and his daughters Lisa and Emma. He and his family had arrived on Tasman Island in 1972 to begin life as a lighthouse keeper. Lisa was seven years old at the time and she still remembers being nearly blown away one Christmas morning but for a rugby tackle by her father! The memory of the aroma of kerosene was in the back of their minds as they climbed the lighthouse where keepers had worked through the night, the clockwork mechanism turning the prisms with the mantle aglow, sending its warning flash out to sea.



This Burk bundy clock from Tasman Island was never used & has now been donated to FoTI's museum collection thanks to the Ikin family.

In 1975, they were transferred to another windy island—Maatsuyker Island—before stints at Swan Island and Low Head.



Above: left Bob Ikin with Lisa & her sister Samantha  
 Middle left: Visitors arrive for the Ikin family  
 Bottom left: Bob Ikin with Samantha & Lisa  
 Photos Deidre Ikin

Below: Emma, Bob & Lisa Ikin, returned to Tasman Island, Rotary Day, March 2026, 50 years later. Photo Lisa Ikin



Farewell to Tasman Island for another year

ARTISTS IN OUR MIDST

It was thanks to some of Tasmania's well-known artists that FoTI's 2026 Lighthouses of Tasmania Artists Calendar was such a success. Some of them joined FoTI volunteers for the group's 47th working bee on Tasman Island. It was a great opportunity for them to combine the restoration of the back verandah of Lightkeeper's Quarters No 3 and produce some unique works of art. FoTI's heritage builder, Dave Davenport (Paradigm Construction), headed the team who installed the new windows which were repaired in Paradigm Construction's workshop, before finding time to do some sketching down in the 'Lost World'. Clifford How was out in the dawn light to create a number of sketches in oils and Peter Gouldhorpe's gouche paintings depicted the windswept Tasman Sea below the eastern cliffs. FoTI field naturalist, Amanda, who's drawing in the calendar of Eddystone Point lighthouse, concentrated on scouring the island for insect life and Sue Lovegrove and David Edgar added coats of paint to the window frames of Q3BV.



Dave & the windows for Q3BV



Above & left: Dave sketches in the Lost World



Left: Artist, Peter Gouldthorpe paints Q3BV's new window frames.

Above & right: Peter's paintings, gauche on paper, both from FoTI's Feb/March 2026 working bee.



Sue Lovegrove paints Q3BV inside panels



David Edgar



Left: Clifford How paints the window frames at Q3BV

Right & below Cathedral Rock & the cliffs of Tasman Island;

On the easel: Cliffs of Cape Pillar seen from Tasman Island



Amanda Thomson

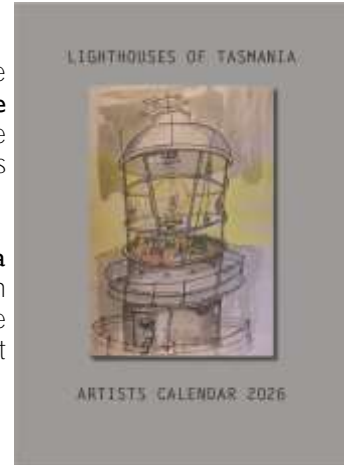


FUNDRAISING

LIGHTHOUSES OF TASMANIA ARTISTS CALENDAR

Raising funds for work on Tasman Island is a perpetual challenge. FoTI works in partnership with the **Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service**, but it's **FoTI's volunteers who hatch the plans to raise money for the restoration work on the heritage listed buildings and the natural environment.** In the early days there seemed to be a number of government & semi-government grants available to apply for, but these days creative thinking is the norm.

**In 2025 FoTI approached a number of Tasmania's artists, with the result that a Lighthouses of Tasmania Artists Calendar 2026 was published** —each month featuring a painting of a different Tasmanian lighthouse. Ninety percent of the calendars, which were distributed to a number of outlets around the state, were sold. If you missed out — you might be lucky to find a few left! Contact [friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com) for details.



SAUSAGE SIZZLES

One of our regular fundraisers, a Sausage Sizzle organised by Ingrid, was held in January at Bunnings, Mornington. As usual, the stall was very popular with the aroma of barbecued sausages and caramelised onions wafting through the air. Thanks to Ingrid and the team of volunteers, over \$1000 was **added to FoTI's coffers.**



Saturday was a busy day at Bunnings where another Sausage Sizzle was underway. Increased petrol prices and interest rates didn't seem to stop the constant flow of Bunnings shoppers. They were very hungry, even queuing to get a taste of the delicious sausages and caramelised onions! There were record sales of about 700 sausages and 100 cans of drink with a profit of \$1683 which is up from our previous record of \$1501.

Thank you to the volunteers for their incredible effort and dedication and, thank you, Ingrid, for your great organisation. Well done everyone! Without each and every one of you this record wouldn't be possible.



ROTARY DAY STALL

Our stall at Safety Cove was open for business on Rotary Day, 7th March, despite the challenging weather. Volunteers were busy protecting the merchandise with a tarp, thanks to Rotary, during rain showers.

Thanks to fantastic work by Ingrid and new members, Alison and Mike, there was a steady stream of visitors past the stall as they headed to and from Tasman Island.

There were lots of conversations with happy customers who had a fabulous time on the island. One visitor said that it was an **“absolutely**

**fantastic day - love my new tea towel & calendar”** and another remarking that the **“Tasman Island magnet had pride of place on my fridge!”**

There were a couple of new items also on sale—a sticker, produced in collaboration with Rotary, and key tags, featuring a laser cut image of Tasman Island's lighthouse.





DEAL ISLAND RESTORATION

FoTI members have been busy this year at other lighthouse locations too: FoTI member and heritage builder, Dave Davenport (Paradigm Construction) and his team had a busman's holiday on Deal Island recently when they did some restoration work on the historic lightstation buildings. Roof and window repairs were needed on the Superintendent's residence built in 1846, damaged by decades of harsh Bass Strait weather. Original timber framing and shingles beneath the current roof were preserved where possible as evidence of the buildings' historic nature.

The lighthouse, first lit in 1848, is the highest in Australia but was discontinued in 1992 because it was often obscured by cloud. If you thought the windows on Tasman Island were in need of repair, check out the ones on Deal Island!

MAATSUYKER ISLAND

FoTI's founding member, Chris Creese, spent a few days on Maatsuyker Island recently where he worked with a small group to restore the clockwork mechanism of the historic Maatsuyker Island Lighthouse which had been discontinued in 1996, replaced by a 'tupperware' light nearby. Maintenance had been neglected since that time but with their tlc, it was soon operating effectively again with the magnificent Chance Bros 1st order lens rotating in the lantern room overlooking the Southern Ocean.



: Deal Island restoration work on Superintendent's quarters



Above from left:

- Clockwork mechanism
- The lens rotated on rollers, instead of mercury
- 1st Order Chance Brothers lens made of 540 pieces of precisely cut glass
- Maatsuyker Island historic lighthouse first lit in 1891

Left: Volunteers, David, Peter, Derek & Chris at Maatsuyker



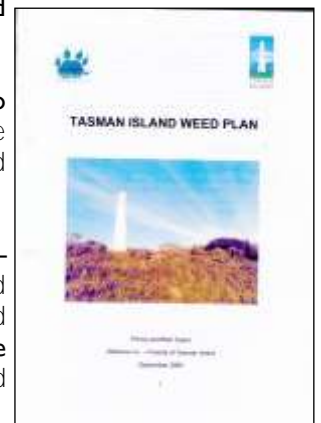
VALE WONDER WEEDER - PENNY TYSON

Vale, Penny Tyson, FoTI's first Weeding Wonder Woman and field naturalist who passed away recently.

On FoTI's working bee in 2007, Penny realised that a lot needed to be done on the natural environment of Tasman Island as well as the lightstation buildings. Weeds and garden escapees had proliferated through the native bush over the years.

FoTI working bees held on Tasman Island between October 2007— June 2009, formed the basis of a weed management plan prepared by Penny and her husband Bob which became the basis for weed management on Tasman Island. Penny's volunteer experience at the Tasmanian Herbarium was also invaluable for confirmation and advice on different weed species.

Penny was a long-time contributor to conservation in Tasmania and, together with Bob, was a stalwart member of many Wildcare Tasmania volunteer groups, including Friends of Tasman Island and Friends of Deal Island. Our condolences go to Penny's family and friends ... she will be sorely missed.



## CARETAKING ON THE LOW ISLES

A caretaker programme on Tasman Island, even if it was over the summer months, **would play a big part in keeping the island's heritage-listed buildings in good repair.** Regular mowing and brushcutting, too, would relieve the pressure on volunteers at **on FoTI's ten-day working bees.**

FoTI volunteers, Don & Lee, are nearing the half-way mark of their 12-month stint as caretakers on the Low Isles in tropical North Queensland.



Low Isles  
Photo Douglas Shire

In an email, Lee wrote that the temperature is hot and humid. The little Bridle terns are extremely noisy and have finished laying eggs with the youngest chick three weeks old and the teenagers beginning to learn to fly. As caretakers, Don and Lee assist with bird counts on the island each month by members of the Low Isles Preservation Society.

Both the Pied pigeons and Bridled terns are supposed to migrate back to Asia in March, and Lee keeps telling them that their real estate contract is up and to get moving. To sleep all through one night without birds screeching would be wonderful, she remarked! The rains have arrived and welcome, not only do they cool the temperature but also wash the bird droppings, saving them a lot of work. They are enjoying their working holiday and now looking forward to the dry season

which everyone says is the best time of year.

The beach surrounding the tiny island is similar to being in an aquarium - lemon sharks feeding 50cm from the shore, as well as black tip sharks and turtles swimming along with stingrays - a fascinating and ever-changing scene.

Sammy Seagull  
Lee Cameron

Being new to the island we peered into every nook and cranny; every part of this tiny island fascinates us. A seagull was nesting in a plant near the lighthouse - we watched her day by day. Eventually a tiny chick appeared and within days they had both disappeared. We were surprised and delighted to see "*Sammy seagull*" appear as a very noisy boisterous chick with his exhausted mother chasing after him. It has been several weeks now; Sammy has grown every day and now learning to fly. He is very demanding - making a loud noise, expecting to be fed often. He follows us around during the day and when he gets bored with us he goes off to "play" with the terns.

I believe from Sammy's point of view the terns are cute little birds that sit on the ground waiting for his company - if he goes too close they greet him loudly amongst much excitement with flapping of wings and a throaty sound telling him how happy they are to see him. He gets very excited and rushes in as only small children can do without fear with the simple premise that everyone loves him and wants to be his friend (imagine a puppy here). Sammy's parents swoop and squark at the terns who, in turn, try to attack Sammy. This goes on every day - Sammy seems to have the attention span of a two-year-old and a learning retention problem.

His latest trick is to take flying lessons on his "runway" which is the nicely raked path from the lighthouse to the head lighthouse keeper's residence. He loves an audience, waits for us to finish raking then practice begins. Each run displays a few metres of off ground flight, then he stops, walks up to us and demands praise - parents supervising close by. He is such a funny little bird who is making a big impact on the tiny island and its caretakers.

Sammy discovered water and was soon to be found standing in any pool of water available. We had a water bowl near our back door for the birds. Sammy in his usual thoughtless way took over that bowl, stood in it, sat in it and even went to sleep in it - the terns constantly swooping, and making distressed noises while our little bird happily snoozed on. He now has his own shell near the Relief Lighthouse Keeper's residence, away from nesting terns. Our little friend can now fly about three metres with a height of a few metres - he will be independent soon.

Last evening while walking, I heard Sammie's distinctive cry, it appeared to be coming from the public toilets. There was our brave little seagull sitting on top of the toilets which are two-storey. He was crying out, very distressed wondering how he got up there and how he was going to get down. Our policy is to not interfere with nature, so we walked on. I was very happy to see him doing his practice flying on his very own runway early the next morning.

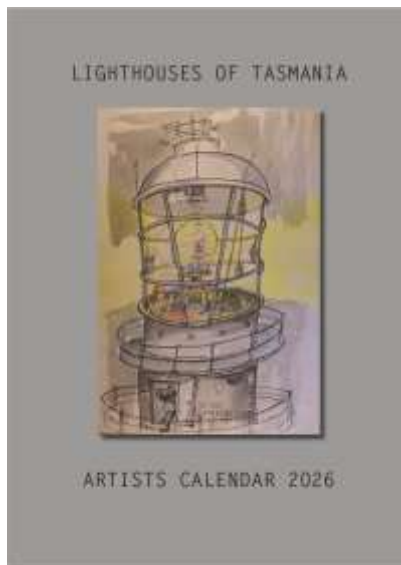


Low Isles Preservation Society  
Don & Lee at right



Photo thanks to LIPS Facebook



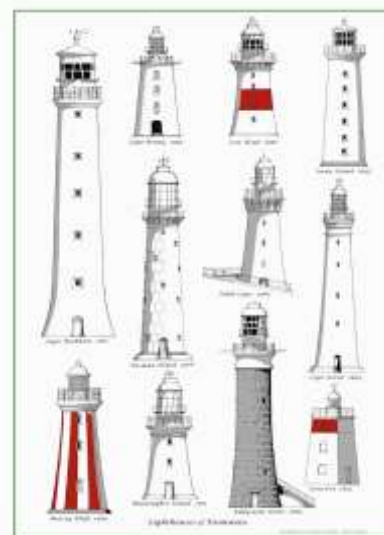


Lighthouses of Tasmania Artists Calendar 2026  
A few still available !

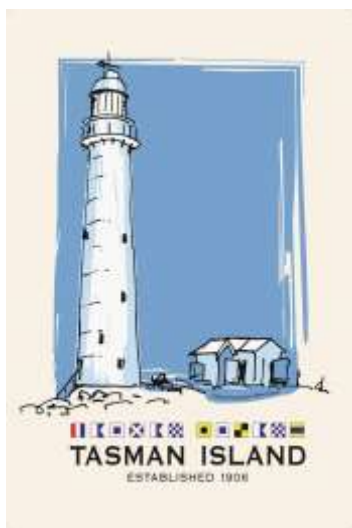
12 artists, 12 lighthouses, 12 frame worthy artworks - one stunning fundraiser, the Lighthouses of Tasmania Artists Calendar 2026. A beautiful spiral bound fine art wall calendar, large size (297 x 420mm, A3) printed single sided in Hobart on premium 250gsm recycled paper. The 'frame-worthy' selection of twelve stunning lighthouse artworks are by renowned Tasmanian artists and those less well known, all Tasman Island volunteers, makes this calendar a perfect, lasting gift. Don't miss out, purchase your calendar/s now.

?? Price includes postage within Australia \$17.65)

<https://wildcaretas.org.au/groups/friends-of-tasman-island/shop>



Lighthouses of Tasmania tea towel  
Designed by FoTI volunteer,  
Peter Gouldthorpe  
\$25



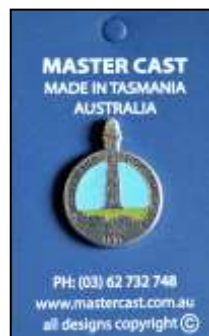
Tasman Island Lighthouse tea towel  
designed by FoTI volunteer, David Davenport

\$25

All available at the Wildcare shop  
<https://wildcaretas.org.au/groups/friends-of-tasman-island/shop>  
Postage free within Australia



Supporter's Patch  
Featuring FoTI's logo  
designed by Gavin Reynolds  
\$15



For all lighthouse lovers & collectors of lighthouse memorabilia, this is for you: A cast of the original Tasman Island tower, custom made in Tasmania

Lapel Pin: \$13 + postage within Australia

**FRIENDS OF TASMAN ISLAND**  
**Lighthouse Collection**

Lighthouses spark the imagination of mariners & landlubbers alike.

The highest lighthouse in Australia, historic Tasman Island Lighthouse, Cape Bruny's 2nd Order lens & other memorabilia feature in this collection of cards.

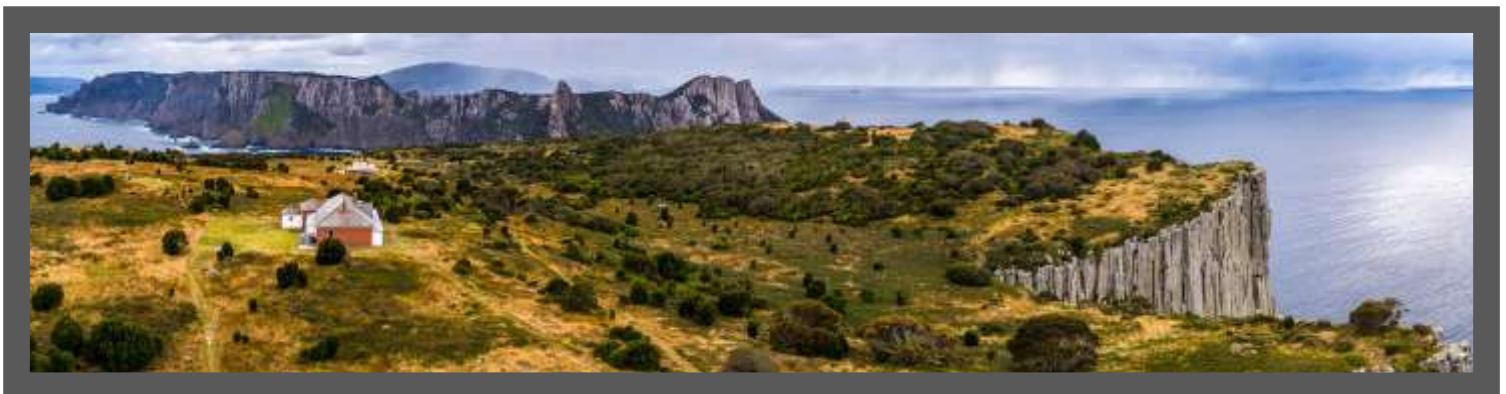
Thank you to David Davenport, Kate Hansford, Peter Gouldthorpe, Adrian Levings & AMSA who donated the art work for this series. Thanks also to FoTI member, Ian Ross, for the printing.

**This pack of 7 cards \$40**  
Includes postage within Australia



Supporter's Pack includes:  
Lighthouses of Tasmania tea towel, Cardboard Lighthouse Kit, Tasman Island pocket book, FoTI supporter's patch, Tasman Island bookmarks & cards  
\$50

Top: JW Beattie photographed this spectacular scene - the highest sea cliffs in Australia—on a visit to Tasman Island in 1913.  
Middle: FoTI volunteers captured a similar view 113 years later during their February/March working bee in 2026  
Bottom: Thanks, Ian Sale, for this Facebook posting after Rotary Day, capturing this westerly aspect from the lighthouse balcony.



#### FOTI MEETINGS:

Our meetings alternate between face-to-face & Zoom meetings on the third Thursdays of each month. Face-to-face meetings are held at the Derwent Sailing Squadron, 23 Marieville Esplanade, Sandy Bay, Tasmania. Check for details on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfTasmanIsland/> All welcome!

#### WILDCARE BRANCH PAGE:

FoTI is one of the many volunteer groups which make up Wildcare in Tasmania, currently with 235 members. Check out our branch page & photos of our activities. Go to <https://wildcaretas.org.au/groups/friends-of-tasman-island> .