



FRIENDS OF TASMAN ISLAND

NEWSLETTER 33

December, 2025

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*



On their arrival, FoTI's working bee team were greeted by this
spectacular view towards Cape Pillar & The Blade

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Thanks to contributors: Erika Shankley, Lee & Don Cameron, Amanda Thomson, Nikki Hutchings, Annabel Carle

Photos: Erika Shankley, Lee Cameron, Dave Davenport, Nikki Hutchings, Ray Vaughan, Amanda Thomson



Want to 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

www.tasmanisland.org.au

FOTI WORKING BEE #46

FoTI's 46th working bee in November this year had three distinct elements - the rebuild of the back verandah of lightkeeper's quarters No 3 (Q3BV), weed management and nature-based field naturalist observations.

Asbestos has been removed



The heritage-listed lightstation buildings on Tasman Island, now 120 years old, are in constant need of maintenance and repair. Volunteers from Wildcare group Friends of Tasman Island have been on the job since 2005. It's thanks to people like Paradigm Construction's Dave Davenport, that FoTI is progressing steadily towards restoration of these Federation-style buildings.

Q3BV RESTORATION

In the weeks leading up to the working bee, several off-island sessions were held at Dave's workshop in Hobart, preparing timber for the restoration work. An advance party then delivered several sling loads of building materials to the island, together with a team of asbestos removalists with logistical support from PWS Ranger, Sam Lennox. Finally, the main contingent of volunteers arrived to put it all together.

Over the next 10 days the 11 volunteers worked steadily, the majority concentrating on the building works while others worked in other areas around the island—mowing and brushcutting (with eight months of growth since the previous working bee) as well as weeding and general maintenance. Anne, who had volunteered as the group's cook/caterer, kept everyone well fed.

Tasman's wild weather is well documented in lightkeepers' logbooks, and it was no different during this working bee. Fog,

rain, hail and gale-force winds with gusts over 70kph interrupting the workflow. But the volunteers soldiered on, making good use of the occasional bursts of sunshine.

The focus was to restore Q3BV to its c.1930 rebuild configuration, while conserving elements of the original c.1906 construction and the c.1930 rebuild wherever possible, replicating elements where required in keeping with its heritage values. Additional strengthening to improve resistance to strong winds was also planned.

Work benches were set up outside with a variety of tools and generators hummed as work progressed. Corrugated iron recladding for the roof was followed by framework, floor timbers and external weather boarding being gradually replaced and painted. Window frames were removed and Chris's faux windows from Q2's back verandah restoration were reused to fill in the gaps. The windows were then packed securely before being transported back to Dave's workshop for a more detailed restoration - to be reinstalled at next year's February working bee.

An unfortunate accident curtailed volunteer, Edwin's, time on the island when the spinning blade of a woodworking router got in the way of his finger. Prompt treatment by 1st Aiders Anne and Alan and care from Nikki (a nurse) soon had him stabilised and a helicopter working in the area flew him off the island for further treatment.

WEEDING

Nikki Hutchings

Meanwhile, Nikki, the sole weeder on this trip, scoured the surrounding area for wayward vegetation which had been introduced to the island, either inadvertently or as part of a domestic garden, and was now infiltrating the bush.

A weeding programme on Tasman Island has been ongoing since FoTI's first working bee in 2006 and in 2009 a comprehensive *Tasman Island Weeding Plan* was formulated by Bob and Penny Tyson. Over the last few years, a specialised working bee in January aims to combat Californian thistle and, more recently, Hairy Sedge (*Carex Hirta*) - a native of Europe introduced to North America, but so far, not found anywhere else in Australia.

Winter 2025 had been the driest in Tasmania since 2020, with mean temperatures well above average. According to the Bureau of Meteorology, Tasman Island had experienced its "equal highest June mean temperature on record". Unsurprisingly, given the warmer and drier conditions, the pond was found to be completely dry, and a significant number of dry trees/limbs have succumbed to the more recent strong winds.

Conditions appear to have been most advantageous for scarlet gladioli to re-establish themselves in significant numbers, with 1755 corms being excavated. Wild radish, too, is flourishing with 456 plants removed, but Yarrow and Californian thistles have been much less prolific than in previous working bees.

FIELD NATURALISTS

Amanda Thomson

Another productive working bee, where the main focus was on the rebuilding of Q3BV but we did make lots of flora and fauna observations as well. Weather always plays its part - this year mostly cold and windy, wet and foggy! Not many flowers out due to the cold, nor insects, as a result. Despite some rain, the island was quite dry and the pond completely dry!

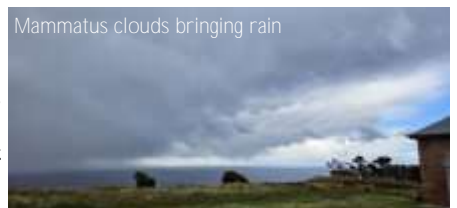
Orchids were a focus at this time of the year. We weren't disappointed, even though it was a one-day event - when the sun shone enough! Sun orchids (*Thelymitra*) opened, revealing the spotted variety 'ixioides', many *pauciflora* and a couple of onion orchid sp. (*Microtis*). To my delight I found a hidden patch of maroonhoods (*Pterostylis*) listed in the 2007 Tasman Island Plant Species list but never seen by me here. One flower left, as they finish in October usually.



Off-island working bees



Mowing & weeding



Mammatus clouds bringing rain



Outdoor work bench & tools



Spotted sun orchid

Birds were the usual culprits. Notable were a juvenile forest raven, with diagnostic bluish eye, before turning **white in adulthood**. **One sighting of a Lewin's rail (Dave);** **kelp gulls teaching their young to fly from the eastern cliffs.** One egg was observed from afar in the **white-bellied sea eagle's nest; no adult was seen on this occasion.** Though they were seen regularly on other days. shearwaters were heard on a couple of nights. Small flocks of yellow-tailed black cockatoos and beautiful firetails were seen along the main track.

Despite repeated visits and lures put out, there was no sign of the Tasman Island endemic cricket. As elusive as ever! More interesting spiders, and beetles were recorded. Some specimens have gone to TMAG for identification and their collection. More moths and some interesting flies seen—awaiting identification on iNaturalist where FoTI has almost doubled its observations—now 2307!

Nikki accompanied me up the eastern bank through sometimes thick vegetation, a beautiful mosaic collection of various shrubs and trees. We were shocked to find large numbers of the Pink Berry bushes covered with sooty mould. Some *Monotoca* bushes were also affected, but often the new growth was not. Some dead bushes found. After consultation, it may be natural attrition due to plant age, or climate changes. We need to watch and see how this progresses. No intervention advised. More sooty mould also seen to the south.

I did notice many new seedlings of *Monotoca glauca* (Goldey wood) sprouting up all over the island. Whales were also seen off the east coast - very exciting – they were breaching $\frac{3}{4}$ out of the water and slapping down, the sound reaching us after a delay of some seconds!!

Another excitement was a rare Brocken spectre – again to the east where a giant magnified shadow (in this case the lighthouse and oil store) is cast onto clouds (or in this case sea mist) below. It is also surrounded by colourful rings



(rainbow) known as a 'glory'. What an amazing place to be!

Thank you to all those who assisted in finding things, Ray and Connor, to Nikki who accompanied me whenever she was able on excursions into the wild – lovely to have your company and assistance.



After 14 days on the island, working flat out, Q3's back verandah was completed - minus its proper windows. As Dave said, **"It was a stellar team effort before and during the works - great food, great company and a great result."** Thanks must go to Dave, in particular — **it's your dedication to the island, time and expertise, that makes it all happen.** Special thanks also to Anne, who kept everyone well fed and took great photos; Amanda who kept us up-to-date with her blog and photos on Facebook and Nikki, the sole weeder; Chris who managed and supervised everything; and especially Carol - who worked relentlessly behind the scenes. And grateful thanks to Tasmanian Helicopters pilot, Jason, and PWS Ranger, Sam, for making sure we all kept safe. Thank you everyone.



Working bee team:
Left: Chris, Amanda, Dave;
Middle: Connor, Mark, Tony, Nikki;
Right: Anne, Ray, Alan
& Bottom right: Edwin

One of the building team
returns to Hobart for
medical treatment



All packed & ready to go

Fundraising Sausage Sizzle



The sausages were hot and tasty at FoTI's Mother's Day Sausage Sizzle at Bunnings, Mornington. Unfortunately the weather put a dampener on sales with a profit of only \$626 and left-over sausages stored in Tony & Robn's freezer for future events.

There was better weather for Father's Day in September with about \$1000 added to FoTI's coffers. The 27kg of sausages went down a treat with everything sold out at about 2.30pm. The move to near Bunnings' front entrance certainly paid dividends!

The Bunnings Activities Co-Ordinator has confirmed that we can have Easter Saturday next year - Saturday April 4, 2026. This is usually the highest yearly turnover day for Bunnings. Ingrid said "I think I'll order over 40kg (maybe 45kg!?) for that day and we will need quite a few volunteers on the roster."

A big THANK YOU to Ingrid and the bevy of volunteers for all your hard work





FUNDRAISING CALENDAR

FoTI's *Lighthouses of Tasmania Artists Calendar 2026* was hot off the press towards the end of October. By early November, over 300 eager recipients had received their much anticipated copies, featuring artwork of 13 of Tasmania's lighthouses by 13 Tasmanian artists. Printed in Tasmania, it was an all-Tasmanian production as a fund-raising project by volunteers from Wildcare group, Friends of Tasman Island.

Have you got your copy of this limited edition work of art, yet? Carol has only 60 left ...

It's available from the Wildcare shop: <https://wildcarea.org.au/groups/friends-of-tasman-island/shop>

See below for a full reprise of the introduction, including those interesting snippets which, unfortunately had to be edited out due to space limitations.

Heritage builder, Dave Davenport, displays his artistic contribution in FoTI's Artists Calendar after an interview with ABC presenter, Tracey Strong.

A number of our artists have been showing their work at a group exhibition at Handmark Gallery recently—Luke Wagner, Diane Masters, Peter Gouldthorpe, Clifford How & David Edgar. Have you bought your copy of our limited edition calendar yet? By all reports it's a winner! There aren't many left so don't miss out!

Researching information for the introduction to FoTI's 2026 *Lighthouses of Tasmania Artists Calendar*, I found lots of interesting tidbits about the lightkeepers & their families who lived & worked on Tasmania's lightstations. However, limited space meant that many of these interesting bits had to be left out. Here, then, is the unexpurgated version for your enjoyment. A limited number of calendars are still available through the Wildcare shop: <https://wildcarea.org.au/groups/friends-of-tasman-island/shop>

Lighthouses of Tasmania Artists Calendar 2026

Erika Shankley

"Every light has a different character, the navigator picks up this character and looks at the chart and says 'I know where I am now'"
John Cook, Tasmania's last Lighthouse keeper

Tasmania may be Australia's smallest state in area but has the fifth-longest coastline among Australian states and territories. Six of the first twelve Australian lighthouses were built on these remote, rocky shores. An aid to navigation for ships at sea, their graceful towers also offer inspiration to artists. Wildcare Tasmania Friends of Tasman Island's 2026 calendar features an artist's eye view of twelve of these unique structures.



The historic lighthouse on Maatsuyker Island, built of Oyster Cove brick, is the most southerly in Australia, first lit on 1 June 1891. Life in the 'roaring forties' could be harsh. In 1891 R.W. Garraway transferred from Cape Wickham as the light's first head keeper, but by October 1895, requested his release as he said he was unable to endure the climate at Maatsuyker for another winter. The historic lighthouse still retains its magnificent 1st Order Chance Brothers lens assembly, more than three metres high, made from 540 pieces of precisely cut glass, although this historic lighthouse was discontinued in 1996, replaced by an automatic fibreglass beacon nearby.



The disastrous wreck of the convict transport ship *George III* on 12 March 1835, with the loss of 133 lives, gave impetus for the construction of a lighthouse at Cape Bruny. Designed by John Lee Archer and built of local stone by a team of convicts, it is the third oldest lighthouse in Australia, first lit in March 1838. A note in a bottle found in a cavity in the lighthouse wall in 2025 reported that a new 2nd Order Chance Brothers lens was installed during a refit in January 1903. Australia's longest-serving head lighthouse keeper, William Hawkins, was superintendent at the time, serving from 1877 until 1914 - a total of 37 years and 232 days. The historic Cape Bruny lighthouse was decommissioned in 1996, replaced by an automatic solar light on an adjacent hill.

Lieutenant Samuel Hill designed Tasmania's first lighthouse at the Iron Pot, situated in the aptly named Storm Bay. Also built by convict labour, the first rudimentary light was raised and lowered by hand. On 11 November 1832 the Marine Board's pilot reported seeing the light on "the evening of Sunday last." An inspection resulted in a new lighthouse being built in 1833, incorporating the original structure. A huge storm in 1895 drove waves right over the island with the three keepers struggling to keep the light burning while their families took refuge in the Head Keeper's house. In the morning there was devastation everywhere with kelp clinging to the uppermost rails of the lighthouse, over 25 metres above sea level. In 1920, after nearly 90 years of service, the light was automated, lightkeepers withdrawn and their dwellings dismantled but the obolid shaped stone tower still stands today - Australia's oldest lighthouse still operating in its original tower; the first to utilise a locally made optic; and the first Australian lighthouse to use solar power. Renamed Derwent Light in 1884, the light is now operated by Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST) as part of the Port of Hobart.



The last manned lighthouse built in Tasmania stands atop Tasman Island's cliffs which plunge, nearly 300m straight down to the sea. A site was cleared in 1886, but construction didn't commence until 1904. The tower, in kit form, is constructed with 224 curved, cast-iron plates, shipped from Chance Brothers in England. The light was officially opened on 2 April 1906. However, proceedings were cut short by bad weather and according to family sources it was Jessie, wife of Head Keeper, George Johnston, who lit the light for the first time. By then the official party were on board the *SS Mahinapua* steaming towards Bruny Island where "the flash was clearly visible and general expression of satisfaction was given." The highest operating lighthouse in Australia, it remained an active station until 1976 when the lantern room was dismantled, and the magnificent Chance Brothers 1st order lens removed - now on display at the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney. Keepers were removed in 1977 with the lighthouse now operating automatically.

In January 1887, there was quite a settlement at Eddystone Point where contractor, W.J. Duffy & Co, together with 30 workmen, were constructing a lighthouse. Massive blocks of granite were cut at the nearby quarry **"... every stone is measured and squared ... cut and numbered for its place on the tower."**

Amanda Thomson

First lit on 1 May 1889, the lighthouse at Eddystone Point is unusual in that the rough-hewn granite has been left unpainted. Seven feet thick at the base and three feet at the top, the lighthouse features a handsome wrought-iron staircase manufactured by Kennedy Brothers at their Derwent Foundry in New Town. To the west of the tower, a subsidiary red light covered Victoria Rocks.



Erika Shankley

At the suggestion of the Governor of Van Diemens Land, Sir John Franklin, a highway of lights across Bass Strait was planned, with the first lighthouse to be constructed on Swan Island. He came ashore on 8 November 1843 with Lady Jane Franklin to see a party of 22 convicts, under the direction of Charles Watson, preparing to build the lighthouse. First lit on 1 November 1845, life on Swan Island must have been difficult. Only the Superintendent had a proper house, a 4-room structure built of local stone and brick. The assistants had to fend for themselves, living in crude shelters or in the tower itself. However, this was considered undesirable as the smoke from their cooking fires obscured the light. Head Keeper, Charles Baudinet, served 25 years as a lightkeeper, arriving at Swan Island in 1867. His wife, Eliza, died aged 47, of **"dropsy mortification"** on 21 February 1882 and is buried on the island. Charles was succinct in his log entry for that day **"Bullock sick, wife died"** as he dismantled some shelves to build her coffin and conducted the burial service himself. Continuously occupied by light keepers and their families for 141 years, the lighthouse was automated in 1985, and it was a sad day when the last light keeper left on 31 October 1986.



Deal Island Lighthouse, first lit on 12 March 1848, was a joint project by the governments of New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania. Built of local rubble stone, Charles Watson headed a crew of workmen together with a team of ten bullocks which hauled materials uphill, three kilometres to the site. First head keeper, William Baudinet, arrived for duty on March 10, 1848. Port Officer, Wm. Moriarty, reported that the original Wilkins revolving catoptric lens, seven feet high, had 21 lamps in groups of seven and the light could be seen for 13 leagues (~72.2 kilometres). In a **romantic twist, William's son Charles met his future wife when the barque General Jessop ran aground on Deal Island in a gale in 1863.** He married Miss Eliza Ballentine, one of the survivors from the wreck, in Port Albert, Victoria, the following year. Getting supplies could be a chancy business. Charles wrote **"We get things we do not require, and those most required we do not get"**. He kept an extensive vegetable garden, livestock, went mutton-birding and fishing and even made his own boots. The lighthouse, once the highest above sea level in the Southern Hemisphere, was decommissioned in 1992 due to frequently being obscured by cloud. It was replaced by unmanned lights on North East and South West Islands.



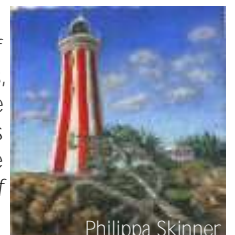
Sue Lovegrove



Clifford How

A pilot station had been located at Low Head since 1805, but it was not until 1827 that it was felt that a lighthouse was necessary. Originally known as George Town Station, John Lee Archer's design was built from stone quarried nearby. Completed on 8 October 1833 the design was unusual in that the keepers' quarters were attached to the tower. Manned by a superintendent (head keeper), the two convict assistants were locked in their quarters overnight. The current double-brick lighthouse with its distinctive red stripe is the second to be built on this site. By the 1880s the original tower had deteriorated beyond repair and a new tower, with a more powerful light turned by a clockwork mechanism, was operated by an endless chain.

Construction of the Mersey Bluff lighthouse commenced on October 16, 1888. The brick tower, which stands on a plinth of solid basalt with a cap of white Bellerive sandstone, was first lit on 2nd August 1889. In a general rotation of light keepers, Assistant Keeper at Swan Island, W. Jacques, was transferred to Mersey Bluff as its first Head Keeper. The light attracted a large number of visitors – on Sundays, especially – with the keeper kept busy showing the public over the structure. The light was automated, and keepers removed in 1920. The lighthouse, with its distinctive vertical red stripes, is a highlight of staying at the Mersey Bluff Caravan Park next door and is one of the first sights seen by visitors as they arrive on board the ferry, *Spirit of Tasmania*, at Devonport.



Philippa Skinner



Skeat Andrews

Table Cape, on Tasmania's northwest coast, is a spectacular site for a lighthouse, overlooking sheer cliffs and surrounded by scenic farmland. Designed by Huckson & Hutchison, the tower was erected by local builder John Luck. Constructed of brick, brought from Victoria as ship's ballast, then painted white, Chance Brothers of Birmingham in England supplied the apparatus, which was reassembled, on site, by Duff Brothers. One writer quipped that it was **"...left to history to wonder what the Marine Board was thinking, leaving such an important building to Luck and Chance!"** On 1 August 1888 the light was lit **"...by Mr Meech, amid the cheers of the assembled party..."** Table Cape Lighthouse is the only operating lighthouse in Tasmania which is open for inspection.

King Island, at the western entrance to Bass Strait, gained a reputation as a graveyard of ships. The 48-metre lighthouse at Cape Wickham, built of local stone, painted white, has **'...an appearance of massive strength, calculated to last for ages to come.'** with walls 3.4 metres thick at the base. The tallest lighthouse in Australia, it has 11 flights of stairs, each with 20 wooden steps, unusual in a stone lighthouse. Danish seaman, Edward Nilsen, had the contract to carry mail to Cape Wickham in his boat *Secret*, before beginning 36 years in the Tasmanian Lighthouse Service in February 1878. His first appointment as Assistant Keeper was at Cape Wickham where numerous entries in the log recorded 'gales and squalls'. First lit on 1 November 1861, the lighthouse at Cape Wickham was automated in 1918 and keepers removed in 1921. All three houses were demolished with the light then tended by a keeper from Currie. The original fixed Catadioptric lens, made in France by Louis Sauter, is now on display at the King Island Historical Society Museum in Currie. During preparations for the 150th anniversary of the lighthouse it was discovered that it had never been officially opened. To rectify this oversight, Australia's Governor-General, Quentin Bryce, officially opened the lighthouse in a ceremony on 5 November 2011.



David Edgar



The elegant lighthouse at Cape Sorell is the second tallest in Tasmania. Designed by Hobart architects Huckson and Hutchison, **the tower was built to withstand the full force of the 'roaring forties'**. Nearly 400,000 bricks made in Hobart were used in the construction by Duff Brothers, completed by May 1899. First lit on 2 October 1899 the light was built to serve the port of Strahan and improve navigation into Macquarie Harbour. Automated in 1971, Head Keeper, Laurie Williams, could not bring himself to follow the nightly procedure of 'light up' on the final night of manned operation. It was his wife Val, who lit Cape Sorell Light for the last time. The keepers' quarters were then demolished. With automation, light stations fell silent, with light keeping as a way of life becoming a thing of the past. Land and buildings were then transferred to the state.

However, light stations such as those on Tasman, Deal and Maatsuyker Islands are returning to life, thanks to the work of Wildcare Tasmania volunteer groups like Friends of Tasman Island, who, in partnership with the Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service, work many hundreds of hours each year to restore the natural and cultural heritage of these lighthouse islands.

Funds raised from sales of the calendar will help FoTI continue their amazing work on restoring the built heritage and natural values of Tasman Island and its lightstation. A big thank you to the 13 artists featured in this calendar and to Dee Webb for her expertise in putting it all together. Thanks also to Carol, and the team of volunteers working in the background—where would we be without you!





The Herbarium in Hobart has identified the gladioli present on Tasman Island as *Gladiolus* × *colvillii*, the scarlet gladiolus, probably planted in gardens by lightkeepers but is now infiltrating the bush. **It's an old variety first described in 1823 by nurseryman James Colville in Chelsea England.** It is a cross between two South African species *Gladioli tristis* (which also occurs a weed here in Tasmania) x *Gladioli cardinalis*. **It's bright scarlet petals are emblazoned with a white streak and there is also a commercially available white form.**

Thanks, Annabel Carle, for this explanation.

If you fancy a jaunt to Tasman Island to see what FoTI has been up to over the past 20 years, how about joining the fundraising trip with the Rotary Club of the Tasman Peninsula. You will be mesmerised by the amazing views as you walk the island tracks, **inspect the lightkeepers' quarters which are undergoing restoration and as a special treat, the lighthouse will be open for inspection.** A small stall will feature FoTI merchandise.

Seats are limited but you may be lucky!

**HELICOPTER FLIGHTS
TO TASMAN ISLAND**
March 7th, 2026
(in the event of inclement weather, the event by 4th and 5th March)

Rotary
Tasman Peninsula

**ONCE A YEAR
UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY**

Ex Safety Cove
Tasman Peninsula

\$575 per person
(Maximum 2 hours on the island)

\$675 per person
(Extended time on the island - very limited availability)

Ex Cambridge

\$775 per person
(Extended time on the island - very limited availability)

Part of Fun Irongraded [More info here](#)

EXPERIENCE TASMAN ISLAND

- ✦ Discuss life on the island with a former Lighthouse Keeper and the Friends of Tasman Island
- ✦ Enjoy the magnificent 360 degree vista
- ✦ Inspect the Keepers' Quarters
- ✦ Wander the island at your leisure
- ✦ View, from the lighthouse, the highest vertical sea cliffs in the southern hemisphere

This total experience only
available through
Tasman Rotary

For further information contact

ARNOLD McSHANE Mobile: 0418 493 767

Email: tasmanislandtrips@bigpond.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/tasmanislandhelicopter>

Bookings open December online at: <https://tasmanianrotary.org>

POP-UP MUSEUM

Wildcare Tasmania volunteer groups Friends of Tasman Island, Friends of Maatsuyker Island and Friends of Melaleuca held a Pop-up Museum at the Geilston Bay Boat Club in August. On show were historic documents and artefacts from these remote islands and the Port Davey area. We were able to see:

- a working model of the Tasman Island lighthouse made by Tony Parsey;
- Lighthouse apparatus manufactured or restored by Chris Creese;
- We were even treated to a demonstration of lighting up the lamp, as in the days when lamps were lit by kerosene;
- There was also a scale model of the whim at Maatsuyker Island, crafted by Ailsa Fergusson; and
- A bottle found in the wall cavity of the Cape Bruny Lighthouse with a note written by Lighthouse Inspector J.R. Meech in 1903;
- A talk by Tony Fenton about the Whalers Point Lighthouse at Port Davey; and other talks by volunteers, former keepers and authors of a number of books.
- We were even able to cross over live to Maatsuyker Island where the current volunteer caretakers showed us around their museum.

Cape Bruny lantern room bottle transcription:*Names of Light Keepers*

Superintendent Wm J. Hawkins

1. Asst W. A. Campbell

2. " Chas. Bennett

Marine Board Members

Master Warden A. E. Risby

Secretary J. Adams

Inspector & Engineer J.R. Meech

Wardens (CJ) Jordan, (F) Bond, Captain T. M. Fisher,

(EJ) Burgess, Cap W. J. Evans, (FW) Lord, Cap. (TC)

Herbert,

(H) Chesterman, Harbour Master. Cap. M McArthur,

Deputy (Harbour) Master Capt J. Creese

Names of workmen assisting J.R. Meech erecting Light.

A.C. Meech Engineer & fitter

J.R. Meech Junr. Asst.

J. Butcher, C. Risby were assisting

Maker of Light equip/ Mssrs Chance Bros
to the order of the H. M. Board.

These memo were written this day
by J. R. Meech Inspector of Lighthouses

J.R. Meech

Inspector of Lighthouses

Jany 29 1903

South Bruni Light – originally
Erected dated 1836. In the year
1903. Decr the tower was altered

Iron stairs in place of wood. Concrete
floor in place of Boards. New iron
floor top landing. New lantern and
second order flashing light 3

seconds light and 19 ½ darkness.

J.R. Meech estimated £2300 F.O.B England

Actual cost £2200 F.O.B England

The task of altering the tower and erecting
iron stairs was contracted for by
Mr A Dowding for £390. Work was
commenced the 4th Dec 1902.

The old Lantern. Said etc
was taken down by J.R. Meech
Inspector & Engineer of Lighthouses,
Hobart Marine Board, was com-
-enced on Nov ready for construction.

Erecting new Light was com-
-menced Jany 10 1903.

The last plate of the lining was fixed
on Jany 29 1903 and this bottle
put inside there.

Temporary light during
alteration was arranged & erected in October
by J.R. Meech & workmen, ready for
the 1st of Dec 1902 which was the
date the old light was discontinued
and the temporary light was lighted
that night

JR Meech



CARETAKING IN THE LOW ISLES

Lee and Don Cameron



In 2020 an invitation to join Wildcare Tasmania was delivered with my Tasmanian Parks renewal application. I did a little reading and decided it was a worthwhile organisation join.

I attended an expo Wildcare had organised at the Tennis Centre, thoroughly enjoyed the talks given by various members and began to apply for working bees. Don and I were absolutely thrilled to be invited to go to Schouten Island – **the main problem weed is gorse and if anyone doesn't know gorse intimately it can be tiny or tall, woody with very large sharp spikes.** The group had been targeting this weed for **years, so outliers were difficult to spot.** I was trying to **"get my eye in" on this weed.** **At morning tea,** we were asked the number of pulled or poisoned bushes – I very proudly yelled 16, others had found **hundreds in a "nursery".** **That is the moment when I began to admire all the volunteers and the dedicated work they do.** I whispered my numbers from that time onwards.

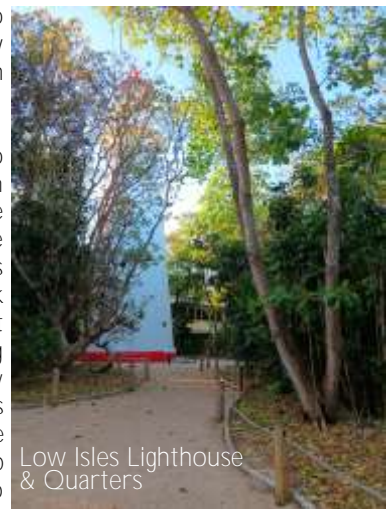
Don and I have both been fortunate to attend working bees in many areas in Tasmania, each island has its own personality and problem weeds along with infrastructure which needs constant maintenance. Again, volunteers with diverse capabilities and trades are forthcoming, and very generous with their time.

We heard about the caretaker's position on Low Isles a few years ago but decided not to apply. When I received an email again, advertising the position, I bullied Don into helping with the application with the belief that you may have to apply for several years before being considered. We were amazed to get an interview and the job.



We have been on the island for two weeks now and are beginning to feel comfortable. The island is a tiny coral cay 12 miles offshore from Port Douglas. It is 443m wide, 102m N-S and 178m E-W. The foliage and paths make the journey around the island appear much larger. We are responsible for the upkeep of the infrastructure and the cleanliness of the island which receives many visitors. The island is ours from dusk to dawn which sounded very pleasant at the time of the interview but in reality, is very dark and any use of torches disturbs the breeding

birds. We have the Pied Imperial Pigeon and Bridled Terns. Only a few terns were here during the first few days - then they arrived, hundreds of them! The pigeons coo beautifully – similar to a lullaby but the terns screech, someone barks like a dog and the night noise can be very loud. The terns are funny – they are **miniature "Happy Feet" and do a constant tap dance preferably on an object that resonates** – ie a washed-up plastic container or the outdoor shower head. They are friendly, funny little birds that ground nest and tend to drop their eggs anywhere. The pigeons nest in the trees or on Woody Isle nearby.



We are enjoying our stay here, busy but happily so. It would be good if we could find a temperature control and turn it down just a bit, but the house is well positioned and cool, so we time our outside jobs for the cooler times of the day. We are very grateful to Wildcare as without the friendship and instruction from various members we would not have obtained the necessary knowledge for this position.



Construction of the first lighthouse in far north Queensland, on Low Isles, commenced in 1874. In common with many other Queensland lighthouse it is clad in galvanised iron sheeting over a timber frame, First lit on 17 September, 1878, the lantern room of the 21 metre lighthouse originally housed a 3rd Order Chance Brothers lens, removed in 1993, and replaced with a Vega VRB-25 beacon.

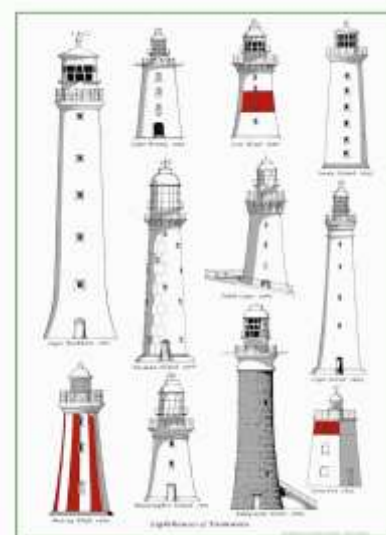


Lighthouses of Tasmania Artists Calendar 2026
A few still available !

12 artists, 12 lighthouses, 12 frame worthy art-works - 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.

\$50: Price includes postage within Australia \$17.65)

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



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



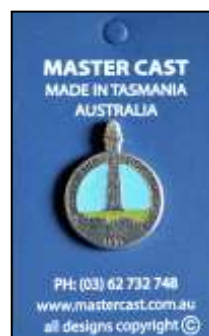
Tasman Island Lighthouse tea towel
designed by FoTI volunteer, David
Davenport

\$25

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



Supporters 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



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
supporters patch, Tasman Island bookmarks &
cards
\$50



Come rain or shine, the views at Tasman Island are spectacular



A glimpse at
FoTI's 46th working bee



Left: Thanks, Anne, for volunteering to cook for the team
Centre: *Carpobrotus rosii* (Pigface) & *Pelargonium australe* (native pelargonium)
Right: Mark repairs the brickwork after removing rusting steel brackets which had held the verandah to the brick wall.



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> .