

Friends of South Solitary Island Lighthouse



NEWSLETTER

December 2019

Photo courtesy Precision Helicopters

In September this year our President, Rob Trezise, represented FOSSIL at the Annual General Meeting of Lighthouses of Australia Inc. (LOA) in Western Australia.

Each year Lighthouses of Australia Inc. hold their Annual General Meeting in a different state of Australia. This year the meeting was held in Western Australia at the Cape Naturaliste Lighthouse on the 6th of September.



Rob enjoyed visiting a number of lighthouses whilst out west, including Moore Point at Geraldton (pictured above)

“These get-togethers are a great way of exchanging ideas and learning more about what other groups are doing at their respective lighthouses” Rob said.

Friends of Tasman Island was formed as a Wildcare group in 2006. They raise funds through a series of ventures including the sale of collectable souvenirs.



Members of Lighthouses of Australia Inc at Cape Naturaliste (Photos R.Trezise)

As well as sharing his own experiences as President of FOSSIL and a Committee Member for lighthouses of Australia Inc, Rob was keen to hear of the great work being undertaken by the Friends of Tasman Island – another remote lighthouse off the south-east coast of Tasmania.

These funds assist with the conduct of two or three working bees each year. After 13 years of operation they now boast a membership in excess of 130 individuals.

For more information or to become a member of LOA, go to:
<https://lighthouses.org.au/>

Childhood Memories

Brian Bevan, a founding member and the Vice President of FOSSIL, has fond memories from his childhood of his time spent on South Solitary Island. Brian agreed to share his story with us.

I moved to South Solitary Island Lighthouse in 1956 with my family when I was seven years old. Bill, as my father was known, went over to the Island first as Assistant Light Keeper to Alf Astridge (Head Keeper) and Terry O'Shea and we lived in number three quarters.

Mum had to organise us kids; Ray, Trevor and myself out of school and enrol us with correspondence school (Black Friars in Kings Cross, Sydney).

The trip over by boat was not on a normal stores day in the 'Pamela Star' skippered by Harry Fanning (nice and clean) but in a licensed trap fishing boat owned by 'The Pirate' (nick name); a small, smelly craft.

We were seasick all the way over from the smell and rocking and rolling over the waves. Little did we know that the ride up in the basket was going to be our worst nightmare.

When the basket was finally landed onto the deck of the boat and we all jumped in we had lift off. The basket had to be hand winched up and it nearly landed in the sea; it swayed with the wind from side to side until it finally landed. We had arrived on the 'Rock' and did not leave again for twelve months until our annual holidays.

We were very lucky on the Island and did not miss the mainland one bit. We had a swimming rock pool, pet rabbits and went fishing on a regular basis.

We were stationed on South Solitary Island for two years and it was a great life experience growing up there.

Below: Brian and his brothers Ray and Trevor on South Solitary Island in 1956



Emotional Reunion

As you may already be aware, helicopter tours of South Solitary Island are run by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service in conjunction with Precision Helicopters and FOSSIL on two weekends a year. Thanks to the coordination efforts of FOSSIL, former residents of the island are invited to participate in the tours and share their personal stories of life under the light with other guests.

This year marked a special occasion for two of these former residents; Jim Smith and Geoff Handicott. Jim and Geoff were the 'child stars' in a short film made on the island in 1961 titled 'Forgive Us Our Trespass'. The gentlemen were reunited on 2 August at Coffs Harbour Jetty after more than fifty years apart.

Jim and Geoff were the volunteer guides on the tours conducted on 3 and 4 August this year. They have a fascinating history of growing up on lightstations across NSW from birth to high school.



Above: Geoff playing the harmonica in a snip from the 1961 film 'Forgive us our Trespass'; shot on South Solitary Island.

Left: Geoff left the island in possession of the harmonica, even though it was a birthday present for Jim. He returned it to Jim fifty years later at their recent reunion at Coffs Harbour Jetty.

RENEW or JOIN online now & SAVE!

FOSSIL Treasurer Rosie Squibb recently established an online registration and payment system for membership applications, renewal and payments.

The online system operates through the 'Register Now' website and provides a simpler way to process and manage memberships for FOSSIL. Additional fees associated with the operation of the system, has forced a small price rise in the cost of membership from 1st January 2020 to \$18 per person.

The good news for new and existing members is if you renew or join online NOW for next year the membership fee of \$15 will still apply. This limited offer is valid only until 31st December 2019.

Click on the link to register:

<https://www.registernow.com.au/secure/Register.aspx?E=36996>



The last volunteer team to work on the island this year were treated to a beautiful rainbow over the lighthouse after a brief rain shower.

Above and left: photos courtesy of Greg Robinson



Left: Volunteers on South Solitary Island in between cleaning and painting July 2019

Photo courtesy Gail Yager



Left: Denis did a wonderful job on all the detail work painting the trims



Paul working on the ceilings



The South Solitary Island lightstation by night – photo courtesy of Paul Van Den Boom

Volunteer Effort

The National Parks and Wildlife Service Coffs Coast Area Manager, Glenn Storrie, recently shared the results of their Volunteering Annual Report with FOSSIL.

“This has been our biggest year in terms of volunteer numbers, projects and hours contributed,” Glenn said. Coffs Coast Area supported 31 diverse projects over 2018/2019 with a volunteer workforce of 366 people and a total contribution of 5,788 volunteer hours. At the rate of \$35 per hour this equates to a massive \$202,580 value of effort.

FOSSIL members made the most significant contribution with a total of 48 volunteers and 798 hours of effort recorded.

There are more than six million Australians who volunteer, and they make an extraordinary contribution to Australian society. The NPWS Coffs Coast Area has one of the largest and most diverse regional volunteer programs in the state. “I would like to acknowledge and thank all the volunteers” Glenn said. “They do things as diverse as assisting with administrative duties in the office to bush regeneration, rescue of shearwaters, maintaining South Solitary Island lighthouse buildings and spotting for koalas.”



Photo courtesy of NPWS

The Area certainly offer a great diversity of conservation projects to their volunteers. Besides FOSSIL, they also partner with Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare, WIRES, Dolphin Marine Conservation Park, ORRCA and Coffs Harbour City Council.

“Together with our massive volunteer workforce we achieve amazing things for nature conservation on the mid north coast of New South Wales.”



Volunteers on Dunecare Day 2018 (photo courtesy of NPWS)

NPWS COFFS COAST AREA VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019

Program Name	Volunteer Hours	Volunteers	Service Program
Valla Beach Bushcare Group	195	13	Pest and Weed Management
Woopi Creek Bushcare Group -Sherwood NR	113	4	Pest and Weed Management
Friends of Muttonbird Island -Research	61	5	Saving Our Species
Friends of Muttonbird Island - Fledging season	361	53	Saving Our Species
Marine Incidents	0	0	Saving Our Species
Ararwarra Dunecare	37	8	Pest and Weed Management
Ararwarra Headland	0	2	Pest and Weed Management
Mullawarra Dunecare	206	15	Pest and Weed Management
Mullaway North Dunecare	62	2	Pest and Weed Management
Fuller Street Landcare	370	16	Pest and Weed Management
Safety Beach Dunecare	81	5	Pest and Weed Management
Woolgoolga Back Beach Dunecare	170	3	Pest and Weed Management
Sapphire Reserve Landcare	101	13	Pest and Weed Management
Gaagal Little Tern Recovery	48	1	Biodiversity and Wildlife Management
Bongil Little Tern Recovery	0	3	Biodiversity and Wildlife Management
Serenity Landcare	78	8	Pest and Weed Management
Sandy Beach Dunecare	558	3	Pest and Weed Management
Pacific Villas Landcare	102	3	Pest and Weed Management
Darkum Beach Landcare	476	2	Pest and Weed Management
Macauleys Headland Landcare	118	7	Pest and Weed Management
CCA Hit Team	126	17	Reserve Infrastructure & Maintenance
Friends of South Solitary Islands maint & guides	798	48	Heritage Conservation & Connecting Communities
South Sol Bush Regenerators	315	5	Pest and Weed Management
Bongil Community Koala Surveys	500	52	Saving Our Species
Emerald Beach Dunecare	128	5	Pest and Weed Management
Kororo Basin Landcare Kororo NR	30	14	Pest and Weed Management
Tree Parents Project Bongil	487	50	Biodiversity and Wildlife Management
Coramba Rainforest Guardians	34	6	Pest and Weed Management
Mal Dwyer Dorrigo NP Plateau	120	1	Pest and Weed Management
Charlie England Dorrigo NP Rosewood	100	1	Pest and Weed Management
Admin Support	16	1	
Total	5,788	366	\$202,580 @ \$35 per hour



Left: FOSSIL volunteers at South Solitary Island in August 2019

Photo Paul Van Den Boom

MORE INFORMATION & Membership Enquiries

Friends of South Solitary Island Lighthouse

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