

Mud Islands Times

Number 31 July 2006



Friends of Mud Islands Committee Members

Brooke Connor

Nola Haines

Kate Laing

Deb Singleton

Donna and Steve Smithyman

Felicity Thyer

Megan Underwood

Chris Wales

Calendar of events to Jan 07

The Group go to the Islands on the fourth Sunday of every month.

Because the boat will only carry eleven people, bookings must be made with the trips organiser, Brooke Connor or Donna Smithyman by the Wednesday evening prior to the Working Bee (see above for contact numbers).

July 23rd - Waders Study Group
August 27th - Weeding trip to MI

August 28th - AGM at Ocean Grove Nature Reserve at 7.30pm

September 24th - Weeding trip to MI
October 22nd - Weeding trip to MI
October 23rd - Committee Meeting at the Ocean Grove Nature reserve at 7.30 pm
November 26th - Sea grass monitoring

December 1st - The group will meet at the Portarlington Hotel at 7.30 pm for an end-of-year get-together.

2007

January 25th - Australia Day clean-up Mud Islands
February 25th - some day early in February, Waders Study Group Bird Count
March 11th - Weeding trip to MI
March 25th - Weeding trip to MI

Meet the boat in Queenscliff at 10.40am near the corner of Harbour St and Larkin Parade at the lower landing on the ferry side of the orange pilot boats.

Watch this space for developments of the harbour and how this may affect the boat meeting place.

New members are always welcome – see the membership form at the end of this newsletter.

Current members - please pay the annual membership as soon as possible (due June 30) for the next financial year. \$10 individual and \$15 family. Donations always welcome.

Standby for an announcement of a special trip in the near future to help weed on South Channel Fort.

Mud Islands a Blast from the past!

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An indigenous and cultural heritage survey of Mud Islands on Monday 8th May, unearthed something a little more than expected! A potentially explosive ordnance was found partially exposed in the sand on the shoreline of the north island. As a result of the discovery the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group (Army) were contacted, and without hesitation organised for a representative from the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group to visit the islands and assess the situation. After a bit of digging around the buried object with a plastic trowel it was identified as a 10inch artillery projectile or 'shell' as fired from the coastal defence guns such as those at Portsea.

It was most likely fired from Portsea (some time between about 1900 & 1930, as later shells use a different style of Fuse) - the fact that it had more rust, crud & barnacles on the base than the sides suggests that it has been rolled by the tide & currents on the sea-floor at some stage, so it probably didn't initially land where it was found, but washed up with the deposition of the dune sometime since then. The guns at South Channel were 8inch and an older-style of gun that used 'studded'-shells, as are the disappearing guns at Queenscliff. There is a small possibility it was fired from a shipboard gun, but a ship would usually take the opportunity to go out in open ocean to shoot, rather than play in the shallows.

With the projectile and some military history understood, it was time for removal. To safely dispose of the ordnance the explosive's expert set and fired a small charge to the base of the ordnance. This involved positioning explosive material to the base of the ordnance, running out an electrical line to a safe distance, digging in and detonating the explosive. In the interest of safety, Rod Beazley and I were asked to position ourselves 2.5kms offshore from the site. We remained in telephone contact and were informed just prior to the charge being fired. The ordnance proved to contain no explosive material, but we did see a small explosion. The shell remained intact, the

problem now was removal! Due to the weight of the shell it was decided that the most appropriate method was to use break it up in to smaller manageable pieces this was to be done with more explosives. Rod and I once again were positioned offshore, further charges were positioned strategically around the shell and detonated, this time creating a much larger explosion. The next inspection revealed a rather decent hole in the ground and numerous small pieces of metal, a quick tidy up of the site and the mission was complete.

As we departed the islands we noticed the police vessel positioned to our west, we made our way over for a quick rendezvous and were informed that the explosion was heard in Portsea! It must have raised a few eyebrows as the police helicopter even made an appearance overhead. We then assisted the police by towing their vessel from the sandbar in which it was stuck and made our way back to Queenscliff. Just another diverse day for Rangers on the bay!



Easy does it! Exposing the unidentified ordnance



The ordnance exposed.



The aftermath post bomb disposal

Photos of a recent fire on South Channel Fort



**Birds observed on Mud Islands
5 February 2006**

Observers:
Peter Menkhorst
Euan Moore
Jennifer Rolland
Annette Hatten
plus other members of FoMI

Note that full coverage was not achieved because the tide was falling when we arrived and the shorebirds had already dispersed widely across the mudflats making close observation and accurate counts very difficult.

Species	Estimate of numbers present
Black Swan	600
Little Pied Cormorant	15
Pied Cormorant	22
Australian Pelican	550, breeding
White-faced Heron	15
Little Egret	2
Australian White Ibis	500
Straw-necked Ibis	1
Royal Spoonbill	5 adults, 6 nestlings
Swamp Harrier	2
Spotless Crake	1
Bar-tailed Godwit	1500
Marsh Sandpiper	6
Common Greenshank	40
Ruddy Turnstone	25
Great Knot	15
Red Knot	75
Sanderling	2
Red-necked Stint	900
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	350
Curlew Sandpiper	180
Pied Oystercatcher	8
Sooty Oystercatcher	1
Pacific Golden Plover	15
Grey Plover	40
Red-capped Plover	5
Pacific Gull	12
Silver Gull	28
Crested Tern	25
Fairy Tern	45
Little Tern	1
Welcome Swallow	7
Little Grassbird	9
Golden-headed Cisticola	16

Membership Type (tick one)
 Student & Pensioner \$5
 Single \$10
 Family* \$15

Please accept my donation of :
 \$20 \$50 \$100
other \$ _____

Enclosed is a cheque/money order/cash
for: \$ _____

As part of my membership I wish to receive:
1. notification of the group's monthly
activities
 yes no
2. The "Mud Islands Times"
 yes no

Name:

Telephone number:

Postal Address:

Post Code: _____

Please provide your email address, so we
can easily and cheaply contact you about
our activities.

Email:

Names of the individuals this membership
covers:

I/we agree to be bound by the constitution
of Friends of Mud Islands Inc. during
my/our membership. Our remittance for
membership is enclosed herewith.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

*Family membership's include 2 adults & all
children under 19 years of age at same
address. **Membership period is the
standard financial year.

OFFICE USE ONLY
Date Received:
Added to membership register Y/N

Photos from the March Working Bee



FOMI New Web Site

See <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fomi/> for our
new web site. This site is still
underdevelopment – keep an eye on
progress. If you have any photos or
information that we can include on the site,
please send to fthyer@yahoo.com.