



Winter Newsletter 2006

Radar boys make return trip to bunker

A DOZEN veterans will return to Cape Otway to shed light on a little known chapter of Australian war history involving German mines, Japanese submarines, and a concrete radar bunker known as The Doover.

Fresh out of radar school, Peter Yeomans served at the Cape's Number 13 RAAF Radar Station in early '43. It's now 63 years since he served there, and Mr Yeomans is eager to make his first return visit to the refurbished Doover with his radar mates. They will dedicate a plaque to the personnel who tracked Japanese submarines at the Cape as

part of Australia's Coastal Defences from 1942-45.

The bunker has been refurbished by the Lightstation's operators who are keen to meet with the veterans and hear their stories at a ceremony on Saturday, August 19.

Mr Yeomans likens his time at The Doover to labour.

"It's like childbirth, you only remember the good bits," he said.

"I saw a lot of Japanese subs plying the Strait, they used to come up on moonlit nights and charge their batteries.

"They were following the BP iron ore boats going up to Woolongong and Port Kembla.

"As far as I know we never saw anything of the Germans. The Japanese were looking for the Queen Elizabeth and the Queen Mary bringing the troops back from the Middle East, at least that's what we thought they were looking for."

The radar station was built in 1942 after the US merchant navy vessel the SS City of Rayville was sunk by a German mine off Cape Otway.



Could you murder a three course dinner?

LIKE your drinks and mysteries served "on the rocks"? Then you'll want to be part of Cape Otway Lightstation's sunset tour and murder mystery dinner set on board the Titanic.

The Lightstation is hosting a murder mystery dinner party themed around the most famous shipwreck of all time.

Lightstation manager Paul Thompson said the dinner on Saturday, August 19, would be based on the theft of the Heart of the Ocean Diamond.

"Rumour has it the Scarlet Pimpernel has been smuggled on board among the exclusive first class passengers, or may even be among the seedy third class voyagers," Mr Thompson said.

"When a body is discovered it's time to call in Inspector Sherman Jones to solve the crime.

"Everyone who comes to the dinner becomes a character and they will receive a secret document to brief them on their part in the night.

"The talented team of actors create a fun atmosphere, where the guests are encouraged to take part in solving the crime, without doing the time."

The three-course meal is \$65 and will be served in the historic Lightkeeper's Cottage Café. Bookings are essential.



See the first lightkeeper get his marching orders

HISTORY will come alive for children at Cape Otway Lightstation as International Lighthouse Weekend celebrations take-off around the globe this week.

Kids can meet a member of the Morse Codian Fraternity and ask them to tap out a message to friends or family anywhere in the world.

The highly entertaining Colonial Infantry Brigade and Heritage Police will re-enact the sacking of the first lightkeeper Lieutenant

Lawrence, who was fired for drunken behaviour and ungentlemanly language.

Between 9am and 5pm both days families can climb the spiral staircase to the top of the iconic lighthouse, built in 1848.

They can see the giant lens up-close, and keep watch for whales from the observation deck.

The local Koori community will speak with children about their heritage and culture.

Free face-painting will follow storytime both

days. Kids can also discover what it's like to be the Cape's weatherman.



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Highlight of the Great Ocean Road - Café Tours Accommodation Events Schools

Governor to launch indigenous pathway

VICTORIA'S Governor Professor David de Kretser will officially launch the Cape Otway Lightstation's Koori Heritage Trail on August 31 during his two day visit to Colac Otway Shire.

The Lightstation has just won some Federal Government funding to build the walking trail and has invited Governor de Kretser to launch the exciting new project which will include creative

signage, a re-created indigenous campsite, a ceremony/gathering area and other sculptural and art works.

Lightstation manager Paul Thompson said the walk would be developed in partnership with local indigenous groups.

The 98ha lightstation precinct is part of the traditional lands of the Gadubanud people.

The Koori trail will explain the connections

between archaeological data and the ways indigenous people lived.

It will emphasise the impact of European settlement on indigenous culture in the Otways, plus tell stories of the Dreaming and spirit ancestors.

It is intended that the walking trail will promote the site as a place to learn about indigenous culture both for national and international tourists and school groups.



What's new?

Cape Otway Lightstation has a new-look website with improved access to information about the historic precinct, plus nearby attractions.

Check it out at www.lightstation.com

An audiovisual room has been set up in the Lightkeeper's Cottage Café so visitors can enjoy a DVD about the lightstation's history and its people.

Whales spotted

Humpbacks and Southern Right whales have been spotted within 400 metres of the lighthouse during their annual migration this winter. The giant mammals, can easily be spotted from the lighthouse deck, as they send water spouting metres into the sky. They have been spotted on calm days.

Young keepers take on quest

Another four Melbourne schools have signed up for the Lighthouse Keeper's Quest, an experiential learning program, written and conducted by Lightstation manager Paul Thompson.

During the Quest children are transported in time to 1848 when the first Lightkeeper Lieutenant James Ross Lawrence was fired.

They suddenly find themselves in charge of securing supplies and keeping the lighthouse lit to prevent further shipwrecks on this notorious coastline.

The expeditions, which run for between two and five days, are set in the historical context of keeping the Lightstation operational after Lawrence's dismissal.

The outdoor education program, designed to teach children problem-solving, team-work and communication skills, caters for primary and high school children.

Mr Thompson said most of the schools which had brought children to the Lightkeeper's Quest this year had already booked again for next year.

Did you know?

WHEN the SS Lady Bird collided with the English steamer Champion off Cape Otway on August 24, 1857, 32 people were drowned.

Survivors told many tragic stories, however on a lighter note, the Second Mate of the Lady Bird rescued the stewardess of the Champion and they were later married. A racehorse aboard Champion broke loose, swam seven miles to the shore, and raced again in the Western District.



A classic night

CAPE Otway Lightstation sponsored Roger Woodward's July 7 recital at Colac Performing Arts and Cultural Centre.

Woodward is pictured above with the Lightstation's manager Paul Thompson and CEO Jenny Bowker.

Internationally renowned Australian pianist Woodward, wowed the sell-out COPACC audience who gave him a standing ovation.

Woodward, who spends most of his time in San Francisco, joined hundreds of people at a post-show supper provided by the Lighthouse.

He jetted off to recording studios in Germany the following day with a poster of the lighthouse, a fleece and cap all bearing the lighthouse logo.

As part of the Lightstation's sponsorship a substantial pictorial exhibition on the history of the lighthouse, the radar bunker and the telegraph station was mounted in the COPACC gallery.

Up to 2000 people enjoyed the month-long exhibition.

Colac Primary School took four classes on excursion to see the exhibition to complement their transport studies.

The children were fascinated by the stories of European migrants long voyages and lighthouse supplies being hauled along the beach by bullock drays.

The media always loves a good story

JOURNALISTS, documentary makers and reality TV producers continue to beat a path to the Lightstation's front door.

National Geographic's Adventure Magazine is to publish a feature on the Lightstation in February.

Nexus a TV program produced by the ABC for

Australia Network and broadcast daily throughout the Asia Pacific region is also working on a program about the lightstation.

Sultan Sushi the Belgium-based reality TV production company is making a return visit for the series Wedding in Australia, only this time they will be featuring

Dutch couples. The program, destined for the Netherlands' Net5 will feature a couple hoping to win a wedding DownUnder on a daytrip to the Lightstation.

Filming will take place on October 14 and will include scenes of a lucky couple taking off from the Lightstation in a helicopter.

All Day Saturday and Sunday

Telegraph Station (1859)

Send telegrams to anywhere in the world courtesy of the Morse Codian Fraternity and Telstra Countrywide.

Self Guided Tours

Entire Lightstation grounds including the Lighthouse.

Koori Dreaming

Understand why the Cape is one of the most unique Aboriginal cultural sights.

Radio Operators

Contacting Lighthouses all over the world.

Saturday & Sunday 11am, 2pm, 3pm, 4pm

Guided Lightstation Tours

Gain a real insight into the importance of the Lighthouse, Telegraph Station, the navigational difficulties of early mariners and the stories of people that lived here.

11.00am Saturday & 1.00pm Sunday

KIDZONE @ the Cape

Free face painting & story time "The Lightkeepers Lunch" & "Kira the Koala".

Hear these stories read by our very own Lightkeepers.

1.30 - 4.00pm Saturday

Howlin Wind

Australia's leading Flute player inspired by journeys along the Great Ocean Road and beyond.

12pm, 1pm & 2pm Sunday

Steve Crombi

Singer song writer performing songs inspired from the Bass Strait and Southern Ocean fishing days.

2.30 - 3.30pm Saturday

WWII Radar Bunker Dedication

13 Radar Station Cape Otway. Dedication Plaque to those RAAF personnel who served here during World War II. Stories, speeches and music.

3.00 - 4.00pm Saturday & 12.00 - 1.00pm Sunday

Weather Station Tours

"Gale force winds west of Cape Otway" ... speak to the man who has been recording the weather here for years and see some of the equipment that aids weather forecasting.

5.15pm Saturday

Sunset Lightstation Tour & Murder Mystery Dinner

The Titanic - That Sinking Feeling ... A themed dinner about the mysterious murder? on the Titanic.

Bookings essential, phone (03) 5237 9240

