



Winter Newsletter 2009

International Lighthouse Weekend, celebrating lighthouses and the people that worked in them, is back at Cape Otway on **August 15 & 16**. Learn more about our fascinating history. Keep watch for passing whales. Join our ghostbusters.



Australian Ghost Adventures'
Gary Sullivan

Investigators lead hunt for ghosts

TWO paranormal investigators and a psychic medium, armed with ghostbusting gear plan to make contact with an 'intelligent haunting' at this year's International Lighthouse Weekend at Cape Otway.

Australian Ghost Adventures' paranormal detective Gary Sullivan and his team will offer ghostbusting tours on Saturday, August 15, at 5:30pm and 8:30pm.

Bookings are recommended as the ghost tours sold out last year.

Mr Sullivan said while there were a lot of 'residual hauntings' at the 1848 lighthouse and in surrounding buildings, intelligent hauntings were more exciting because they interacted with ghostbusters.

Mr Sullivan's team had a close encounter last year with the ghost of a girl.

"What's supposed to have happened is a young girl, aged four, died around 1870 to 1880," Mr Sullivan said.

"They had to wait days and days for the coroner to arrive on horseback.

"They put her in a cupboard on the

windward side of the house. She is an intelligent haunting - she knows you're there and will interact.

"Last year two of our girls were sitting on the floor in that room, so as not to intimidate her, and they both simultaneously heard a child's voice, and we caught their reactions on camera. They're both mums with a motherly instinct and they both started crying."

Mr Sullivan said he was looking forward to working with a psychic medium at the Lightstation.

"We call them psychic profilers because they pick up on residual hauntings - these ghosts are like an imprint, they won't ever go away," he added.

Mr Sullivan said residual hauntings, of which there were many at Cape Otway, accounted for stories of ghosts were seen in the same place, many times, by different people, always doing the same thing.

To book a ghost tour call the Lightstation on 5237 9240.

Colonial infantrymen back on watch

THE VICTORIAN Colonial Infantry kept a careful eye on the Lightstation in the mid 1850s-60s because it played such an important role in ensuring ships safely negotiated the treacherous Shipwreck Coast unscathed and safely landed the Colony's newcomers in Melbourne.

During the Lighthouse Weekend the Victorian Colonial Infantry Association, a reenactment troop and band of keen history buffs, will be back on watch.

They will set up camp near the Telegraph Station, ensure the Lightkeeper's doing his job properly, field questions from visitors, and help people trace historical information on ancestors who served with the infantry.

Corporal Tom Corfmat said few people were aware Victoria had its own navy and infantry prior to Federation.

"From 1870 onwards the British troops pulled out of Australia and the Colonial forces were responsible for the land defence of the colonies of Australia until the Australian Army was formed after Federation in 1900," Corporal Corfmat said.

"There were Victorian Rifles across the region in Belfast, which is now Port Fairy, Portland and Warrnambool.

"We feel they patrolled the area because of the Lightstation's importance, although we don't know for how often or how long."

Each year the troop's camp and parades are a popular feature of the Lighthouse Weekend.

Children are fascinated by the uniforms, tiny stretcher beds, cramped tents, plus the harsh and exposed living conditions the infantry endured.



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'Beacon of Hope' for hungry riders



THE LIGHTSTATION is a major drawcard in The Rainforest Ride - an event being billed as 'The most spectacular road riding event in the country'.

Up to 1,000 cyclists from across Victoria are expected to join one of four rides in the Rainforest series, which begin and end in Apollo Bay on Saturday, November 21.

The 140km Rainforest Circuit, for hard core and truly determined riders, will head up a punishing path onto the top of the Otways, travel along 'The Ridge' and then descend to sea level along the Great Ocean Road heading back to Apollo Bay, with a side-trip to the Lightstation.

Another, aimed at road touring riders and families, is the 70km loop Lighthouse Discovery Ride which passes through lush cool temperate rainforest, ridge-top farms,

towering eucalypt forests, coastal heathlands and ultimately the Lightstation.

Traditionally known as a 'beacon of hope' by seafarers, the Lightkeeper's Café will have a similar significance to hungry riders. It will have plenty of home-made food and the usual range of teas, coffees, cold drinks and water to help riders re-fuel before heading back to the Bay.

The event was designed by Rapid Ascent which is responsible for the Anaconda Adventure Race in Lorne each December which attracts a field of 1,200 and the Otway Odyssey which brought 1,750 riders to the region in February.

The Rainforest Ride will benefit the Burnet Institute which is fighting 'the big three' - HIV, TB and malaria.

For details see www.rainforestride.com

We've had a whale of a year

IN SPITE of the hit tourism is taking during the global economic crisis Cape Otway Lightstation has set a new record in 2008/09 with visitor numbers topping 84,000.

Lightstation manager Paul Thompson said annual visitor numbers had jumped by almost 3,000 since last year and the heritage precinct's accommodation occupancy rates were also up by 25 per cent.

"We've just had our biggest year ever, both in visitor numbers and revenue," Mr Thompson said.

"Generally there's a bit of doom and gloom out there, but we're bucking the trend."

Although the number of international visitors was down on previous years, Mr Thompson said Victorians had taken up the slack.

"People are holidaying at home in response to the recession, our international markets are down, our interstate market is static, and we're definitely getting more people from within Victoria."

Mr Thompson owed the Lightstation's



success to its commitment to constant improvements and careful restoration work on the 1848 lighthouse, Telegraph Station and World War Two Radar Bunker, plus a new coastal cliff walking trail.

"People comment on the improvements that have been made, and a lot of people return and bring friends and family with them," he said.

"People are also looking for winter and summer experiences at Cape Otway - it's beautiful in the summer and stepping out onto the lighthouse balcony in high winds is quite invigorating in the winter.

"We're seeing whales almost every day now, which is a great drawcard. Some days they've been very close. "The lighthouse balcony is 80m above the sea and makes for a great whale-viewing platform."

Mr Thompson said advance bookings at the Lightstation for October to February were strong. He expects the Lightstation to be busy in spring and summer.

Lots of fun for kids

THERE'RE lots of activities for kids at Cape Otway's International Lighthouse Weekend, with craft, story time and musical workshops.

Kids love meeting the Morse Code operators at the historic Cape Otway Telegraph Station where they can send a telegram to friends and family anywhere in the world.

In these days of SMS and Twitter, the dots and dashes of Morse Code are a reminder of the contemporary communications revolution.

Kids also get a kick out of seeing radio operators make contact with colleagues at lighthouses around the world, as they too celebrate their heritage.

A regular performer at maritime festivals, Geoff d'Ombrain (pictured below) is an Old Salt who has a passion for performing and music education. He will offer music workshops for children during the weekend. A former music lecturer, Geoff plays a great variety of instruments. Children find his original and traditional folk songs, and musical antics fascinating.



Great Otway getaways

MAKE your trip to International Lighthouse Weekend at the Cape an Otways adventure.

The Lightstation has teamed up with a range of accommodation and activity providers to ensure you have an excellent weekend away.

See www.lightstation.com/packages for great deals on accommodation, ghost tours, dinners. You can even make a grand entrance by riding a horse into the Lightstation or go off-road on a Lightkeeper's Shipwreck Discovery Tour.

Lessons on lightkeeping

STUDENTS from Victoria, Australia and overseas will spend time at the Lightstation this spring and summer, learning about the trials and tribulations of the early lightkeepers.

Find out more about our Quest Skills for Life experiential learning program at www.lightstation.com

