



## Winter Newsletter 2010

This winter we're having a bumper whale season at Cape Otway, spotting Southern Rights & Humpbacks almost daily. Follow our sightings on [twitter.com/capeotwaylight](http://twitter.com/capeotwaylight)

### Opera stars to perform popular arias at Lightstation



CAPE Otway Lightstation is presenting the Victorian Opera in a gala concert of the most-loved operatic and Broadway favourites amongst the spectacular surrounds of the lighthouse.

At Opera in the Otways, on Saturday, October 16, Victorian Opera's music director Richard Gill will conduct some of the State's finest voices, accompanied by a full orchestra for a concert of popular arias, duets, and ensemble pieces.

The State opera company's programme will include songs from household favourites Rigoletto, La bohème, The Magic Flute and Carmen, plus Broadway hits Oklahoma, The King and I, Oliver, A Little Night Music, and The Threepenny Opera.

The gala will feature a choir of the region's school children who will perform on the evening alongside professional artists who have just appeared in Victorian Opera's recent, acclaimed productions including Julius Caesar and The Turn of the Screw.

Richard Gill has promised a rousing performance at Australia's most significant lighthouse, adding: "Performing in regional

Victoria is one of the most vital aspects of Victorian Opera's work. We want to inspire a whole generation of artists and audiences throughout all of Victoria."

In addition to Victorian Opera there will be a fun programme of roving performers and main-stage entertainment, highlighting some of the region's talented performers. Free activities will be provided for children.

Opera in the Otways is synonymous with good food and wine, and this year people will be spoiled for choice. The region's best produce, wine, beer and hand-made gourmet delicacies will be served at a Paddock to Plate celebration at the Lightstation on October 16.

Tickets to Opera in the Otways will be available online at [ticketmaster.com.au](http://ticketmaster.com.au) or at the Apollo Bay and Colac Visitor Information Centres.

For more information on this exciting event see [www.otwaysopera.com.au](http://www.otwaysopera.com.au) where there will be information on some great package offers for Opera in the Otways and accommodation. For regular updates follow the event on Twitter: @otwaysopera

### Win a family movie pass and great getaway to the Cape

WE'RE offering the ultimate prize for Australian movie buffs - win a family pass to see Lord of the Rings star Miranda Otto's latest film South Solitary, plus a family weekend break staying on location at the Lightstation.

Just released, South Solitary was written and directed by Camera D'Or winner Shirley Barrett, and stars Miranda's father Barry Otto, plus Marton Csokas from Lord of the Rings and Romulus My Father.

South Solitary follows Meredith (Miranda Otto), unmarried and 35, who arrives at a remote lighthouse island in 1927 to assist her uncle Wadsworth (Barry Otto), in his new post as head lightkeeper.

Bad weather and misadventure leave Meredith marooned on the desolate island - all alone with the sullen and withdrawn

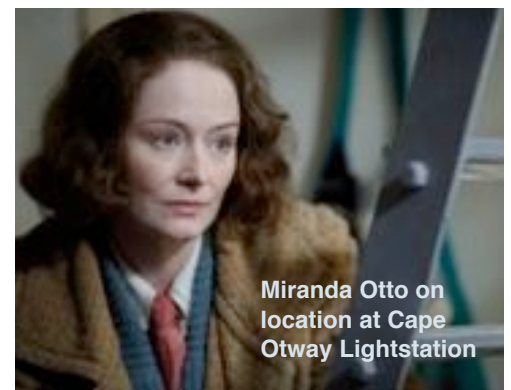
assistant keeper Fleet (Marton Csokas) for company.

It's a windswept and gentle comedy romance about the great human need for companionship.

The winner of our South Solitary competition will win accommodation for two adults and two children, staying at the heritage precinct.

Items from the set remain on display in the lighthouse which was one of two used in the filming of South Solitary last year.

For a chance at winning the movie passes, accommodation and breakfast prize package, valued at \$450, answer this simple question: Name two actors who appeared in both Lord of the Rings and South Solitary. Send your answer to South Solitary Competition, Cape Otway Lightstation, PO



Miranda Otto on location at Cape Otway Lightstation

Box 41, Apollo Bay, 3233. Entries close August 20. The two nights' accommodation at the Lightstation must be claimed by December 24.

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Former Lightkeeper  
Jack Waites recalls  
surviving an explosive  
night at Cape Otway

## Jack's big bang theory

WHEN Jack Waites became a lightkeeper in the mid Sixties, he was looking for adventure, but didn't expect to be blown up.

He was serving at Cape Otway in the late Sixties and on one foggy night, he began preparing a fog rocket to warn ships of their proximity to land when all hell broke loose. A magnesium fuse sparked an explosion which saw Jack blown clear of the rocket shed, along with its walls.

Jack says occupational health and safety left a lot to be desired during his two-and-a-half years with the Commonwealth Lighthouse Service.

He received less than 10 minutes' training on how to prepare hand-made fog rockets, which needed to be assembled and fired every 20 minutes during foggy conditions.

Like a glorified sky rocket, the fog rockets were made using a 20cm long cylinder which was filled with an explosive charge of tonite. A fuse of magnesium was then plugged into the detonator and lit before being placed in a piece of water pipe set at an angle in the ground.

"I lit the magnesium and she started spitting, it spat over into a half a box of detonators," Jack said.

"It blew the walls out of the shed, I didn't know if I was on my way to heaven or hell."

Miraculously Jack survived, but remembers nothing of the explosion.

"I don't know what happened next, apart

from a big bang which perforated my left ear drum - it still gives me trouble today. I had singed hair and eyebrows."

Jack's wife Glenys was pregnant with their second son, and slept through the event.

Jack says the rocket shed was always an accident waiting to happen.

There was no power supply to the shed. So that Jack could see to make the rockets he had to run an extension cord along the ground, through the heath to the shed which was located just metres east of the lighthouse.

"The whole process was a bit of a trauma. Straight away I felt guilty that I'd done this. Technically it was my fault," he said.

He said the use of fog rockets at Australian lighthouses was banned from that day.

A few months later Jack, Glenys and their two boys left the Lightstation and returned to their former home in Greensborough, near Melbourne. They left the service so that their eldest son could start school.

Although Jack found many aspects of the job mundane, and didn't like the military style of management enforced when he served at Gabo Island, King Island, Wilsons Promontory and Cape Otway, he and Glenys have happy memories of life at these rugged and isolated outposts.

"I just loved the freedom of wandering around - it was an amazing experience," Jack said.

## Weekend celebrates world's lighthouses

INTERNATIONAL Lighthouse Weekend at Cape Otway on August 21 & 22 gives visitors an exciting look at life and communication from a bygone era.

Families get a kick out of joining our after dark ghost-busting tours, visiting the 1850s camp of the Victorian Colonial Infantry, sending Morse Code messages to friends and family around the globe, and learning about life of the early lightkeepers and their families.

Kids love pitting their texting skills against those of the veteran Morse Codian Fraternity and can listen in while radio operators make contact with lighthouses around the world.

Both the Infantry Association and Characters of the Cape will perform heritage re-enactments of the life and times of early pioneers at the Lightstation.

There is a free craft corner for children and a very good chance of spotting whales from the lighthouse balcony more than 80 metres above the Southern Ocean.

The Lightstation's Telegraph Station, Radar Bunker and Lightkeeper's Café are open all weekend.

Additional activities, such as the heritage reenactments are included in the standard entry fee of adults \$16.50, school-aged children \$7.50, family of four \$41.50, concessions \$14.50. Pre-schoolers free.



Children enjoy meeting Colonial Infantryman Sgt Major Geoff Gleadall

## Characters of the Cape bring history alive with enchanting performances



ACTORS are bringing to life the fascinating true stories of Cape Otway characters at the Lightstation.

Historical records, court cases and biographical information were researched to recreate the characters' stories.

Actors perform the lives and times of Henry Bayles Ford who won the superintendent's job - a watch that lasted 30 years from 1848.

Ford's extraordinary wife Mary Anne Ford, is also portrayed. She gave birth to seven children at the remote outpost, nursed shipwrecked sailors and tended the lighthouse when her husband's assistant keepers disappeared to join the Gold Rush.

Lightstation visitors also meet Rose Ann Hyland, one of a handful of survivors from

the female convict ship Neva, wrecked in 1835.

James Lawrence, the Cape's very first lightkeeper who was sacked for 'ungentlemanly' conduct, also appears.

Other Characters of the Cape include Charles La Trobe, the first Governor of Port Phillip, who helped forge a route to Cape Otway, and French Commander Nicolas Baudin who failed to make territorial claims on behalf of Napoleon Bonaparte.

Katherine Evans, the wife of an assistant lightkeeper, will also appear. Two of her children, who died within a year, are buried in the Cape Otway cemetery.

The characters appear daily. See our website for more details.