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RecollectionS
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The Lighthouse and Lighthouse Keeper's Cottage at 'Elladulla', 1902. Image: State Library of South Australia

'A Highway of Light'

There is something decidedly romantic about lighthouses. Perhaps it's the function they serve – helping to keep seafarers safe. Perhaps it's their design – everything from squat little buildings to towering edifices to modern skeletal towers, no two ever being exactly the same. Perhaps it's their location – usually remote, often at the very edge of a perpetually storm-battered cliff. Perhaps it's the captivating stories of intrepid lighthouse keepers (and their families) – enduring loneliness, facing unusual dangers and unexpected surprises.

And, the histories of lighthouses are just as enthralling.

The South Coast of NSW certainly has its share of lighthouses – a number with most unusual histories, that we are now pleased to share.

Our journey starts to the north of the South Coast:

Kiama Lighthouse

It took 17 years to construct a harbour at Kiama. When it was completed in 1878 shipping to the area increased substantially and the need for a lighthouse soon became apparent.

The site selected for the new lighthouse, on Blowhole Point, meant that the town's showground (then on what must have been one of the state's most spectacular locations!) had to be relocated.

Most NSW lighthouses at that time were designed by the Colonial Architect's Office. But Kiama's wasn't. It was designed by the Chief Engineer of the Marine Board, Edward Moriarty.

The lighthouse is a modest 15.5 metres in height, with the light 36.5 metres above sea level.

Fantastic Reads

The original lamp, installed in 1886, was imported from England. It had an intensity of 600 candlepower and was visible for 9 miles (14.5km).

The lamp was upgraded to run on town gas in 1908. This enabled the light to then be seen for 15 miles (24km). This modification had the added advantage that the light did not need to be continuously monitored.

Kiama Lighthouse Image: Kiama Library

In 1920 the light was upgraded again so it could be powered with acetylene gas and, at the same time, the tower was totally de-manned. In the 1930s the lighthouse keeper's cottage – in which a lighthouse keeper had never lived because the Harbour Pilot kept watch over the light (the Harbour Pilot lived nearby in the Pilot's Cottage [now the Pilot's Cottage Museum]) – was turned into a kiosk. It was demolished in the late 1980s.

In 1969 electricity was connected to the light, boosting its intensity to 28,000 candlepower which provides visibility to 30km.

Crookhaven Lighthouse

The Crookhaven Lighthouse is on the southern headland at the mouth of the Crookhaven River which, because the mouth of the Shoalhaven River is often closed by a sandbar, carries much of the water from the Shoalhaven River into the ocean.

In 1872 local boatman erected a brass lantern with a red light on poles at the river entrance. This was replaced with a timber lighthouse as part of the Shoalhaven Signal Station in 1882.

The Crookhaven Lighthouse c. 1908

In 1904 the wooden lighthouse was demolished and a new brick lighthouse was erected nearby. It utilised the lamp from the former Cape St George Lighthouse (see below) that had been demolished five years earlier. The Crookhaven Lighthouse is 7 metres tall and stands 22 metres above sea level. Its light is visible for 15km.

In the late 20th century the light was converted to run on solar power.

Cape St George Lighthouse

Ruins are all that remain today of Cape St George Lighthouse, on the southern headland of Jervis Bay. The lighthouse may have gone, but its remaining legacy is a particularly fascinating history.

The Cape St George Lighthouse was a three-storey lighthouse designed by the Colonial Architect, Alexander Dawson, that was built in 1860.

After it was completed, it was discovered (or it was formally acknowledged that) it had been built in the wrong position – 4 km north of where it was intended to be. And its light was not visible from the northern approach to Jervis Bay, and was barely visible from the southern approach!

Evidently the builder simply moved the lighthouse to the wrong site because it was closer to the quarry from which he was obtaining his sandstone!!

The light tower sat atop an 8-room complex. The tower was 18.5 metres tall.

From 1860 to 1877, 15 people including the lighthouse keeper, 2 under-keepers and their families lived in this 8-room complex. The oil for the light and other supplies were also stored in the building, so conditions would have been very cramped and uncomfortable. In 1877, a 7-room weatherboard cottage was added to house the head keeper's family.

Supplying the lighthouse was always difficult. The nearest landing place was over 4 kilometres away at Murrays Beach, so horses were needed for transporting mail and supplies, and taking children to and from school. But keeping horses was not easy because there was little grass nearby for feed.

A string of tragic deaths are associated with the lighthouse:

In 1867, Isabella Lee, the daughter of the principal lightkeeper from 1863 to 1873, died of typhoid.

In 1882, 13-year-old George Gibson, died from pleurisy.

In 1885, Florence Bailey, the 11-year-old daughter of the third assistant lightkeeper, also died of typhoid.

Her father, Edward Bailey, supplemented his income by fishing for sharks on the rocks below the lighthouse. In 1895, he was washed from the rocks by heavy seas and became entangled in his fishing lines. He was then taken by sharks whilst his son watched on helplessly.

Francis Hammer, the nine- or ten-year old son of a single woman who lived at the lighthouse, would often amuse himself by pushing large rocks over the cliff edge. One day, whilst doing this, he lost his life when he either toppled over or lost his footing when part of the cliff collapsed.

William Markham, the assistant lightkeeper from about 1878-1883, was kicked in the head by a horse and died before reaching Nowra Hospital.

In 1887, Kate Gibson, the principal lightkeeper's teenage daughter, tripped while skylarking with a loaded gun. It discharged, instantly killing her friend Harriet Parker, the assistant lightkeeper's daughter.

Between 1864 and 1893 (whilst the Cape St George

Lighthouse was in service) 23 ships were wrecked in the vicinity of Jervis Bay. Eventually in 1899, this obviously-ineffective Cape St George Lighthouse was replaced by one at Point Perpendicular, on the northern headland to Jervis Bay.

After the new light became operational, it was considered that having two towers in close proximity to one another would be a hazard to navigation in daylight. So, from 1917 to 1922, the Cape St George Lighthouse Tower was used for target practice by the Royal Australian Navy.

Cape St George Lighthouse

Point Perpendicular Lighthouse

The Point Perpendicular Lighthouse was built in 1899 to replace the incorrectly-sited Cape St George Lighthouse.

It was designed by the Colonial Architect, James Harding. He later designed two other similar lighthouses which were built at Cape Byron and Norah Head.

A new (for Australia) building technique was used for the Point Perpendicular Lighthouse. Pre-cast concrete blocks were made on site from local aggregate and these were then hoisted into position atop a solid concrete base. This construction method reduced costs and construction time.

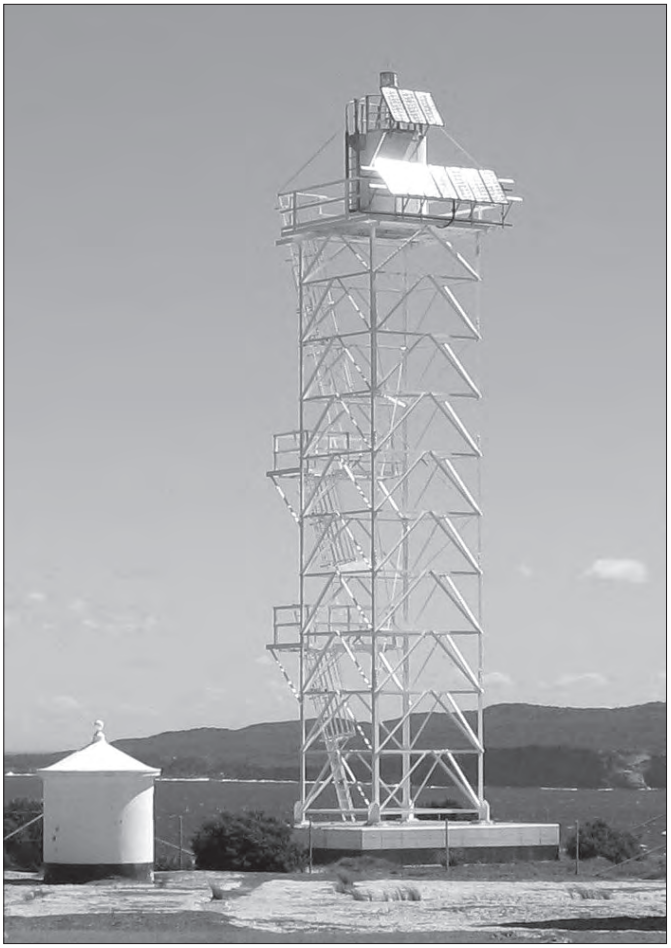
Material for the lighthouse was landed at Bindijine Wharf on Honeymoon Bay on the northern side of Jervis Bay (about 8 km northwest of the lighthouse), and was then taken by horse and cart to Point Perpendicular.

Point Perpendicular Lighthouse in 1917

The original light source was a six-wick concentric oil burner, resulting in a light output of 100,000 candlepower. In 1909 this was converted to a light using pressurised kerosene with an intensity of 1,200,000 candlepower – and,

with only minor changes, this remained the light source until the lighthouse was decommissioned in early 1994.

An automated solar-powered beacon on a 17 metre 'lattice' style tower replaced the old light (which was 21 metres in height) in January 1994. It has a strength of just 14,100 candlepower but is visible to a range of about 48km.



The skeletal tower that replaced Point Perpendicular Lighthouse

Warden Head Lighthouse

Ulladulla Harbour is situated in a natural bay, with several reefs and bomboras across parts of the entrance to the bay. To improve anchorage, a stone pier was built in the bay in 1865 and, because of the loss of several ships and lives as they tried to enter the Ulladulla port, a lighthouse was built on the pier in 1873.

It was designed by Edward Moriarty to essentially the same design as the Wollongong Breakwater Light that was constructed in 1872. Moriarty later designed the lighthouse at Kiama.

Both the Ulladulla Harbour and Wollongong Harbour Lighthouses are unusual in that they were made of curved wrought-iron plates riveted together using ship building techniques, rather than being constructed of masonry or stone. The original oil lamp had an intensity of 800 candlepower.

At the direction of James Barnet, the then Colonial Architect, the Ulladulla Breakwater Lighthouse and a lighthouse keeper's cottage were relocated to Warden Head (Ulladulla's southern headland) in 1889.

In 1920 the original oil lamp was replaced by an automated acetylene gas light and the operation was de-manned. In 1964 the light became electrically operated. Today the light has an intensity of 28,000 candlepower and is visible for a distance of 26 km.

The Warden Head Lighthouse in 1879, in its original position

The lighthouse keeper's cottage at Warden Head was dismantled in 1922 and re-erected in the nearby township of Milton.

Montague Island Lighthouse

As shipping increased along the NSW South Coast in the mid-1800s, pressure increased for a navigation aid to be installed on Montague Island, east of Narooma.

Construction of the lighthouse, designed by Colonial Architect James Barnet, commenced in 1878. It was to be sited on the highest point on the island.

However, the contactor damaged the large granite boulder selected for the lighthouse base with unauthorised blasting. As a result, the lighthouse had to be slightly repositioned.

That contractor subsequently surrendered his contract to build the lighthouse. In 1880 a temporary light was set up, and new contractor was appointed. By late 1881 the lighthouse was completed.

The light tower on Montague Island is constructed of locally hewn interlocking granite blocks that were quarried on the island. The original power source for the light was

The Montague Island Lighthouse

oil and it had an intensity of 45,000 candlepower. The light was upgraded in 1910 and 1931. In 1969 conversion to electricity raised the strength of the light to 1,000,000 candlepower. In 1986 this was reduced to 120,000 candlepower, which is visible 37km out to sea, when the lighthouse became solar powered.

Between 1881 and 1953 (when the Island became a flora and fauna reserve under the control of the National Trust of Australia), Montague Island was a popular destination for day visitors and campers. During that time, up to 200 people were taken to the Island at a time.

The last lighthouse keepers left the Island in December 1987.

The Island is now managed by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and the lighthouse is controlled by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

BOYDS TOWER TWOFOLD BAY.

Boyd's Tower

Boyd's Tower was built in 1847, one of entrepreneur Ben Boyd's several follies.

It is 23 metres high and was constructed from Pyrmont sandstone brought by steamer from Sydney. It was originally intended to be a lighthouse but the government considered it unsuitable, so it was never used for that purpose.

It was designed by Oswald Brierly, an English artist and student of naval architecture, who was manager of Boyd's whaling site near Boydtown. The word 'Boyd' is a prominent feature of the stonework towards the top of the tower.

After Boyd's empire collapsed, the tower was used for whale spotting by the Davidson whaling family. They had a tribute engraved on the north window reading '*In memory of Peter Lia who was killed by a whale, September 28, 1881. Aged 22 years*'. The background to this is that a whale had

been harpooned. It headed out to sea dragging two boats for more than 15 km. Eventually, when the harpoon ropes were severed, the whale turned on one of the boats, broke it in two and smashed it with its tail. Unfortunately, Peter Lai was sitting where the tail smashed the vessel. He was thrown overboard and was never seen again.

Green Cape Lighthouse

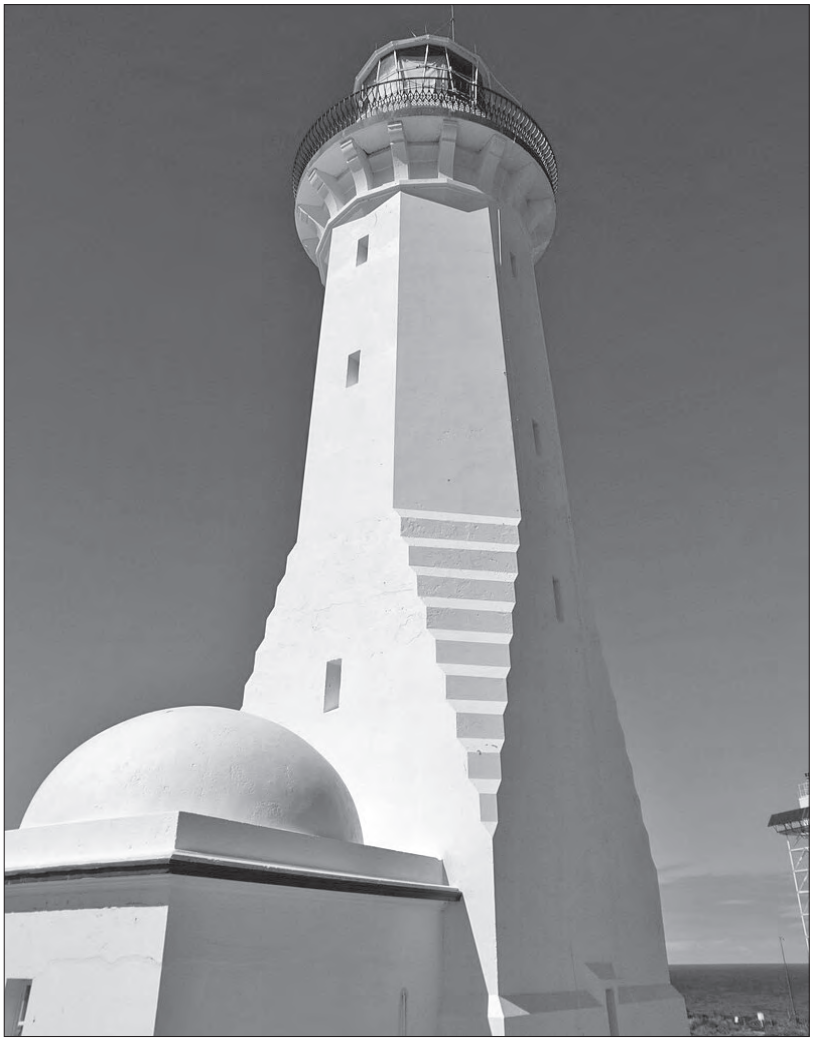
Architecturally, this is probably the most interesting of the lighthouses on the NSW South Coast.

It was designed by the Colonial Architect James Barnet as one of about 25 lighthouses intended to provide a 'highway of light' to shipping along the NSW coast. (By the early twentieth century this 'highway of light' had become a reality, with 25 coastal lighthouses and 12 in Sydney Harbour having then been constructed.)

The tower is octagonal and sits on a square base. It has attractive 'stepping' up four of its sides and just below the light has a prominent balustraded balcony. A small domed pavilion, used as the oil store, adjoins the tower at its base.

It is one of Australia's earliest and most extensive concrete constructions and, because of this, is recognized by the Institution of Australian Engineers as an Engineering Heritage National Landmark.

The lighthouse's construction, though, proved to be a real challenge.



Green Cape Lighthouse

The 15 metre tall metal skeletal tower at Green Cape that was commissioned in 1992.

The builder who was contracted to undertake the work was Albert Wood Aspinall, an Australian stonemason and builder who was considered to be an expert in constructing round towers and buildings. He had previously built the Post Office in Eden.

The site for the lighthouse was very isolated and all materials and labour had to be transported from Bittangabee Bay, to the north of Green Cape. This necessitated the construction of a jetty and storehouse at the Bay and a 7km (horse-drawn) wooden tramway connecting it to the Cape. This preparatory work took seven months.

It was then discovered that the lighthouse site was unsuitable for the foundations of such a heavy structure, and a 20-foot thick clay bed had to be excavated before the tower could be erected. Drifting sand that continually covered the tramway and the building's foundations presented further challenges.

Building of the lighthouse had begun in 1881 and, with its problems, took much longer than had been anticipated. This sent Aspinall broke and probably ultimately contributed to his committing suicide in December 1903. The project was completed by Aspinall's creditors.

The Green Cape Lighthouse is the second tallest in Australia and the tallest in the state. It is 29 metres tall and the light is 44 metres above sea level. Its 1-million candlepower light was visible for 41km.

The lighthouse was completed in May 1883.

Inexplicably, on the evening of 30th May 1886, with the Green Cape Lighthouse fully operational, a paddlesteamer, the Ly-ee-moon, ran into rocks at full speed at the base of the Lighthouse. The occurred on a clear, calm night. The steamer quickly broke up and 71 lives were lost – one of the greatest losses of human life in a single shipwreck in the state's history. Fifteen men (ten crew and five passengers) survived the shipwreck. Only 24 of the bodies were ever recovered (one of these was Flora MacKillop, the mother of Mary MacKillop). Most of these are buried in unmarked graves a short distance from the light station.

In 1992 a solar powered lamp on a modern lattice skeletal steel tower was constructed right next to the Green Cape Lighthouse. The new light is automated, with a strength of 37,500 candlepower so, with this conversion, the old light station was de-manned.

* * *

There are two other light towers on the NSW South Coast that almost escaped our attention: one at Burrewarra Point near Broulee, see photo at right, and the other on Brush Island off Murramarang. The Brush Island Lighthouse was built in 1967, is just 2 metres tall, but its light can be seen for 15km. The solar-powered Burrewarra Point Lighthouse was erected in 1974, is 10 metres tall and is 62 metres above sea level. Its light can be seen for 17km. We have been unable to obtain further information about why these light towers were built – but, presumably, they were constructed to fill gaps in the 'highway of light' along the South Coast.

‘From the Very Summit’... Croagh Patrick Comes to Bega

Dr Richard Reid

The Very Reverend David Joseph Griffin was Catholic Parish Priest of Bega and Dean of the South Coast of New South Wales from 1950 to 1955. He was born in 1899 in faraway Ireland in the little rural townland of Furhane. Furhane, 413 acres in size, lies some five kilometres south of the town of Listowel in County Kerry. Ordained in 1921, the Dean would have lived through tumultuous times in Ireland … the Easter Rising of 1916, the Irish War of Independence 1919/1921, and the tragic, bitter, post-independence Civil War of 1922/1923. The Civil War in Kerry has been described as particularly divisive.

What does any of this have to do with Bega?

From Father Gerard Monaghan’s history of the Bega Catholic parish, *Visions for a Valley: Catholic People in the Bega Valley, 1829/1985*, we learn about the many Irish born and trained priests associated with the parish. All of them would have carried deep memories of Catholic Ireland, childhood, youth and training in ministry in an Irish, or sometimes a European, seminary. Monaghan writes of Dean Griffin that his coming ‘shook the natives’ for here was a man of strong convictions and someone clearly prepared to voice them. Monaghan knew him as a boy: ‘I’d witnessed many an outburst and felt the brunt of his temper myself on occasions’. But he also wrote of Griffin: ‘In his will he made bequests to orphanages etc. ... he’d given all away ... just as he gave himself daily to the honour of God’.

Unsurprisingly, given his upbringing and personal experiences in very troubled times, Griffin had strong opinions about British rule in Ireland. As Monaghan writes: ‘the sight of the Union Jack was for him worse than the proverbial ‘red rag to a bull’. And this deeply patriotic Irishman left a permanent Irish imprint on Bega’s beautiful parish church, St Patrick’s.

In Bega Griffin took on the building of a major, rearward extension of St Patricks. This was completed and dedicated on March 15th 1953. But well before this, on July 22nd 1951, there was a significant ceremony to dedicate the foundation stone for the extension. Griffen felt his fellow citizens of Bega knew little of foundation stones:

Banner, foundation stone and 1882 section of St Patrick’s

Bega Parish is not accustomed to such ceremonies, civic or religious, and Foundation Stones are remarkably absent from all our buildings, which means that most of the good people have no conception of what it is all about.

Those who witnessed the laying of the stone, or who bothered to read their local paper, the *Bega District News*, probably never forgot the fuss surrounding this singular event. And it was ‘singular’ for the time.

Making his way from Canberra for the occasion was a well-known member of Canberra’s then small diplomatic corps, Ireland’s first Ambassador to Australia, Dr Thomas Joseph Kiernan. The *News* informed its readers that Kiernan, who was interested in Australian colonial history, had arrived on Wednesday 18th July and over the next couple of days spent a great deal of time going through the records of marriages and births of early Irish settlers in the district and touring the district to call on families descended from

these immigrants.

The *News* reported Kiernan's doings extensively one headline reading 'Ambassador of Ireland Receives Civic Welcome'. At this reception Kiernan treated the Bega councillors, and other attendees, to a lengthy speech about the progress being made by a modernising Ireland. Only in the middle of the speech did he drop a hint about what had really brought him to Bega. He had come, he said:

Auxiliary Archbishop of the Catholic Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn, Dr Guilford Clyde Young [left] and the Very Reverend David Joseph Griffin, Parish Priest of Bega, standing in front of the St Patrick's Banner after the dedication ceremony for the new foundation stone for the St Patrick's Church extensions, 22 July 1951. [Bega Parish Archives]

… to symbolise a link between the two communities … a link of sympathy, and friendliness and good fellowship. The stone which I will present formally tomorrow to Dean Griffin is itself a symbol of 1500 years of Irish history, and it symbolises hardiness and sturdiness of individual character.

The stone, what stone? Readers of the *News* would already have learnt, in the article about the civic reception on 21st July, that Kiernan, on Sunday 22nd July, would formally present the Bega Roman Catholic Parish 'with the foundation stone for the extensions of St Patrick's Church on behalf of the Irish people'. This foundation stone was not simply a nice piece of suitably inscribed Australian granite but a 'stone which has come from the very summit of Croagh Patrick (St Patrick's Mountain)'. That was certainly powerful symbolism, a dramatic binding of St Patrick's Church in Bega with its namesake's most sacred site in Ireland in the far west of that island, on the edge of Europe, looking out towards the wild Atlantic.

These days many from Bega have made, and continue to make, the long flight to Europe and it's a fair guess that some make it to Ireland. Once there they could make the trek west, to County Mayo, to discover what it means that they have a stone, in the midst of their community, from 'the very summit of Croagh Patrick'. The trek to that summit, to the summit of what's known as 'Ireland's holy mountain', has been going on for centuries. Thousands and thousands of pilgrims have struggled up a steep, rock-strewn pathway, some in bare feet, to look out on an awe-inspiring view taking in a vast oceanic and water pocked landscape. Here, reputedly, the Saint fasted for Lent 'tormented by demonic

birds, which he drives off with his bell, after which angelic white birds serenade him'. While on the mountain Patrick reputedly received the right to judge the Irish on the 'Last Day' and banished the snakes, emblems of sin, into the expansive waters of Clew Bay hundreds of metres below. In recent times the remains of an ancient church have been excavated at the summit dating from the early ninth century.

Times have changed at Croagh Patrick. An Irish environmental website, 'Leave no Trace', describes some of the challenges facing the 'holy mountain' as ever-increasing numbers of tourists come to climb it in addition to the pilgrims:

'Impacts to Croagh Patrick include litter, trampling and erosion, human waste, impacts to farm animals, and damage to property and natural objects. Due to its popularity and the slippery, rocky surface towards the summit, accidents and emergencies are a frequent impact on the mountain too, putting increased strain on the volunteer Mayo Mountain Rescue team and the vulnerable upland habitat.'

Dr Thomas Joseph Kiernan, Ambassador of Ireland to Australia, 1946–1954. [Carol Kiernan, from DFAT online exhibition '70 Years of Diplomatic Representation']

A 2016 headline in the *Irish Examiner* emphasised the problems and possible drastic consequences – 'Damage on Croagh Patrick due to erosion may leave access severely restricted'. And today, much to the chagrin of the local Catholic parish, the mountain is being treated by some as an athletic endurance test one article writing of 'athletes who race up and down the peak'.

Little, if any of this, would have been in the minds of the plain people of Bega, and the many dignitaries Catholic and otherwise, who gathered at St Patrick's Church on Gipps Street on Sunday 22nd July 1951 for the laying of the foundation stone. On one level it was unmistakably an Irish and an Irish/Australian occasion. While Monaghan refers only to Dean Griffin's Irish nationalism … the Dean's dislike of the British flag and his 'almost pathological anti-British streak' … he says nothing about how the Dean brought his support of an independent Ireland into full view on foundation stone dedication day.

The *News*, however, was alert to what today might be called the 'optics' of the occasion:

Over the site fluttered four flags – 'the Australian Jubilee Flag presented to the Bega Convent School by the Australian Government, the Tricolour of Ireland, the Papal Flag and the flag of St Patrick.'

With the exception of the Jubilee flag, the other three flags had flown over the Dean's home in Kerry. The so-called Jubilee Flag was not new: it featured the stars of the Southern Cross on a blue background with the Union Jack in the top left-hand (or right-hand depending line of sight) corner. The use of this flag has a complex history, but in 1951 the Menzies Government sent one to every school declaring it to be the Jubilee Flag to celebrate fifty years since the declaration of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901. It only became the Australian flag in 1954 with the passing of the Flags Act. Australia's official flag until that point had been the Union Jack. But, with the Jubilee Flag, precedence was now given to stars of the Southern Cross. Perhaps Dean Griffin was able to contain any dislike of the Jubilee Flag as it no longer gave prominence to the Union Jack. Perhaps there was no 'red rag to a bull' here.

A contemporary photograph, taken shortly before the dedication ceremony, shows where the Croagh Patrick stone was to be placed. This cavity was draped with a banner on which were emblazoned the words, in Irish, 'Erin Go Bragh' – 'Ireland for ever.' Beneath was a much larger piece of polished granite with this inscription:

St Patrick's Church Bega
[Begun 1881 Front Extended 1911]
Sanctuary Chapels Sacristies 1951
In Honour of the Most Holy Name of Jesus
The Foundation Stone set hereon
Which came from The Very Summit of
Croagh Patrick [St Patrick's Mountain]
IRELAND
And which was presented on behalf of
The People of Ireland
By Dr T J Kiernan M.A. Ph.D. Ambassador of Ireland
Was Blessed and Laid by
Most Rev G Young D.D. V.G.
Auxiliary Bishop to Most Rev T.B. McGuire D.D.
Archbishop of Canberra & Goulburn
PAX

Children stand around politely, possibly having read the inscription, and behind the site was a large St Patrick's banner embroidered with a Celtic cross, possibly a parish banner carried in St Patrick's Day processions. The presentation and dedication ceremony on that Sunday lasted some two hours. Starting at 1 pm there was a 'High Mass' inside the church during which Ambassador Kiernan formally handed over the Croagh Patrick stone. The Auxiliary Bishop of the Canberra/Goulburn diocese, Dr Guilford Young, gave an occasional address and then a procession of priests brought the stone through the assembled crowd to the foundation stone site. Here the stone was formally laid and blessed by Dr Young who was given a 'handsome ceremonial trowel' for the laying. At 3.15 there was afternoon tea while the Bega band played a 'musical programme'.

There were final speeches. Dr Young praised and thanked the Dean for his work. The Mayor, Alderman Chas Ayres, welcomed everybody and asserted that it was a proud day for Bega to have both Dr Young and Ambassador Kiernan in their midst and how the St Patrick's extensions would 'add to the prestige of Bega which is noted for its beautiful

churches'. Lastly, Kiernan drove home the significance of this little piece of Ireland, now brought to Bega:

The stone is given by the Irish people to Bega as a symbol for future generations of Bega people and a reminder to be just and true.

An appeal was made for funds to build the proposed extensions. The crowd then drifted away from what, for the town and district, was undoubtedly an unusual and significant event.

The Croagh Patrick foundation stone and inscription stone visible on the northern wall of St Patrick's Church, Bega. [Richard Reid]

How many people in Bega today know the stone is even there? Has its presence, over the decades, allowed justice and truth to prevail in the town? As he left the district Ambassador Kiernan exhorted the community to take care of its history and the *News* devoted a whole editorial column to his advice. Kiernan said: 'There must be a great pride in what has been achieved in Bega that will in time stimulate someone to collect and study the records'. This, the *News* thought, was a 'challenge to the town and district' as only 'modest efforts' had been made to date to record the story of the European settlers of the district. An approving comparison was made with the Illawarra where a Wollongong Historical Society had been established. The *News* recommended the establishment of a similar society, and indeed 8 months later the Bega Valley Historical Society was born. However, the extent to which the 1951 advice from that editor, and Ambassador Kiernan, has been heeded adequately is for today's townsfolk to assess.

What still needs to be told is how that wondrous piece of Croagh Patrick stone got to Bega, what that was all about and the process behind the stone's journey from Ireland. That will be included in the next issue of *Recollections*.

[The author thanks Mary Twyford and Bega Parish Secretary, Tanya Tomlinson, for their help in compiling this article.]

Dr Richard Reid is a Canberra-based historian and is Vice-President of the Canberra & District Historical Society. He is a frequent visitor to Tathra and has a special interest in South Coast history.

The Mystery Bay Mystery

The discovery of a holed fishing boat on rocks at Mutton Fish Point (also called Corunna Point) on Sunday, 10 October 1880, resulted in the South Coast's most intriguing mystery.

Five men were believed to have been murdered, but the Police could not determine where it occurred or by whom. Their bodies were never found. The mystery remains unsolved.

The site where the beached fishing boat was discovered is today known as Mystery Bay – just south of Narooma.

The 'mystery' received extensive media coverage at the time, not just in Australia but throughout the British Empire. This is how *The Daily Telegraph* reported it on 27th June 1887 – almost seven years after the event.

That five men, one of them a well-known and highly-trusted Government officer, should disappear suddenly off the face of the earth, and leave behind not one clue to point with the remotest degree of certainty to their fate; that this massacre—for massacre it is now almost proved to have been —should be perpetrated close to a thickly-populated mining camp, where, although villainy is certain to exist, informers eager to gain a reward might also be found; and that for close upon a decade, all that the police chose to do and private enterprise could do to fathom the mystery, or at least discover the bodies of the victims, have failed.

All this seems incredible, yet these are features which go to compose a tragedy horrible as it is mysterious, romantic as it was brutal...

THE STORY.

Mr. Lamont Young was a young and well-connected Englishman of considerable scientific attainments, a married man and was employed as Government Geological Surveyor under the Mines Department. On Friday, October 8, 1880, he arrived at Bermagui— then the scene of a "rush" consequent upon the discovery of gold— and camped upon the southern bank of the river. His mission was to make a geological survey of the adjacent coast. He was accompanied by a German named Max Schneider, his assistant, also connected with the Mines Department. This Schneider had got into trouble before leaving Sydney in connection with some monetary transactions of a shady nature. On the day following their arrival (Saturday) Young and Schneider dined with Mr. H. McC. Keightley, police magistrate and warden of the district, and Senior-Constable Berry. Directly after dinner Schneider left with the avowed intention of walking into Bermagui to see a mate. Young remained in the company of Senior-Constable Berry up till 4 o'clock in the afternoon, promised to go fishing with him on the following day, and then walked away towards Bermagui Point.

At about 6 o'clock he was seen again, walking towards his own tent—seen alive for the last time by any honest witness.

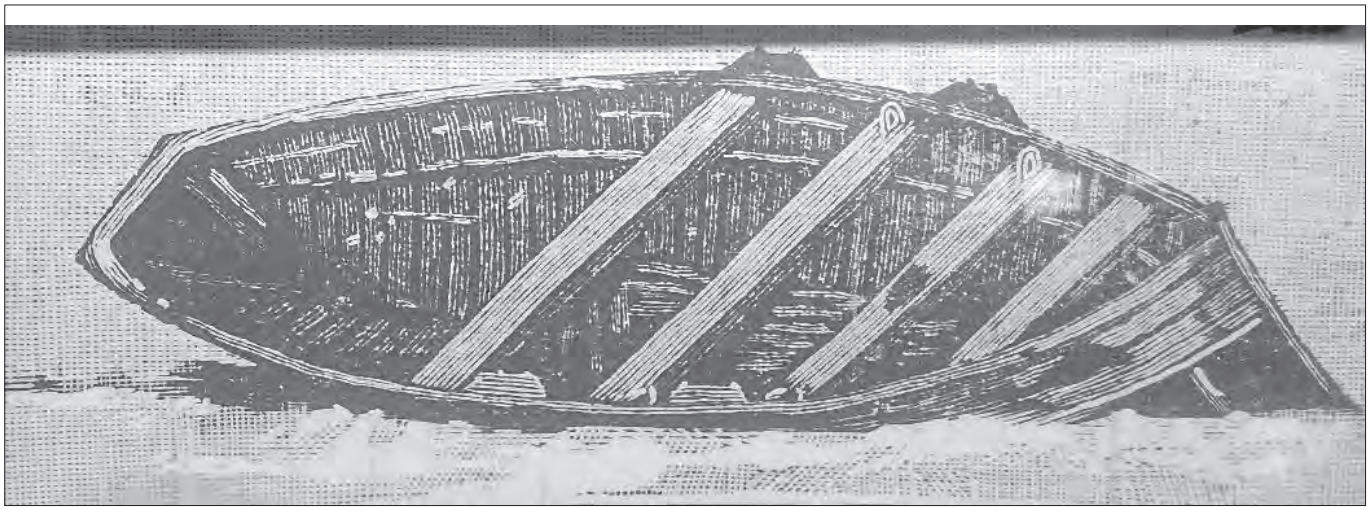
These are all the available facts concerning Mr. Lamont Young up to the time of his disappearance, which actually dated from about 6 p.m. on Saturday, October 9.

We must now turn to the surrounding circumstances, the subsequent discoveries always connected with his disappearance, and the hosts of speculations formed as to its cause.

A few hundred yards along the bank of the river where Mr. Young's tent was situated, three men of the laboring class, who had come over in a boat from Bateman's Bay with the intention of trying their luck at the diggings, were also encamped. Their names were Lloyd, Towers and Casey. The last named was an old man of nearly 70, and all three were well-known in the district as honest reputable fellows.

On Monday morning early a boat, which afterwards proved to be that belonging to these men were found jammed between the rocks and much damaged near Corunna Point, some nine miles along the coast. A quantity of Mr. Young's effects was in or near the boat, and the conclusion was at once arrived at that he and Schneider had hired the men to take them out either for the purposes of fishing or of exploring the coast, and that they had landed, either on Montagu Island or the mainland. The boat, it was at first thought, had broken from its moorings and drifted to where it was found lying.

As days passed, however, and the search for the fugitives was fruitless, an inspection of details and a fuller



Boat found following searches

consideration of the circumstances convinced everybody that the explanation must be sought in another direction.

A suspicion of foul play was first given rise to by the finding of three revolver bullets near the boat, one partially imbedded in the thwart [a structural crosspiece that provides a seat in an undecked boat]; but as none of these bore the appearance of having been fired, having evidently been used as sinkers for fishing purposes, and as any sounds of a shooting affray at this spot would have been heard in the mining camp at Corunna, a short distance away, the idea of that particular form of violence was abandoned. An examination of the boat showed that her bottom was full of large holes, evidently made designedly from the inside. There were five stones lying in her, which might have been used for this purpose. By those who knew the locality it was asserted that the boat could not have reached the nook where she was found without human agency, and that she was evidently navigated there before being destroyed.

On all hands it was deemed remarkable that Mr. Young should have left Bermagui without mentioning the matter to anyone—his tent and effects had also disappeared—without any apparent motive and even with an appointment pending for Sunday with Senior-Constable Berry as already stated.

THE SEARCH.

The affair having assumed the serious aspect to which we have been led, search parties were instituted and the neighbouring coast was scoured and the water searched for the discovery of the missing men, alive or dead. It is observable throughout that the local police were indefatigable in their endeavors to fathom the mystery, but that the authorities in Sydney made light of the matter, and it must be confessed that had prompt steps been taken to close all avenues of escape to the possible offenders, and to follow up simultaneously every clue, however slight, justice would not have been baffled as it has been for so many years, and as it is more than probable human justice will be to the end of time.

It was not until 15 days had elapsed after the discovery that any member of the Metropolitan force arrived on the spot—and then only one. This was Senior-Constable Martin, of the Water Police, selected on account of his knowledge of nautical affairs. He could do but little, was recalled after a time, and made his report in the usual fashion. The Mines Department were the first to take steps in the matter by dispatching Mr. T. C. Binney, registrar of the department, to institute inquiries and conduct a search. This gentleman apparently discharged the duties imposed upon him with much thoroughness.

His investigation lasted from October 10 to November 6. Near where the boat was found were discovered indications of a party having had lunch, a pipe, supposed to belong to Mr. Schneider, and a knife, while an axe and shovel were found in the deep water of a bay close by. All search for the bodies in the water in caves along the coast, in the sand or scrub proved utterly futile. In course of time Mr. Binney made his report too, and returned to his departmental duties.

After that the department sent Mr. Alexander Gray,

another gentleman connected with the mines, and Moses Owen, a miner recommended for the task to further search for the bodies at Corunna.

Mr. Gray was an enthusiast at his work, and shortly after his arrival he reached what he thought to be a clue of the murderers. Wiring to head-quarters for permission to follow this up he was instructed in reply to confine himself to the search for the bodies. This he continued conscientiously but unsuccessfully, and after two months he in turn was recalled and reported himself.

In consequence, however, of a strong suspicion which had formed itself in his mind Mr. Gray afterwards, at considerable expense to himself, conducted an independent investigation, concerning which and the idea which prompted it we shall speak further on.

GIVEN UP FOR LOST.

By this time the five missing men—Lamont Young, H. W. Lloyd, B. Casey, Towers, and Max Schneider—were given up for lost. The Government reward of £200 offered for information as to their fate had not been responded to and all search had proved fruitless. The majority of persons believed that murder had been committed, but this conclusion only served to give rise to a number of widely differing and some very impossible theories.

Mr. Lamont Young's father, Major-General Young, of England, continued to write the most piteous letters to all who he thought would be able in any way to assist in the recovery or to ascertain the fate of his son. These letters were passed from official to official, were docketted, initialled and generally found their way to the Inspector-General of Police, who furnished a "report." An additional reward of £100 was offered by the distracted father, who suggested that that offered by the Government should be largely increased. This suggestion was not approved of by Mr. Fosbery, and the matter was allowed to stand.

The official mind, as represented by Mr. Fosbery, the Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Keightley, the police magistrate at Moruya, and others, was firmly disposed to the

ACCIDENTALLY DROWNED THEORY.

Their idea was that the boat had been wrecked while its occupants were trying to navigate it among the rocks, and that they had been swept out to sea by the currents.

There were a host of reasons for discarding this notion, a few of which may be mentioned.

In the first place, the boat was found in an upright position, which would have been well nigh impossible had what was imagined occurred. Again, the fact of stones lying in the bottom of the boat was unexplained, and her bottom showed undoubted signs of having been intentionally smashed from the inside.

The contents of the boat, also, were mixed up in great confusion—many of Mr. Young's articles having been shoved indiscriminately into common bags. This the theorists endeavored to account for by supposing that the boat had been visited by some predatory person before the man who first gave information saw her. On the whole, there was everything to show the theory to be incorrect. It must be borne in mind that, in the absence of any proof to the contrary, it was always perfectly reasonable to suppose that

THE MURDERED PARTY NEVER LEFT BERMAGUI.

Indeed, this opinion was held by more than one person. Mr. Gray formed this conclusion from the first, and felt prompted to further research thereby, but he was at the time

under departmental control, and his actions were thereby stultified. Both he and his co-worker, Owen, thought that the murder had been committed at Bermagui on Saturday night, but beyond that point they differed. Owen's idea was that the five missing men had been murdered by others unknown. Gray contended that, doubtless with the assistance of others, Schneider had murdered the other four. Both agreed in fixing on one suspicious character in the neighborhood as an accomplice in the dreadful crime.

A woman who resided near the river about half-a-mile above Young's camp stated on several occasions that on the Saturday night she saw a flash and heard a report like that of an explosion from that direction, followed by shrill screams. Whether much reliance can be placed this statement it would be hard to say.

The idea that Lamont Young and party were done to death at Bermagui was shared by several others, who, however, had different opinions as to the details of the murder. Among these were Mr. Robert Hannan, an ex-detective, who a couple of years after the event conducted investigations on behalf of Major-General Young; Senior-Constable Berry, who in this respect differed from his superiors; Mr. John Forster, J.P., of Wagonga, who was intimately acquainted with the circumstances of the case, and others. Mr. Keightley, although a believer in the drowning theory, never believed that Schneider was in the boat. Schneider, he thought, remained on shore, and on hearing of the disappearance of the party decamped with Young's tent, fixings, &c., and has never been heard of since, simply because he was glad enough to sink his identity for reasons readily understood by those who knew the man. It is thus seen that more than one person believed that Schneider survived the others. The question then arises,

WHERE IS SCHNEIDER?

The clue which Mr. Gray at first believed to be within reach had reference to this man. Stories were told of two men having crossed the river at dead of night after the supposed murder. One of them was known in the district, but the other was a stranger of queer aspect, who took pains to keep silence in the presence of others. This, Mr. Gray thought, was prompted by fear lest his German accent should betray him. Mr. Gray had reason to believe that this man escaped to South Gippsland, but although he succeeded in interesting the Victorian police in the matter the man was never found.

REPORTED DISCOVERY OF THE REMAINS.

As will be seen from telegrams published from our correspondent, remains supposed—and with the best reasons—to be those of the Lamont Young party, have been discovered in the sand near Bermagui.

The mystery has approached a little nearer to the long-desired solution, but may yet be far off. The information to hand is at present very meagre, and after the lapse of so many years any ideas we may form must be of a very speculative character.

Should any remains likely to be those of Schneider be unearthed, it will be concluded that he was murdered with the others; if such be not found, then the inference will be that he was implicated in the outrage. Such a discovery as this is certain to powerfully affect the minds of the criminals, if any still live, or of persons possessed of information withheld, so who knows but what the community may shortly be startled by further revelations.

Who Said That?

(Answers on page 17)

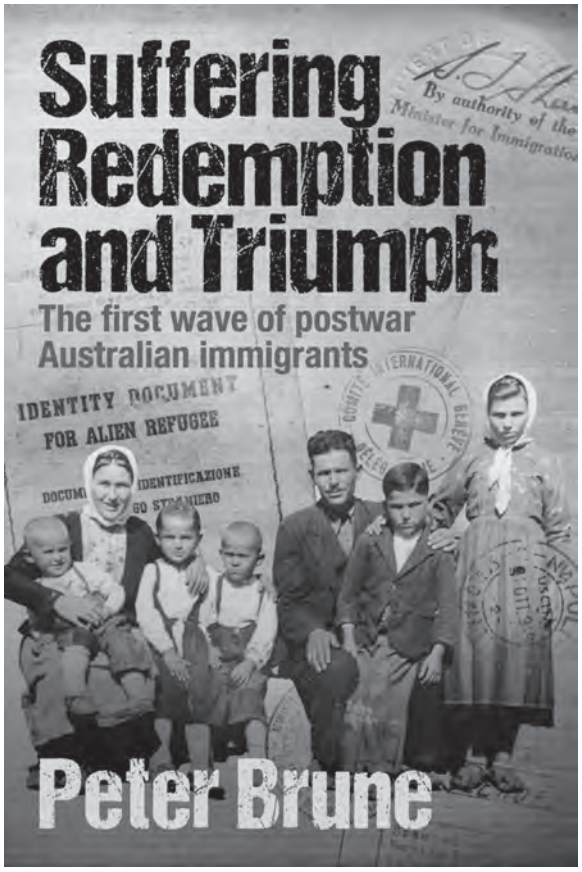
a. *'I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat.'*
b. *'I know this beach like the back of my hand.'*
c. *'We have nothing to fear but fear itself.'*
d. *'The Australian continent needs an Australian government.'*
e. *'I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious.'*
f. *'This is a memorable day in the history of New South Wales. I shall be a baronet, you will be knighted, and my old horse will be stuffed, and put into a glass case, and sent to the British Museum.'*

Suffering, Redemption and Triumph

by Peter Brune

The post-World War II immigration era shaped Australia in many ways so, historically, it is an extremely important era.

It's a story that is interesting, and part of it – the story of Displaced Persons who came to Australia after World War II – is the subject of *Suffering, Redemption and Triumph*.



After World War II, there were 7 million refugees in Europe alone, most of them drifting to refugee camps in Germany, Austria and Italy. A viable solution to this humanitarian crisis seemed to be a mass migration program to the 'new world'.

At the same time, two major challenges confronted Australia: how to expand the nation's economy to create resulting wealth, and how to address a very pressing and real fear that Australia must enhance its military capacity to defend itself.

The answer to both these needs was obvious - Australia had to dramatically increase its population.

Enter, stage left, Arthur Augustus Calwell.

Calwell became Australia's first Minister for Immigration in July 1945. At that time, he already strongly believed that immigration should become Australia's primary vehicle for economic growth, and he possessed the drive to introduce and then implement a program of mass migration to Australia.

The preference among Australians, and therefore politically the preference for Australia at that time, was that almost all those new arrivals should come from England. However, there was full employment in Britain at the time making emigration less attractive to the British, and ships were simply not available to transport British migrants to Australia.

Enter, stage right, the International Refugee Organisation (IRO), a United Nation's body charged with the transport and re-settlement of refugees. Australia had been one of 27 nations that had supported the establishment of the IRO and it had provided an initial £857,700 to the organisation.

The IRO, of course, had millions of refugees available who potentially could be relocated to Australia. And, importantly, it had shipping resources.

So, Arthur Calwell suggested, and Prime Minister Chifley agreed, on a very neat solution: Australia should pay the IRO £10 per migrant who came to Australia.

Basically, the immigrants agreed that in return for free transport to Australia and free accommodation in Australia, they would work for two years anywhere that was stipulated by the government's Department of Labour and at any unskilled job allotted to them.

Hundreds arrived in 1947, and thousands in the following years.

The scheme seemed to have worked amazingly well and, despite its many shortcomings that are examined extensively in this book (such as the country not fully benefitting from skills that many migrants possessed because on arrival they were almost-arbitrarily assigned to, and were obliged to perform, unskilled work), this *'huge economic, social and political experiment saw the young nation* [dramatically] *change its cultural composition'*.

One of the contributing factors to the success of the immigration scheme was what was quaintly called 'the conditioning process' within Australia – a substantial publicity campaign that promoted the acceptance of immigrants from 'alien' (i.e. non-British) countries. This, too, is examined in the book.

But *Suffering, Redemption and Triumph* is really not a history of the immigration of displaced persons to Australia. It is a record of interviews with a small number of those arrivals that provides the 'human face' to the broader history.

And these stories are presented in three sections: *'The first, an appreciation of the war experiences of those immigrants, to give a context, or a setting, to who they are and what had shaped them. The second, an examination of how they established themselves in their new land and how they were received at both the government and community level. The third, how they* [recently] *have looked back on their migrant experiences and what their contributions have been'*.

The book ends with a slew of statistics illustrating the contribution of displaced persons immigrants, including: *'In Victoria 45,000,000 extra bricks were produced by Displaced Persons during the* [1949] *year...Production at the works of the Australian Iron and Steel Company has increased from 9,500 tons a week to 12,000 tons a week. In South Australia, the employment of 50 Displaced Persons at Iron Knob has greatly increased the production of iron ore...there are 2,150 Displaced Persons employed on the New South Wales Railways, and approximately 2,500 on the railways in South Australia. In New South Wales they are not only employed upon new construction but also upon most urgently required track maintenance. In South Australia, the Trans-Australia*

and Central Australia Railways would have been in the direst straits for track maintenance if Displaced Persons had not been supplied. There are 400 Displaced Persons fettlers alone working on the Trans-Australia Railway across the Nullarbor Plain…'

The hero, to Peter Brune, however, was not the migrant workers but Arthur Calwell: *'Arthur Calwell is often remembered as the Leader of the Opposition who lost three federal elections, but his contribution to his country as the inaugural Minister of Immigration constitutes one of the nation's most remarkable achievements. During his four-year period as Minister for Immigration from July 1945 until the Chifley government was defeated in the December 1949 election, Calwell displayed a unique degree of foresight, pragmatism and statesmanship…the Menzies Government – and its first Minister of Immigration, Harold Holt – forged ahead with the very same policies as Arthur Calwell. And Holt freely acknowledged Calwell's sterling service: 'He has been a big Australian putting the national interest above any temporary political advantage.' No praise should be too high for this 'big Australian'.'*

Suffering, Redemption and Triumph is available in paperback from around $24.

Peter Lacey

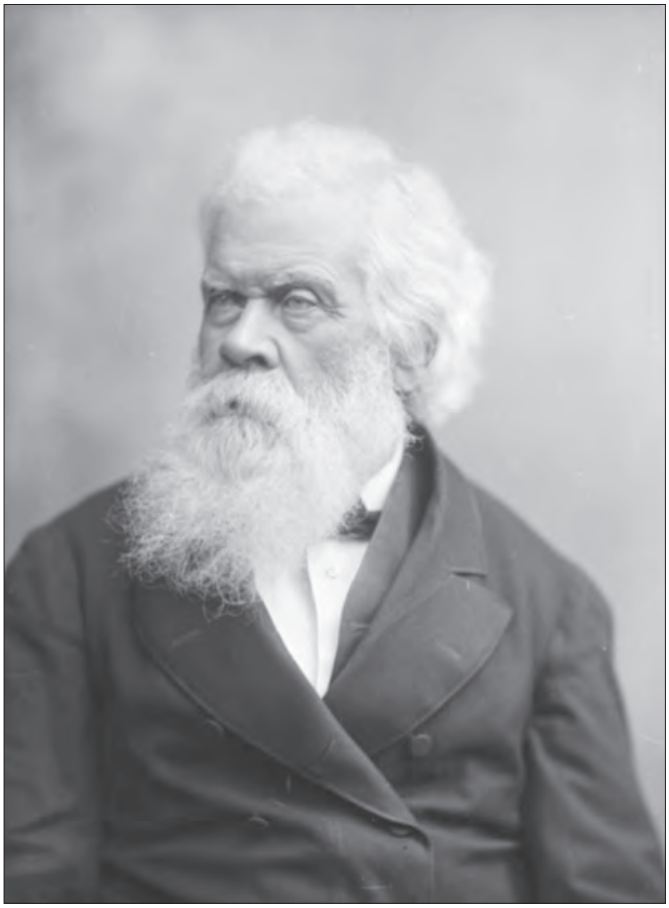
They Said That

(see questions on page 15)

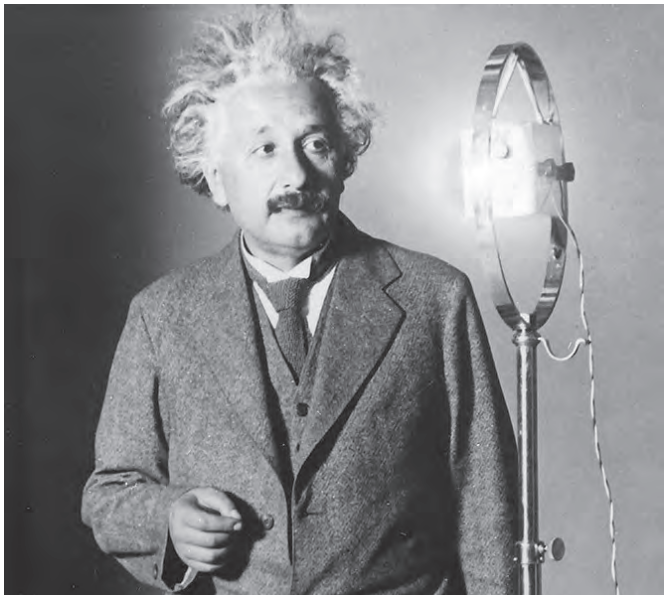
a. **Winston Churchill** was a superb orator. His acerbic wit was legendary (such as when Lady Astor suggested 'If I were married to you, I'd put poison in your coffee' to which he replied 'If I was married to you, I'd drink it'). His 'I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat' words were part of his very first speech to the House of Commons as Prime Minister on 13th May 1940 and at the height of World War II. He went on to say 'We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many long months of toil and struggle…You ask what is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory. Victory at all costs. Victory in spite of all terror. Victory however long and hard the road may be. For without victory there is no survival.'

b. December 17, 1967 in Portsea, Victoria, was hot and humid – a perfect day for a swim. So **Prime Minister Harold Holt** and a group of friends headed from Holt's holiday house to nearby Cheviot Beach, initially to catch a glimpse of a round-the-world sailor who was heading into Melbourne's Port Philip Bay. The tide was unusually high and there was a strong undercurrent when Holt decided to take a dip, telling his friends 'I know this beach like the back of my hand'. He was never to be seen again. His body was never found. Conspiracy theories rapidly multiplied: he had committed suicide; he was a Chinese spy, so a Chinese submarine had picked him up and whisked him away (his wife, Zara, dismissed this possibility, noting 'he didn't even like Chinese cooking'!); he had been assassinated by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, because he intended to pull Australia out of the Vietnam War; he faked his own death and ran off with an alleged mistress. A coronial inquest in 2005 concluded simply that, although he was an experienced swimmer, he accidentally drowned in dreadful conditions. In a perhaps-unintentional example of Australian black humour, the Malvern Council renamed a swimming centre under construction at the time of Holt's disappearance in Glen Iris, Melbourne (within Holt's electorate) 'The Harold Holt Memorial Swimming Centre' (it was intended to be named the 'City of Malvern Olympic Swimming Centre').

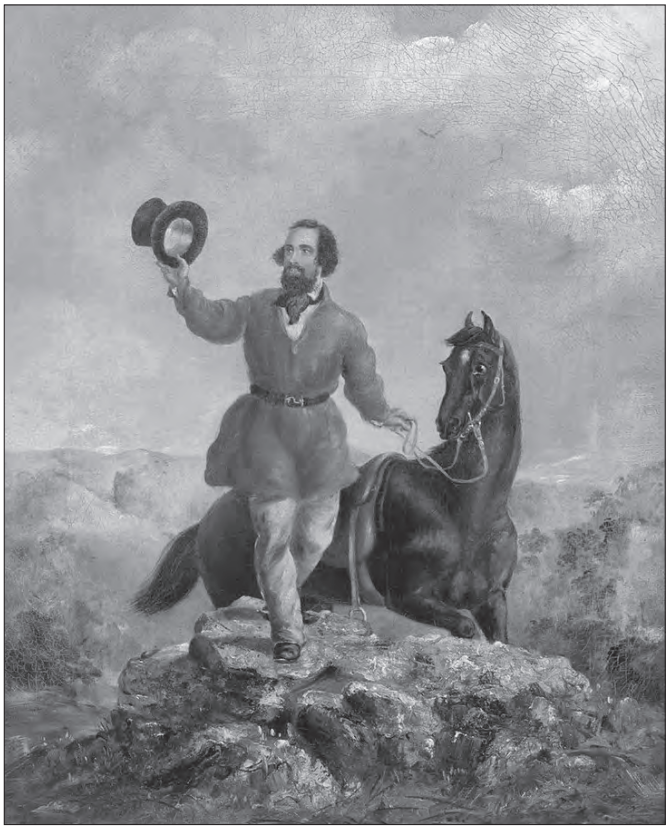
c. 'We have nothing to fear but fear itself' is the most famous quotation associated with **Franklin D. Roosevelt** and his presidency. It was part of his inauguration speech in 1933, when Roosevelt observed that fear was *'nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life a leadership of frankness and of vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory. And I am convinced that you will again give that support to leadership in these critical days' [in the depth of the Great Depression]. FDR has been described 'one of the great orators of the twentieth century. He could explain complicated policy with clarity and precision, entertain and enlighten audiences with stories that ranged from the poignant to the humorous, and attack his opponents with invective that was often sharp and occasionally vicious. His rhetoric soars with eloquence, educates with charm, and evokes the everyday concerns of U.S. citizens with palpable grace.'*



d. **Sir Henry Parkes**, when Premier of NSW, lost his seat of East Sydney in an election on 23rd October 1882. Eleven days later he was elected the Member for Tenterfield (interestingly, at various times he had previously been Members for Sydney, Cumberland, Kiama, Mudgee, Canterbury, and was Member for East Sydney on four separate occasions; after serving as the Member for Tenterfield, he served as Member for Argyll and Member for St Leonards)! In 1888 he introduced a Bill to the NSW Parliament to change the name of the State to 'Australia'. The following year, in an historic speech in Tenterfield, he declared 'the Australian continent needs an Australian government'. Ten years later a Federation Referendum was held but was unsuccessful – mainly because NSW residents did not support it. The next year a second, successful Referendum was held, ultimately leading to the Federation of Australia on 1st January 1901. Regrettably, Sir Henry Parkes 'The Father of Australian Federation', did not live to witness the realization of his Australia vision. He died in 1896.



e. **Albert Einstein** was the mastermind behind $E=mc^2$ and the Theory of Relativity. He once explained his genius when he said, 'I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious.' He was also a violin-playing womanizer who failed university entrance exams… and was an avid commentator on almost everything: education ('Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school'), marriage ('Men marry women with the hope they will never change. Women marry men with the hope they will change. Invariably they are both disappointed'), money ('Compound interest is the eighth wonder of the world. He who understands it, earns it ... he who doesn't ... pays it), music-making ('I cannot tell if I would have done any creative work of importance in music, but I do know that I get most joy in life out of my violin'), religion ('I am a deeply religious nonbeliever') and life in general ('Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance you must keep moving'; 'If A is success in life, then A = x + y + z. Work is x, play is y, and z is keeping your mouth shut') Einstein is probably the most quoted scientist in history – 'the eternal mystery of the world is its comprehensibility. The fact that it is comprehensible is a miracle.'



f. **Edward Hargraves** (1816–1891) is credited with having discovered the first payable goldfield in NSW on Lewis Ponds Creek at Ophir near Bathurst in early 1851. He is reputed to have then said to his 'guide' (John Lister or James Tom or William Tom, all of whom accompanied him on the historic prospecting trip) 'This is a memorable day in the history of New South Wales. I shall be a baronet, you will be knighted, and my old horse will be stuffed, and put into a glass case, and sent to the British Museum.' None of these predicted results eventuated – but Hargraves did receive (among other things) a £500 and then a £10,000 government reward, an annuity of £250, and was appointed Commissioner of Crown Lands. Publicity that Hargraves gave to the area sparked Australia's first gold rush with Governor FitzRoy writing in May 1851 that *'thousands of people of every class are proceeding to the locality, – tradesmen and mechanics deserting certain and lucrative employment for the chance of success in digging for gold, – so that the population of Sydney has visibly diminished.'*

Mini Recollections

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Mini Recollections

'Tis Now Just a Memory

The Briggs Valley Rotolactor

BRIGGS VALLEY ROTOLACTOR

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