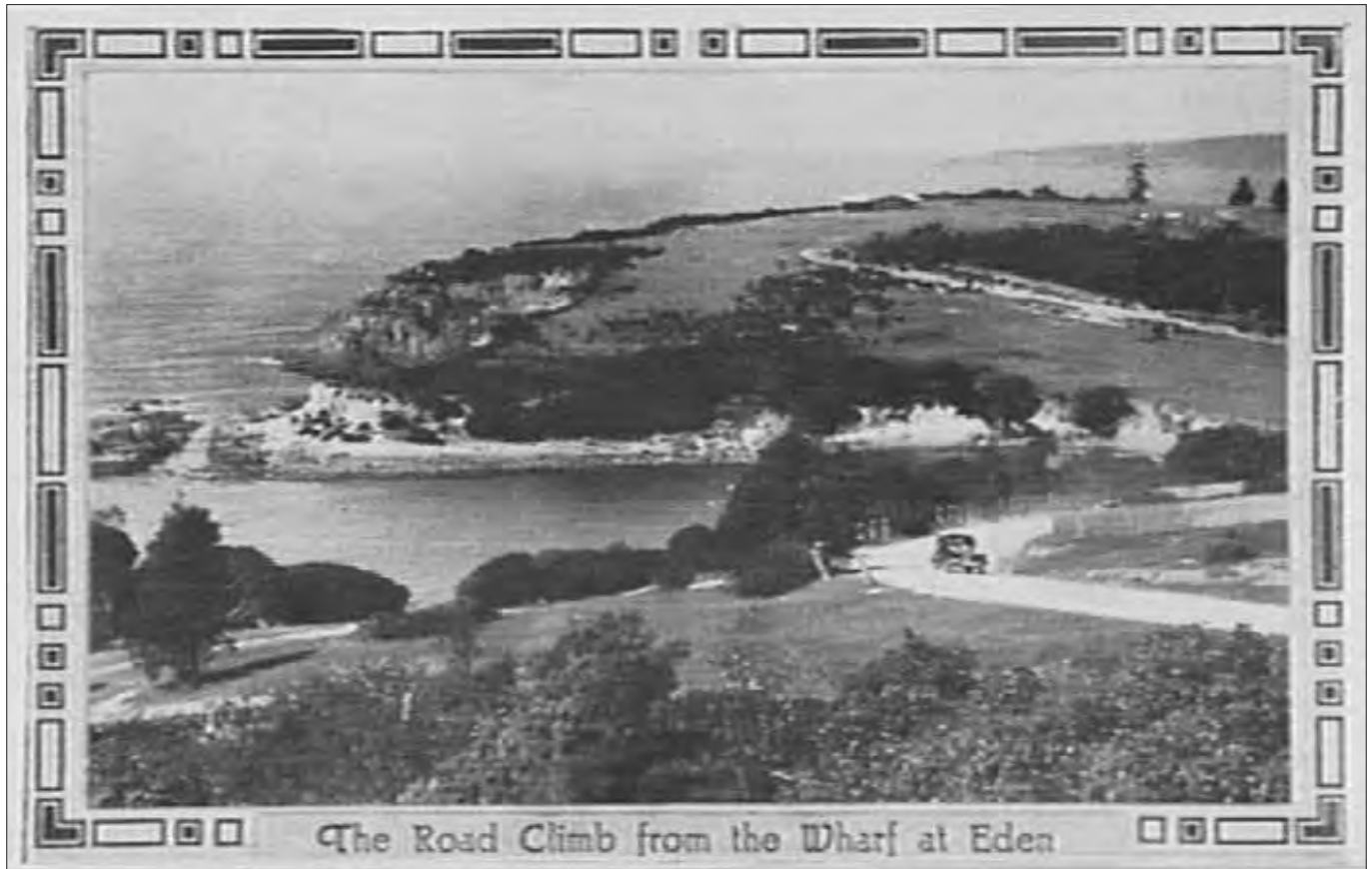


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Eden c 1935. It's changed a bit since then! See 'Eden...the worst place I ever visited' story page 9
Photo: State Library of Victoria image b31545

2BE — 'The Voice of the Community'

Local radio stations usually mirror the communities they serve. Bega's 2BE (now 2EC) certainly did so, and it also played some important roles in the development of the NSW South Coast.

The first commercial radio station in Sydney started broadcasting in 1924. The following year, Melbourne's first commercial radio station went to air. Ten years later, in mid-1935 (having recently established the ABC), Prime Minister Joseph Lyons offered a 'B' class (commercial) radio broadcast licence to the Bega area and to other Australian country areas.

2BE (or more correctly Bega and Far South Coast Broadcasters Limited) was then established. Its shareholders were local farmers, its Chairman was local businessman W.H. 'Billy' Balmain (see 'Recollections' 17). A well-known

Melbourne radio announcer, Alfie Andrews, was hired as the station's Managing Announcer on a generous salary of £8 per week. The station went to air on 30th September 1937 with 'A Program of Music Selected from the World's Great Recordings' together with several humorous sketches by members of a 2BE Dramatic Club.

At that time, Bega's population was 2,310. This was the middle of the Great Depression. In the first few months, the station broadcast only on Wednesday afternoons and Sunday afternoons and evenings (about 6 months later its broadcasts were extended to Saturday evenings and early Sunday mornings).

Somehow the station survived (just!)...until the company was bankrupted in 1940.

At that time 2BE had a 'gripe' session that invited listeners

**Fantastic
Reads**

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to send in their grievances for broadcast on air. The local Fosseys store manager complained about the ever-present smell in Bega from a tannery on the banks of the Bega River. The radio station aired the complaint, and this led to the owners of the tannery suing the station for libel. The station lost the court case that followed, and an extraordinarily high £2,000 award + £600 court costs was made against the station.

Volunteers continued to run the station until its broadcast licence and equipment (but not the bankrupt company!) was purchased in June 1941 by a radio man, John Kerr, from 2PK in Parkes and 2XL in Cooma for £500.

The station eventually became financially successful – especially after it started relaying popular shows from Sydney, like those hosted by Jack Davey and Bob Dyer, which ensured that some of their sponsors' money also started flowing to 2BE.



Bill Momsen, Frank Heffernan, John Kerr who was the owner of 2BE, and Mrs Crowley at 2BE in 1961

By this time, the station was already demonstrating it would be innovative. In 1938 an announcer by the name of Billy Jardine, who presented himself on-air as 'The Newshawk', began a session on 2BE sponsored by Balmain Brothers (Bega) Limited. It was the only session of local news anywhere in NSW that was not simply reliant on the local newspaper. The Melbourne *Advocate* wrote this of it (26.1.1940):

'To a city visitor listening to the local Radio Station 2BE, there was something fresh and appealing not only in the music of the full-vowelled names like Pambula, Nimmitabel, Bemboka, Merimbula, Candelo, Bombala which echo lyrically on the air, but also in the ... news sessions of 'The Hawk', who gathers all the local gossip and news, and gives it with a nice economy of language and in a breezy and unaffected style.

'The Hawk' is possibly unique in Australian broadcasting. He gives a genuine cross-section of real life in a rural community, with its comings and goings, its visitors, its various fortunes

and colourful little incidents, from the towns, the farms, the beach on the coast, even the weather, foul or fair, which the little coastal steamer encounters on its trip to Tathra. It is all done in an engaging intimacy and a depth of human interest.'

Kerr enticed a former workmate from 2PK, Lawrence Porter, to Bega. He erected a new, more powerful antenna and built a small fibro studio/office for the station about a mile east of Bega on land leased from local farmer Charles Parbery. As this was on a hill (just behind today's Glen Mia Estate), Porter built his house at the corner of Howard Avenue and Tathra Road so he could keep watch on the antenna from his back window! (The station's first studio had been located in offices above Grist's Chemist [now Priceline] on the corner of Auckland and Carp Street and its transmission tower was in the paddock behind the chemist where the Bega Commemorative Civic Centre now stands.)

Lawrence Porter also arranged with Sgt Hanson of the Bega Police to install radio receivers in all local police cars – so, when a policeman needed to be contacted, Sgt Hanson would ring the radio station, the station would broadcast a message for the policeman to contact the police station, and the policeman would then find a local telephone and ring the police station.

In the 1960s, local pilot Frank Heffernan used his Auster Aircraft on a number of occasions for fire spotting and to search for missing

bushwalkers and people lost at sea. He kept in contact with either 2BE or 2XL in Cooma whilst in the air.

Between 1975 and 1979, he and 2BE provided a regular aerial service in summer months between Eden and Batemans Bay 'reporting daily on shark and surf conditions and warning surfers of danger spots.'

2BE also played a very major role during local emergencies.

During at least one of the bushfires in the late 1950s, the station was used to advise local residents when they were required to evacuate their homes, and was used to direct individual bush fire brigade teams as they were fighting the fires. Evidently the station was presented with an award for the role it played during this emergency.

Following devastating bushfires in January 1952, a radiothon raised £4,200 and 4,000 bales of fodder to aid farmers devastated by bushfires. The station was also used to appeal for trucks to move 2,500 starving cattle to Cooma.

And, as the *Bega District News* noted in 1977, 'being

located on the notorious Bega River, flooding is a constant threat and over the last 40 years there have been numerous serious floods and 2BE has stayed on the air 24-hours a day to act as the voice of the flood authorities. Mr John Kerr's voice seemed never to be off the air during the disastrous, devastating record floods of 1971.'

In 1975, 2BE was purchased by Ray Rumble. Gary Kelly, one of the announcers at that time, recalls that 'Ray Rumble asked me to visit a local shopkeeper who refused to advertise on the station. The 2BE sales manager had had no luck either. The shopkeeper operated a toy and hobby shop in one of the side streets. I went to the shop and wandered around for a while. It was a mess, with stuff strewn everywhere and nothing organized. But it had charm, and invited you to investigate the nooks and crannies, with the promise of finding something wonderful.



2BE's Studios in 1942. Photo: Historic Views of Bega Collected by W A Bayley, State Library of NSW, FL8855822

'Can I help you?' he asked. So I told him I was just looking around and that I was from 2BE. '2BE? Nobody listens to 2BE. Everyone listens to the ABC, so if you're trying to sell me advertising, forget it.' 'Well, if nobody listens to 2BE, you won't mind if I get on air tomorrow morning and say that you're cheating on your wife and running around with loose women.'

I went back to the station, wrote and produced a few ads, phoned him to say that I'd play them on air as freebies so he could hear them, and then waited for his response. He bought a package of ads for the Christmas season. Later he told me he'd had his most successful Christmas ever, with people coming from miles around to see the toy and hobby shop 'that wasn't even in the main street!'

Ray Rumble's 2BE has the distinction of installing Australia's first radio translator (at Broulee) in 1978 (this transmitted programs from 2BE in Bega as well as programs from a new studio which was established in Vulcan Street, Moruya) and opening Australia's first commercial relay transmitter (at Narooma, which only broadcast programs from 2BE in Bega) in 1983.

The extent to which 2BE was a local 'voice of the community' is illustrated by 2BE boasting in 1977 that 'information is available in different forms on every day. From our regular 'Service Sessions' of timetables for planes, buses, tide times and sunrises daily, 'Education Today', 'United Farmers Review', 'Dairy Corporation Speaks', Soccer

Pools, Victorian Tatts Lotto, NSW State lotteries and onto five minute weekly broadcasts by the district politicians ...'The Bermagui Hour', 'The Cobargo Session', 'The Pambula Hour', 'Merimbula Square Program', 'Eden Twofold Arcade Show', 'Busy Corner Show', 'East of the Clock Program', 'Tathra Calling', to name a few.' And 'for the many Victorian visitors, the Melbourne News Headlines are broadcast daily at 1.35pm and (following the opening of the Broulee translator station) for the Canberra visitors to Moruya, Narooma and Batemans Bay a special daily Canberra news headlines will be broadcast at 1.36pm.'

(In 1986, 2BE dropped its local funeral announcements that were broadcast at 8am daily. 'There was such an uproar that they reinstated them within a week'.)

In late 1986 music promoter Glenn Wheatley bought the station, only to on-sell it five months later to Hoyts Theatres. They changed the station's call sign to 2EC (East Coast). Three years later, in 1990, the station was sold to its current owners, Grant Broadcasters. **R**

Sources: Information supplied by Frank Heffernan; '2BE - 40 Years Old This Week' supplement to *Bega District News*, September 25th 1972; *History of Wireless Telegraphy in Australia* (available via the internet).

We thank Frank Heffernan for suggesting we include this topic in 'Recollections'. If you have a South Coast history topic you would like us to feature and can provide some basic information, please contact us: southcoasthistory@yahoo.com



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CEMETERY SECRETS: THE STORIES THE TOMBSTONES DON'T TELL

'Murder and Piracy on the High Seas'

This is one of nine Commonwealth War Graves Commission graves in Moruya Cemetery.



Six are graves of Australian airmen who were killed when their Avro-Anson aircraft crashed shortly after takeoff from the Moruya Landing Strip on 1st November 1945. They were on their way to Uranquinty near Wagga Wagga. Military air crashes were not that uncommon in Australia in World War II, with nearly 350 occurring in NSW, and a Corporal in charge of a refuelling team at Cloncurry in Queensland reputedly once advising a pilot that 'you won't have any trouble finding your way to Darwin. Just follow the trail of crashed Kittyhawks and you can't go wrong.'

The other three graves, including that of Alexander Reid (above), are of fishermen who died as a result of their 35-metre steam trawler, the *Dureenbee*, being shelled and machine gunned by a Japanese submarine off the coast of

Moruya on 3rd August 1942.

In early July 1942 the Japanese submarine *I-175* was detailed to patrol waters off the Australian coast. On 23rd July it torpedoed the Australian merchant vessel *Allara* when about 20 miles (32km) off the coast near Newcastle. The ship's crew abandoned ship. The *Allara*, however, did not sink and was towed into Newcastle.

The next day the *I-175* torpedoed and damaged another ship, the *Murada*, whilst she was 82 miles (132km) north-east of Newcastle. Three days later the *I-175* was attacked by the newly-commissioned corvette *HMAS Cairns*, so headed south – on the way sinking the French merchant vessel *Cagou*, resulting in the loss of all 39 crew.

In the early hours of 3rd August the unarmed trawler *Dureenbee* accidentally encountered the *I-175*, which was surfaced and recharging its batteries, 25km off the coast of Moruya. The submarine then used its deck gun and machine guns to fire on the *Dureenbee*, destroying the trawler's radio room and its wheelhouse, and crippling its engine room.

The submarine then circled and continued firing on the *Dureenbee* for 45 minutes before heading out to sea. At that point the *Dureenbee*'s Captain fired several distress flares to summon assistance. The Moruya Volunteer Defence Corps responded by asking another trawler, the *Mirrabooka*, to initiate a search, and an RAAF aircraft then directed the *Mirrabooka* to the stranded *Dureenbee*.



The graves of the airmen killed in the Avro-Anson crash near Moruya in 1945



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The graves of the crewmen from the *Dureenbee*

One fisherman, Arthur Scoble, had been killed in the shelling of the *Dureenbee*. Another, Archibald McPherson, was to die on board the *Mirrabooka* as it headed to Moruya. Alexander Reid, the trawler's Chief Officer, died in hospital several days later. The vessel's radio operator lost a hand in the encounter. The other seven members of crew survived with minor injuries.

The *Dureenbee* floated until it ran aground and was wrecked on Richmond Bombora about 1 mile (1.5km) north of Batemans Bay. The steam whistle from the vessel was later salvaged and was used for many years to signal changes of shift at Perry's timber mill in Batemans Bay. It is now in the collection of the Batemans Bay Heritage Museum.

The attack on the *Dureenbee* and the deaths of Scoble, McPherson and Reid were dramatically described in reports (doubling as wartime propaganda) at the time as 'murder



The *Dureenbee* after being attacked by the *I-175*

and piracy on the high seas'. 75 years later a newspaper feature concluded it was 'most likely an act of sadism calculated to strike terror into the hearts of other sailors'. **R**

Sources: Wikipedia; wikiwand.com; ozatwar.com; brouleebayfolklore.weebly.com; AWM Commemorative Rolls; *Sydney Morning Herald* 2.11.1945; *The Daily Telegraph* 3.8.2017; 'The Terrified Trawlermen' by Tim the Yowie Man, *Canberra Times* 26.7.2017.

Your suggestions about other gravestones in local cemeteries that have interesting stories attached to them will be VERY welcome. Send your suggestions to southcoasthistory@yahoo.com or phone 0448 160 852.



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The Hidden History in Cemeteries

I've been poking around some local cemeteries recently, following up suggested subjects for our regular 'Cemetery Secrets' feature, and it seems to me that our local cemeteries are significantly under appreciated, significantly under utilized tourist attractions.

Cemeteries are, I'd suggest, fascinating places. At one time, those who visited and appreciated cemeteries were viewed as slightly ghoulish – but that's changed as, in general, cemeteries are now better maintained, and are therefore much more inviting places to visit, and there is an increasing appreciation of the resources that many cemeteries offer: architecturally and artistically they can be intriguing; they are often significant refuges for interesting flora and fauna (I'm always intrigued, for example, that Bega Valley Shire cemeteries have signs warning of the possible presence of venomous snakes but none promoting other interesting wildlife or plants!); they are often sited in extremely scenic locations (the Tilba District [or Little Lake] Cemetery, as an example, has spectacular coastal views [and, uncommonly, has some excellent explanatory signage – see comments below]); they are tranquil parks; they are places for remembrance and for honouring forebears; they are accessible – and free! – 'open air museums' full of local history, full of interesting sculptures.



'Died Aged 5 months, 6 months, 7 months' and an adjacent unmarked child's grave.

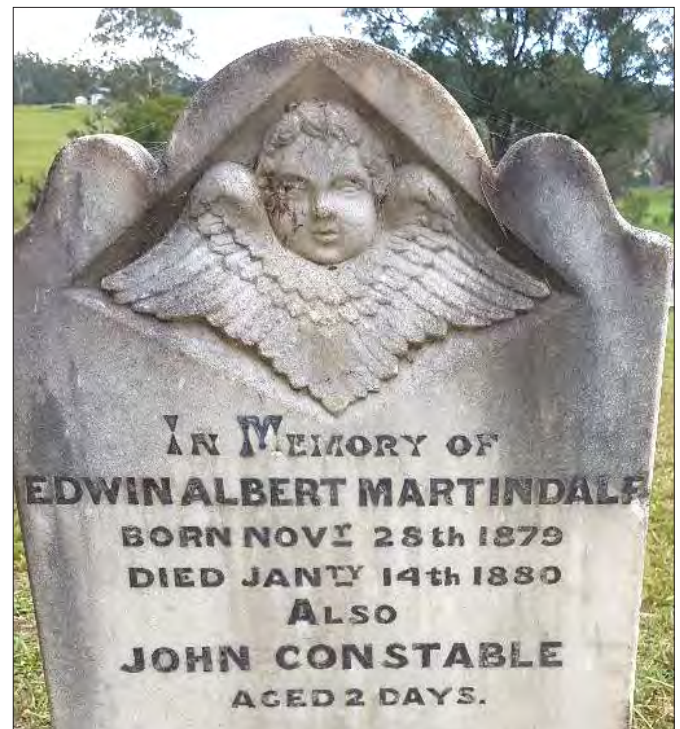
But I also find many cemeteries to be frustrating places – frustrating because, as a visitor, I'm not immediately provided with enough information about them and their residents. And, equally frustratingly, I know that this dearth of information is something that could (and should!) be relatively easily, relatively inexpensively, addressed!

Most tombstones or monuments provide minimal information: a name and, if we're lucky, a date of birth and a date of death; perhaps some very basic reference to close relatives ('loving wife of Joe, mother to Samuel and Samantha') and some departing wish ('Rest in Peace') or some observation ('Greatly Missed') by those who were responsible for the burial and commissioning of the memorial.



From just a quick walk around (as an example) Moruya Cemetery, one can get a real sense of the rich history of that area: up until the early 1900s being a child in the Moruya area (like many other places) was quite a risky undertaking...as was riding a horse!; World War II had a very direct impact on the local area; the area had attracted bushrangers (which is hardly surprising as there were rich goldfields nearby); and the town had significant Scottish and Irish populations (and still does have with, according to the 2016 Census, the proportion of residents in Moruya claiming Irish or Scottish ancestry being significantly above the state averages; there is also some particularly interesting, distinctively-Irish headstones and monument decoration and design in Moruya cemetery).

And, of course, cemeteries are an EXTREMELY valuable historical resource to historians.



Occasionally, these epitaphs are of greater interest. For example, next-of-kin of those who died on active service in World War I were offered the opportunity to add a personal message not exceeding 66 characters – for which they had to pay 3½d per character! – on standard Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstones that were provided free of

charge. Beyond the very common 'At Rest' and passages from the Bible, there are epitaphs that make visits to these cemeteries much more informative; these range from 'He did his bit', to 'Shot at Dawn. One of the first to enlist. A worthy son of his father' (on the grave of a deserter), to 'An only son killed in action on his way to his leave and wedding', to 'Sacrificed to the fallacy that war can end war', to (perhaps uniquely) a bar of music recognising a dead soldier's skills as a violinist.



In times past, the physical limitations and costs of engraving monuments restricted the amount of information that headstones could display. Other monumental options that are available today, however, have removed that limitation, so – hopefully – future tombstones will include significantly more information about the deceased who are buried beneath.

If more information about the deceased is provided,



A nearby headstone is engraved 'In Memory WALTER TOMBS, Police Constable, who died at Moruya from injuries accidentally received from a fall from his horse on the 25th November 1897. Aged 27 Years. Erected by public subscription.' That story, surely, must be worth displaying nearby.

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the site will be more interesting...and, surely, will greatly increase community recognition of the contributions those who are there, 'at rest', made to society and to local history.

But possible changes to memorials in the future will not address the current situation with existing memorials.

There are stories relating to every surviving grave. Some are simple, some are grand – but, socially, all are important, and all deserve to be recorded and shared. If we do not do this, then we are effectively choosing to ignore the contributions (however humble, however significant) those deceased made to local society.

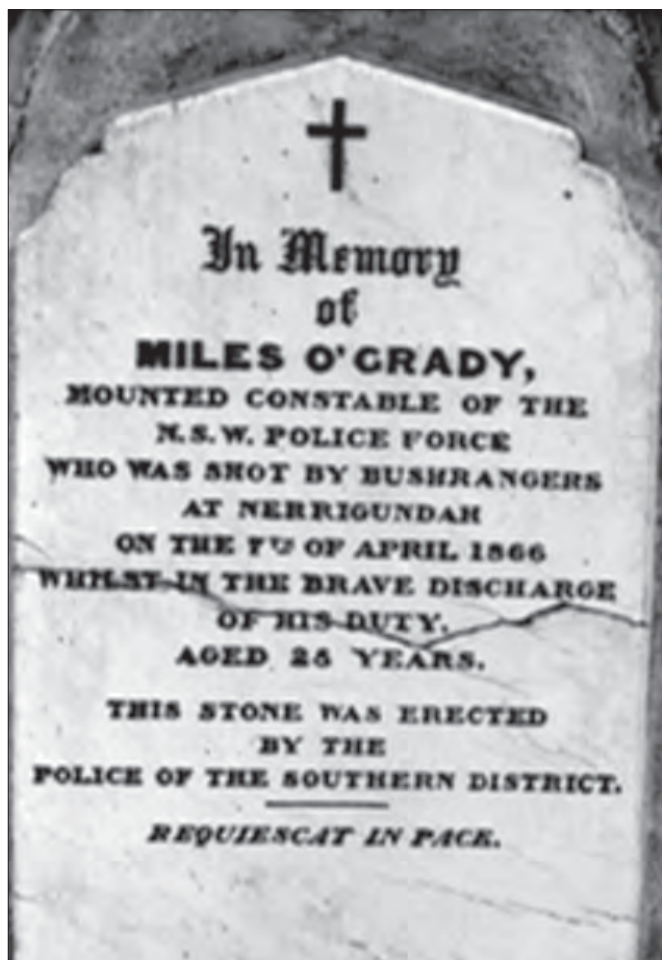
Their stories ARE of interest to visitors to local cemeteries, and their stories infuse 'life' to individual cemeteries. They can make a visit to a local cemetery vastly more rewarding... and can effectively transform an everyday 'ordinary local cemetery' into a significant, worthwhile visitor attraction.

And many of those stories deserve to be told.

So, what am I suggesting? Basically that we make an effort to provide more information at cemeteries about those who are buried there, perhaps (and this is just one suggestion) by erecting plaques (or, in modern parlance, 'interpretative signage') about the lives of some of the interesting 'residents' adjacent to their graves or around the perimeters of the

Continued on page 12

Miles O'Grady's story (see right) would be certainly worth including on signage adjacent to his grave (the story is at bit.ly/Recollections1)...and signage would also enable the date of his death to be corrected (it was 9th April, not 7th April)!



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**'Eden, though a beautiful spot ...
is about the worst place
for astronomical observations
that I ever visited'**

Transits of Venus (where Venus passes across the Sun, as seen from Earth) are rare and they only occur in pairs once every 100 years or so. One occurred in 1874 and another in 1882.

The 1874 transit was of particular interest and generated international excitement because it presented the first opportunity to astronomers to photograph the phenomenon.

As had occurred on previous occasions (including when Captain James Cook was despatched to Tahiti to observe the 1769 Transit, before he then sailed westwards to 'discover' the east coast of New Holland), numerous expeditions were planned and equipped to observe the transit from locations around the globe (one of these expeditions, financed by the United States Congress was to Hobart and another to Queenstown in New Zealand).

In Australia, the Transit was to be watched from a number of observatories, including those in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.

Sydney Observatory received a Government donation of £1,000 to observe the 1874 transit and three additional observation sites were selected to supplement the data that would be obtained at Sydney Observatory. These three sites were determined to have desirable geographical positions, reliable weather, and "telegraphic convenience for determining longitude".

Woodford (in the Blue Mountains), Goulburn and Eden were selected as these sites.

The Eden expedition leader was Rev. William Scott who had previously been Government Astronomer at Sydney Observatory. He was, in the months following the Transit,

to detail his experiences in a paper that was read to the Royal Society in January 1875.

'We left Sydney on Tuesday, November 24th, and arrived at Eden the next morning. Having landed our observatory, tents, and instruments, together with a good supply of bricks and cement for building piers for the instruments, my first care was to find a suitable spot for the observatory.

I was not long in selecting an open space known as the Market-square [now the carpark of the Eden Fishermen's Recreation Club] on a hill overlooking both bays. This site has the advantage of being near the telegraph line, and commanding uninterrupted views of the ranges at some miles distance to the south and west, the wooded sides of which I saw would afford good reference marks for the adjustments of the transit instrument in the meridian and prime vertical.

The day was nearly over before we had carted all our luggage to the top of the very steep hill which forms the principal street. A commencement however was made of setting up the observatory in which we were most effectively assisted by Mr Russell [the then Colonial Astronomer], the harbour master, and his boat's crew.'

A system was devised to cover the bottom half of their telescope with a large bag 'so that the whole observatory answered the purpose of a dark room for photographic work. This arrangement, though very convenient, was, I think, the least successful of Mr. Russell's contrivances as the bag was liable to be influenced by the wind, and interfered with the steady motion of the [mechanically-driven] telescope'.


On the day of the Transit, things did not go well for Rev. Scott, leading him to ultimately conclude 'that Eden,



Waiting for the Transit of Venus at Eden in 1874. Seated at right is William Scott

though a beautiful spot, and in many respects a most desirable place to inhabit, is about the worst place for astronomical observations that I ever visited.

As they waited for the Transit to commence, clouds had moved in and the wind had picked up. However, before Venus moved into the sphere of the Sun, *'I could see clearly the whole of the planet's outline. In fact, it presented exactly such an appearance as might have been expected from a planet possessing an atmosphere.'*

The party was also able to follow the path of Venus into the sphere of Sun until *'I regret that the action of the wind on the telescope rendered it impossible to keep the micrometer wire in its true position' and 'the quality of the pictures (was) affected by the clouds which were continually moving over the sun's face: indeed there were very few minutes during which the sun was not more or less obscured... At one time we had to stop for 20 (minutes), and at another time for 80 minutes, the sun being entirely obscured...(ultimately) we took about 60 photographs, very few of which I fear are of any value.'* 

Sources: Royal Astronomical Society's Science Photo Library's website; *Sydney Morning Herald* 23.1.1875, accessed from Trove; *'Transit of Venus'* by Steven van Roode; Wikipedia; Information supplied by John Sandefur.

We thank John Sandefur for suggesting this topic be included in *'Recollections'*. If you have a South Coast history topic you would like us to feature and can provide some basic information, please contact us: southcoasthistory@yahoo.com

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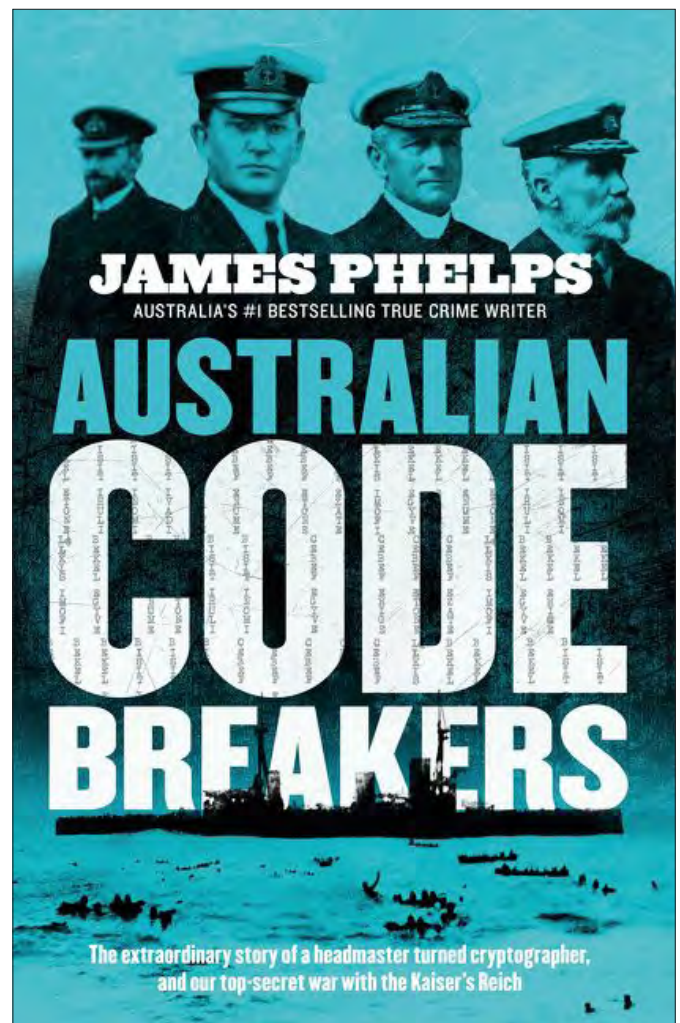
HISTORIES

Australian Code Breakers

by James Phelps

The story is interesting. And, apparently, one that has never been widely publicised before. From that perspective, it's worth reading this book.

But it's a fairly simple story – one that really could be told in a few pages (in contrast to the 306 pages it takes in this book) and therefore would be ideally suited to being outlined in any of a number of Australian history magazines (as indeed it was, in a 1934 edition of the RSL's magazine *'Reveille'*).



And, personally, I wasn't overly keen on this history being presented in a dramatized style – but I guess that was necessary if a substantial book was to be published from a very limited storyline!

'Australian Code Breakers' is promoted as 'the extraordinary story of a headmaster turned cryptographer'. Yes, that story is there, but it's a minor part of the book. Most of the book is taken up with details of Australian and German World War I naval operations. These include, for example, details of the sinking of the *Emden* at the Cocos (Keeling) Islands and the well-known action designed

to prevent the *Pfalz* leaving Melbourne's Port Phillip Bay, which resulted in the first shot fired in anger in World War I. And, whilst these are interesting and important stories in themselves, the inclusion of these details has absolutely no relevance or connection to the central theme of the book.

So, what is the story?

At the outbreak of World War I the Allies did not have copies of any German code books. However, one was soon seized by the Australian Navy from a German merchant vessel that sailed into Melbourne apparently totally unaware that war had recently been declared (how this seizure was made is a great yarn!).

A German-speaking ex-school headmaster was then recruited in an attempt to use this code book to help decode a backlog of intercepted German radio messages.


The Germans, however, also used other codes and keys to these codes, so his job rapidly changed to attempting to crack these other codes – the solution to one of which was estimated to be hidden among 54 billion other possible combinations of this code used by the Germans.

He was remarkably successful and valuable information was transmitted to the British Admiralty which, at the time, had been given complete control over the Australian navy. But – surprise, surprise! – intelligence assistance (no matter how helpful it may have been) from 'down under' was not greatly appreciated by the intelligence boffins attached to the British Admiralty, so vital information supplied from

Australia was either totally ignored or its use was delayed.

It is likely that the worst naval disaster in British history (the Battle of Coronel off the Chilean coast) would have been averted had the intelligence supplied from Australia been promptly and effectively used, and had the Australian fleet (and especially its most powerful ship, *HMAS Australia*) not been embarrassingly misdirected by the Admiralty.

A short time later, after the Germans had again changed their key to the basic code (which meant that each of these new keys to the code also had to be figured out), the efforts of this Australian provided essential information to the British Admiralty that ultimately led to the significant December 1914 British naval victory at the Battle of the Falkland Islands.

And – surprise!, surprise! – it seems the significance of this Australian's code-breaking effort was then deliberately downplayed so, for example, no mention of it was included in Charles Bean's mammoth '*Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–18*'. Perhaps this why it remains a little-known episode in Australian history. 

'*Australian Code Breakers*' is available in paperback from around \$24.

If you read any book reviewed in 'Recollections', we'd be very interested in your assessment of them. Reviews, after all, represent just one person's opinion.



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cemetery. And, then, we should ensure that local tourism material starts suggesting that these local cemeteries are places really worth visiting. (Already an increasing number of people are being attracted to what cemeteries have to offer [cemeteries really do add a depth to travel that can't be found anywhere else!...]and there are even words to describe these visitors: 'taphophiles', 'tombstone tourists', 'gravers').

The stories about John Gilmore in 'Recollections' 21 and about Alexander Reid in this issue of 'Recollections' are examples of information that could beneficially be displayed on interpretive signage at the scenic Moruya Cemetery, which would then provide more encouragement for people to visit the area.

However, whilst I am currently frustrated with the scarcity of information about those buried in local cemeteries, I suspect that future historians will be even more frustrated

by an absence of *any* information at all about most previous residents from the area.

The trend now is for bodies to be cremated rather than buried (so no headstone is erected), for cemeteries to be planned as lawn cemeteries or eco-cemeteries (again, with no headstones), and for obituaries (especially in local media, and especially for 'ordinary' residents) to be printed less often. (Interestingly, on-line obituaries provide the opportunity for more details to be recorded, by more contributors, about more of those who have died – even those who might normally be considered 'ordinary people' – but the problem with these on-line obituaries is that they are transient and few end up, for example, ever being archived by local history societies or museums.) So, regrettably, more and more people in the future will simply 'disappear' when they die, leaving virtually no record of their lives and their contributions to local history and society.

Peter Lacey

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