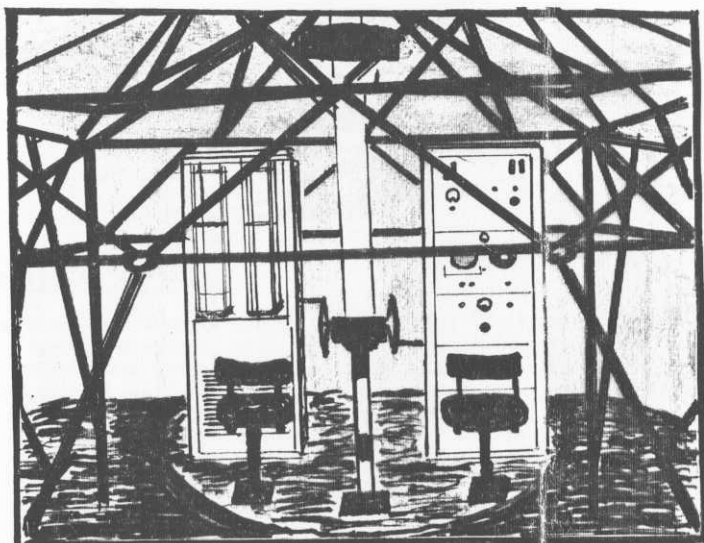


R. 1/2/05
(Hester)

Jerry

ENCOUNTER 2002—WEDGE 200.

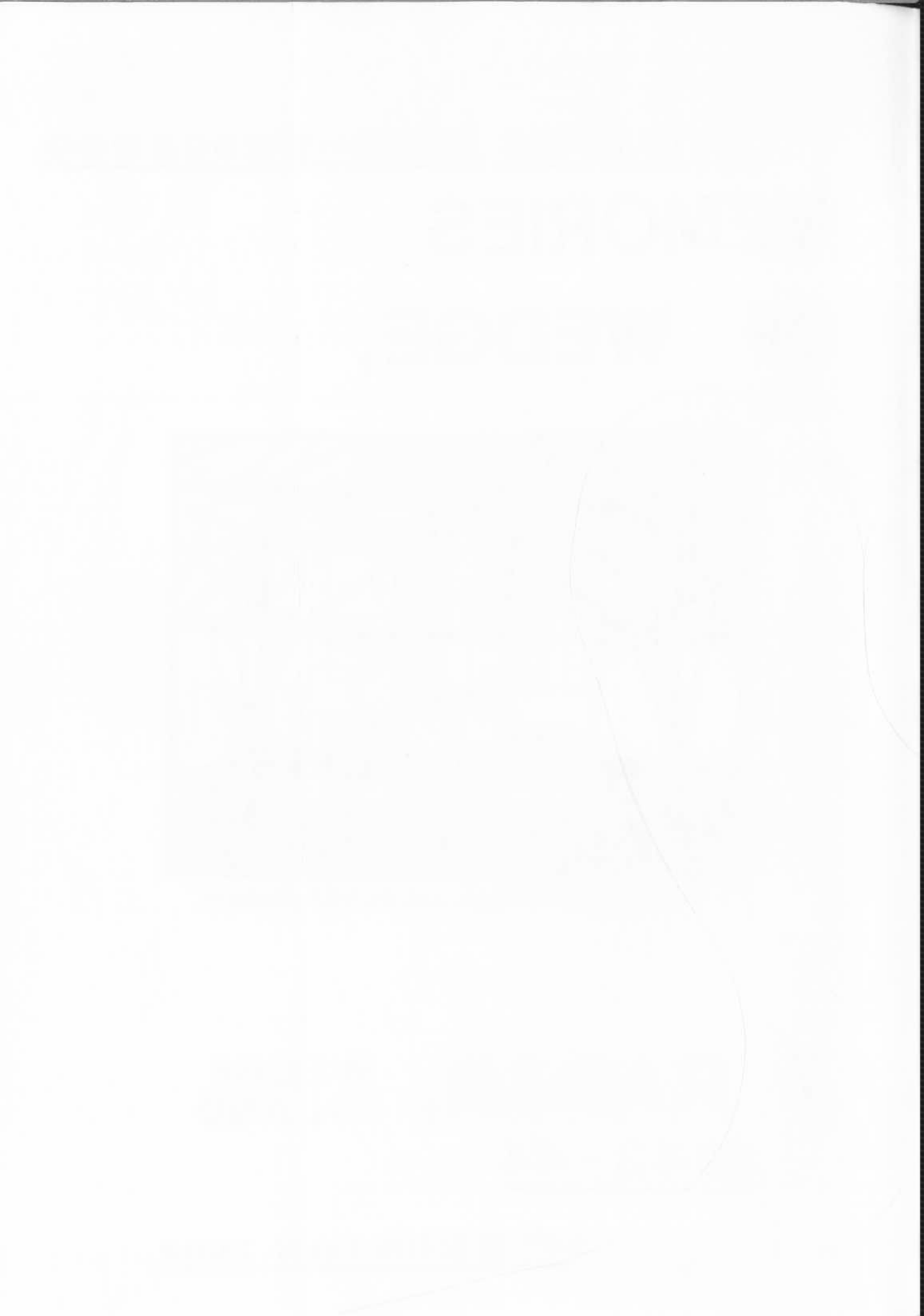
MEMORIES OF WEDGE,

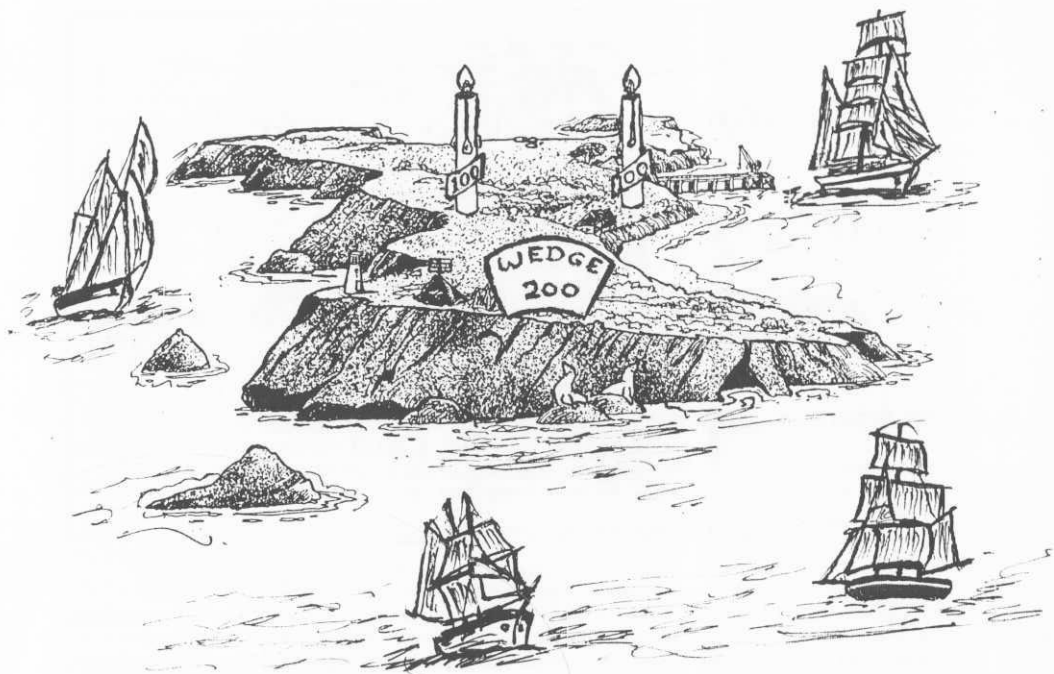


Looking into the LW/AW Mk. 2 at the A.W.M., Canberra.

**7 RADAR, WEDGE
ISLAND**
1943 - 44

14th REUNION 2002





HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO WEDGE !

We've had much to celebrate during the year 2001 - Federation Year - with reunions, special meetings, Back to the Old Town celebrations and the like and old friends have taken advantage of these occasions to get together once again and to reminisce over a cupper or two, or a jug or three. Now all that is over, and we're well into 2002. So the question now is.... what can we celebrate now?

Well, there's now ENCOUNTER 2002...the Matthew Flinders - Nicholas Baudin bit of history so important to South Oz...and it's on right now. There are 4 tall ships, inter-nation rivalry, Britannia Rules the Waves and all that. But while the fiercest celebrations will be down in the Encounter Bay region next month, we who can claim to still have a bit of Wedge soil under our finger nails can celebrate a double century for our dear old island home. So.....ENCOUNTER 2002 equals WEDGE 200.

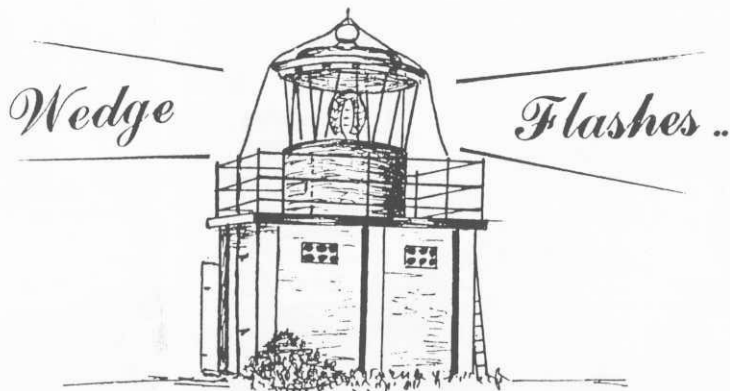


Yes ! Only a couple of weeks ago - on February 24th., Wedge turned 200. For on February 24th. 1802, Wedge was duly discovered and named by Matthew Flinders as he made his way from west to east across our southern coast-line.

Matthew had much to think about at the time. He had just lost 8 good men and true who had left INVESTIGATOR to seek water. Among these was Mr. Thistle, one of his right hand men. So Thistle Island was named, and Memory Cove, and Cape Catastrophe. No doubt Flinders then hurriedly named Wedge Island because of its shape, and then quickly left the area which held unhappy memories for him.

So 200 years and a bit later, we celebrate the Wedge Double Century...and today we say HAPPY BIRTHDAY WEDGE!

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THE SIGNALS AND RADAR LUNCH. Once again, a big plug for the pre-Anzac Day Signals & Radar Lunch to be held at the Marion Hotel on Thursday, April 18th. at 12 Noon...Numbers appear to be down a little (naturally) from the 100 or more of a few years ago, so help keep the old flag flying, and enjoy a meal at the same time, Ron Coat is our man to see, or contact Ray Deane.

At the time of writing, the intention is still to have a National Radar Reunion in South Australia in March, 2003. The Barossa Valley is the favoured gathering place for accommodation, dinners, trips etc., and doubtless many of the famous S.A wineries will be visited. Warren Mann, who has organised several reunions, will also be principal organiser for the S.A. effort.

The recent Western Australian experience was to have about 90 attendees, so probably about 100 at least would attend in S.A. So there certainly would be quite a few old mates to catch up with - particularly if you can drop a line or two, or send a Xmas card or three this year to tee up old friends.

Wouldn't it be a shocker to take 'em all out to Wedge!

Ed. Simmonds new book, Technicalities and Generalities, is now on the market on CD/ROM, or in computer form - but a printed version can be obtained for the computer illiterate (like me). There are some unique illustrations, and photos to amaze you.

And I understand 70 or 80 'new' photos and circuits will also be made available via the same method in the fairly near future.

We send our Best Wishes to all old Wedge-ie-tarians....particularly those on the sick list. And Greetings from all at the Reunion to President Doug. We certainly miss your company. And we are truly pleased to see Maurice Bottrill here with us again.

Did you see Winston's effort in the 'Tiser before Christmas? Where does he get those big words? I can tell you...it sent me scurrying backwards and forwards looking for the Oxford Dictionary.

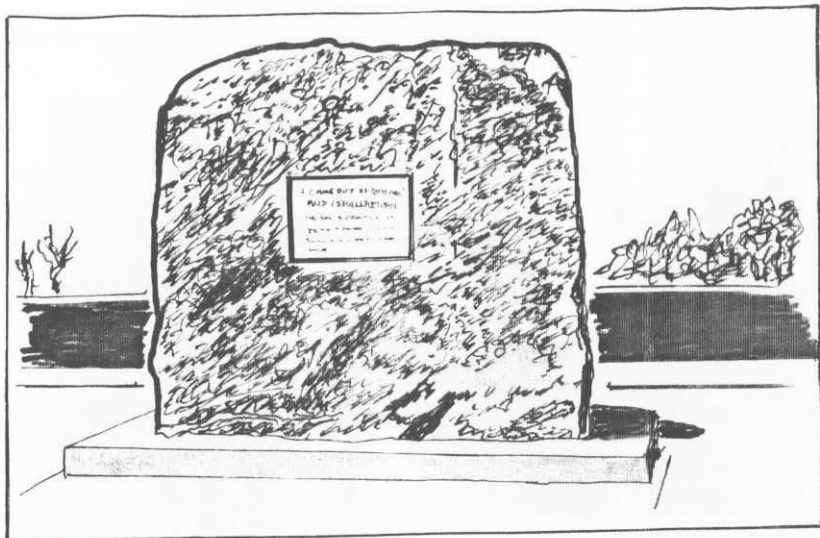
PS

DESPITE the palindromic, next year will be far from comic.
W.J. INGRAM,
Klemzig.

Finally, with the big Reunion next year, reorganising ours may be necessary.

We were so sorry to learn of the passing of Pat Bottrill during the year.

#####



"...AND I SHALL RETURN!"

Ierowie is a pretty quiet place these days, but back in '43 and '44 there was hardly a busier town in S. Ats. Troop trains coming and going, almost hourly, narrow and broad gauge - servicemen everywhere, for Ierowie was then the changeover point for the northern trains.

Back in '90, Winston Ingram told us a good story about Doug advising the mighty 5 star General MacArthur to fly to the Alice and then proceed by train, which he did. And at Ierowie the Press caught up with him on the station platform where he quoted those words which are still well known nearly 60 years later...."I came out of Bataan - and I shall return!"

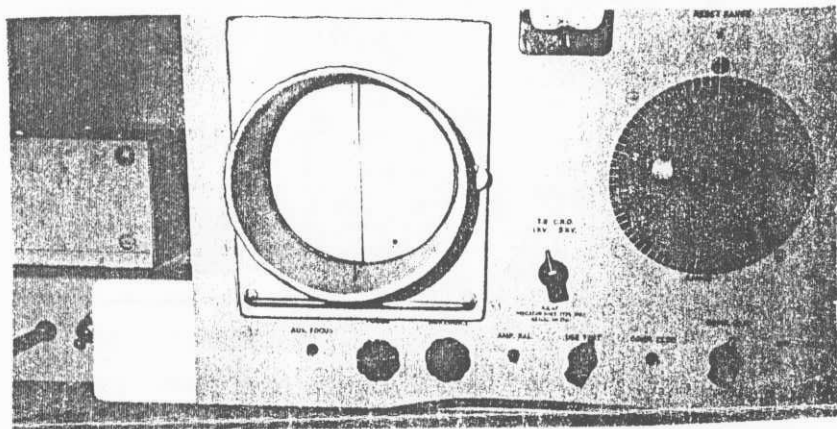
But 60 years later that station platform is no more. The station itself has gone, so too the railway staff and all signs of railway activity.

But Ierowie has ensured its '42 moment of glory has been permanently preserved in bronze and granite. A magnificent stone and plaque marks the historic spot on a small section of the station platform where tens of thousands of servicemen climbed aboard the Narrow Gauge to continue their trek to the north. Undoubtedly this is a unique historic spot deserving special recognition.

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P.S. Next Saturday, the 23rd., Ierowie will hold its big annual day, as close as possible to the day MacArthur was in the town. Old residents, friends and whoever feels inclined to visit, all are invited.





The LW/AW Receiver panel on display at the Perth Reunion.

THE PERTH REUNION.

I've heard from Keith Backshall and Dean Dadds - and both tell me that the Perth show was indeed first class - a fine credit to the organising committee. Unfortunately Keith, one of the principal organisers, had to retire hurt (due to a health nasty) but there's still plenty to report on.

Dean tells me - Every function went smoothly and in an easy, relaxed manner. The outings and dinners were all thoroughly enjoyable. Buses and Launches arrived exactly on time, and we were treated to memorable visits to the RAAFA Village and the Canals of Mandurah with their kilometres of mansions. In Fremantle, the fish leapt out of the water to prove their absolute freshness for lunch before we crossed to Rottnest.

We saw the cultivation of the State emblem - the Kangaroo Paw, on the trip to Yanchep; and we enjoyed the wonderful sight of the lights of Perth looking across the waters of the Swan River from the heights of Kings Park.

The Committee men extended wonderful hospitality to their interstate visitors - our aircraft were met and we were driven to our selected motels. Our chauffeurs returned later to take us in comfort to register.

There were two dinners at the well known Bull Creek RAAFA Club...Keith was to be M.C. at both. Well, he managed both jobs O.K., and the dinners went off in fine style under his guidance and direction.

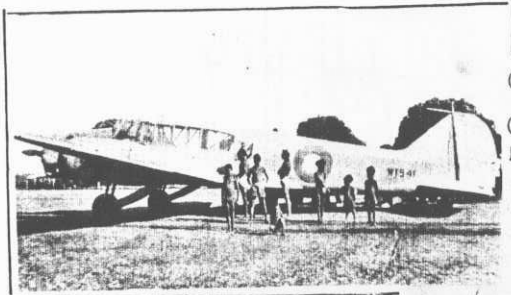
Keith has informed me that speaker Austin Asche kept the guests in fits of laughter at the final dinner.

Among the high-lights of the displays was a 'working' receiver scope of an LW/AW and this received much attention from the viewers.

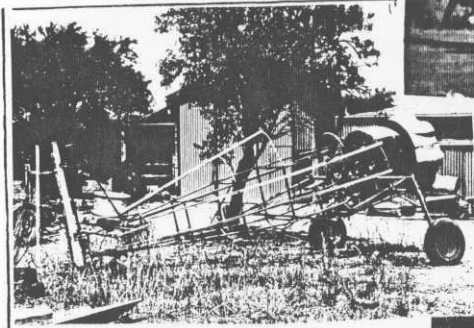
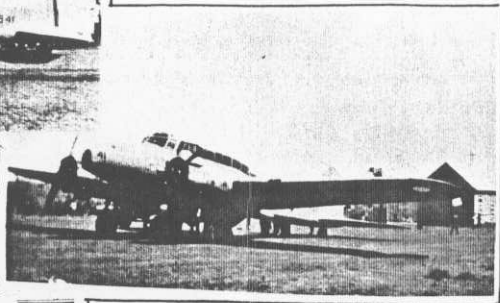
Mark Bussanich who put it together received congratulations for his hard work in gathering in the components from near and far and then putting them together with an actual trace and blip.

So ends the story of the Perth get-together - evidently a great success - and we thank Keith and Dean for reporting to us.

(For some years, Perth has enjoyed the zeal of an active radar group who meet regularly at the RAAFA Clubrooms.)



(Left) W1941 at Bathurst, and
(Below) At Port Keats Mission.



W1941 identified by the usual
plate on the frame, still
exhibits some of her original
dignity, even in a farmer's yard.



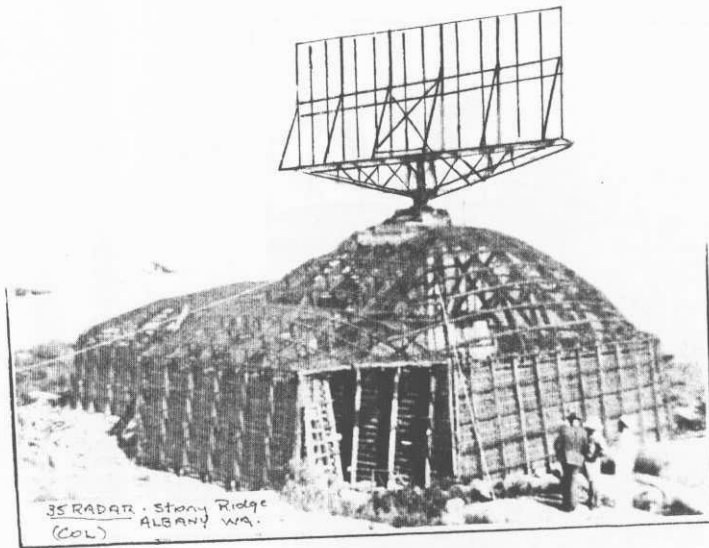
ANSON W1941 OF 6 COM. FLIGHT DESERVED A BETTER FATE.

There would be very few of our out-stations in NWA that did not receive a supply run from one of Fenton's Ansons. Doc Fenton seemed able to instil one maxim in the minds of his 6 Com. Flight pilots..."Land regardless!" - which most times was done - and successfully - to deliver fresh supplies- mail-pictures- and personnel to the most isolated stations. Even 344 down on Montalivet eventually cleared enough ground of rocks and stones for a small strip - and the first plane to land was one of Doc Fenton's Aggies.

Anson W1941 was a veteran of the service and could be seen anywhere in the NWA. I photographed it at Port Keats, and I have a photo of the same plane at Bathurst Island...A fine old plane doing a grand job.

I have two more photos of W1941 in a farmer's yard...part of it on the rubbish heap, and part stuck together as a push-around single seater for the farmer's kids to play around in. A sort of disposable go-cart.

W1941 certainly deserved a better fate.



35 RADAR, STONY RIDGE, ALBANY.

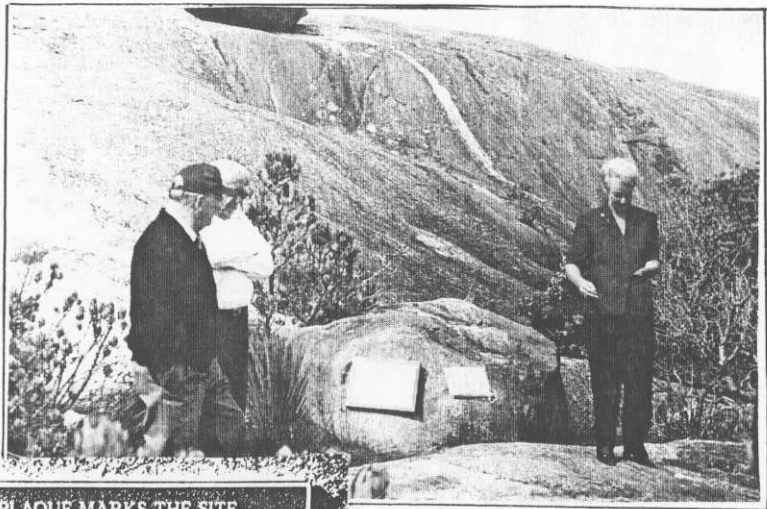
You just may recall back in October '95, a memorial plaque honouring 32 Radar was unveiled with due ceremony at the old camp site on Rottneest Island, W.A.....Keith Backshall sent a few photos and the story which we happily wrote up in M.of W. Well, the W.A. Radar Group has scored again - this time with a plaque down at the lonely, rocky site of 35 Radar at Stony Ridge, on the ocean directly south of Albany where the huge rock formations seem to bear a great resemblance to the granite outcrops in South Australia.

This time the Anzac Day honours were attended to by the Lady Mayor of Albany; and after the honours had been attended to with due ceremony, all adjourned to the Albany airport where plaque No. 2 was unveiled paying due honour to the HF/DF unit stationed there during the war years.

So all who are interested enough to venture down south of the very attractive town of Albany and to search around, the plaque will be found fixed on granite, recalling the station and men of 35 Radar, located there during the war.

Hopefully, the photos kindly lent by Allan Ferguson will convey the essentials of the occasion. Allan spent some time on the Albany station and prepared a history of the place some time ago.

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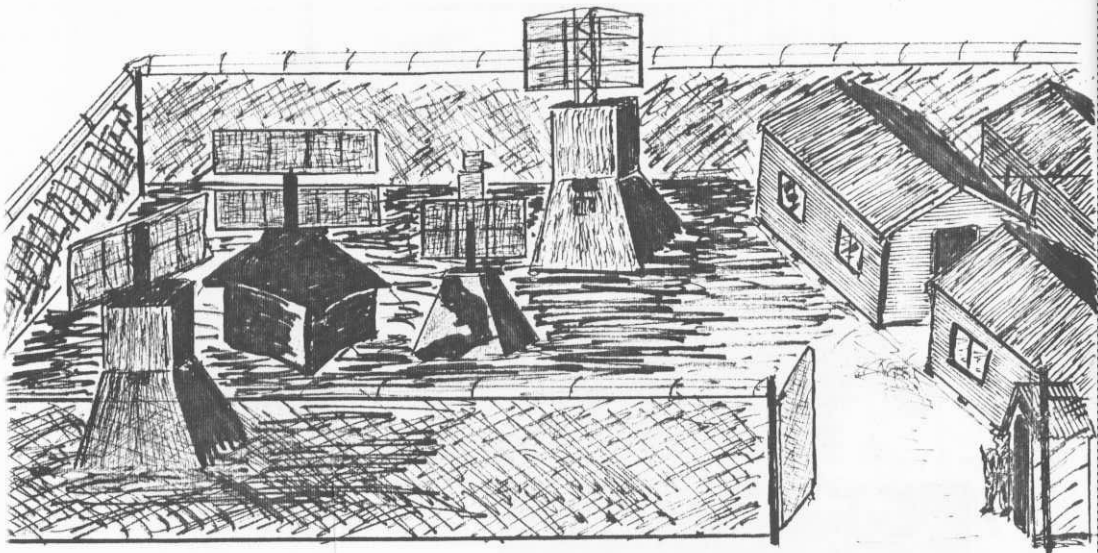
THIS PLAQUE MARKS THE SITE
of the
**R.A.A.F. AIR WARNING RADAR
STATION NUMBER 35**
WHICH OPERATED HERE 1943 TO 1945
This plaque has been mounted by the
W.A. Radar Veterans Group
in conjunction with the Albany Branch of
the Royal Australian Air Force Association,
W.A. Division.
April 2001

The principal action down
at Stony Ridge, Albany,
last April.

(per favour Allan
Ferguson.)

Allan's second photograph shows the ceremony at the Albany airport when
a second plaque was unveiled honouring the HF/DF boys of W.W.2.





RADAR SCHOOL, RICHMOND.

A spit 'n polish castle if ever there was one....with a forest of radar aerials sprouting above the security fence. A march into school every day....C.O.'s Parade every week....a parade every day. Guards on the gate with bayonets fixed. Salutes for all commissioned officers. Rookies in their second month of Air Force life. Atebrin yellow veterans. P.I. and radar theory. Mess parades, sick parades, pay parades and of course, short arm parades.

Most of all, I remember the rush for the gate on Friday afternoon, each man brandishing a Leave Pass at the S.P. Poor chap....you could wave a wine label at him and he'd wave you through. Then there was the train trip back on Sunday night with the carriage in darkness. You didn't need much imagination to guess what was going on in the dark across the corridor. Remember those wide-open toilets? All in together boys? I explored and found the Yanks further down the lines at least had a partition between each - no door, but some measure of welcome privacy. So I joined the Yanks for a session each day....and very nice chaps I found them to be. And those red beret fellows opposite the school, marching as though a herd of elephants might stop them, but nothing less. True soldiers those fellows. Can you imagine an 18 year old AC1 - 4 weeks in the RAAF - stopping them with a "Halt...who goes there?" if they'd marched up to the Radar School gate?

My memories of the place are pretty dim now of course, but undoubtedly the week-ends in Sydney were the high spots - the harbour particularly. But I do have vivid recollections of becoming a Mess-hand once the course was over. There my principal duty seemed to be loading up the circular racks of plates for a big dish washing machine - giving the racks a spin, then slamming the door shut. Not as good a job as the D.I.Y. method at our radar stations though. That effort was about the only time I worked among WAAAF's in my Air Force career - washing dishes in the Airmen's Mess at Richmond.

So we were 'passed out' as AC1 Radar Operators and left Richmond after 4 short weeks during which time we learnt the theory and the basics of the various gear we would operate - and how to salute an officer whether he wanted to be saluted or not - and how to start a diesel. How different at an actual station! A family of 20 or 30 - a few sergeants - a young C.O.. No parades - a few household chores - but all working as a team to keep the Doover on the hill operational. Inside the Doover, the flicker of green on the CRT represented the sole purpose of the station. That green blip 100 miles out....friend or foe? Friendly usually, but we were never told.

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REMEMBER 44 RADAR WING?

Recently a story appeared in the Newsletter, and a photo appeared in 'WINGS'- telling of the re-forming of 44 Wing at Williamtown. The photo shows Jack Fraser (one of our old mob) passing the Wing emblem into the safe-keeping of a young and obviously keen young bod of the re-formed Wing.

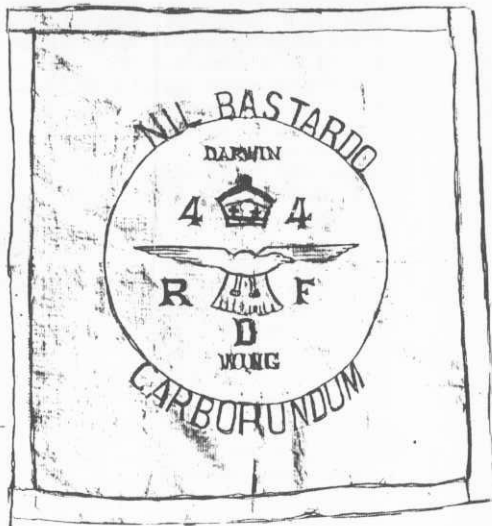


The sketch shows the old emblem of 1943-44 vintage which somehow was taken into unofficial safe-keeping by our old friend Jim Flaherty when 44 Radar Wing at Darwin was disbanded in August 1944 I think it was.

44 Radar Wing had a somewhat dubious record for dispensing a high level of discipline and other such nonsense, but despite that, it looked after the NWA radar stations far better than NWA H/Q which had often just conveniently forgotten them after sending them out into the wilderness.

As for Jim who somehow managed to save the old emblem with its disrespectful message....well, Jim was a true-blue friend of all us old radar chaps, and did his best to further our rights and privileges right up to the day he was posted to that great Doover in the sky.

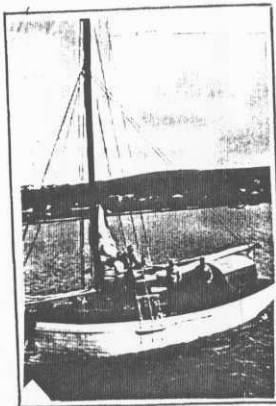
And just what does that old motto mean? Well, my dear old Latin teacher used to say...."Don't translate Latin literally- always put it into English" ...so I guess "Don't let the b—s wear you down" is as good as any translation.



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SECRETS FROM AN UNOFFICIAL HISTORY OF WEDGE.....

(By Stan Moss, - and ever so slightly 'censored' by M.E.F.)



Fri. 28/5/43. I arrived at Wedge at 9 p.m. and slept that night on Welfare's cutter 'FLORENCE.'

Sun. 30th. Settled in now, and we received lectures on the Vickers Machine Gun.

Mon. 31st. Today we had actual Vickers firing and practice.

Tues. 1/6/43. Tommy Gun practice for the Wedge troops today, and there was also C.O.'s parade with inspection of our quarters. (Is nothing private?)

Wed. 2nd. Grenade practice today....then a parade because of our lack of discipline. Then came a session of routine drill for us Wedge recalitrants.

Thurs. 3rd. A morning parade today followed by rifle drill and target practice. Afterwards the C.O. delivered a lecture on inefficiency in locating and correcting equipment faults. The recreation for the day was to erect a wireless mast.

wed. 9th. The C.O. left on Welfare's boat. (Perhaps life will be a bit easier....maybe?)

Thurs. 10th. Life still no better....making paths is today's job.

Fri. 11th. Flares were seen towards Thistle Is. Maybe... (just maybe the C.O. has been shipwrecked!)

Sat. 12th. We enjoy a special tea with a euchre tournament afterwards.

Thurs. 17th. The CAPE YORK anchored off-shore in the late afternoon and left the next day. We spent the day laying phone cables between the camp sections.

Sun. 20th. 7RS 'off air' for most of the night because of high winds.

Thurs. 24th. Another parade and an ARP lecture, plus a special parade for the RDF staff.

Fri. 25th. M.V.MOONTA picked up about 10 p.m.

Sat. 26th. Much agonising....

I had to entertain with a song at a concert. (Bet I won't be asked again!)

Mon. 28th. Concrete floors to be laid up at the Dover. RDF Labourers?

Thurs. 1st. July. Football!

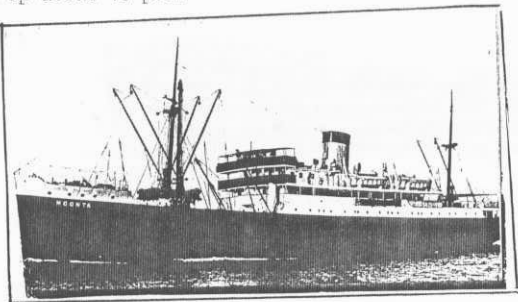
Fri. 2nd. A storm hits Wedge. M.V.MINNIPA located and plotted.

Sun. 4th. Two NCO's were locked in 'B' motor house.

Thurs. 8th. I picked up planes - Ansons - probably from Mallala or Pirie.

Su. 11th. All confined to barracks as some miscreant has snaffled the C.O.'s tobacco.

Mon. 12th. Trial of two men who were AWL - they were given Field Punishment.





Tues. 13th. There were test flights by Ansons while the equipment was checked.
Sat. 17th. The JOHN ROBB arrived and our heavy supplies were unloaded and brought ashore.
Sun. 18th. A Special Tea.... then a sing-song followed by a fish supper.
Wed. 21st. Football... 'The Rest' defeated the Vics.
Mon. 2nd. Aug. The new C.O., P/O. Henty arrived at 7 RS Wedge.
Fri. 6th. Two turkeys shot and brought in.
Tues. 10th. Roast turkey and fish for tea.
Sun. 15th. Visiting Lancaster from England located and plotted.
Fri. 20th. I caught 5 fish, and I picked up M.V. MOONITA at 30 miles. Not a bad range.
Tues. 24th. Happy Birthday to Me ! My 20th.

Sat. 28th. Lots of birthday parcels arrive.
Mon. 30th. Plotting the Lancaster again....this time at 86 miles.
Wed. 1st Sept. I left Wedge with Welfare for the Neptunes - we arrive at 11 a.m., then on to Port Lincoln.
Thurs. 2nd. I score a makeshift bed in the MOONITA lounge.
Sun. 14th. November. Back again, and 6 left for Wedge Island - a record trip, so Welfare says.
Sun. 21st. Fishing all day from RAAF boat, and we lost the anchor, but I caught a 20 lb. groper.
Mon. 22nd. The C.O. inspects the Doover.
Tues. 23rd. I commence Air Crew studies.
Fri. 26th. Woodchopping, then we repair and improve the phone lines.
Sat. 27th. Another concert after our evening tea. This is a good idea.
Fri. 3rd. Dec. Picked up two planes heading towards Adelaide....and the radar personnel were paraded in the C.O.'s office.
Sat. 4th. A euchre evening after tea.
Dec. 5th. Welfare arrived and the C.O.'s wife was on board. She stayed overnight.*
Mon. 6th. The turning gear 'on the blink.'
Thurs. 9th. I worked with George Miller repairing the W.T. gear.
Sun. 12th. The JOHN ROBB being unloaded, and our gear U/S for 8½ hours. Then the JOHN ROBB was loaded with wool bales
Mon. 32rd. M.V. MOONITA and a minesweeper passed the island.
Wed. 25th. Temperature Inversion....phenomenal ranges.

**(How many girls would endure a trip on Welfare's boat, a night of connubial bliss on a straw palliasso on a cyclone wire base, then a trip back on that fishing boat again. She was a hardy lass.*

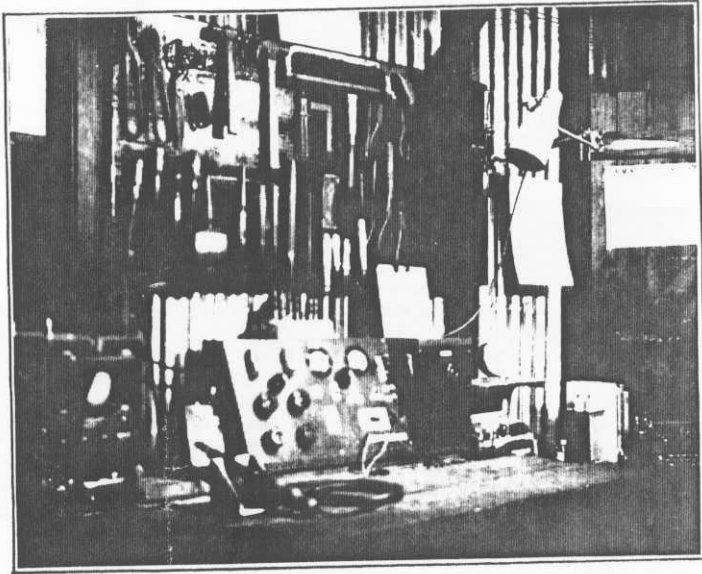
I'll bet she brought her Galligans with her next time.)

SOME CHAPS ARE BEGGARS FOR PUNISHMENT!

344 RS on Montalivet rather enjoyed its reputation as the roughest, toughest and loneliest station in the West - and Laurie Leckie endured 7 months there from September '44. Not content with that, in July 1988 Laurie returned to the Island in the Sun where even the local Aborigines refused to live, to nostalgically sit on the old Doover thunderbox once again. Yes - it was still there, and ready for instant use.

Guess what! At the Perth Reunion, Laurie was on a recruiting drive, mustering a crew to sail with him along the Kimberley coast to Montalivet again, and promising chilled water rather than the hot drinking water from an aviation fuel drum as in '44.

We suggest you take the old thunderbox home with you Laurie, set it up in the back yard and you can sit and think then, whenever you wish.



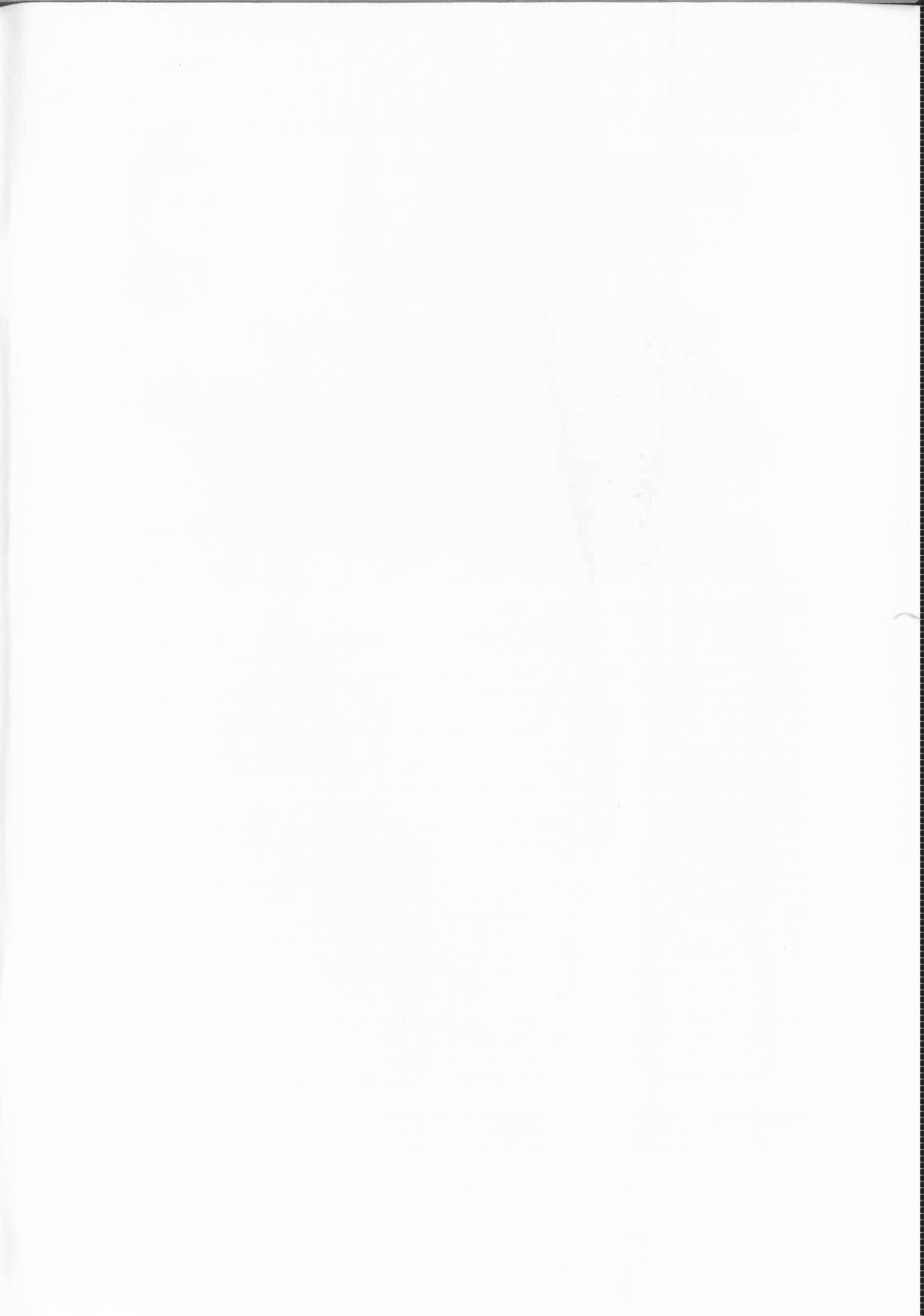
THE STATION WORK BENCH.

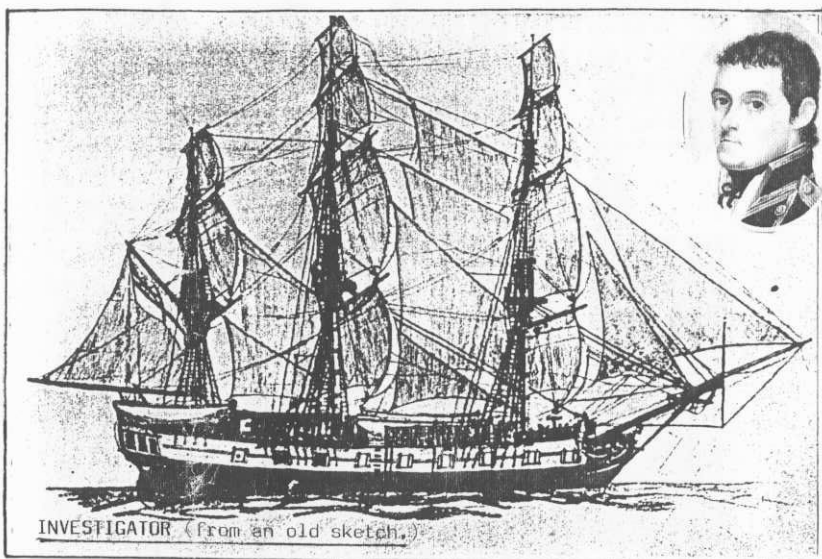
The station work bench was invariably the Mecca for Many More Men than the Mere Mechanics....and of course the most important of the extraneous bench-top types were the brew makers, often with just a jug element suspended from a piece of wood or asbestos and inserted into a coffee or tea tin of water. The old generator motor always coughed and grunted a bit when that gizmo was switched on and the voltage dropped. Next on the list were the skilful Foreigner Makers wielding fine magneto files and Gibbs Dentifrice Paste, each with carefully monitored time on the old Dawn vice. The less skilful of these artisans grabbed the hacksaw or the hand-drill, or hammered away on a makeshift anvil until they graduated to the ranks of the professionals after making a ring of reasonable standard, after which they also demanded payment for any item sold.

Dural, perspex and pearl-shell were jealously guarded and heaven help any miscreant caught snitching any.

Brave indeed was the Mechanic who wanted to do a bit of wiring or chasis bending - which is probably why the C.O. appeared as if by magic whenever any work was contemplated on the gear. Threats of 'slapping on a charge' always cleared the way, for apparently Brock's Creek had few comforts. Me? I preferred to sell my beer at 5/- a bottle - a certain return for no effort at the work bench. The beaut photo shows the bench at 46 RS, Cape Don and is the only bench photo to so far come to light.

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ENCOUNTER 2002 EQUALS WEDGE 200.

It was from the deck of HMS INVESTIGATOR that Matthew Flinders bestowed names on the many islands and coastal features around the southern coastline and out from Port Lincoln in 1802. In all truth, poor old Matthew must have been hard put to find names for them all, for when he named Wedge on February 24th, his inspiration obviously came from the simple shape and outline of the island. Indeed, even his old ship, INVESTIGATOR, was honoured by naming the strait separating Kangaroo Island from the mainland after the rather decrepit old vessel.....also a group of islands out from Coffin Bay was named 'The Investigator Group.'

Actually, history reveals the ship was a bit of a wreck, and Flinders who in contrast was an efficient captain, surveyor and explorer, deserved a far better ship in his task of exploring and mapping the coastline of New Holland as the continent was then still known. - the name 'Australia' being bestowed from the name Flinders chose to show on his charts....Terra Australis. It seems apparent that INVESTIGATOR was indeed lucky to make it back to Port Jackson, for much of her plank work was found to be rotten and leaking, and another vessel had to be found for Flinders to sail back to England with the results of his work. Not that that did him much good either, for when he called at Mauritius for supplies, England and France were again at war, and he was imprisoned as a POW for six years.

Flinders - and INVESTIGATOR - had completed the huge task of circumnavigating Australia, and much of his map work and survey charts were still in use at the time of WW 2. Such was the excellent work of the man who named Wedge Island, and who is honoured in Encounter 2002 and Wedge 200.

Compiled and published by M.E.Fenton, 27 Lasscock Ave., LOCKLEYS 5032, for the 14th. Reunion of 7 Radar Wedge Island.
