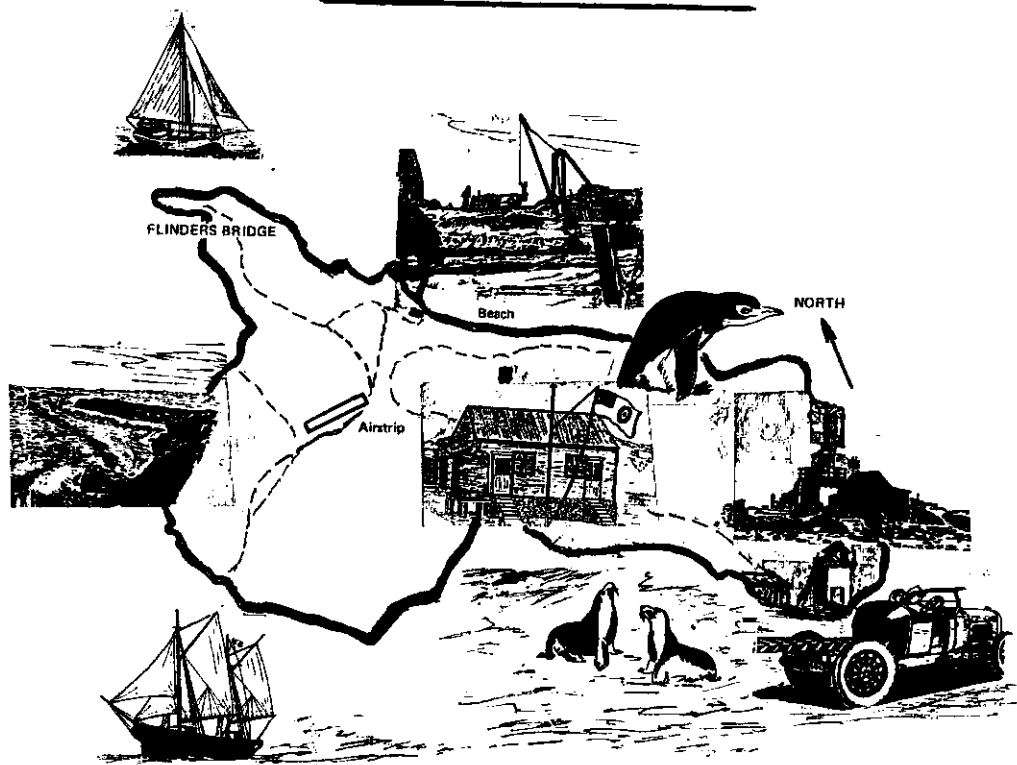


MEMORIES OF WEDGE,



7 RADAR, WEDGE
ISLAND
1943 - 44



16th REUNION 2004

MEMORIES OF WEDGE,

7 Radar was one of seven RAAF radars planned for South Australia in 1942. Only two became operational - 7 RS and 10 RS at Cape Jervis.

Les and Edna Rau arrived on Wedge early in 1943, to stay for 10 years.

7 Radar arrived later that same year and commenced a 24 hour watch from the summit of the island which continued for 18 months. So the two became friendly neighbours

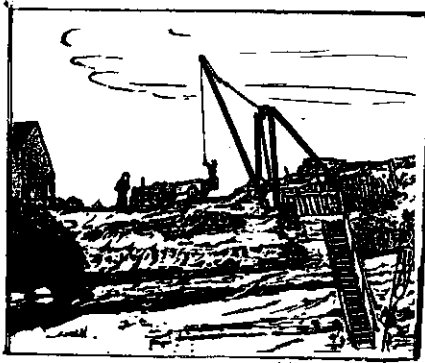
This story has been compiled from RAAF records and various anecdotes - also from the recollections of Edna Rau and daughter Kay Behen who lived on Wedge until 1952 - in all the story covers only a decade in the 200 year history of Wedge Island at the entrance of Spencer Gulf in South Australia. But the friendly associations of that decade continue to this Day.

Acknowledgements and thanks are due to...
Jack and Shirley Measday,
Edna and Kay,
Ron Coat for his Lighthouse info,
John Culshaw for early history,
and various Wedge folk for photos,
particularly Kelvin Scudds.

Compiled in 2004 and published for the
7 RS Reunion, by
M.E.Fenton,
27 Lasscock Ave,
LOCKLEYS, 5032.

Mona Fenton

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MEMORIES OF WEDGE.

The Story of RAAF 7 Radar,

1943 - 44.

Also a chapter in the story

of Les, Edna and Kay Rau

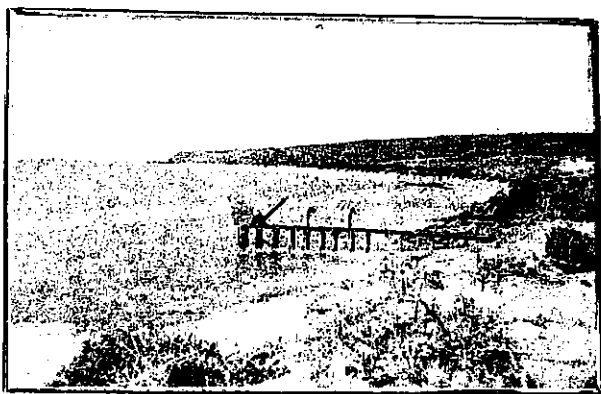
while living on Wedge Island,

1943 - 1952.

Author's Note re 7 Radar.

The story of 7 Radar covers only 18 months, and hardly any incident occurred in that time worth special mention. The most noteworthy occurrence seems to have been the 'mal de mer' regularly experienced by the men while crossing between Lincoln and the island in a fishing cutter. But there were many personal incidents, and many of these have received mention in the Memories of Wedge pamphlet presented at the 16 annual reunions which began back in 1988. Recollections from Edna and Kay also received mention...and all of this made good material for this booklet. So too the early island history and the many photos.

7 Radar proved a good training station for new radar men - and a rest station for the men returning from the north. It filled its special role admirably.



Foreword

In this Booklet of Memories, published for the 16th. reunion of 7 Radar, the author has completed an interesting and informative picture of the history of Wedge Island in the years before, during, and after the occupation by the Air Force.

It is a fitting addition to the previous booklets, and serves as a reminder to the servicemen of those earlier days, and of the friendships formed there. The author has done much to encourage those associations with his yearly publications.

For the wives and families of the men, there is an understanding of life during the war on a small and lonely island. The numerous photos make this picture even more vivid.

Many valuable and enduring friendships have been formed among the families and are set to survive well into the future. This is in large measure because of the dedication and efforts of the author.

We thank and congratulate him.

S.M.

The history of our 7 Radar reunions is mostly made up of three phases.....
Doug Cocks, Morrie Fenton, and the rest of us.

When Doug came to me 17 years ago for a little help during several days working on telephone books and electoral rolls, I didn't dream that we would go on into the 21st. century. We have renewed friendships, made new friendships, and got to know extended families.

The life of No. 7 was quite short, luckily because war didn't come its way, and so it wasn't further needed for war duties. After it closed down we were all scattered far and wide until 1989. A few have died, and of course we are sorry, but grateful for having known them; at an average age now of over 80 years we have been lucky.

Radar officers were often only 21 years of age, acting as foster fathers to a team of 40 or more. In general, each made a personal success and helped build a good team.

I certainly enjoyed my stints on radar stations and bigger units.



Dedication —

This little booklet of Wedge Memories is dedicated to the memory of Doug Cocks, and the other men of Wedge who have passed on since our reunions began back in 1988. Doug had the first inspired thought of calling his island friends together again after some 45 years. His rallying call was enthusiastically answered and the news was passed on.

When our ladies joined with us with equal enthusiasm, our get-togethers enjoyed a decade or more of friendship and memories which have been equalled by no other radar station, with Wedge folk arriving from every state except Northern Territory.

The passing of the years has inevitably seen the numbers falling, and of course must continue to do so. But regardless, we have enjoyed wonderful memories over some 16 years - perhaps longer. We've renewed or made new friendships, and have keenly anticipated the reunions each year.

Maybe we've stretched the truth just a little, particularly about the wild seas on the trip out from Lincoln. But our adventures on Wedge Island are now mentioned in many Family Histories where no doubt they will live on for centuries.

So....Here's to all Wedge folk!

Morrie Fenton,
2004.

* * * * *

WEDGE HONOUR ROLL

Commanding Officers, 7 Radar:

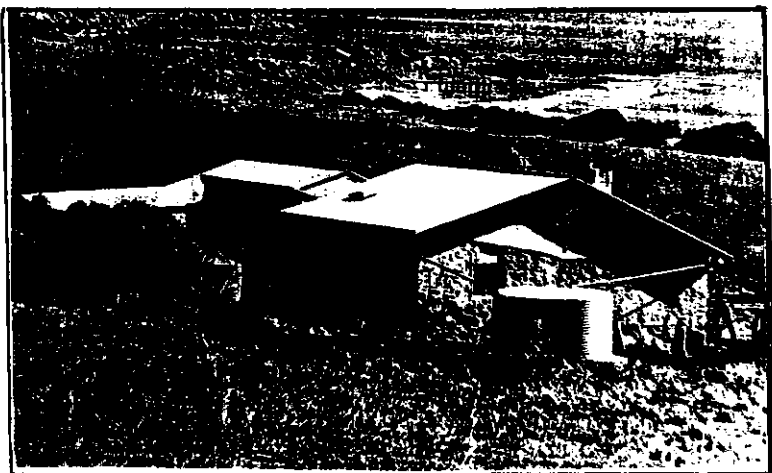
George	GLOVER	Jack	MEASDAY
Ted	HENTY	Ian	YOUNG

N.C.O.'s and Men:

Ken	ARNOLD	Paul	KLOEDEN
Reg	AVERY	Howard	KAESEHAGEN
Kevin	BAUER	Bill	LANGCAKE
John	BUTLER	Derry	MANN
Maurice	BOTTRILL	Dick	MOATE
Keith	BACKSHALL	John	MERCALFE
Phil	BENNETT	Reg	MERCHANT
Vic	BROWN	Ron	MITCHELL
Alan	BUTCHER	Neil	MAJOR
Len	BATH	Ron	MIDDLETON
Doug	COCKS	John	MEAD
Alan	CROSS	Scotty	McBAIN
Jack	CARNEY	Paul	MORRISETT
Ray	CLIFF	Doug	MILLER
Mort	COLLINS	John	MANSFIELD
Basil	CLEWER	George	MILLER
Phil	CUNNINGHAM	Murray	MARKS
Leo	CARR	Stan	MOSS
Bob	CLIFFORD	Ken	NIXON
John	COOPER	Nick	NICHOLSON
Laurie	CLOUSH	Tom	OCKERBY
Alec	CHISHOLM	Wally	PACKER
Don	DIMSEY	Len	PAECH
Max	DILLON	Pat	PASSEY
Merv	ELLBOURNE	Ern	PASCOE
Dave	ELDRIDGE	Don	PLUSH
Gordon	ELLIS	Warren	QUINTRELL
John	ELLIS	Harold	RADBONE
Jim	FITZPATRICK	Les	RAU
Neville	FRANKS	Edna	RAU
Eddie	FRENCH	'Pop'	REECE
John	FRASER	Arthur	RAW
Robert	FENTON	Ron	ROBERTSON
Bill	FREEMAN	Clem	RICHARDSON
Morrie	FENTON	Kelvin	SCUDDS
Des	GILLARD	Bernie	SWANN
Jack	GILCHRIST	Cec	STEINHARDT
George	GOWER	John	SMITH
Reg	HALL	Ken	SLIP
Colin	HAMILTON	Peter	TOOPE
Theo	HARVEY	Keith	TURNER
Joe	HALL	Glen	VAUGHTON
Rod	HARRIS	Ted	WINTER
Roy	HEGARTY	Bob	WATSON
Win	INGRAM	Merv	WHITE
Len	JACOBS	Jim	WALTERS

* * * *

Memories of Wedge



It is believed that the original small cottage homestead on Wedge was built about 1860 or earlier by the Daw brothers, the first settlers - and since then there have been additions, alterations and rebuildings which have substantially altered its appearance.

The disposal sale of the RAAF camp buildings after 7 Radar closed provided fresh building material also, and in later years the homestead became something of a holiday camp.

Since the late 1980's when 3 sections of land on the island were subdivided and offered for sale, two new homes have been erected, and much of Wedge has been declared a reserve. Several species of native animals now thrive on the island which is free of feral animals of any kind.

THE HISTORY OF SETTLEMENT ON WEDGE ISLAND.

Wedge Island, of some 2000 acres, has experienced at least 150 years of settlement and pastoral use. The largest of the Gambier group, Wedge was taken up as a pastoral property in the mid-nineteenth century. The first recorded lessees were N.J. and J.H. Daw who held Pastoral Lease 701 from 1859 to 1871. By about 1860 they had established a picturesque homestead and garden. Although details of this early farming operation are unknown, it is likely that if sheep were grazed, they were soon replaced by cattle or horses which are more tolerant of the 'coasty' conditions of the island.

By the early 1880's high hopes were held for the pastoral and agricultural success of the island. In 1883, Wedge was surveyed for division into nine sections of between 200-250 acres by the Government Surveyor, Arthur Chamberlain. Although most of these sections were originally taken up by Thomas Cowen, a farmer of Islington, by 1904 they were held by John and William Haigh, stockowners of Port Lincoln, who also held leases for other islands in Spencer Gulf. A guano lease was also issued to William Haigh from 1889 for the taking of guano from coast reserves on several islands in the vicinity of Wedge. The operation was called the Penguin Guano Ltd. This material was probably used for soil improvement on the Wedge property. The Haigh family held Wedge Island until 1909 when the property was in the hands of estate executors, presumably on the death of a family member. As a completion of the Right to Purchase Leases issued earlier for the land, the island was 'freeholded' in 1912. This perhaps indicates the viability of the area for pastoral use compared with other islands which have remained under leasehold tenure.

William Golley was the next owner of Wedge Island. He purchased the property in 1915, although his association with the island possibly preceded his time as manager/owner. Andrew Golley, probably a relative, was involved in the property when it was next sold in 1935. The Golley family also held guano leases for Wedge in the 1920's. As were Thistle and Reevesby Islands, Wedge became well known for breeding horses to be sold in the Indian Army remount trade, and when noted ornithologist Captain White visited the island in 1916, he referred to the Golley brothers who lived there and bred a good stamp of pony. The most common type of horse bred was a cross breed Clydesdale and pony, and horses were kept commercially on the island until the mid 1930's. There are many reminders of this bygone age still evident, such as horsedrawn vehicles, blacksmith equipment and horseyards. Even after sheep were introduced, about twenty horses were retained for use until fairly recent years in rounding up stock and carting hay.

Barley was also commercially grown on Wedge in the early years, with about one third of the island being arable; it is said that the island produced better yields than on the mainland. The grain was bagged and shipped for sale, and the hay cut for stock feed. The barley was winnowed, then bagged and hauled down the northern cliff face to the beach on large slides. The substantial stone shed built in the 1890's on the cliff near the present jetty, was a storage shed for hay and grain. It later became a shearing shed.

Although deliberate burning was not carried out to create feed but to control the spread of Coast Daisy-bush (*Olearia axillaris*), in the year following a burn the feed would be good where the weed had once existed. Other weeds are Horehound and Milkweed. Generally however, there are still large areas of relatively natural vegetation on Wedge Island, and pests such as cats, rabbits and foxes are unknown. →

When Don Cooper took over the property in the 1930's, there were about 2000 goats on the island. The sale of their hides, bringing about three shillings (30c.) each, was a great bonus for Cooper, funding the cost of the considerable amount of fencing necessary on the sheep property. The last of the goats were removed only about 30-40 years ago.

In 1935, Wedge Island was purchased by Don Cooper, who as a youth had become captivated with islands on his many excursions sailing single-handed along the South Australian coast. As the market was declining for horses, Cooper decided to take a gamble and try sheep on the island, using the recently developed soil-improvement technology which largely remedied coast disease. This involved drenching sheep every month for copper and cobalt deficiency; and although there was a good success rate, about ten to fifteen per cent of the sheep were still affected, and would run to the edge of the cliff. In fact, so new was the technology at the time that sheep from Wedge Island were the first to be sold at the Adelaide abattoirs which had been successfully treated for coast disease. Thistle Island was also an early property to experiment with the new technology. Usually Wedge Island ran about one sheep to the acre, or 2000 sheep in a good year, but in a very dry year up to 600 would have to be destroyed so that the limited summer feed would last. Generally cross bred Border Leicester sheep were better adapted to the island conditions than Merino.

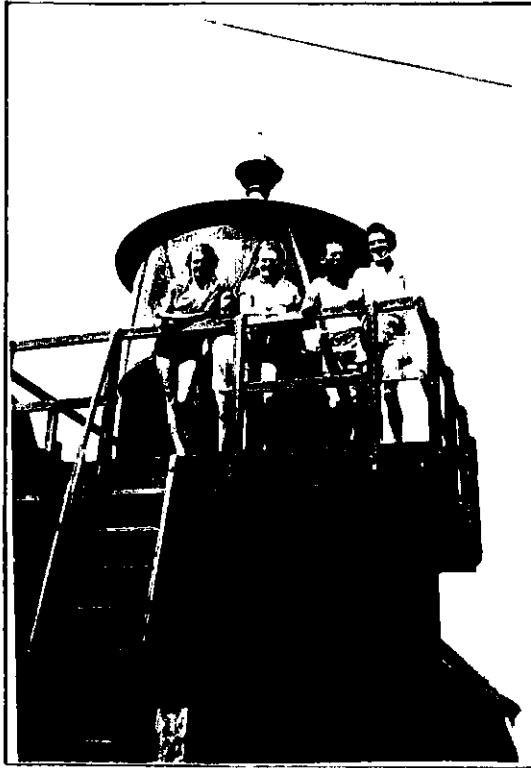
A major difficulty was the loading of stock. Although a jetty was constructed on the northern shore when the RAAF Radar came to the island for two years in the 1940's, the transfer of stock onto boats had always taken place from the beach. Cooper can recall that on one occasion the 18 foot dinghy of the vessel loading his stock was in poor condition and sank, taking his rams with it. This left him without rams for some time. Generally the cutter STORM BIRD, skippered by Arnold Mittner, called for the Wedge Island sheep and wool clip, and it was a sight to see the fifteen or so lambs packed in the dinghy sitting on their tails with one on top by which Mittner ingeniously controlled the others. When loading horses, they were generally tied together, swam to the cutter and winched on board. In later years, the lighthouse service vessel YANDRA would call for the stock.

Although the isolation generally did not worry Cooper, (and on one occasion it was two years before he left the island) the war years posed considerable difficulty for him. At this time his hard-working Manager Les Rau enlisted for service and Cooper was left to operate the property single handed. It took him three months to blade shear the sheep. It was also up to four months between supply deliveries to the island, although on occasions arrangements would be made for fishermen to deliver more essential items. In fact, the visits of fishermen were a great benefit to the island occupants, offering both company and the means of an occasional trip to the mainland. In later years, pleasure cruisers would also land intermittently on the island in the summer months.

Norm Growden bought the island in 1952 and kept sheep for some years, operating on a similar basis to Don Cooper. Prior to the acquisition of Wedge Island by Venture Corporation Pty. Ltd in 1988, the island had become primarily a tourist destination, and being free of mainland predators, has served as a sanctuary for several endangered species of native animals. Some subdivision for housing has occurred.

(Slightly adapted from Venture Corporation's history. My thanks to John Culshaw.)

Memories of Wedge

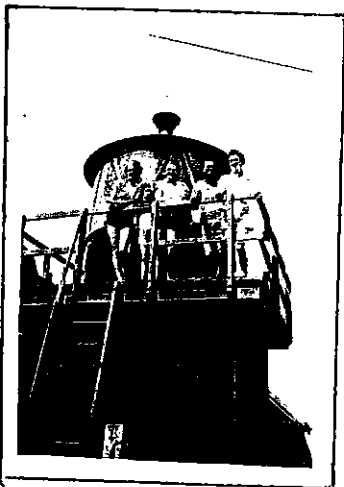


With one family only living on Wedge, recreations and amusements were rather limited. After exploring the island, fishing and netting crays became the most popular pastimes...but on those occasions when friends visited, a walk to the summit where the first lighthouse had been erected in 1911 was always popular. The view from the balcony was truly spectacular.

MEMORIES OF WEDGE.....From the Rau Family Photo Album.



Edna, Les and Kay in Pt.Lincoln.



With friends on the Lighthouse,
Les and Edna at extreme right.



Kay Rau aged 16 months.



Les Rau on 'Creamy.'

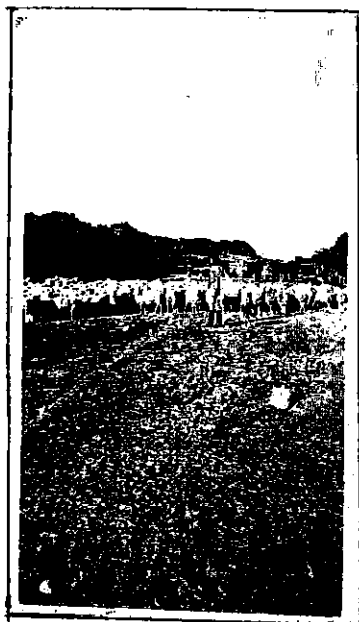
(Right) The cattle appreciated
the heavy rain.



MEMORIES OF WEDGE.....From the Rau
Family Photo Album.

(Top) Edna and Les at the shearing
shed after heavy rain.

The other three photos show the
farm livestock... sheep, goats
and horses.



WEDGE DURING THE WAR.

Wedge Island welcomed two new 'arrivals' in 1943 - the first was a recently wed couple, Les and Edna Rau who occupied the old cottage homestead. Les became the island farm manager and general worker, while Edna worked at many of the lighter farm jobs, and also tended the house duties and the improvement of their living conditions.

The second arrival was the Air Force men of 7 Radar - some 35 in number who found their camp and station buildings waiting for them on higher ground nearer the summit of the island. The farm was then stocked with more than 1000 sheep with as many lambs in season - there were up to 30 horses, some turkeys and fowls, 2 or 3 cows including Jenny the milk and butter provider - and of course 3 or 4 dogs, with Lassie regularly producing pups which were keenly sought in Lincoln. Fish and crays often appeared on the farmhouse menu, while vegies were grown in the home garden, watered with waste from the house to avoid the salty bore water. Groceries and other necessities, mail and newspapers were brought from Port Lincoln, by any passing local fisherman - but with the RAAF on the island, the two regulars were Ray Welfare and Charlie Petersen. Contact with Lincoln was made each morning via Ken Bassham, a local radio man who saw to it that their special needs were supplied. Unpacking the stores, and catching up on mail and papers was always a special pleasure that night.

Shearing time was special too, with a few new men to attend to and feed. Sometimes they wanted fish or cray for lunch, or even turkey and all requests were added to the menu.

A special time for both Les and Edna was each Saturday night when they were invited to the Air Force camp to join with the men for dinner and the social evening that followed. 'Blues' were worn by all men, and if they were lucky, a few scored a dance with Edna, so making the evening really special. And of course, there was always a supper, usually more than just biscuits and a mug of tea.

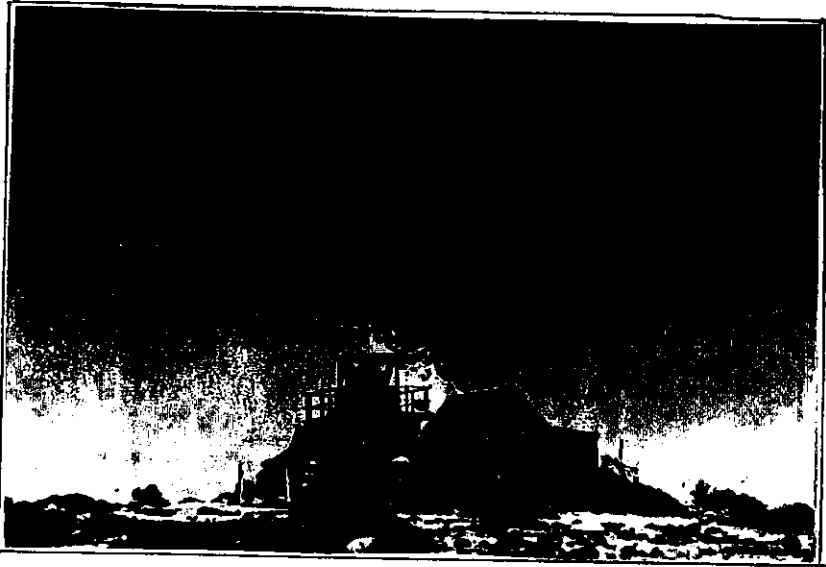
The RAAF closed the station in September 1944, though the radar was maintained in readiness at any time...and daughter Kay was born in Adelaide in April 1945. The family returned to Wedge in September on the lighthouse tender CAPE YORK. Climbing down a Jacob's ladder with the babe in arms to disembark was an acrobatic challenge to Edna.

As Kay grew, the RAAF jetty proved her favourite island place. Here she played and swam, caught her first fish, and had her first school lessons.

The Rau family finally left Wedge Island in 1952 to pursue other interests on the mainland and to have Kay properly educated. Although the work had proved hard, and conditions had been harsh, they had found it a great experience, and they had enjoyed every minute of it.



Memories of Wedge



7 Radar formed at Parafield, South Australia, in March 1943, and a 24 hour watch was set up on Wedge Island in May. Transport to the island for the RAAF men sometimes took days, with travel by steamer to Port Lincoln, then by fishing cutter out to Wedge. This last part of the travel was often through choppy seas, and was not very keenly anticipated by the men.

The station closed in September 1944.

The radar gear was an Australian made A.W. (Air Warning.)

7 RADAR, WEDGE ISLAND.


In the early years of the war, there were some very positive encounters with the enemy - even in South Australia in December 1940, the freighter 'HERTFORD' was badly damaged by a German mine from a minefield laid around the Neptune Islands area. But it was the entry of Japan into the conflict in 1941 which brought about grave concerns about the now increasing activities of the enemy off the Australian coast. The installation of Radar stations to watch over cities and key centres, as well as shipping routes, was hastily sanctioned by War Cabinet; and on 6th. May, 1942, the installation of a Radio Location Station on Wedge Island was approved. The cost of the station was estimated at £15100 - and this cost included all sleeping, messing, ablutions and latrines for a possible 43 personnel.

Provision was also made for control buildings, storehouses, administration buildings and engineering services such as road and jetty improvements. The actual control building, or 'Doover,' was a steel frame building, 20 feet square, supplied by the N.S.W. Railways - the two power houses comprised buildings 18' x 10'6" supplied by Garner Constructions, of Melbourne. Other installations included 2 underground 1000 gallon fuel tanks, and 2 machine-gun emplacements. In October, 1942, the land for the RDF Station was secured under National Security Regulations, and construction began - the camp itself being camouflaged to represent a farmhouse and its outbuildings - and the Doover was placed under a concrete shell, looking convincingly like the natural rock - with the exception of the aerial which protruded skywards. The Doover site was close by the automatic gas lighthouse on the summit of the island - the top of the 'Wedge.' The finished cost of the installation was £16500.

No. 7 RDF Station came into being at Parafield on 1st. March, 1943, and P/O A.J.Glover was appointed C.O. Two days later, he inspected the site of his new command from the air, in a plane supplied from Mallala. The administrative details for the new station were quickly dealt with by Southern Command, and the new C.O. prepared to move to the new station site in three groups of men. The first group of eight comprising the C.O. and a Guard party left Parafield on 13th. March - the second group left for the island on 29th. March, - and the last group, with Radar Officer P/O R.W.Gibbons in charge left Parafield on 10th. April, after they had first seen the new RDF equipment safely loaded on to the 'JOHN ROBB' ready to leave Adelaide. The final act of making the unit operational was attended to when the C.O. returned to Parafield on 15th. April, to collect the S. and C. Documents, then to return to the island under escort, to eventually arrive back on the station on 23rd. April, 1943.

Meanwhile, W.T. communications with Adelaide had been established, and on 1st. May, 1943, a continuous RDF watch commenced from Wedge.

A system was established so that supplies and stores for both the Radar Station and the lighthouse arrived monthly by ketch - most frequently by the 'JOHN ROBB,' - sometimes on the 'CAPE YORK.' The transport of smaller items, of mail and personnel was attended to by small fishing cutters from Port Lincoln, usually Welfare's and Petersen's fishing boats, which called at the island while going about their everyday activities - when the weather permitted. Indeed, the trip



from Adelaide to the island could sometimes take days if bad weather prevented the fishermen from leaving Boston Harbour at Port Lincoln.

On 26th. July, 1943, P/O E.B.Henty was appointed C.O. - and he was able to assume command early in August. Towards the end of the month, the station water pump was repaired, so restoring the water supply for showers after a long breakdown of 2 months. At this time, there were still 40 men on the station.

The S.A.Harbours Board had meanwhile provided a gang to improve the jetty facilities by installing davits, and by blasting out some of the reef so that the jetty could be approached more safely, and this work was completed in September, 1943. And in the same month, exercises with the Navy were carried out, no doubt to check the security and defence of the station, which was now re-named 7 Radar Station. The W.T. communications with Adelaide were proving quite a problem - at times it was intermittent - and sometimes messages were even relayed via 10 Radar at Yankalilla. A new AR7 Receiver arrived on the 'CAPE YORK' in September, and Signals Officer S/L Murden also arrived to give the problem his more expert attention.

January 1944 saw a reduction in Personnel numbers - there were now 31 men on the island - and somehow a prismatic compass, property of the RAAF, just disappeared. Despite very intensive enquiries and investigations, it failed to re-appear.

The 'JOHN ROBB' arrived on January 26th, with a water condenser - the supply of good water was a continuing problem - and in February, Meteorological Officer F/Lt Hutchinson arrived by cutter to instruct the men in the method of compiling weather reports; and from then, 3 hourly weather reports were issued to the Air Force Stations at Parafield, Mallala, Port Pirie and Mount Gambier.

There was an unfortunate accident in February, too, when AC1 Gowers, a Radar Operator, was badly burned on his arms and face by flame from the water condenser. He was taken from the island as quickly as possible under the care of F/Lt Bishop and a Medical Orderly. On the same day, 21st. February, P/O J.W.Measday arrived on posting from Richmond, and he took temporary command of the station while the C.O. went on leave.

In March, both power units went U/S. An emergency message in code was despatched via the farmer's radio and the VAOC Port Lincoln. Two days later, spare parts for the engines arrived, and the station resumed normal operations and communications.

In April and May, modifications and alterations to the W.T. gear were effected, with emergency batteries being installed and a new Bendix Transmitter replacing the old, with the object of keeping the station 'On Air' in emergencies such as those recently experienced - and on 8th. May, P/O Measday took over as C.O. of 7 Radar, Wedge.

June 1944 saw the arrival of two new engines for the generators, and the 'JOHN ROBB' took away the old unreliable plants. In August, a new power dinghy arrived to be kept safely on the jetty davits - and on 13th. of the month, F/O I.W.Young took over as temporary C.O. So finally, with the station at long last adequately equipped for efficient operation at its isolated location, a signal was received from Southern Area on August 18th. advising that the station should prepare to close down.

From 13th. August to the 14th. September, F/O Young acted as Temporary C.O. of 7 Radar Station which finally disbanded on 15th. September, 1944.

The Radar Station property on Wedge Island continued to be held by the RAAF for the remainder of the war, but with the termination of hostilities, the station was no longer required. Accordingly, on 24th. November, 1945, approval was given for the disposal of the Wedge Island property, and 7 Radar ceased to be.

o o o

FROM ONE OF THE 'ORIGINALS.' LEN JACOBS.

As far as memory allows, and in the absence of old Pay Books, it would seem that 7 Radar Station was formed early 1943. It is possible "Radar" was not used in the early title, and something like Radio Location appeared, but this I cannot substantiate. However, in late 1942 and early 1943 stray 'bods' began turning up at Parafield where, in a couple of rooms in a little used hut, P/O Glover set himself up as Officer in Charge.

About mid April, orders came to pack up and move to Wedge. This was accomplished by the whole company embarking on the 'MOONTA' for the overnight trip to Port Lincoln. The C.O. being a stickler for King's Regulations, a guard was posted to protect the code books locked in a safe in a cabin, but as equinox gales had blown solidly for about 3 weeks prior to embarking, the overnight trip was 'pretty rough,' and the guard did not survive the watch.

On arrival in Port Lincoln, the troops were transferred to a ketch, the 'JOHN ROBB' and were bunked on the firewood among the drums of fuel for tractor and generator engines on the island. Vaguely I recall a day or two elapsed before the ketch left Port Lincoln. Eventually the ketch sailed slowly down the coast of Eyre Peninsula to the point at which it was necessary to steer out into the ocean to eventually make Wedge. I was not aboard the ketch, but on the stern of Welfare's vessel which was contracted to bring supplies and mail and even airmen from Port Lincoln to the island. At the point where the boat left the shelter of the land and pushed out into the ocean, the seas were monstrous, and it was a long, slow haul before anchorage was reached in the relatively quiet waters of the bay on the northern aspect of Wedge to prepare for the unloading.

As it was late in the afternoon and still not a smooth sea, everyone remained on board overnight and thoroughly welcomed the morning when it came with promise of disembarkation and physical activity after the cramped quarters and discomfort of the relatively short voyage.

Len Jacobs.

AND FROM THE LAST - Joe HALL.

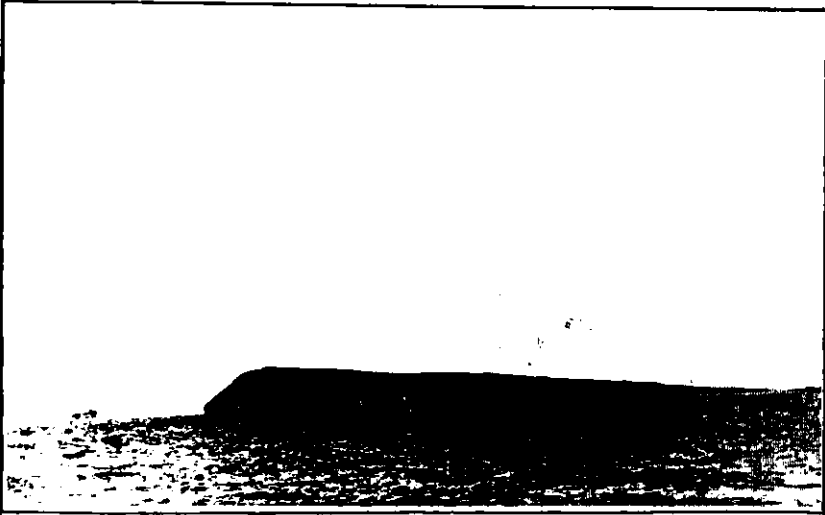
I was the Radio Op. when the Radar Unit was inoperative towards the end of the war, and the island had only 4 RAAF Personnel. I became Cook for the final group of some 20 who worked to pack up and load all RAAF gear onto a small ship which took us back to Adelaide.

I can claim to be the very last RAAF man to leave the island, as I rowed out to the ship in the dinghy belonging to the island.

I have good memories of the card games at night with the only two civilians,- Les and his attractive wife.

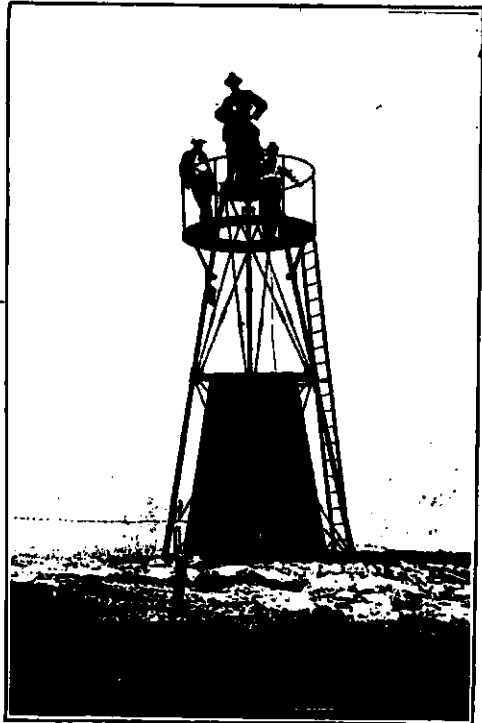
Joe Hall,
ex RAAF 410659
(Mt. Eliza.)

'THE WEDGE.'



'The Wedge' - Wedge Island was first seen and named by Flinders in 1802, and named because of its shape.

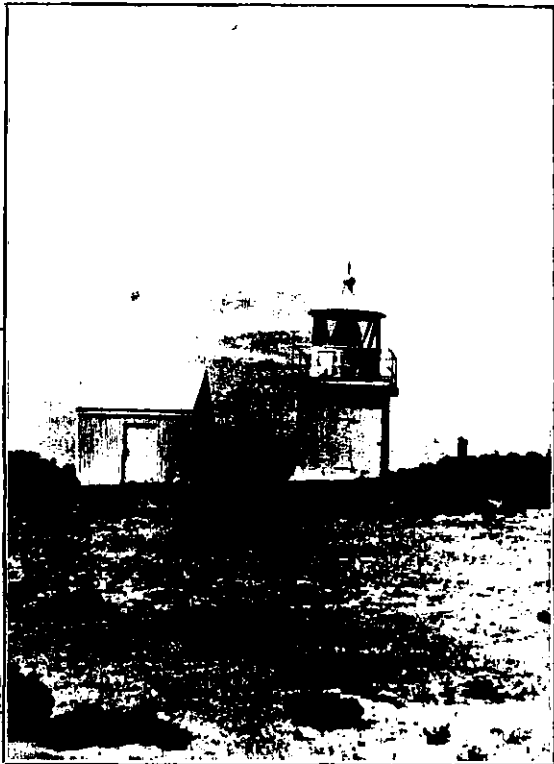
The first Wedge lighthouse - a low power and short range light, was erected on the summit of the island in 1911.



THE WEDGE LIGHTS.

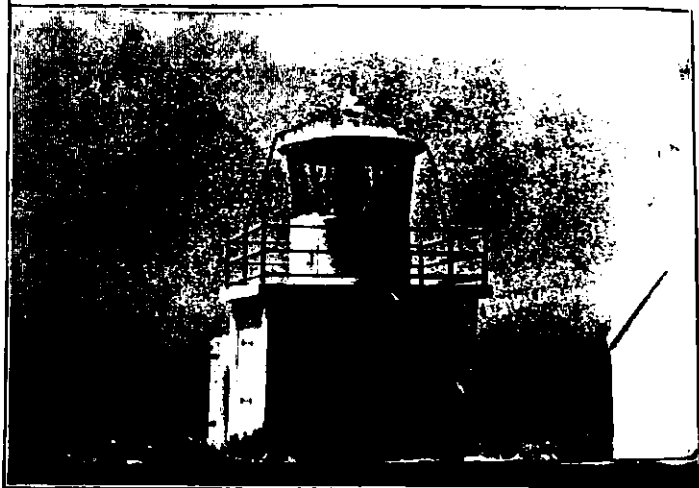
The second light on Wedge Island was built in 1918.

The small shed next to the lighthouse was built to house the gas cylinders.

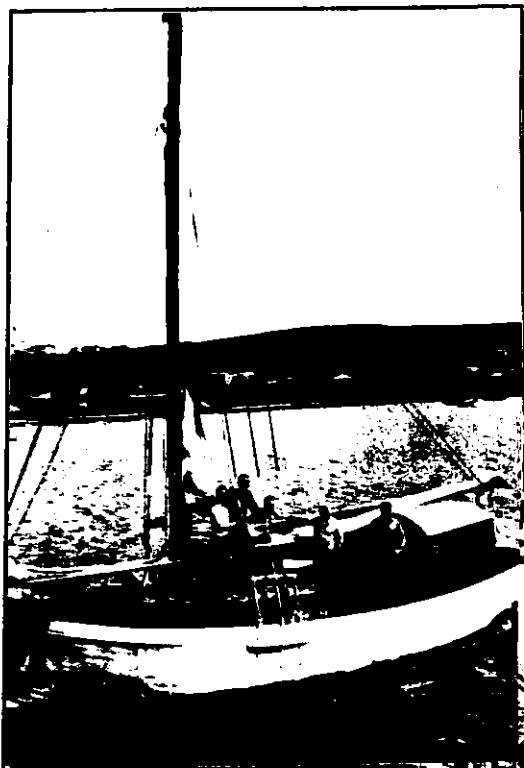


Below.

The third and present light, now solar powered and with a 12v. lamp in the lens. This is the second highest operative light in Australia.



FROM LINCOLN TO WEDGE.



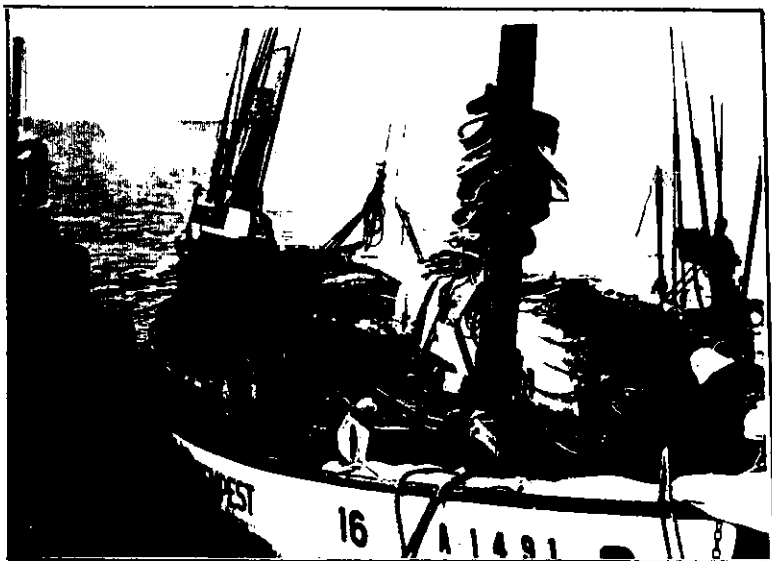
Ray Welfare, from Port Lincoln, was contracted to deliver stores, mail and personnel to the Wedge station which he was able to arrange as part of his fishing trips. His cutter was named 'FLORENCE.'

The crossing to Wedge could be very choppy, and many radar men remembered it with something close to dread.



Sometimes the trip took the men much further afield whether or not they were happy about it, down to the Neptunes, or around Dangerous Reef and the islands.

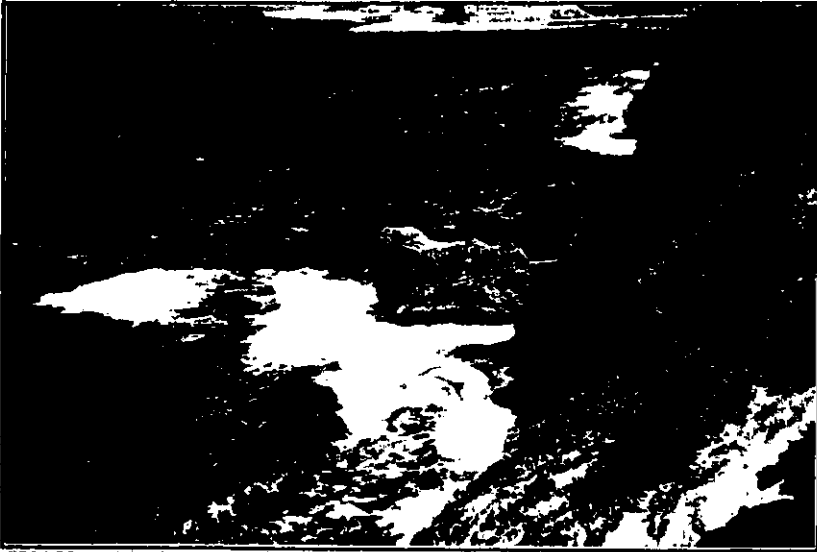
FROM LINCOLN TO WEDGE.



Charlie Petersen's cutter, 'TEMPEST,' which also occasionally appeared on the run....a very neat and clean craft very similar in size to Ray Welfare's 'FLORENCE.'

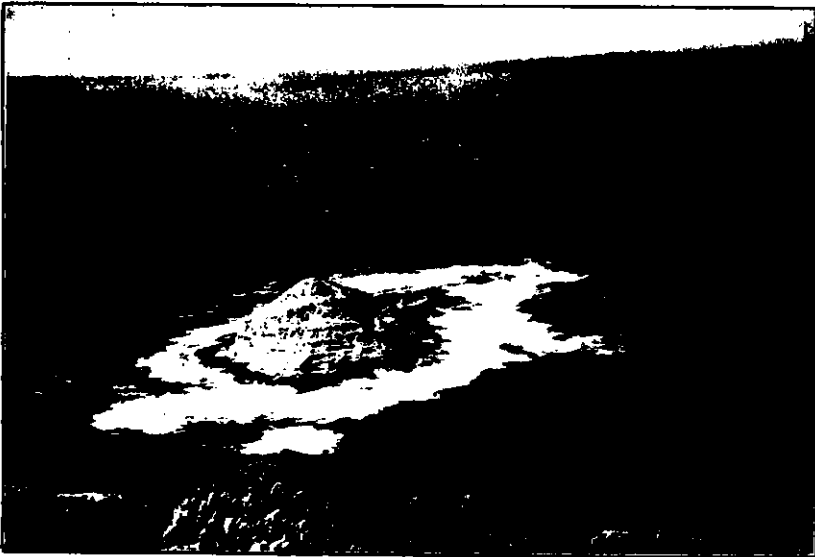


SURF AND CLIFF.



"Cliff and Ledge - The Walls of Wedge- Eternal Seas Surround Them."

The photos were taken by Kelvin Scudds, and the words describing the ramparts of Wedge are by Winston Ingram.
The cliffs exceed 200 metres in height.



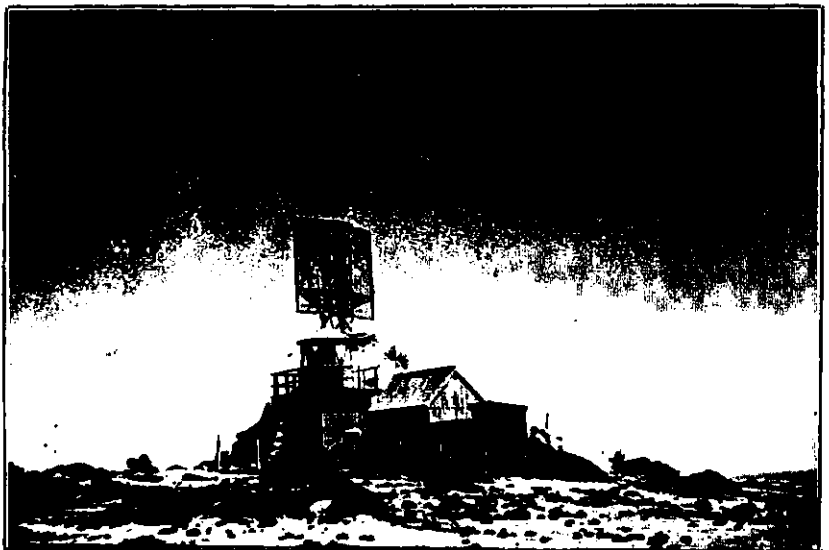
SURF AND CLIFF.



More photos taken by Kelvin Scudds showing the wild nature of the islands, cliffs and coastline around Wedge Island.



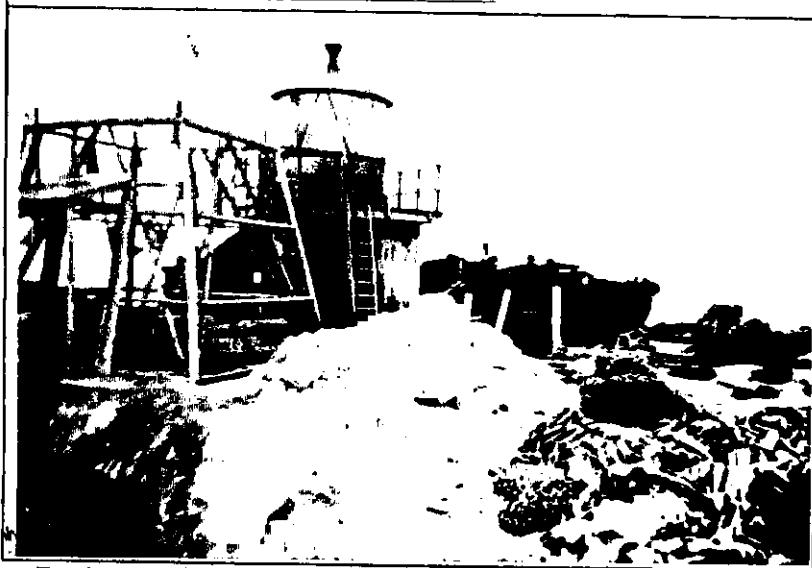
THE RADAR DOOVER AND THE WEDGE LIGHTHOUSE.



On the summit of Wedge. Two great photos showing the 7 Radar Doover, the lighthouse and the associated shed where the gas cylinders were stored. These photos were taken by Kelvin Scudds in about 1945.

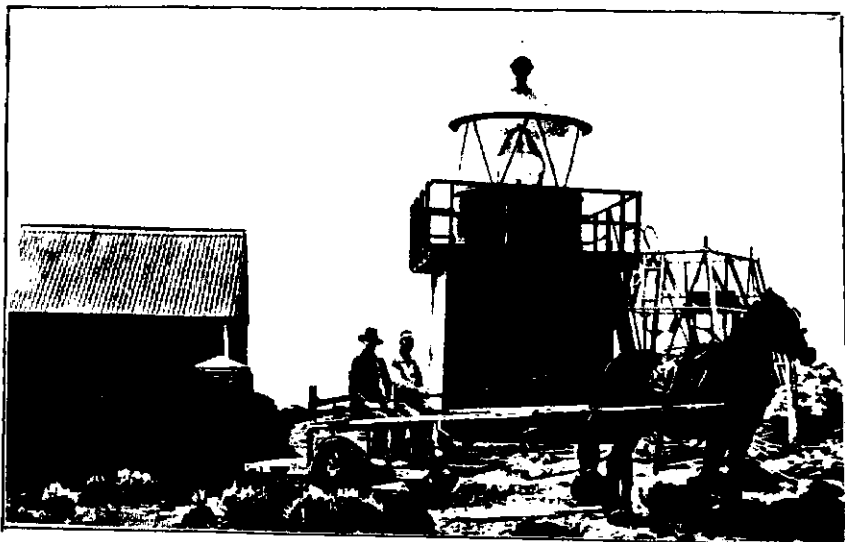


THE RADAR DOOVER AND THE LIGHTHOUSE.



At the end of the war, arrangements were made to remove the 7 Radar Doover and the various camp buildings. The concrete shell was first removed, the equipment dismantled and the tower itself was then quickly removed to return the site to something like its pre-war condition. Photo from the Rau family album.

The photo below which has only recently come to light, shows the 1949 transport of gas cylinders to the lighthouse. Photo from Ron Coat.



PERSONNEL

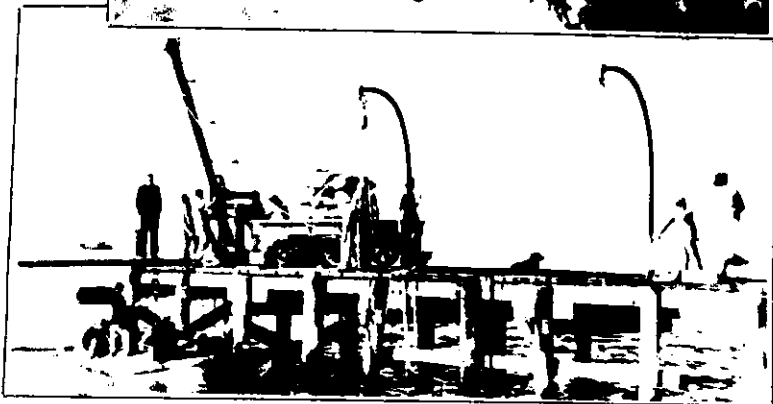


Christmas Dinner, 1943. The largest 'family' ever to sit for lunch together on Wedge Island.

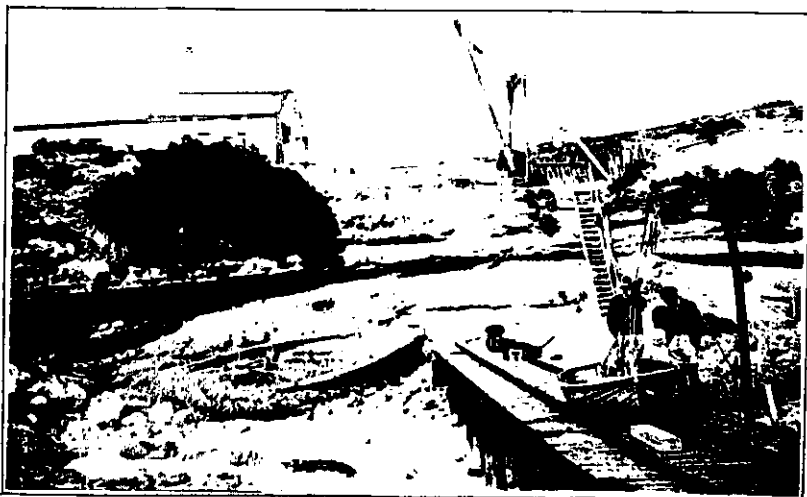
(Below) The Commanding Officer, P/O. Jack Measday and Corporal Derry Mann, Orderly Officer for the day. Both are 1944 photos.



THE 7 RADAR CAMP AND JETTY.



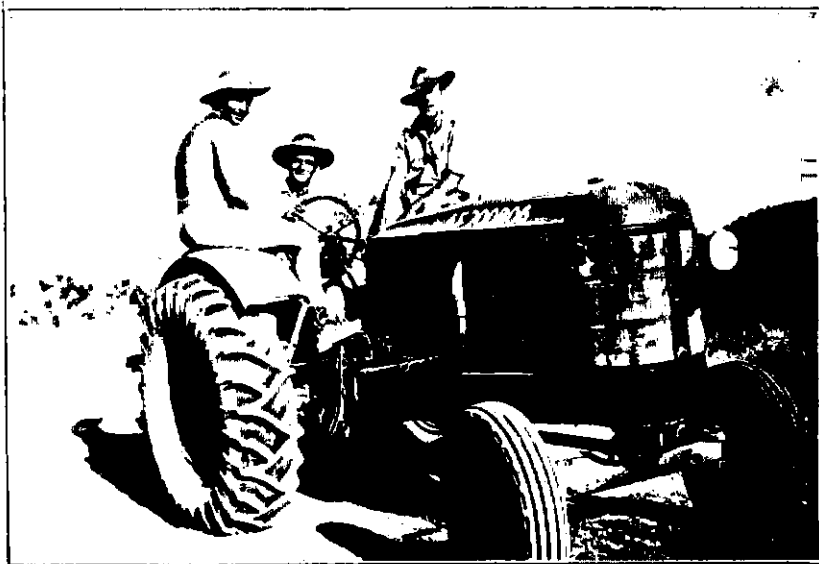
(Top) Part of the 7 Radar camp.....and (Lower) The island's jetty — and the smashed unit motor boat after a severe storm.



PERSONNEL .



Most of the Wedge crew in the summer of 1943:-
(Rear) Basil Clewer, Ern Pascoe,, Mort Collins. (Centre) Jim Fitzpatrick, Bob Clifford, Jim Walters, Neil Major (Front) George Miller, Derry Mann, Len Jacobs, Dick Moate, Doug Cocks.



The unit transport - Dick Moate (Driver), Cec Steinhardt (at right)

WEDGE FISHING.



Doug Cocks, the Corporal Cook and Jim Walters, the Guard Corporal, decide on fish cutlets for tea - plenty for everyone!



Ron Robinson, Ken Slip, Vic Brown, Keith Backshall and Cec. Steinhardt show off the result of a Wedge fishing expedition, 21st October 1943.

PERSONNEL .



Doug Cocks, Jim
Fitzpatrick
Len Jacobs,
Colin Hamilton
and Derry Mann.

Wal Packer took
Blacky the dog
in hand when the
station closed.



Len Jacobs,
N.Nicholson and
Ted Winters in
August 1943.



The S. Australian
Victory Contingent after
their return from
London. Sgt. Neil
Major is centre front.
Neil was on Wedge in
1944.

PERSONNEL



With little regard for correct team size, various sports were enjoyed whenever sufficient numbers showed interest,- particularly in cricket and football. The photo above of 19 men shows 2 cricket teams....and below is a football team almost at correct strength. The sports venue was a fairly level grazing paddock near the farm homestead.



REUNIONS.



The first 7 Radar Wedge Reunion in 1989 was held at the Italian Club in Carrington Street and proved very successful....and (Below) the largest Reunion in 1991 was at the Savoia Restaurant in North Terrace. Group photos have been taken at all Reunions which have since been held at the Marion Hotel in the Mitchell Room.
Edna Rau was our Wedge friend and neighbour.



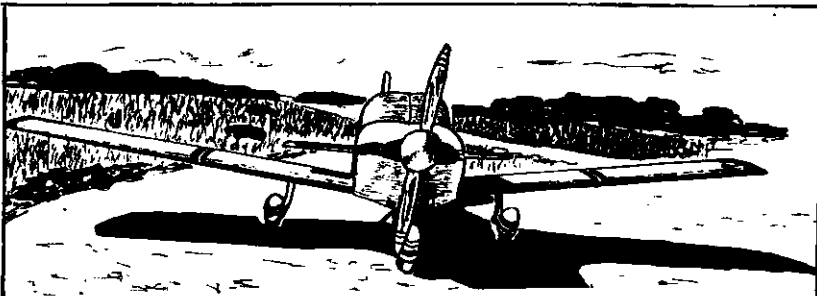
CONCLUDING THE WEDGE STORY.

Before ending this Story of Wedge, we should make mention of four stalwart supporters of our reunions....Kay Behen, daughter of Edna and Les, and herself a true blue Wedge person who lived on the island as a youngster..... John Beiers who for many years has been happy to act as O.I.C. Reunions, and who because of his aircraft flying ability has been able to fly several folk back to Wedge for a 'look-see'....and also John Allan, a one time distinguished radar boffin who actually secured the site of 7 Radar, and who in retirement seemed quite happy to adopt our reunions as his radar contact.

And finally, our good friends Ron and Pat Coat have attended the reunions since the early years. Ron was a radar mechanic on our sister station, 10 RS at Cape Jervis, and after the war he became a lighthouse maintenance officer. During his time on that job he was able to visit Wedge Island lighthouse several times.

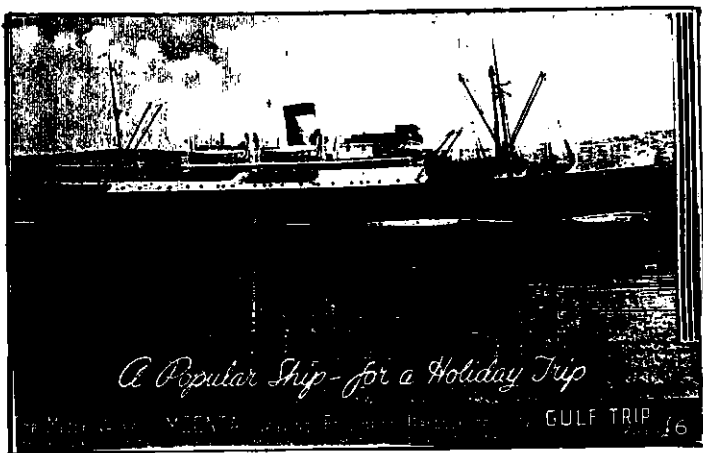
Though the work of 7 Radar proved quiet and uneventful, nevertheless the site chosen proved correct, for as late as December 1944, U-boat B29 from Batavia sailed across Australia's southern waters, and was within 20 miles of Wedge seeking targets on the shipping lanes. But now we can truly say that 7 Radar, though lonely and so very isolated out on Wedge, was a happy station with enough work and recreation to keep all occupied and busy, with friendly neighbours who enjoyed our company for the eighteen months we were on their island, while we certainly enjoyed their company too.'

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Modern Wedge Transport. John Beiers has been able to fly several folk back to Wedge in similar aircraft for a nostalgic 'look-see.'

Memories of Wedge



"SHIPS THAT PASS IN THE NIGHT."

The M.V.'s MOONTA and MINNIPA deserve a mention in this story of Wedge Island, for both vessels of the Adelaide Steamship Company formed an essential part of the mode of transport for both men and materials between Adelaide and Port Lincoln. Their regular route took both vessels past Wedge at night, and the operators learned the time of their usual appearance on the gear as they emerged from the Althorpes.
