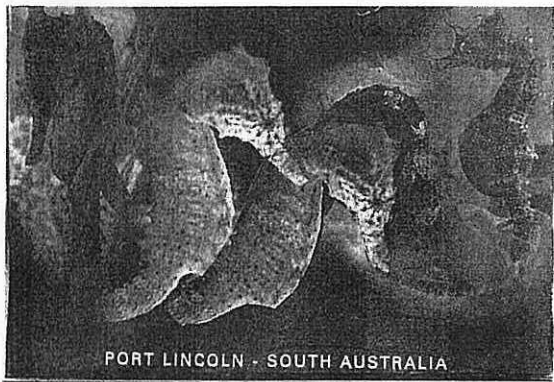


MEMORIES OF WEDGE



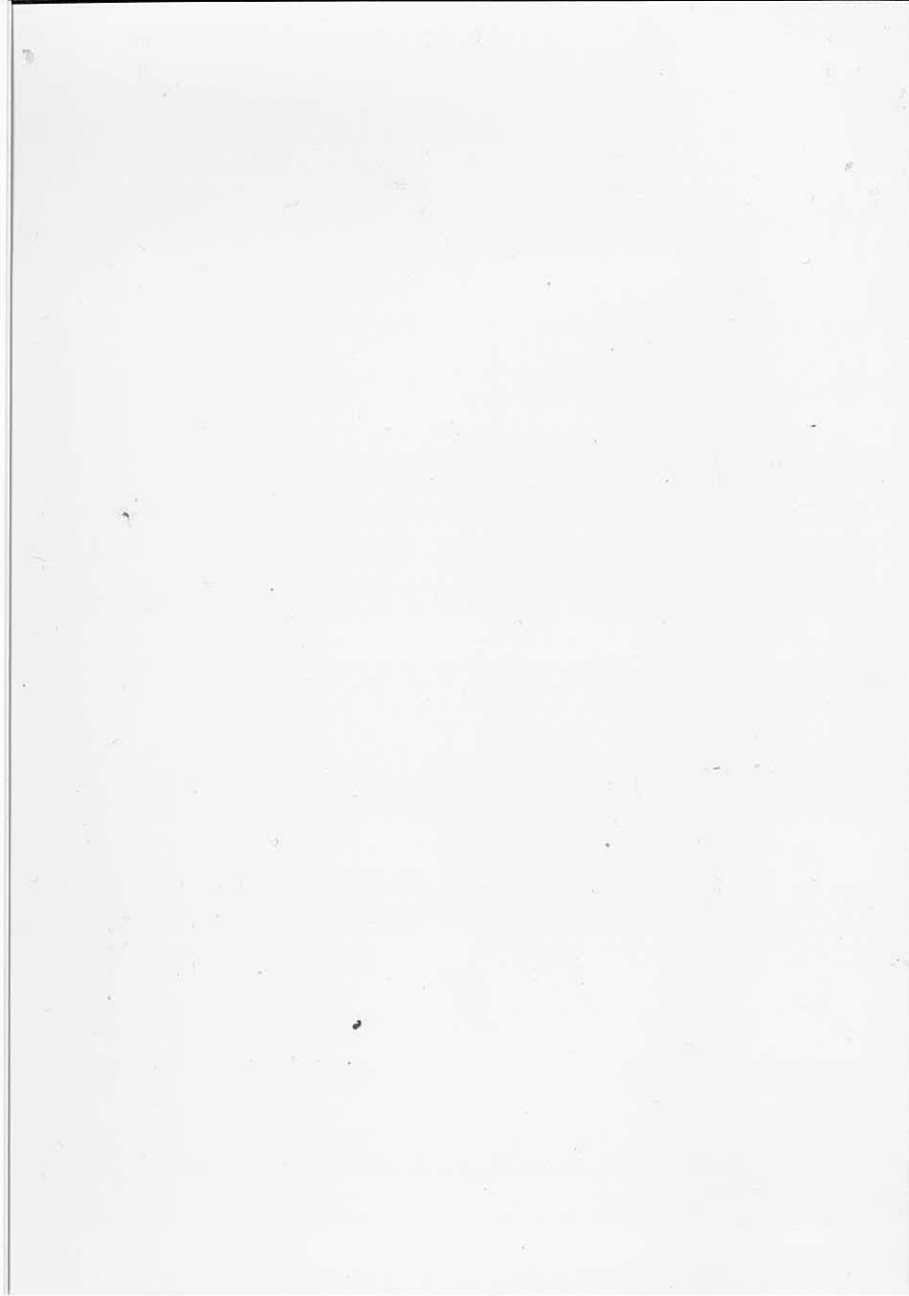
7 RADAR,

1943 – 1944

**WEDGE
ISLAND**

From Ron Cassidy

21st REUNION 2009



7 WEDGE RADAR REUNION 2009 – 21 YEARS ON

A very warm welcome to the 21st 7 Radar Wedge Island Reunion- being held on 31st March 2009. This year brings a change of venue to the Adelaide Pavilion. We hope you enjoy the peaceful setting of Veale Gardens which surrounds the venue.

Thanks to Doug and Rhonda Cocks for beginning the reunions in 1988. They still continue today – 21 years later. Morrie Fenton

In this Booklet of Memories, published for the 21st 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. Stan Moss

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 21 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 number 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. Jack Measday

OUR WEDGE REUNIONS

We've now enjoyed 21 happy Wedge reunions, and in a fit of nostalgia, I looked back over the photographic records. There I found mainly happy memories, and just a few sad reminders of those good folk who no longer join with us on that one day of the year.

The first reunion evidently was in 1989, though Doug did start his marshalling program in 1988 -all quite a long time ago now. Until 1994 we gathered at the Italian Club in Carrington Street, with one exception in 1991 when we assembled at the CTA Club in North Terrace which was a comfortable and roomy place I recall.

Since 1995, all our 'get-togethers' have been in the Mitchell Room at the Marion Hotel where we have been welcomed and well looked after. This year brings a change of venue to the Adelaide Pavilion.

As our reunions have more or less coincided with the big National Reunions, it's been natural to 'show and tell' much from those big shows interstate when any number up to 500 attended, with 160 at the national show at Geelong. Our biggest gathering was 50 which for a tiny speck of land out in Spencer Gulf was pretty good really, and quite enough to look after, particularly as our first show in 1989 attracted only 14.

Since then the folk of 7 Radar and Wedge have come from every state except the Northern Territory, and the faithful still come from afar, even from over the border, and regularly too.

We've had personal reminiscences, a video or two, photo displays and radar displays of various stations where the Wedge men were posted and some of those were pretty weird and hairy too. We've even seen a model of Flinders' "INVESTIGATOR" sailing across our Anniversary cake - and a model of our old island Doover seeking out the secrets of the room. Every reunion has had its strange and wonderful gimmicks and all these have been worthwhile - for a novel approach is necessary each time to maintain interest.

We introduced a cake as a novelty, and John Beiers joined us for the first time in 1994 - a happy encounter that one, for over the succeeding years he has exerted his talents and influence from the top table to make everything go well. And apart from that he piloted a Cessna over to Wedge with 3 passengers each time on board.

Now we hear there are a few new homes on Wedge - no B. and B's mind you - but I guess the really keen fishermen who have enjoyed Wedge in the past will still be content to sleep on the beach or stick up a tent there.

But it's all been good, enjoyable fun - more like a family gathering, for we all know each other, and we all look forward to the Annual Wedge Do when we meet old friends again.

OUR WEDGE FRIENDSHIPS



First reunion – June 1989

Friendships first forged on Wedge Island some sixty odd years ago have lasted so well that they can be called "Life time" friendships – particularly those that began on those choppy seas between Thistle Island and Wedge. They have continued on troop trains and troop convoys – in slit trenches and every type of circumstance unimaginable.

Strangely, often these friendships have continued through a succession of radar stations featuring English, Australian and American equipment – even Canadian gear which was perhaps the most fastidious of all equipment in the N.W. area. Even in that carefully hidden section at the bottom of the camp area, verbal pleasantries were exchanged so cementing friendships lasting many, many years.

The radar fraternity is spread across every part of Australia so that recognition of an old mate often took place on arrival at a station – a renewed friendship that had first begun on Wedge Island, somewhere out from Lincoln. And we have seen friendships blossom and continue through the many years since as reunions began the very enjoyable task of locating old mates via mail, news, letters and some other means.

Few friendships enjoyed the bonds of friendships witnessed again and again by the radar bodies and on so many areas, before continuing on through the years, enriched by memories of so many places and incidents. And many began on Wedge.



The most recent reunion – April 2008

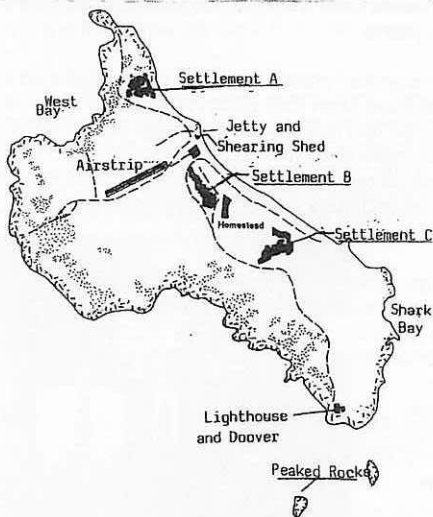
OUR 'TOUCH OF .PARADISE' IN 2009

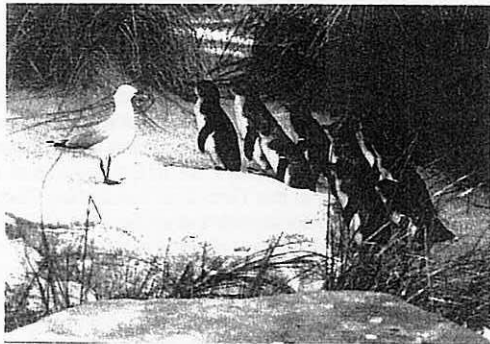
Wedge Island is one of about 150 Off-shore islands in South Australian waters, all varying greatly in size, shape, weather, and height above sea level. And so they also vary in plant, animal and bird life, and also in sea life, seals and penguins particularly.

These varying conditions apply very much to Wedge, which is part of the Gambier Islands Reserve, with the exception of the three sections, A, B, and C set aside for private development and shown on the attached map.

Also shown is the landing strip, not even remotely contemplated 40 or 50 years ago. But the familiar old landmarks – the lighthouse, the RAAF jetty and the old 1894 shearing shed are still much in evidence, thanks be, and there are also a few reminders of our old radar camp.

Remember the seals? Their barking could clearly be heard from the Peaked Rocks when we were up at the Doover. And who could forget that over-excited penguin someone had put in a locker. Very over excited it was indeed.





"Now Listen youse fellersWe're gonna try it again
and we're gonna keep on trying till you get it right....."

"So stand to attention..... toes together up straight
everyone and on my command, move smartly".

"Tenshun!..... Right Turn..... now on my
command move off with the left foot".

"By the left quick waddle and swing those bloomin'
flippers chest high like they showed you at rookies".

"Lep Right, Lep Right. ...Waddle Waddle You've got It!"

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