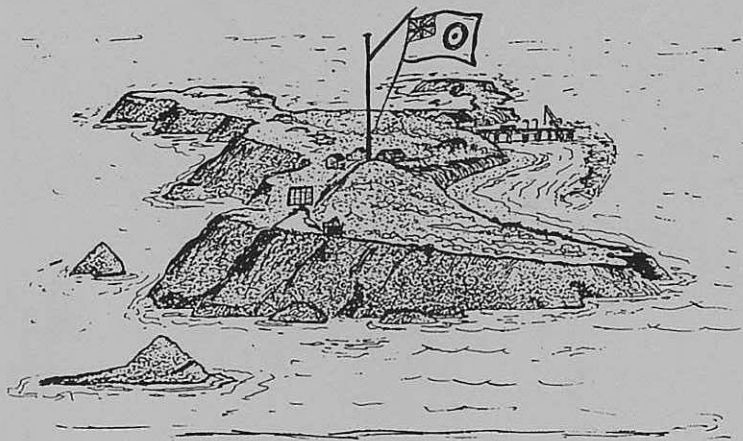


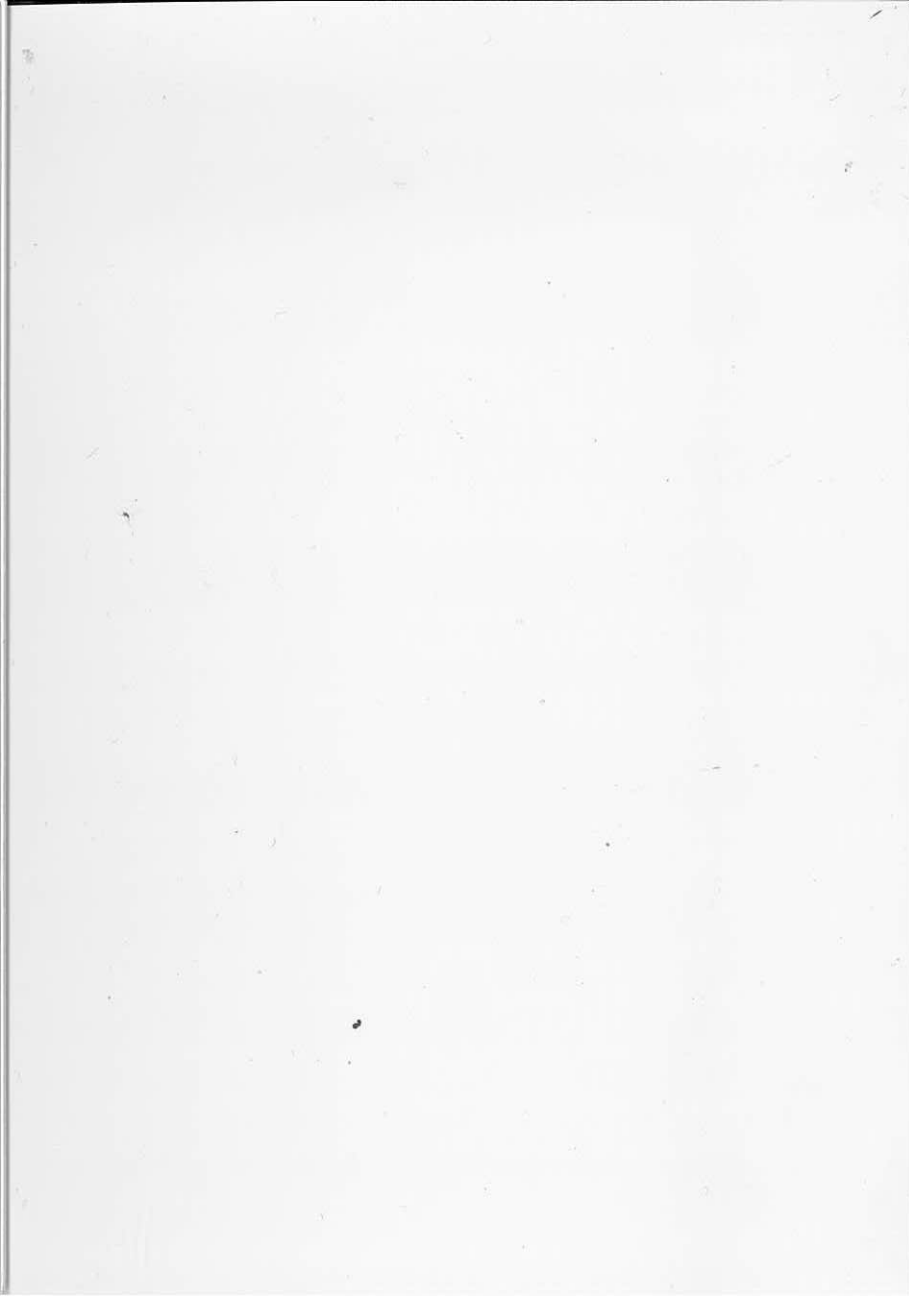
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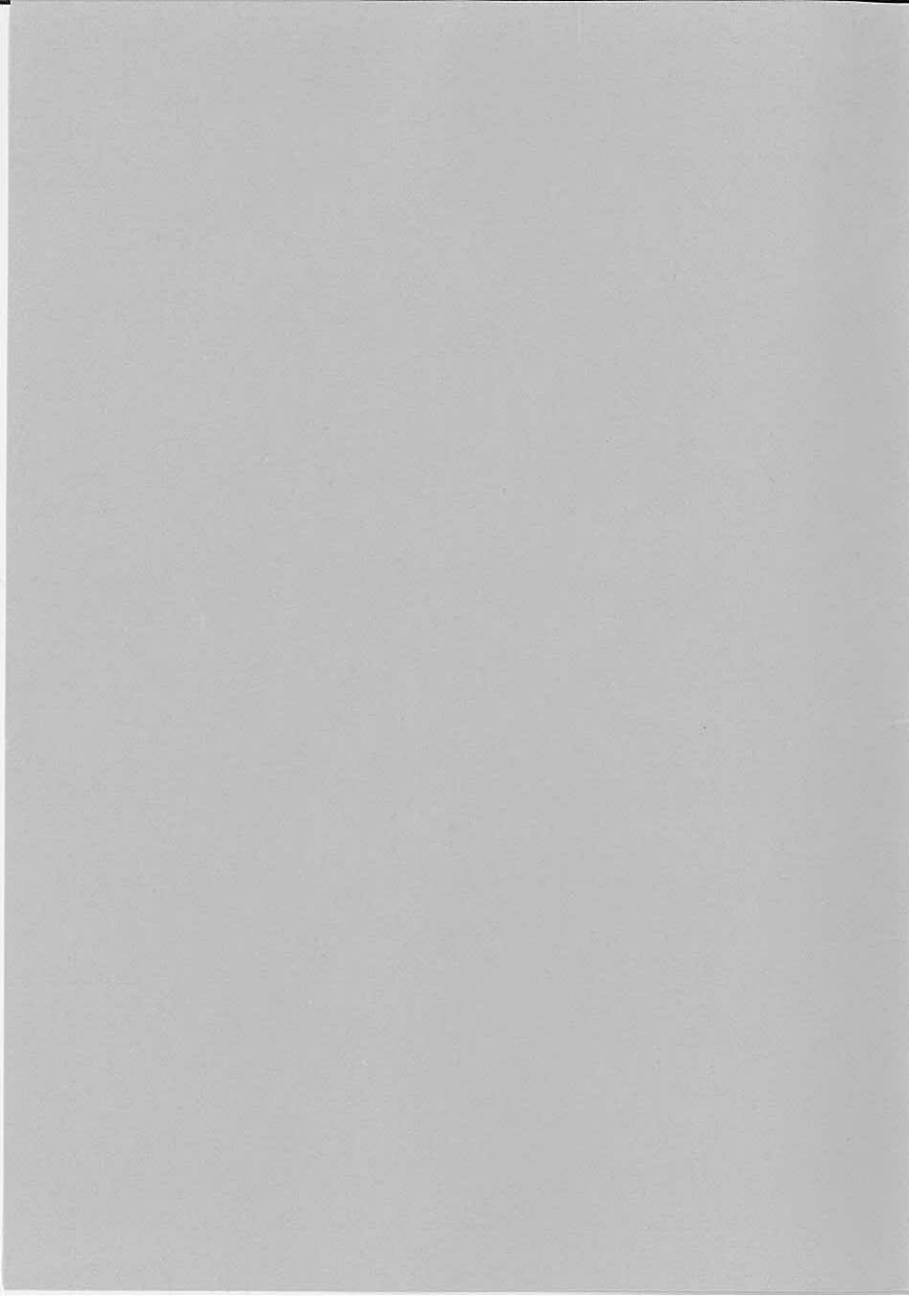


Wedge Island
Sketchbook.



MORRIE FENTON.



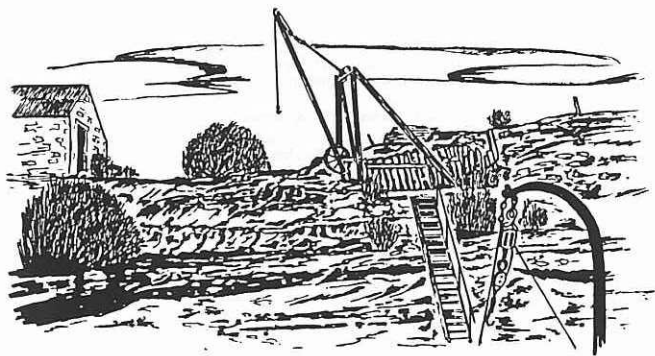




Wedge Island
Sketchbook.

DEDICATION.

*Dedicated to All Who
Remember the Island Life.*



MORRIE FENTON.

WEDGE ISLAND

SKETCHBOOK.

ISBN 0 9596866 9 4

MORRIE FENTON.

(M.E.FENTON.)

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by

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January 1995

Greetings from the City of Adelaide.

In this special year when "Australia Remembers" we all try to recall the events of fifty years ago, leading to the victory in the Pacific and Universal Peace.

The contribution of 7 Radar Unit to the war-time security of Adelaide and South Australia is possibly not very well known, however, this booklet outlines the importance of the work and service carried out in the Gulf.

I congratulate you all on the occasion of your reunion. I wish you well with the celebrations and hope that the friendships which have endured for so long will continue on into the future.

Henry Nino
HENRY J. NINO
Lord Mayor

Wedge Island.

Wedge Island was discovered and named by Matthew Flinders, that outstanding young explorer of the Australian coastline, in 1802, its name being suggested because of its distinctive and striking silhouette against the skyline. Many of the islands in the vicinity of Wedge were named by Flinders at the same time, the neighbouring larger Thistle Island being named after his navigator who lost his life close by while seeking water.

Wedge may have had earlier settlers, but its first recorded history began about the mid 1800's, and from then the island has supported a succession of farming attempts, some being more successful than others. In all these attempts, the fierce weather patterns, the isolation, and the salty atmosphere have all greatly influenced the outcome. Today the island is mainly given over to fishermen and perhaps a few holidaymakers seeking solitude in a near perfect and natural environment. But in its farming days, barley, horse breeding and raising, and sheep farming have all found favour for a period - even guano gathering was tried at one time by an enterprising early island owner and speculator.

Since it was first surveyed and divided into sections in 1883, there have been a succession of owners and managers living on the island in the cottage built by the Daw brothers about 1860. The names Cowan, Haigh, Golley, Cooper, Winckel, Rau and Reed have all featured prominently in the progressive story of Wedge, while in 1943 and 1944 the island had its largest ever population when up to fifty Air Force men manned the radar unit established on its highest point near the lighthouse. In the 1950's several names of the Growden family were registered as the principal titleholders, and Mr. Norm Growden practised his farming methods mainly from Port Lincoln, flying to the island to check the stock, the water and fences.

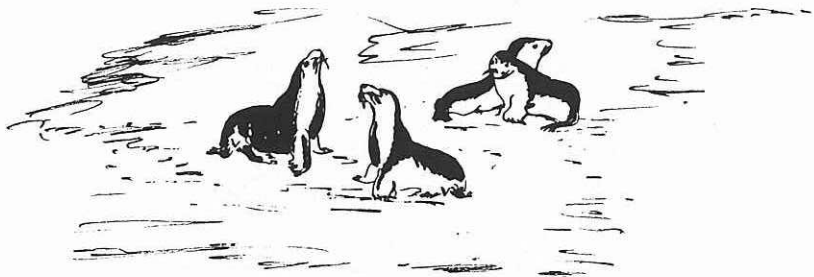
In 1988, Wedge Island was bought by Venture Corporation, and three separate parcels of land were subdivided and offered for private purchase and for the construction of holiday homes, the scheme being subject to strict controls and regulations, for at the same time up to one third of the island became marked for eventual inclusion in the Gambier Islands Conservation Park. Joswell Pty. Ltd. are the present owners of the freehold portion of the island not privately owned, and the conditions ensure that ultimately more than half of Wedge Island will become reserve.

Meanwhile, many species of endangered wildlife have become established on Wedge, for the island is still free of feral animals. Rock wallabies, bettongs and wombats appear to be thriving, while penguins and seals have long treated the island coastline as their special domain.

Perhaps it is inevitable that at some future time Wedge will gradually become more known and more popular as an off-shore island, but it is to be hoped that the strict regulations now in place will ensure forever that the natural beauty, the wild coastal scenery and the endangered animal species now successfully established will somehow continue forever.

1995.

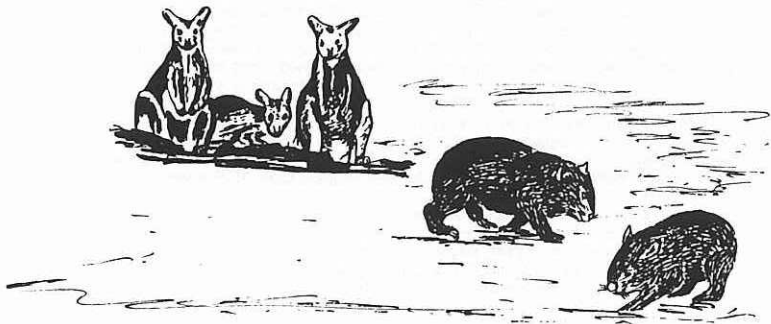
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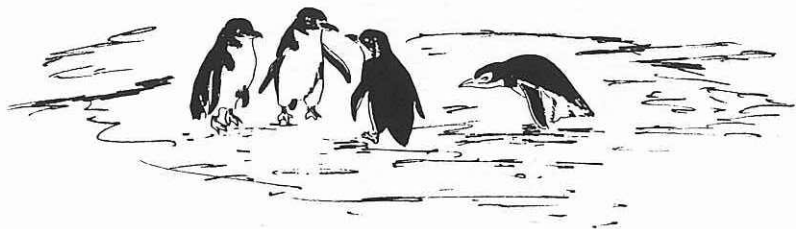


The Wildlife of Wedge.

The fairy penguins and the seals have long been known as the natural wildlife occupants of the Wedge Island shoreline, with the little penguins coming ashore at night to shelter among the rocks mainly on the sheltered side of the island, while the seals have long been the masters of the heavy surf, resting and often making themselves heard from the ledges and the pimple islets around the more dangerous and less accessible parts of the island coastline.

In more recent times, a highly commendable conservation programme has been adopted, and several off-shore islands including Wedge, all being free of predators such as foxes, cats, snakes and the like, have been reserved as wild life areas.



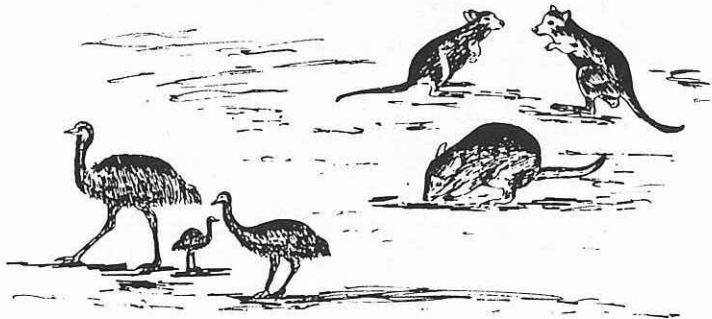


THE WILDLIFE of WEDGE.

This programme has allowed several endangered species to be released into the rarely disturbed undergrowth and vegetation, hopefully to be released eventually back into their own natural habitats when their numbers have sufficiently increased.

So the wombat, and the shy brush-tailed bettong now occupy the island in increasing numbers, along with the handsome little Pearson Island wallaby. And there are emus, though these have increased so rapidly in numbers that somehow they must be culled

Eventually, more than half of Wedge Island will form part of the Gambier Islands Conservation Park, which would ensure the protection and survival of the flora, fauna, and the natural beauty of the place.





"Paradise Beach" - the pristine length of beach along the northern coast of the island.

"Going Ashore."

Going ashore on Wedge Island was at one time achieved only by way of the beach on the northern side, but after the sturdy small jetty near the old shed had been built, together with the two lifting cranes, this part of the island became a key entry point and place of embarkation. From the jetty, the island folk and their visitors, workmen, stock and materials left or entered Wedge - very much so until the small airstrip was completed. The old stone shed, patched and altered, has survived since 1894. It has been enlarged, equipped in a variety of ways from time to time for its many roles, and has become almost a symbol of the island. Perhaps its most important years were those when it became headquarters for the shearers when up to 2000 sheep were kept on Wedge.

Over the years, the little jetty, built for the Air Force personnel stationed on Wedge in 1943, has deteriorated somewhat, but the crane still works well, and small boats can be lifted to be left safely on the jetty above the seas which at times even there can become unpredictably rough and dangerous.

History tells that stock leaving the island - the horses and sheep, did so from the beautiful Wedge beach running east of the jetty, the horses swimming out to the small steamer waiting off-shore, while the sheep enjoyed the short trip packed in the drier, crowded confines of the ship's boat.