

EDEN KILLER WHALE MUSEUM / 02 64962094 / EMAIL promo@killerwhalemuseum.com.au

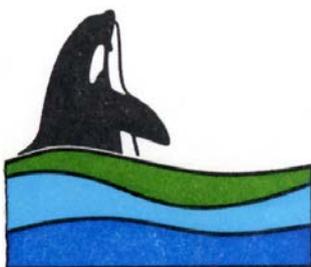
Special Interest Articles:

- ❖ NEW EXHIBITION — CANNED — 13TH MARCH — 13TH OCTOBER
- ❖ A NEW INDUSTRY FOR EDEN
- ❖ FROM SEA TO CAN — TUNA PROCESSING
- ❖ FISHY BUSINESS WITH DEVELOPMENT SHARKS CIRCLING
- ❖ FOUND — SS IRON CROWN
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Cannery Canned

For over 50 years generations of Eden families worked at the fish canning factory on the foreshore of Cattle Bay, Eden.

In 1999 citing unprofitability Heinz-Watties closed the Eden Greenseas cannery sending its operations to Thailand.

Twenty years on *Canned*, a new exhibition at EKWM opened on the 13th of March, explores the history of the site and the development of an industry in Eden that impacted on most families in the town.

At the height of the fishing industry up to 40 tuna boats plied the rich waters off Eden with 147 locals earning their living at the tuna cannery. Now just five trawlers operate out of Eden. In the mid-1980s, more than a decade before the cannery was closed, Mr John Henry travelled to Thailand with another manager to examine the country's fish processing industry.

A new Industry for Eden- Jody White EKWM Curator

At the turn of the 20th century, Australian fish supplies were provided by few fishermen and fish was expensive. Canned fish was mostly being imported from England and America. In the early 1930s, there were a few failed attempts to establish a large scale fish processing precinct in Eden, but it wasn't until the Second World War year of 1940 that a cannery was established in



"We wanted to prove to the government that the Thais were dumping canned tuna in Australia, and we did, but the government was not prepared to act," he said. "We looked at sanitation and they (Thais) had the best system ever. But when we looked inside their laboratory, there was no one working in there ticking things off. It was all for show."

Though the business was claimed to have made an 8 million dollar profit in 1998 – the year before the closure the company clearly stood to make more in Thailand.

In 1999 the nation's jobless rate dropped to 7.2 per cent, the lowest since 1990. In the NSW south coast town of Eden, one in every eight workers lost their jobs. The corporate affairs manager for Heinz Wattie Glenda Orland denied that the company was closing down a profitable business. *"We*

Eden on the northern side of Lake Curalo. In 1945, this cannery was relocated to Cattle Bay where ship building and ice making facilities were already operating. In 1946, AFI purchased Twofold Bay Canneries located at Lake Curalo and turned it into a box making factory after transferring the cannery plant equipment to the Cattle Bay site. In 1947 (after successfully turning around their Narooma cannery), Green's Products had their sights on establishing a cannery at Cocora Beach but in 1949 acquired AFI to save



wouldn't close a profitable factory. The local fish catch does not even supply half of our requirement, and over the last several years we've had to import whole frozen tuna to keep the cannery operating." she said.

While taking photos of the exhibition I met one of our Friends of EKWM who also worked at the cannery. This exhibition will draw interest from many in Eden as well as tourists visiting the Museum.



duplication. The cannery by this stage had a concrete wall along the beach front, a 161 metre long jetty (floodlit at night for the convenience of fishermen), ice works, cold store, a Canadian smokehouse, quick freezer, slipway engineering facilities, a boat building shop, chandlery store, canteen and a dam. Homes had also been built for cannery staff. As different fisheries were developed locally, so was range of cannery products. This included tuna in the 1950s and abalone in the 1960s. Green's sold the cannery to Kraft in 1961 and in 1974 it was sold on again to Heinz.

From Sea to Can – processing Tuna – Jody White EKWM Curator

By 1995, the process took 6 hours. A year later a new Bluestar process was introduced reducing processing to just 40 minutes. The film on the freestanding AV unit in Bowler Gallery explains it in detail. The steps below describe processing done in the early 1990s: **1.** Tuna is caught by purse-seine or pole and line method (often many kilometres out to sea), then immediately frozen in large saltwater tanks on the ship. **2.** Tuna is unloaded at Eden's

cannery wharf; weighed and sorted then transferred to thawing tanks or put into deep freeze storage. **3.** Once thawed, tuna is cleaned and butchered, loaded onto trays, then taken to a giant cooker and gently steam cooked then cooled. **4.** The cooked, cooled tuna goes to the cleaning tables and skin, bones and red meat are removed by hand. Quality checks are undertaken to ensure a high quality. **5.** A conveyor belt takes the tuna to the pack shaper

which forms and guillotines the tuna into chunks which are then packed into cans. **6.** Open ended cans continue on the conveyor under a series of dispenser taps which add salt, water or oil. **7.** The cans are then sealed with lids and are carried in large metal baskets to giant retorts for a final cook. The cans are then cooled, cleaned, labelled and packed into boxes. **8.** Forklifts load boxes onto trucks which takes them to a warehouse in Victoria for distribution across the country.



Fishy Business with Development Sharks Circling

Our EKWM Curator Jody White has uncovered early history of the canning business in this 'Fishy' Prospectus.

Over 100 boats launch at the Quarantine Bay ramp during Eden's fishing tournaments in February and March. We wonder how this site would be today should an industrial site envisaged for this area gone ahead back in the late 1920s.

A *Shark Fisheries Limited* prospectus held in the Museum's collection and its relationship to Eden's fish canning history was the impetus of delving into the background of this company.

Back in 1924 experiments utilising waste material came to fruition for *George Thomas Russell* in the form of a new business venture. *Russell Fodder & By-Products Ltd* was established to convert fruit, vegetable and fish waste of Sydney's City Market into fertilisers, pig, poultry and stock fodder - the contract worth 15

shillings a ton.

By 1927 *Shark Fisheries Ltd*, was formed to take over the successful business of *Russell Fodder & By-Products Ltd*, manufacturing oil, leather and other products from both fish and sharks. Mr Russell as manager began promoting the company's prospectus, and vision for a base at Eden to further *Shark Fisheries Ltd's* enterprises. Meeting with some 70 residents and business leaders at Bega (and others such as Twofold Bay Development League members at Eden) Russell outlined the hopes and dreams of the company providing samples already produced at their O'Riordan Street factory in Alexandria.

By 1928, local shareholders wondered at *Shark Fisheries Ltd* lack of activity locally. Mr Russell told Twofold

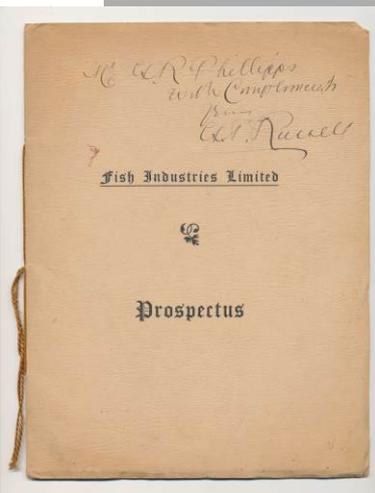
Bay Development League (TBDL) President, J R Logan, that operations had been troubled by strike action over changes to timber workers working conditions.

In April 1929, Mr Logan received notice from Mr Russell that the Local Land Board had granted the application for a factory site at Quarantine Bay. Again a new company was formed, this time to accommodate whale products. Amalgamating with two other companies, *Australian-Antarctic Whaling and Fisheries Limited* was floated, once again with Mr Russell as a director and manager.

By 1930 however local investors were looking for full refunds with news that the Twofold Bay project would not be going ahead. Local newspapers carried the bad news that some investors due to a technicality would not be fully reimbursed. In the meantime, Mr Russell continued to give lectures in Sydney, promoting the wealth of natural resources found in the waters off Eden. **Check out our next issue as the plot thickens.**



Now the old Cannery site is being re-developed by the Cattle Bay Resort – photo Rob Whiter



FOUND – SS IRON CROWN

The wreck of WW11 Iron ore freighter SS Iron Crown torpedoed by a Japanese submarine in 1942 has been found by the marine archaeologists aboard CSIRO research vessel Investigator, using sonar equipment and a special drop camera. Maritime archaeologist at Heritage Victoria Peter Harvey said he hoped the discovery not far from Mallacoota would bring closure to the families of the seamen who died.

"The ship is in a really good state of preservation, although I'm pretty sure the stern of it, where it was hit by the torpedo, was pretty broken up," he said. "The archaeology of these sites enables us to finally find out what happened and why it happened. It tells us the human story of the wreck."

The ship was travelling through Bass Strait and sank in just 60 seconds. 38 crew were killed with only 5 men rescued by SS Mulbera. Tasmanian man George Fisher worked on the Iron

Crown as a deck boy when he was 18, and was one of the five survivors.

His partner Ms Silvester said Mr Fisher had been coming up from below deck when he heard a terrible explosion. "He grabbed the life jacket and he was calling to all the others to get out, get out," she said. "They knew the ship was going down. He jumped overboard, and it was the life jacket that saved him."

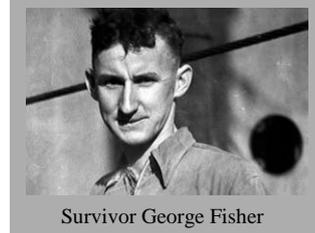
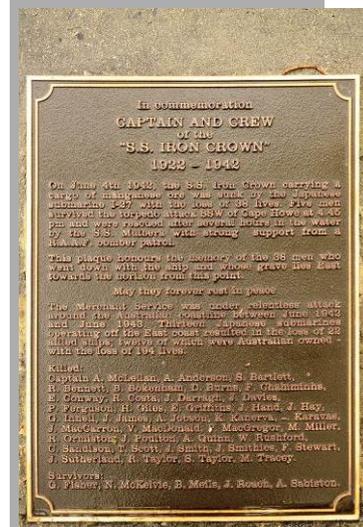
Mr Fisher kept in touch until his death in 2012 with the other survivors, including his close friend Bruce Miel from Adelaide. Before Mr Fisher died, he organised the plaque pictured here to be placed near the cenotaph in Mallacoota in Victoria to honour his shipmates.

Iron Crown was built by Lithgows Ltd, Glasgow for BHP. She was launched on 22 October

1937 as *Euroa*, before being renamed *Iron Crown* and was homeported in Sydney under the British flag.

Between Mallacoota in the South and Bundaberg in the North, these ships were sunk in 1943 by enemy submarines –

- Kalingo*- January 18th by *I-21 Iron King* - February 8th by *I-21 Starr King* - February 10th by *I-21 Recina* - April 11th by *I-26 Kowarra* - April 24th by *I-26 Limerick* - April 26th by *I-177 Lydia M. Childs* - April 27th by *I-178 Wollongbar* - April 29th by *I-180 Fingal* - May 5th by *I-180 Australian Hospital Ship Centaur* May 14th by *I-177 Portman* - June 16th by *I-178*



Survivor George Fisher



John Downton – Peaks, plains & pastures

Born in Sydney in 1939 celebrated artist John Downton enjoyed his early childhood years in Eden before leaving for boarding school at 12 years of age. He returned each year to enjoy his holidays in the area.

As an adult he worked as a commercial fisherman before following his watchmaker's trade during the 1960-50's.

After two tours of duty with the Navy he wrote his autobiography and in the 1970's began an

artistic career taking classes at the Royal Art Society of New South Wales. He also studied under George Lucas and Leonard Long.

He travelled to East Timor as a maritime artist for the Royal Navy peacekeeping force and was awarded an AOM for his services to the visual arts.

Mr Downton is also the official artist for the HMAS Albatross Fleet Air Arm Museum in Nowra, with a gallery in the museum named in his honour in 2014. When he's not

painting he spends a lot of time judging at regional shows. He judged many exhibitions, including the Sydney Royal Easter Show, Nowra Show, Kiama Art Show and Bega Valley Art Awards.

Mr Downton, is a member of the Australian Society of Marine Artists, the Royal Art Society of NSW as well as the Shoalhaven, Kiama and Bega art societies.

There will be a follow up exhibition entitled "*Sapphire Seascapes*" opening on the 15th of August.

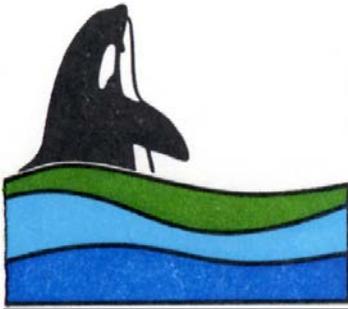


Fleet Arm Museum curator Ailsa Chittick with John.

International Women's Day

International Women's Day was celebrated this year with a breakfast under the Museum's sails overlooking beautiful Twofold Bay.

While the bay is wonderful for recreation it has and remains a workplace for some. Karen Luobikis and Beverley Illes shared their stories of working as deckhands for their husbands during the peak of the abalone industry in Eden from our latest exhibition, 'Wild Catch'



COMING EVENTS:

MAY 11TH
SEHGI MEETING
COBARGO

OCTOBER 15TH
SAPPHIRE
SEASCAPES

OCTOBER 18TH
CRUISING
FORWARD



Karen Luobikis



Yippee – Brydes Whale again sighted in Twofold Bay – and Killer Whale sightings too!



Jenny Drenkhahn and Jeanine Grant

EKWM visits Wotton Gardens (Nullica Lodge)

Margaret Sheaves, Leone Fairweather and Jenny Drenkhahn representing the museum visited Roy Wotton Gardens to give residents who are unable to travel a taste of EKWM.

Taking along some objects they thought would interest residents they were amazed at the reactions invoking many memories and chatting about; milking and sling shots and proper hand writing.

Toni their activities officer had arranged the visit and we may do it again some time.

Our school holiday program was a great success with children and adults making bookmarks. Check out the web address below – Tom has made the top 10 of the world's most famous whales - I wonder how the other whales feel about that!

<https://www.mnn.com/earth-matters/animals/photos/10-of-the-worlds-most-famous-whales/old-tom>



SEHGI history of Bimbimbee

Brigitte Kestermann a member at Merimbula Old School Museum gave an interesting talk about the establishment of Bimbimbee retirement village. John & Kathleen McIlwraith – Smith were the citizens who gave some land and helped establish the first retirement facility in the region. John was also an artisan of note and I think he carved some pieces of stone which he called “merimbulite” I think

the font in the Uniting Church where we met was made of it. She later took those who chose to on a tour of the facility.

The establishment of reciprocal complimentary entry for members to agreeable societies was decided on and SEHGI will design a sticker to be added to membership cards for use at participating museums.

Jenny Drenkhahn



EDEN KILLER WHALE MUSEUM

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS:

EXEC PANEL MEETING	3PM 2 ND THURSDAY	MUSEUM LIBRARY
CURATORIAL MEETING	2PM 3 RD MONDAY	MUSEUM LIBRARY
FRIENDS MEETING	9 AM 3 RD WEDNESDAY	MUSEUM LIBRARY

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