

# EDEN KILLER WHALE MUSEUM

Home of Old Tom - Est. 1931

# SOUNDINGS

NEWSLETTER August, 2023

## Tom's Global Ventures

Just on 93 years since the last of the last killer whale packs which visited Eden annually, was found floating in Twofold Bay. How long had they presented themselves here is not known, but the mystery and the myth endues nearly a century on. There has been thousands of column inches written, photographs and movies and videos displayed, doubts cast on the veracity of the story, but the intrigue endues and will continue to do so.

Back in the early eighties when all things whale began its international interest was increasing, EKWM was approached by a Canadian institution to see if we would lend a tooth from the skeleton, that they might slice it to reveal the "growth rings", similar to that of a tree".

As there were many differences of opinion as to what age Tom may have been at death, we were keen to engage with this reputable body. The expected age of an orca and the folk lore age, dating of him back into indigenous familiarities, were it might be said, oceans apart

Keen though we were, we were also very apprehensive having had been burned by an earlier experience. It was still fresh in the memory at the time I joined, in the mid-seventies... Many will remember Bill Peach's show on the ABC (TDT?). His crew sought of Bert Egan, the loan of an implement to use as a prop for a story on T.F Bay whaling. Bert also thought that as a good reputation had preceded the event, it would be safe to make the loan. The piece was never seen by us, again and left Bert with a good dose of 'the guilts".

With the foregoing firmly in mind, we agreed to the loan of the tooth and the work with it. Many undertakings were given as to the security and the **return** of the piece

and the result of the investigation. Surely these undertakings would be safe. Well, in the event, as the months ticked by and the mail vacant of any package adoring a Canadian stamp, we began with what turned out to be a lengthy exchange of views with the borrowers. We did eventually, get it back. The Canadians seemed quite peeved that we had asked for the return of our property We reminded them of their initial undertakings. When the report was received, it could be said that there was some discrepancy. In one of the calls seeking return of the sample, I was advised that they were not able to

offer a definitive result as the compression of the dentine was such that prohibited a finding. The written report received afterwards

qualified this with the words ...."we estimate Old



## “GAILY DECORATED FLOATS MAKE A FINE SPECTACLE” ....

This was the way the Magnet & Voice saw the float parade and celebrations, the day piped water was turned on, for the folk of Eden, October 1956.

“Those who gave their time and energy to the construction of floats for the procession on Tantawanglo day, must have felt a glow of pride and satisfaction as the large number of gaily decorated floats proceeded slowly along the route to the sports ground.

The day’s celebrations commenced when Clr. F.G. Clare, gave the signal for the first of the large array of assembled in Bass Street, to begin the parade.

A large crowd lined the streets and most were agreeably surprised of the number and evident amount of work, which had been necessary to produce such a fine array of floats.

One visitor from Bega was heard to say that the procession compared more than favourably with a similar procession held in that town recently.

The procession proceeded to Imlay Park for the ceremony and then on to Beach Reserve where the floats circled the arena several times, while the judges made their decisions.

School children from the various schools in the district led by the Bega Band, joined the procession.

### FLOATS TAKING PART

Floats taking part in their various sections were:-

Humorous; Towamba (The Good Old days). Ray Innes and Ray Turnbull; (Horse drawn hearse). Eden RSL (The Battalion band.) Balmain Bros Bega (Bus service). Tathra Urban Committee (Tathra water supply).

Mr F. Davidson (Tathra Water 1885?). Whitby’s Service Station (Pambula emergency water supply). Mr N. Hanson, (Painters accident).

Decorative: The Showroom , Eden (Beach Scene) Capt. D Williamson, (Pirate Boys), Eden Advancement Association. (Wake up!),

Commercial:- Eden Canneries (Tuna Industry), Merimbula Bacon Factory, (Products Display), Cock Bros, (Atlantic Petrol), Whiter’ Southern Motors, (Cars), Advanx (Tyres), Eden Ambulance (Car accident Scene with old ambulance in attendance, followed by the new ambulance chassis and cab, with

the inscription “I aint got no body but your donation will help build it”.

Historic: Hotel Eden (Whaling Days)

The judges had a difficult task in selecting the various winners and most floats were worthy of a prize. The final decisions went to the following

Humorous; Towamba, the good Old days. This depicted a pioneer living room “with baby”. Ruf. Lucas ws in the bath with Bert Daley as “mother”, vigorously applying the scrubbing brush. ‘Granny”, Alf Piesley, was sedately knitting . While the “old maid” (Charlie Page) was busy with her washing chores This float caused shrieks of laughter and was organised by Mrs George Dickie and friends.

Commercial: Merimbula Bacon Factory. This was painstakingly arranged and featured all products of the factory, with four secretaries taking orders.

Special mention must be made in this section to Eden Canneries float, advertising the tuna industry.

Decorative: The Showroom float “holidays in Eden”, which depicted a beach scene with a bathing pool in the centre and complete with beach inspector, bathing beauties and beach boys.

Historic. The Eden Hotel’s float “Whaling Days” showed what could be done in a very short time . The boat was still in the water at 9AM and transformed to a whaling boat complete with crew and whaling gear.



The Cannery girls ; float at the opening

(Ed note; I’m off to Specsavers after reading the barely distinguishable 9pt print)

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Tom’s age based on historical data as 35 years”.  
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Fast forward to current times when the Board received a request from Isabella Reeves, PhD student from Flinders University, Adelaide. Isabella is Australia’s only orca geneticist

After initial hesitation, her discussion with Collection Manager. Angela George, really impressed, thus removing any remaining doubts.. Isabella completed her task admirably.

So the chore of bureaucratic requirements commenced to be complied with. That in itself was a lesson for the layman, including import/export and for removal of species from state and nation, which were but some encountered.

It is amazing just what a half teaspoon of genetic material can reveal under the expert vision of the appropriate scientist. Tom’s sample was to travel to Norway, and Isabella joining with the small group of such people. Norway is the world leader in this research.

To complete her undertaking with EKWM Isabella was generous with her time sharing the findings with school children, local ABC radio and the like. The “Full House” notice was the order of the evening of the 26th Jul. The Norse Gods urely smiled on those lucky enough to secure a position,  
An Observation

EKWM considers itself as an institution of knowledge to be shared. It has a proud record of encouraging academic learning, an that sports, especially where the young are concerned. Needless to say it has been within our modest means.

A donor over decades past we featured in the annual end of year presentations of Eden High and Primary Schools as well as Towamba School, increasing the sum in accordance with the times School group concessions. Even as we add to our knowledge bank, with Isabella’s summary, I reckon we could add our support of that venture to the list.

In the area of drama support, for a number of years, we were instrumental in having Theatre South visit and present their latest production. The theatre production Tonight we Anchor in Two-fold Bay”, was written by th author in and around EKWM. The world premier featured at the Eden Fishermen’s Club, before moving on to the Wharf Theatre in Sydney. Hands on tourism, office work experience and the like, have also been part of our brief. Until its regrettable closure several years ago , St Josephs School was accordingly supported.

I can’t go past the last of that sentence without remembering our late member, school group guide, Secretary of the organisation, and gentleman of the highest order, Herman Boller. Herman who was our last scribe to present the minutes hand written looked forward to make the presentations at St Joey’s each December. And I’ll bet the students and teachers alike,looked foeward to

as the evening proved inetesting and enlightening in-greater understanding of our centrepiece.

Thanks go to Isabella for her diligence and generosity

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Below decks is a happening place. It’s all go as Angela George has compiled a very comprehensive list of what she would like to see achieved in the near and intermediate term. There are times when she and Stephanie Rawlings could do with an extra hand or two. If you would care to be on call to help, please contact Ange (64962094) so she can list your details.

Here again, this is an exciting aspect of EKWM involvement. It’s great fun to see an exhibition come together and know you have had a hand in its creation..



This is the Gabo Island fishing boats float, from the Water Turn-on Parade..Thanks to Jen Drenkhahn for these photos



Herman celebrates his 90th

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### About People

Again, one who helped us along the way has left us.

A pall of anguish and sympathy descended over all who knew Julie Duke. Among those feelings was the great admiration for the fortitude and courage Julie portrayed throughout her illness, the treatment and the untimely passing of her husband during it all.



Julie was with us, a long time ago. Probably thirty years or. It was in our early development stage. She took over the office, a task that needed no introduction to her. She immediately settled into the task.

I can't remember how long Julie was with us. I seem to remember she had previously had been with an accountancy office and returned to that pursuit.

Julie was member of the well known and respected Symonds family. To her children, Rhiannon and Chris and her siblings and their families, we offer our profound condolences and hold them in our thoughts at this time.

#### An anecdote from Julie's time with us.....

The Board took a momentous decision.....

We had agonised for a few meetings as to whether we could have a telephone connected or not and equally, and if so would we be able to pay for the calls. Finally, agreeing to take the plunge, Julie went about arranging the account at the local P.O. She learned that they would not agree to put the bill in the Museum's name so Julie immediately put her hand up. We left it that way styled for quite a period with the account kept arriving that way accordingly. It gave a laugh for a time afterwards as we were never cut off for non-payment.

Thinking about this caused the thoughts to wander to stalwart, life member and gracious lady, Marnie Hall who moved on to Melbourne in the early nineties. Marnie was wont to say "When the first computer came in here....I'm off.

I wonder what she would think of today's array of the beasts.

### The Calendar

The calendar is ready to break from its semi break, particularly as the cruise season approaches.

Prior to that, the September spring school holiday will raise the curtain to usher in, the season.

Guides are a most desirable group who have the ability to enhance people's visits and reflect on the professionalism of EKEM and its apparent pleasure in hosting the visitor

### A Guide To Guiding

Guiding is a very rewarding. It's a chance to meet very many interesting people, to help them navigate the Museum and to hear a longer version of the stories we present. It also builds on the visitor's mind as to the impression they garner of our community and the way we live

I have found that some people, particularly if they had never been required to speak with a customer or the like before.

Please don't hesitate if you would like to try but are a bit wary. Thinking your knowledge is a bit light on... it will soon grow. .... Come and spend an hour or so with a current guide.... Come to the Friends meeting 9Am, third Wednesday of the month, in our theatre or call the office for more information. Your support will be very much appreciated.

With over 40 cruise vessels listed for the season. It will be a test as no other. The possible passenger/crew numbers staring 100,000 in the face, a busy season is assured.

Eden's volunteer resource will certainly be tested

*The bush was grey.. a week today*

*Olive green and brown and grey*

*But now the spring has come my way*

*With blossoms for the wattle.*

(We sang it at school, . Did

Apologies, once again. for this being later than I would like. A tough month with the addition of a never welcome, though regular visitor, overstaying on this occasion

*Keep Smiling Jack*

