

Introduction.

In June 1840 the Port Officer of Hobart Captain W. Moriarty wrote to the Governor of Van Diemen's Land, Sir John Franklin suggesting that lighthouses should be erected in Bass Strait. On February 3rd. 1841 Sir John Franklin wrote to Sir George Gipps, Governor of New South Wales seeking his co-operation.

Government House, Van Diemen's Land.
3rd. February 1841

My Dear Sir George.

.....This matter has occupied much of my attention since my arrival in the Colony, and recent occurrences in Bass Strait have given increased importance to the subject, within the four years of my residence here, two large barques have been entirely wrecked there, a third stranded a brig lost with all her crew, besides two or three colonial schooners, whose passengers and crew shared the same fate, not to mention the recent loss of the *Clonmell* steamer, the prevalence of strong winds, the uncertainty of either the set or force of the currents, the number of small rocks, islets and shoals, which though they appear on the chart, have but been imperfectly surveyed, combine to render Bass Strait under any circumstances an anxious passage for seamen to enter.

The Legislative Council, Votes and Proceedings between 1841 – 42 had much correspondence on the viability of erecting lighthouses in Bass Strait including Deal Island. In 1846 construction of the lightstation began on Deal Island with the lighthouse completed in February 1848. The first keeper William Baudinet, his wife and seven children arriving on the island in March 1848.

From 1816 to 1961 about 18 recorded shipwrecks have occurred in the vicinity of Deal Island, with the *Bulli* (1877) and the *Karitane* (1921) the most well known of these shipwrecks. In 1943 an RAAF plane crashed near the lighthouse and the four crew were killed. Over the years several fires have ravaged the island but in recent times most of the island has recovered from these fires.

Scientific studies of the island group has been undertaken, with the 1890's expedition of the Victorian Field Naturalist Club recording and collecting fauna and flora specimens. Recently, marine studies of the offshore waters of the Group have helped in the establishment of a Marine Protected Area in the Kent Group.

Quotes, letters, reports from original sources, are, with spellings and sentence construction as per the original documentation.

The 'Historical Overview' is a summary of many reports, letters, extracts from books and files collected over many years from an interest in the Kent Group from being a volunteer caretaker on Deal Island.

David Reynolds

DEAL ISLAND – KENT GROUP NATIONAL PARK.

Nature is working very slowly with those islands, or has altogether ceased work upon them, since a more wild desolated place is not easily to be met with. Even the birds seemed not to frequent them in their usual numbers.

Deal Island is part of a cluster of five islands in the Kent Group, named by Mathew Flinders in 1798, after the commander of the *Supply*, Captain William Kent. The islands are named from towns in the County of Kent in England – Deal Island, Erith Island and Dover Island. The two remaining islands are North East and South West islands.

Geology and Early Aboriginal People.

About 35 million years ago Tasmania was separated from the then mainland Australia. Over several Ice Ages, with the sea level rising and then retreating it has created the land connection between Tasmania and the mainland. In geological terms, the present Bass Strait is of recent origin.

With the onset of the coldest phase of the last Ice Age the polar ice sheets increased greatly in size, and water was withdrawn from global atmospheric circulation, resulting in a drop of the sea level. For Bass Strait, the crucial depth lies between sixty-five metres and fifty-five metres, since this would mean the difference a strait sixty kilometres wide and a plain sixty kilometres wide. This 'Bassian Sill' is situated between Wilson's Promontory and the northern coast of Flinders Island, with only Rodondo and the islands of the Kent, Curtis, and Hogan groups always remaining exposed. The sea dropped to this level about 24 000 years ago, thus exposing the floor of the previous strait as a potential road to Tasmania. At 18 000 years ago the sea level was probably 150m below its present one, exposing the entire width of the continental shelf from west of King Island to the steep underwater canyon east of the Furneaux chain. This Bassian Plain was exposed to a cold, dry and windy climate. In the very sump of the plain, some fifty kilometres north of Burnie, there may have been a great swamp or lake into which drained most of the northern Tasmanian and southern Victorian rivers.

It has been assumed that people first got to Tasmania across this glacially exposed plain, with basal dates from about 21 – 23 000 years ago, not significantly different from the exposure of the land bridge. The land bridge to the Australian mainland was finally severed at about 12,500 years ago, and this may have totally dislocated the economic system of the hunting societies operating across it. On Erith Island it appears that some people lived here briefly at a time when the islands of the Kent Group had been cut off from Wilson's Promontory to the north and Flinders Island to the south. At this period, in attempting to reconstruct the exact geographic of islands, the situation is complicated by the probable load of sand which the sea was carrying up with it as it rose across the Bassian Plain. In the initial phase of sea level rise, this load may have been too great for the sea to remove for a while, and so it is my guess that sand spits or other feature may have existed, temporarily linking landmasses which now are separated by water.

Whatever the complexities, it appears that both King Island and Erith Island lost their human inhabitants soon after the islands were formed.¹

Deal Island is the largest in the Group, being approximately 1,500 hectares and measuring about 7km. long and 4 kms. wide. Deal Island has three sheltered sandy coves, East Cove, Garden Cove and Winter Cove. East Cove has a timber and concrete jetty with access by road to the lighthouse keepers settlement 75 metres above sea level. Facing Murray Pass and Erith and Dover Island, East Cove is a haven for yachts in calm weather.

¹ Rhys-Jones. Bass Strait in Prehistory

The island has high granite cliffs on most sides, except for the three coves. The lighthouse on the southern side of the island is the highest in the southern hemisphere, rising 305 metres above sea level. The lighthouse itself is only 22 metres high.

The interior of the island has changed over the years, since the first lighthouse keepers arrived in 1848, with 20 % of the land cultivated for the use of cattle and sheep for the lighthouse staff. This was discontinued when the light was decommissioned in 1992 and the lighthouse keepers left the island.

Exploration.

Lieutenant Mathew Flinders in 1798 during the voyage on the schooner *Francis* from Sydney to Preservation Island in the Furneaux Group, to rescue survivors from the wreck of the *Sydney Cove* is the first recorded sighting of the Kent Group.

Thursday 8. At daylight there was a good deal of sea running, but the weather was fine, with a light breeze from the east-by-north. Land appeared soon after on the weather and lee bows. That to windward was high and steep, consisting of irregular lumps of land, which at first made as one island; but in running past, two smaller ones divided from the north-west end, and presently an opening appeared in the main body of three-quarters of a mile wide, seemingly deep and clear; indeed the water everywhere was blue; we tried the soundings with twenty fathoms but got no ground. The land to leeward consisted of two small islands and two rocks; the largest of the rocks, from its peculiar form, we called Judgement Rock.²

In November 1801 Lieutenant John Murray surveyed the pass between Deal and Erith Islands and which now bears his name. Murray Pass can be difficult to navigate because of the tidal flows and sudden gusts of winds, which come down the gullies from the surrounding islands creating 'williwaws' on the sometimes rough waters. The two coves, East Cove on Deal Island and West Cove on Erith Island offer secure anchorages within the pass. Murray named East Cove, Harrington Cove.³

During and after the salvage operations of the *Sydney Cove* the survivors and the rescuers noted the abundance of seals around the Bass Strait islands. Following these reports the slaughter of seals began and for many years the seal products was the main export for the growing colony of New South Wales. It was in this time frame that a sealers camp was commenced at Garden Cove on Deal Island, but no trace remains of this site today.

George Augustus Robinson.

In 1829, George Augustus Robinson started on a mission trip, against a background of violence to the local aborigines, involving the circumnavigation of Van Diemen's Land on foot, meeting and gathering together aborigines. He had a strong belief that with kind treatment the aborigines could be converted to Christianity. Robinson planned with the concurrence of Governor Arthur to take all the aborigines he could muster to a new settlement on one of the Bass Strait islands. In 1831 Robinson visited Deal Island in an attempt to remove native women from the sealers in Garden Cove. He recorded his observations of the island in his journal

7 April.. Pleasant weather, light breeze, under sail for Kents Group, saw today the Pyramid, the Stacks and the Slipper. On the Slipper or the Curtis Group one of the sealers on board has lived three years alone. This mans name was William Day and he says he never had a native woman. There is a large bird rookery on this island and seal are taken off the rocks. This man said that the flies were so numerous that they would blow potatoes when hot and even salt if there was the least grease upon it. Becalmed near

² Flinders, Mathew. Narrative of an Expedition to the Furneaux Islands.

³ Lee, Ida. The Logbooks of the 'Lady Nelson'.

the Pyramid. At 6pm. Moderate breeze and about thirty miles from the Group. Proceeded on our course during the night under easy canvas, the wind heading us.

8 April.. Pleasant weather and at daylight, found we had drifted away to the westward of Judgement Rocks. Made sail for the Group and made the Group at meridian. Entered the passage, but after about for some time found we were unable to get to the anchorage, which is on the northern Group, there being no wind and the tide against us and running at three and four knots. The passage in the narrowest part is about a mile wide and the entrance is very grand, immense high rocky cliffs, several hundred feet in altitude and perpendicular, some overhanging with hollow caverns. Myself, the captain and three soldiers landed and the vessel lay to until the shift in the tide. The whole of this Group consists of rocky hills of coarse granite. The soil is sandy and the wood small, consisting principally of tea tree and sheoak. There are wallaby, kangaroo and opossum on the island. Proceeded across the island for two miles and came to the opposite coast where is a sandy beach where the sealers have fixed their abode. The path across the hill is romantic, winding through some tea tree scrub. On reaching the huts we found the sealer had gone for some time by the appearance of the huts. The sealers have several rude huts or hovels, which are built of bags tied with hay brands and thatched with grass. The situation is a valley, with a stream of water runs through the settlement, but is very indifferent and of sweet and aluminous taste. They have several gardens, found some poultry, flour, potatoes and a musket in a hut. Found one whaleboat and two dingies.

The captain went off to the vessel to endeavour to bring her into the anchorage at the turn of the tide. At 8pm. the captain and one of the sealers, John Taylor, the American came to the huts with two of the crew. The captain said they had anchored the vessel. The anchorage where the cutter brought us to was on the northern Group, has a sandy bottom, well sheltered and has bold water – the water is deep or bold all round the island close by the rocks. Saw a signal phenomenon, a large bright meteor fell like a brilliant ball of fire which illuminated the hemisphere and it appeared as bright as day. The captain went on board, but myself and a servant, two soldiers and one sealer stopped on shore for the night.

9 April. Pleasant weather throughout. The captain came on shore and after some consultation went on board to bring his vessel nearer to the shore., she being in eighteen fathoms of water. This morning one of the soldiers found a note stuck in the thatch over the fireplace – ‘Gone to Western Port after the straits on the seventeenth of March in search of you as we saw smoke on the Stacks. When you return make smoke on the West Group and we will answer you. We left on the twentieth of March’ By this appeared that if a smoke was made they would return, especially as there was many things on the island belonging to them. It was therefore thought advisable to make a signal and await a few days for their return for if any of the boats had come from Gun Carriage they would in that case look out for the cutter and conceal themselves (provided the cutter left for Western Port) or else they would land on the main, and all hope of finding them lost. Anderson, one of the sealers, assured me that if I left my instructions the men would comply soon as they knew the orders. The American sealer went to the northern side of the island to look for the New Zealand woman that he had left whilst he went to port. Returned disappointed, not able to find her. Said the sealers had taken her away with them, and all his skins. Said they tried all they could to injure him. Said there was two convicts amongst them. Said that Gamble shot the woman from inside the house, he was firing at a stump and the woman jumped up from behind the stump and run into the house when she was shot and took the man she was living with by the collar and then dropped down dead. Saw the grave where she was buried.

10 April (Sunday). Pleasant weather. Smoke was made this morning on the Western Group. Purposed having prayers on board the cutter, for which purpose the Bethel flag was hoisted the whole of this day, but as men had not returned from shore, postponed the service to this evening. Myself living on shore in a tent. Shoals of salmon have been swimming for several days in the bay. At 6pm. strong wind from the westward, with loud peals of thunder and heavy flashes of lightning accompanied with rain. Unable to have prayers.

12 April.....Left a written notice requiring the sealers at Kents Group to render up the aboriginal females. It had been reported to me that two men at Kents Group were absentee convicts and this was my principal inducement to wait a short time, for although I was persuaded that the natives could be obtained and would be rendered up, yet it was obvious that they would not render up the convicts. The captain now saw the danger in staying any longer in this situation, and I wished to be away as it was of the upmost consequence I should return and disperse the friendly missions with all possible despatch. Besides, no apparent necessity required our stopping any longer in this dangerous place, had the westerly gale continued and altered to the southward, and westward, the swell which now came into the bay, and which now was pretty heavy, would have been so

increased that the vessel would have dragged its anchor, and would have gone on the rocks, to which she was pretty close – it is bad holding ground in loose sand, there is a tolerable good sandy beach, but a SW gale would have set her on the rocks.⁴

Bass Strait Lighthouses.

In June 1840 the Hobart port officer, Captain William Moriarty wrote to Sir John Franklin suggesting that lighthouses be erected in Bass Strait between the Furneaux Group and Van Diemen's Land, as well as lights on Cape Otway, Kent Group and Cape Howe.

On February 3rd. 1841 Sir John Franklin wrote to Sir George Gipps the Governor of New South Wales seeking his co-operation.

Government House, Van Diemen's Land,
3rd. February 1841.

My Dear Sir George,

.....This matter has occupied much of my attention since my arrival in the Colony, and recent occurrences in Bass Strait have given increased importance to the subject; within the four years of my residence here, two large barques have been entirely wrecked there, a third stranded a brig lost with all her crew, besides two or three colonial schooners, whose passengers and crew shared the same fate, not to mention the recent loss of the *Clonmell* steamer; the prevalence of strong winds, the uncertainty of either the set or force of the currents, the number of small rocks, islets, and shoals, which though they appear on the chart, have been but imperfectly surveyed, combine to render Bass Strait under any circumstances an anxious passage for seaman to enter; and I venture to say that the master of any merchant vessel trading from the northern hemisphere to Sydney, or in the opposite direction, looks upon this part of his voyage with the greatest apprehension.

.....I venture to submit to you my ideas on the subject. I consider the passage through Bass Strait would be rendered secure, as far as the knowledge of a vessel's exact position would make it by placing Light Houses on Cape Otway, the south-west part of Sir Roger Curtis's Island, and on Cape Howe; if the "Harbinger" Reefs had not been six or seven miles distant from the north-west part of King Island, I should have recommended the western Light being placed on that island rather than on Cape Otway, but I fear if it were so placed, ships might be running on those reefs, my first was that the central Light should be on Kents Group, but on reflection I gave preference to Sir Roger Curtis's Island.....

I forward a copy of the Light House Bill, and will only mention that our merchants and ship owners were consulted as to the increase of the Light House dues, and not a single objection was made to the proposition.

Believe me, my dear Sir George,
Yours, very faithfully.
JOHN FRANKLIN.

Letter from Captain J.W.C. Wickham R.N. to His Excellency Gov. Sir G. Gipps.

H.M.S. *Beagle*, Port Jackson.
2nd. March 1841.

My Dear Sir.

I have attentively looked over the accompanying papers respecting the proposed Light Houses in Bass Strait, but with regard to those intended for the north and south sides of Bank's Strait I cannot offer any opinion, as that part has not yet been visited by the *Beagle*, still, I am glad to find that steps have been taken for the facilitating the navigation of so dangerous a channel, as every seaman who is at all acquainted with it, must long have felt the want of lights on eligible situations, as no doubt those chosen will be.

I have the honour to remain,
My dear Sir,
Yours very faithfully
J. W. C. WICKHAM.

Report from Captain P.P. King R.N. to His Excellency Sir George Gipps

I have carefully read and considered the several papers communicated to me relating to the erecting of Light Houses in Bass Strait, and beg to offer the following remarks upon this most important subject.

There can be no doubt to the advantage that will accrue to the shipping interests, and the commercial advantages of the Colony, by the erections of these beacons; the only question to be considered is their number and their proper locality.

With respect to the lighting of Banks Strait, this has been already determined upon by the Government of Van Diemens Land, and I think that the situations of the light stations have been very judiciously selected. I most heartily congratulate His Excellency Sir John Franklin upon having matured a plan of such vast importance to both Colonies.

With respect to the proper situation for the eastern light in Bass Strait, I am decidedly of the opinion that it ought to be placed on the summit of the eastern Island of the Kents Group, for the following reasons.....

PHILLIP P. KING. CAPTAIN R.N.

Port Stephens, 9th. March 1841.

Extracts from the Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council
Thursday 11th. August 1842.

Report from the Committee on Light Houses proposed to be erected in Bass Strait.

1842.

The Committee appointed on the 22nd. June 1841, to consider and report upon the proposal to erect Light Houses in Bass Strait, and re-appointed on the 11th. August 1842 with instruction to obtain from Commander I.L. Stokes, of Her Majesty's surveying sloop "*Beagle*" such information his recent survey in Bass Strait might enable him to afford, having agreed to the following Report.

.....Captain Stokes perfectly coincides with the Committee, in the opinion formerly expressed by them, that the eastern island of Kents Group, is the best position for a light at the eastern entrance of Bass Strait; and they beg leave respectfully to recommend to your Excellency and Honourable Council, that immediate steps may be taken for commencing so desirable an undertaking as the erection of a Light House on that spot.

J. GIBBES.
Chairman.⁵

J.Lort Stokes, Survey of Bass Strait.

Commander John Lort Stokes in 1842 on the *Beagle* as part of a marine survey of Bass Strait visited the Kent Group, Stokes describes the voyage to the Kent Group:

From Babel Islet we proceeded towards Kent Group, passing in 11 or 12 fathoms, along the eastern shore of Flinders Island where we discovered a dangerous sandy spit extending five miles off, from its extreme the eastern part of the Sister bore N 64o.W six miles and a half. After rounding the latter the wind changed in a violent squall to the westward, and gave us a long beat of a day to reach the Kent Group, during which discovered a reef, just awash at high water, and bearing E.8o S. five miles and half from Wrights Rock.

This, Endeavour Reef, and a sunken rock, about a mile east of Craggy Island, constitute the chief dangers between Kent Group and Flinders. The extremes are marked to the north and south by Wright's Rock and Craggy Island between which should not pass, although there is a channel close to the south side of the former. It should also be particularly borne in mind that the tides, which sometimes run two knots, set rather across the channel S.W.

⁵ Legislative Council. Votes and Proceedings. 1841-42

by S. and N.E. by N. The north – easterly stream beginning a quarter before noon at the full and change of moon.

The *Beagle* passed a half a mile from the north-west side of Wright's Rock, in 29 fathoms in the evening, and having spent the night to - and – fro between it and Kent Group, in the morning was abreast of the opening between the islands, called Murray Pass, when we steered towards it. The weather for the season was fine, and the sun, although shone brightly from a clear wintry sky – it well nigh happened for the last time – upon the poor old *Beagle*.

The sea, still vexed and chafing from the breeze of yesterday, rolled in with solemn grandeur on the storm beaten side of the islands, each heaving swell carrying the ship nearer towards the almost fatal opening. Her motions, however, as if she was conscious of her fate that threatened her, were sluggish and slow, and she seemed unwillingly to obey the impulse of the light southerly breeze that aided her progress. Indeed there appeared to be an opposing tide until we drew into the high rocky sides of the channel, when suddenly the ship was hurried onwards with such rapidity that to prevent our being swept pass a cove on the right it was necessary to close with its outer point, towards which a merciful eddy flung the ships head so rapidly, that before the thrown – aback sails checked her way, her jib – boom was almost over the rocks. During the few awful moments that succeeded, a breathless silence prevailed, and nought was heard but the din of waters that foamed in fury around, as if impatient to engulf us in their giddy whirl. Still, it must be confessed that our hearts sickened, within that our little bark, after having braved so many storms, and done so much good service to the state, might be left to whiten a foreign shore with her timbers. Providence, however, decreed it should be otherwise, and the next moment the *Beagle's* head was slowing paying off from the shore. But her broadside becoming exposed to the swell, she was again driven in towards the point, and so close, that before the well – trimmed sails gave her way, as her stern went down with the swell, the assurance that she might strike, pervaded every shuddering frame. To myself, the sensation was just as if my feet were under the keel, and I almost expected to feel the bones crushing. Still we clung to hope, which can find a place even in the narrowest interval of danger, and our eyes and heart were lifted up in supplication to Him who had already so miraculously reprieved us. Scarcely, however had the prayer been formed and preferred, when the peril was past – in the course of an hour we were safely moored in East Cove, Kent Group.

In this wild and confined anchorage we were detained by constant easterly gales for a fortnight, during the whole of which there was only one clear day, when I got angles to all the distant points from a hill near the south – east extreme group, nine hundred and ten feet high and quite precipitous on its seaward face. We named it Lighthouse Hill, its admirably conspicuous situation suggesting the purpose it might be devoted, the materials for building, all at hand.

The principal islands of the Kent Group have been named Deal and Erith, they occupy a square of four miles, and are separated by Murray Pass, a channel half a mile wide. Conical granitic hills, in some cases clothed to their very summits with an impervious scrub, are scattered over them. On Deal the eastern isle, there are charred stumps of a few large eucalypti, but otherwise the trees are small, the largest being a few casuarina's over the head of East Cove. The valleys on the north side are rich, and in one leading from Garden Cove we found a quantity of fine carrots, planted by some sealers, their seed had been carried by the wind, until the whole valley was full of them, fresh water was also abundant on that side of Deal Island, and as limestone crops out at the head of East Cove, a small party of convicts might be kept here and advantageously employed in erecting the lighthouse and cultivating the soil. By holding out to them a small reward, many of the islands in Bass Strait might be brought under cultivation, and supply grain, potatoes etc. for the consumption of the prisoners in Van Diemen's Land. This plan of dispersing the convicts would also be beneficial in producing a change for the better in themselves, for whilst together they are certainly more likely to brood mischief.

The formation of this group is a little singular, the calcareous limestone on Deal occurring two hundred feet above the sea and between granite, whilst on Erith versicular lava was found. These islands are connected to Flinders by a sand ridge, on which the depth is 28 and 30 fathoms, but the islets and rocks between would appear, from the evidence of upheaval we have just sited, to be elevated portions of a submerged piece of land about to disclose itself.

In a valley behind East Cove I turned loose about a dozen rabbits for the benefit of any unfortunate voyagers who might be thrown hungry ashore in this locality. During the few days that we were there they appeared to thrive very well, and I have no doubt that if not disturbed the island will be soon overrun with them, there being no wallabies to offer molestation.⁶

Construction of the Lighthouse Begins.

In January 1846, the Colonial Secretaries of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land agreed for the construction of a lighthouse on Deal Island in the Kent Group to begin. This was on the understanding that Van Diemen's Land would build the lighthouse and the New South Wales government would provide the lantern and machinery, on account of the navigational benefits to both governments.⁷

The Hobart Port Officer, William Moriarty informed the New South Wales government that Charles Watson, and his group of men would be available after completing the lighthouses on Swan and Goose Islands.

Charles Watson was sentenced in April 1827 to transportation to Van Diemen's Land for fourteen years for receiving stolen goods. A native of Burnley, Lancashire, Watson was married and at his trial, was a manager of a steam engine and a draughtsman. In December of that year, John Lee Archer the Van Diemen's Land Colonial Architect applied for Watson to be paid one shilling a day. He was granted a conditional pardon in 1834 and from 1835 to 1838 was superintendent in the engineer's department. In 1836 he took charge of the work at Cape Bruny, where the third light in Van Diemen's Land was being erected.

In March 1838 a twenty – five pound gratuity was paid to Watson, who was then sent to Low Head, at the entrance to the Tamar, to fit a revolving lantern instead of the fixed light in the tower built in 1833. In September he reported the completion of the job, and asked for an extra six shillings a day. This was recommended by the port officer at Launceston, who said 'I consider he has saved the Colonial Government considerably more than the allowance he has asked for, by his zeal and exertions in procuring the materials'. Instead, Watson was given another twenty – five pound gratuity. Late in 1840, when he was engaged on public works in the upper Derwent Valley, he was found to be under the influence of alcohol and 'addicted to tippling'. He was removed to Goose Island in Banks Strait and put in charge of lighthouse construction there at a salary of 100 pounds a year and allowed marine rations but no spirits.

In March 1843 construction of the tower was completed but the lantern, ordered from England, had not arrived, so Watson and his gang were transferred to nearby Swan Island to begin building another lighthouse. Convict labour was used but by January 1844 some of the men were eligible for tickets of leave. A request for a foreman mason, and two others, a carpenter, a shoemaker, a blacksmith and eleven strong labourers was approved. On completion of both Swan and Goose Islands early in 1846, Watson went to Deal Island in the Kent's Group to supervise the construction of the next lighthouse in Bass Strait.

This time no convict labour was used, although some ex – convicts or even ticket of leave men may have been employed. Apart himself, employed at 100 pounds a year, Watson had a working overseer (sixty pounds), two carpenters (fifty pounds each), two

⁶ Lort-Stokes. Discoveries in Australia

⁷ Argus Newspaper, 1846.

masons (fifty pounds each), two quarrymen (twenty – six pounds each), one blacksmith (fourteen pounds six shillings), and five labourers (nine pounds each).

By May 1846 work had begun at Deal Island. Materials required included 5000 bricks, 12,000 shingles, eighty rafters, 2500 bushels of limestone, 200 joists of various lengths and great quantities of battens, boards, planks and other goods, all, it seems to be used in the building the cottages for the keepers. After visiting Deal Island, William Moriarty reported in November 1846.

.....the increased labour and costs were due to the elevation of the lighthouse site about 280 metres above sea level, the distance from the nearest safe anchorage and the dense scrub through which the men had to work. But, he said they were ‘all happy and contented’ although the six bullocks were not enough for the work to be done – four more were required.

On completion of the Deal Island lighthouse Watson was to become head keeper, but that would have meant a drop in salary. Moriarty said that Watson was ‘ a builder of lighthouses and is an important Mechanic to us, but Lighthouse keepers have low salaries, for the office requires only sober habits’. In February 1848 Watson was transferred from the lighthouse service to the Department of Public Works. He was in Launceston in April, surveying country to the west for the proposed local water works, on a salary of 125 pounds a year and in August he was supervising the placing of beacons being installed at the entrance of the Tamar River. Watson, however, was a sick man. He died at Georgetown, aged fifty – two, on 11 November 1849, the cause of death being given simply as inflammation.⁸

Inter Colonial Co-Operation.

The first example of inter-colonial co-operation and acceptance of joint responsibility, was the erection of the Kent’s Group light station. The Kent’s Group was later proposed by Lieutenant Governor La Trobe as a penal settlement.

The normal practise in the 1850’s was for each colony to light its own coasts and the number of ocean lights was very small. One important exception to the rule had already occurred, and significantly it was associated with Denison. In 1846 the Governments of New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land co-operated in providing a lighthouse in the Kent’s Group in Bass Strait. New South Wales in recognizing the importance of lights to ships coming to Sydney from the south, provided the lantern and the light apparatus. Van Diemen’s Land built the tower and maintained the light. In November 1852 Denison, who was then Lieutenant Governor of Van Diemen’s Land, requested the Governments of New South Wales and Victoria to pay one third each for maintaining the light. The trade and relative circumstances of the colonies had so changed since 1846, stated a letter from Van Diemen’s Land, that, ‘we now find ourselves paying the cost of maintaining the light from which we derive the smallest advantage’. The case was so strong, especially in view of the gold discoveries and the new situation produced by the separation from Victoria, that the other colonies agreed to the Van Diemen’s Land request. They undertook to pay one third each of the costs of the light from January 1854. In this way Denison gained for himself an early introduction to the principle of joint colonial responsibility for lighthouses.

Transportation of convicts from Britain to the mainland of Australia had ceased and, in the new social conditions of the colonies it was difficult to provide for the gaoling of dangerous criminals without great expense. Lieutenant Governor La Trobe suggested that New South Wales and Victoria should borrow from Van Diemen’s Land the Kent’s Group in Bass Strait and make it a place of transportation. As compensation Van Diemen’s Land was to be relieved of all responsibility for the lighthouse in the Group. New South Wales accepted La Trobe’s views in principle, but would not agree to use Kent’s Group.⁹

⁸ Reid, Gordon. From Dusk to Dawn.

⁹ Ward, John. Earl Grey and the Australian Colonies: 1846-57.

Deal Island.

In 1847, 48 cases of apparatus arrived in Hobart on the vessel *John Woodall*. This was the machinery and glass and all the other items for the light on Deal Island.

William Moriarty was sent to inspect the work in progress at Kent Group and to report how soon this equipment might be installed in the tower. Boarding the *Governor Phillip* at Georgetown on May 10 he reached the site the next morning and on the 26th. reported to Colonial Secretary Bicheno that quarters and a provision store had been completed, and a road had been cut from the beach to the summit of the hill on which a column was being erected, principally through impervious bush, the foundation laid and a basic course of masonry completed. Also 3,000 bushels of lime, sufficient to 'perfect the works' had been burnt and excellent sandstone had been discovered and coping stones cut from it. An abundance of good quality granite was at hand and water near the top of the hill and plenty of sand of excellent quality. Moriarty concluded.

Indeed the prospects seem so favourable that there appears little doubt that with anything like a fair average of good weather the tower will be ready for the light in about six months.

Though both Moriarty and Watson were pleased with the progress being made, they were constantly harassed by land based officials, who little idea of the difficulties of setting up such stations. Watson was hampered by careless provisioning, rail trolleys arrived to transport materials, but no rails, bullocks were old and worn out, or young and untrained. To further harass him any trader passing by, felt competent to make reports to the Public Works officers and offer advice and complain about and demand the dismissal of workmen who treated their interference with 'insolence.' While Moriarty was still on the island making his tour of inspection, Bicheno, the Colonial Secretary in Sydney was demanding of his counterpart in Van Diemen's Land, E.Deas-Thomson, a completion date to lay before the Legislative Council of New South Wales. In answer, Moriarty simply sent a copy of his report, but it had to be hand written, and this was a time consuming exercise since it ran for several pages. He never employed a clerk for copying his documents.

On January 3, 1848 Moriarty informed Bicheno that the light on the Kent Group would be ready for exhibition in three weeks time. However, Bicheno, thought it advisable that Moriarty should make a personal visit 'before declaring to all the world that a light is put up.' Though Moriarty had complete and full confidence in Watson's claim concerning the state of the works, when Lt. Governor Denison supported Bicheno's proposal he prepared to sail, only to find that no passage was available to him either on a convict ship or any other Government vessel. Finally he embarked on the brigantine *Alert* bound for Port Albert in Victoria. He diplomatically congratulated the Van Diemen's Land Government on the completion of such a useful enterprise and on the warm interest it had shown in lighting the sea around its territory. He stated that he had observed the light at 13 leagues (63 kilometres) distance, and by 'the unanswerable evidence of cross bearings' had set its range at 12 leagues (58 kilometres). He then gave a full description of the light. His report stated, in part, that the lighthouse was erected on a hill 900 feet (274 metres) above sea level, in a tower 46 feet (14 metres) in height. The lantern was 7 feet (2.1 metres) high with a revolving light and patent smoke consumers, working in three groups each of seven lamps with reflectors. It revolved once in five minutes, showing 50 seconds light and 50 seconds darkness and could be seen for 13 leagues (63 kilometres) and was visible all around the compass unless intercepted by a vessel's being close into any of the surrounding islands.

Copies of Moriarty's report were sent to Sydney and published in the New South Wales Gazette. At the same time Moriarty requested similar notices respecting Goose and Swan Islands should be republished because of errors by the local press.

Three days after the presentation of this report Moriarty received on February 17, 1848 a memo from Denison demanding a full report including the position of the light. At

last, it seems that Moriarty's hitherto unflinching patience had been tried too far, without the customary preamble, without begging to remain anyone's humble and obedient servant, without a date, he replied as follows:

Latitude 30o29' South Longitude 147o 21'30"East

As the Latitude and Longitude are only marked in miles, every fractional part of a mile must be a guess. It does not appear to me to be necessary to say anything about either Latitude or Longitude for I can only take them from a chart authorised by the Admiralty the data from which they publish must already be in their possession and as allusion to the seconds, we cannot arrive at precision. I think it would be preferable to leave it alone altogether. Every seaman who has a proper chart would know the light on Kent's Group on making it. However, as His Excellency wishes it, I have taken off the Latitude and Longitude of the Group as laid down in the Admiralty chart from surveys by Capt. J.L.Stokes, HM Sloop *Beagle* 1843.

WM Moriarty
Port Officer¹⁰

On the 22 February 1848 the 'Hobart Town Gazette' announced the showing of the light on Deal Island in the Kent's Group. The report was signed by W. Moriarty, Port Officer.

The Light-house on Deal Island, forming one of a cluster of islands, called 'Kent's Group' in Bass Strait, latitude 39o29' south, longitude 147o21' east, having now being erected, a light is burning, and will continue from sunset to sunrise.

The Light-house is erected on a hill, 900 feet above high water mark.

The supporting column is 46 feet in height.

The upper part of the column (like all the Light-houses within the Government of Van Diemen's Land) is coloured red, and the tower part white.

The lowest part of the column is built of granite, each block worked to a mould.

The cornice and blocking are six feet high of freestone.

The lantern is 7 feet high, having a revolving catoptric light, with 21 lamps and patent pipes, smoke consumers, working in three groups, each group containing 7 lamps with reflectors, and revolves around once in 5 minutes, showing 50 seconds of light, and 50 seconds of darkness.

The light may be seen at 13 leagues, has been set by cross bearings at a distance of 12 leagues, and is visible all around the compass, unless the light be intercepted by being close in with any of the surrounding islands.

M. Moriarty, Port Officer.¹¹

During the construction of the Deal Island light, the *Alert* successfully tendered to remove railway lines, carriages and gear, the bullocks and draymen – to bring them 'up' (that is to Hobart) and to take 'down' a Superintendent and two men for the price of 100 pounds. One of the men was to receive 1s3d a day without rations and the other two 8 pound a year each with marine rations. Subsequently Mr. McKay of the Public Works Department was notified on April 5, 1848:

Four bullocks have recently been returned from the Kent's Group Light House.
Can you find employment for them in P.W.D.

He replied:

¹⁰ Stanley, K.M. Guiding Lights.

¹¹ Baudinette, M. The Baudinet Story.

Mr. Dossiter will have the goodness to hand over the six bullocks which have been returned from Kent's Group to the Director of Public Works.

A marginal note in pencil reads, 'Full report on copy.' No trace of the report can be found and the mystery of the two missing bullocks may never be solved.¹²

The First Keeper.

Moriarty had the task of choosing the first Superintendent, and his choice was Charles Watson the builder of past lighthouses and the present lighthouse on Deal Island. The Works Department claimed that Watson's skills were too valuable to be left on an isolated island. Watson realising he would receive less monetary return as a keeper agreed, and returned to the Works Department. Moriarty then chose William Baudinet.

Baudinet had been the first Superintendent at Cape Bruny, as a Government officer he had spent many years in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel chasing and preventing the escape of convicts on passing vessels and also attending shipwrecks in the area.

William Baudinet, after spending what appears to have been a troublesome and turbulent three years at Bruny Island, was transferred back to Hobart Town in March 1841. Although the records suggest that he did not meet with the approval of George King of the Port Office and was the target of much criticism, his transfer back to the Guard Boats at the increased salary of 150 pounds per annum can only be seen as yet another promotion.

His transfer back to the Guard Boats meant seven more years of rowing the harbour by night in search of the dangerous and ever increasing problem of smuggling and the searching of ships that lay anchored in the harbour. The convicts were continually trying to stow away, in an effort to seek freedom in some far away foreign port.

The Baudinet family was living in Argyle Street, Hobart during some of this time, and three more children of their ever, increasing family were born there. The area around Argyle Street and Kelly's Steps was very close to the wharf and was the scene of much drunkenness, fighting and crime – not a fitting place for a lady to step out alone, particularly at night.

Only one record of his second term as Coxswain has been found:

Port Office
27th. December 1841

Sir

I have the honour to report for the information of His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, that the Superintendent of the Guard Boat, Mr. W.C. Baudinet (sic) seized a ferry boat belonging to Wm. Hyton, a Waterman, containing an Organ, and five cases of extra barrels, which were being conveyed from the French Whaler ? to the old Wharf on the night of the 24th instant at short half past ten o'clock. In the boat were Mr. Beaumont, who keeps the ? Public House on the Old Wharf, and the owner Hyton, who has been convicted for being engaged in a like matter about two or three years ago. The Boat, Organ and the two cases have been delivered to the Collector of Customs.

I Have etc.
Port Officer.

To Wm. Montague, Esq.
Colonial Secretary.¹³

William and Augusta Baudinet arrived on Deal Island on the 10th. March 1848 with seven of the eleven children who were still living with them. In those early days, the lighthouse station staff consisted of the Superintendent, assisted by several convicts who were

¹² Op. cit. Stanley

¹³ Op. cit. Baudinette.

assigned there by the government for a given period of time They were only released from duty when their ticket of leave was completed and the passage to Hobart was provided when the replacement arrived on the island. The assigned men lived in comparatively primitive dwellings, which were built on the cliff tops near the lighthouse. William and his family lived in more comfortable surroundings at the cottage at the other end of the island, some three miles from the lighthouse on the lower ground in much more sheltered surroundings overlooking Murray Pass and East Cove.

The Superintendent's cottage was apparently built sometime just prior to the lighthouse, perhaps as early as 1844. It was probably used by Charles Watson and other engineers employed in erecting the light for accommodation during its construction. It is built of local granite rubble and has been cement rendered. Originally with a shingle roof and painted white, it consists of four main rooms down stairs with a small set of steep ladder stairs to the upper rooms in the attic. This is divided into a number of tiny rooms, hardly large enough for a small bed let alone other furnishings.

Bishop Nixon in later years sailing on his missionary voyages from island to island, recorded in his diary upon seeing the Baudinet home for the first time, as being startled to see the comfort with which he was surrounded:

.....here on this wild, isolated rock, we found a comfortable stone house; a well appointed homestead; a garden redolent with sweets, and singularly beautiful in the varied colours of its flowers; an atmosphere of peace and content breathing around this island home.¹⁴

On Tuesday May 7, 1850 Baudinet, gave evidence before a Commission investigating a new boat for Lighthouses:

Mr. W.C.Baudinet.

I am the Superintendent of the Lighthouse at Kent's Group and have been since 6th. March 1848. I have been nineteen years in the Marine Department. I was first appointed a Coxswain of one of two Guard Boats which were then in existence. The Guard Boats were originally established for the prevention of smuggling and the escape of Convicts. We rowed guard every night from sunset to sunrise with no day duty. During the time I was Coxswain of a Guard Boat, I saved the Government about 1000 pounds by seizures in 1834, I have also prevented the escape of a great many Convicts. The Lighthouse I was in charge was in very good order when I left a week ago. Two of the Lamps which were sent to Hobart Town last September for repair have never been returned, and I do not know or cannot find out where they are. For three weeks during the later end of December, and commencement of January we were quite without provisions from the Government and I was obliged to victual the men from my own stores. We were victualled up to the 31st. December, but by wastage, the stock was greatly expended by the sixteenth, Mr. Bateman arrived with our provisions on the 16th. January. When I first took charge of the Lighthouse there were 21 lamps, 7 lamps in each group, but by orders from the Port Officer about eighteen months ago the centre light in each group was taken away. My own impression is that the strength of the light is impaired in brilliancy very materially, as far as I can judge on the spot, but from enquires from Masters of vessels, they all say they cannot see any difference in the light, some say they can see it at 40, some 45, and some 50 miles off. We are supposed to be victualled for six months, but when Mr. Bateman arrived last January, we found that all the pork, and a portion of the flour for myself and the men, had been left on Goose Island by him, and we have not since received it. Since the 31st. March they have been without any meat or flour, and I have supplied them from my private stores. The stores for the Lighthouse come very irregularly, we get things we do not require, and those most required we do not get. I have three men. There is sufficient run for 500 sheep on the island and water and plenty of wood. There is no regularity in paying the men at the Lighthouse, all the men are without clothes. I have 1300 gallons of oil on hand. There are 80 gallons of head matter. It would be very desirable to supply the

Island with a boat, we are often three months without communication, and in cases of sickness have no means of making known our wants. Vessels occasionally anchor in West Cove, about four miles from the residence. I think we might occasionally be of service to vessels if we had a boat. In the case of any accident happening to the Lighthouse, we have no means of making known our wants.

My salary is 100 pounds annum. and rations. I had a salary of 150 pounds in Hobart Town as Coxswain of a Guard Boat, and this salary was given me for long service. I do not consider the *Swan River Packet* safe to go into Bass Strait, I would not passage in her to return to Kent's Group for 1000 pounds. I am allowed four bullocks and a cart to transport the oil and the stores from the wharf to the Lighthouse, and to get food and water, about two and quarter miles. East Cove where they land the stores is about a quarter of a mile from my stores. The position is to bleak for cultivation, every thing is cut off by violent winds. The hills are so steep up to the Lighthouse, the four bullocks can only take 50 gallons of oil up to it at a time.¹⁵

The stores and supplies were brought from Hobart by the supply boat, which would anchor at the jetty in East Cove, near the Superintendent's cottage. Once the stores were unloaded, the mammoth task began. The barrels of oil had to be winched up the cliff face to level ground by means of a horse drawn whim. The whim was situated on the cliff top and was operated in similar manner to early miller's wheels used to grind flour or the stone crushing apparatus used in the goldfields. The circular motion of the horse, harnessed to a long pole turned the pulley, which wound the rope attached to the barrel of oil, hoisting it to level ground. A bullock team was then used to convey the load along the narrow road up the steep grade towards the lighthouse, a distance of about three miles. Once again, a whim was used to finally hoist the load to higher ground and the store near the base of the light.

William, in correspondence to the Government, claimed that the procedure to convey just one, fifty gallon barrel of oil took a whole week to complete. As no mention is made of the whims in early correspondence to the Marine Department, its highly possible they were installed sometime after the commencement of the station. The whims were still in service until 1948, when the lighthouse became electrified, reducing the need for oil. As the whims were in use for a period of about ninety years, it could be assumed, that they were substantially modified and up graded over that time.

The Superintendent was responsible for keeping an accurate record of all events in his log book on a daily basis and to keep a record, and closely monitor the consumption of oil and the quantity of oil, shades and cottons on hand. A monthly return was sent to the Marine Department by whatever vessel that was available at the time.

The following extracts are from letters in the years 1848 – 1861 concerning William Baudinet and his family, while on Deal Island in the Kent Group. The letters have been taken from the Superintendent's Correspondence Registers:

Kents Group Light House
June 12, 1848.

Sir.

I beg to forward the Return of Consumption of Cottons and Shades, also the requisition of Stores for 1849. The Window blinds required are for the purpose of Replacing 6 whilst being washed, so that the works may not be exposed to the sun. The red paint is for the Lanthorn which I intend painting during the long days; the sweet oil is much wanted for the works. I am now using Opossum Oil, but it does answer as it clogs in a short time.

¹⁵

Murray-Smith. Mission to the Islands.

The Schooner *Colina* Capt. Brown belonging to Mr. Mcleod of Port Albert sent a boat ashore for provisions, the Crew and Passengers have been without for ten days, she left Sydney on the 5th. April and did not arrive here until [sic] the 23rd. I supplied them with sufficient to take them to Port Albert, they report having seen the light about 40 to 45 miles for two Nights, having being becalmed during that time.

Light house Kents Group
28 Sept, 1848.

Sir.

I beg leave to inform you of the loss of the Schooner *Pedler*, Capt. C. Powell, Master, of Launceston, 19 tons, which occurred on the 2nd. instant. About 6 am the Master and Three passengers, Miss Buchanan, Taylor and a Female Passenger came to the cottage and reported the Wreck of the Vessel, she having parted her Anchors, about an hour previous and was laying broadside on the Jetty and required assistance. It blowing at the same time a heavy Gale from the N.W. I immediately proceeded down and found the Vessel half full of water, - working up with the flood tide. Every assistance that lay in my power was rendered and we succeeded [sic] in saving a great part of her Cargo, consisting of Tea, Sugar and 1/4 cask of Spirit and 2 of Wine which I had moved as soon as possible up to the Store. A great portion of the sugar was lost, most of the Cargo belonged to Mr. Buchanan and the other property consigned to his care.

Light House Kents Group
22 January 1849.

Sir.

.....I have also sent you a requisition for stores, the bedding is much wanted for the men, as those they now have now in use are very Old and Bad. The start rings for the Bullocks are most urgently required for the purpose of carting the Oil to the Light House. I have sent broken ones as a pattern. The 2 small lamps are for the Mens Huts, those left by Mr. Watson are very large and consume a great deal of Oil and Cotton.

Light House Kents Group.
31 October 1849.

Sir.

..... I have also to Report the *Flying Squirrel*, sent her boat ashore at Garden Cove on 30th. Ultimo. to inter the body of a passenger (J. Steward) who died on board that morning also on the 12 Inst. the Barque *Luna*, from London the 25th. June, Capt. Youle with Emigrants bound to Sydney sent her boat ashore to inter the body of a young lady, [Fanny Baker, aged 11], the daughter of the Religious Instructor, (Mr. Baker), who died on board in the 11th. They report having seen the Light at 45 Miles.

I am happy to inform that every thing is correct on the island.

Light House Kents Group
2 July 1849.

Dear Sir.

I respectfully beg to acknowledge the receipt of yours of the 5th. Ultimo. in which you state you wrote to me some past about my Ration Accounts. I can assure you the letter never reached me, the only letters received by me are in the margin.

[Oct. 1848, May 12 1849, May 23 1849, June 5 1849.]

As regards to my not forwarding the returns, there must be a great error somewhere, as they were forwarded per *Foster Fyans*, on the 15th. Dec. made up to the end of the

year, Mr. Lutteral, the Mate took charge of the letters, the return of Oil etc. accompanied them. I have undeniable proof of what I assert, one of which is enclosed, a copy of my letter to Mr. Moriarty, you being ill at the time, and another, a copy of the Log Book, made up on the following morning. I regret extremely that you should feel displeased with me about them, as your letter of the 28 May seems to convey, and without any fault on my part. They are now made out to the 30th. June, in the form you wished and sent enclosed with the other returns, and shall be so made out in the future.

Regarding, my private stores, I have been compelled to send my son again to Town about them, at a very great expense, [sic] you say I hope I have not experienced any want, I beg to assure you, we have, and most cruelly and unjustly so.

In respect to using Government Stores for my family, I respectfully beg to call your attention to my official letters as per the margin, and my private letter of the 28th. Sept. per *Dew Drop*, since which the schooner *Midas*, with the English Emigrants from Twofold Bay to Port Phillip, the Cutter *Mary*, from Sydney to Circular Head, out 14 days and the *River Chief*, from Hobart Town, have been supplied by me with provisions, independent [sic] of which the man Watson, was supplied by me with provisions, from the 12th. March 1848 to the 16th. May 1849, being 431 days, and the money laying all that time, in the hands of Mr. Moriarty, at the office amounting to sixteen pounds 5/9d, also on the 28th. Sept. I sent that gentleman an order per *Dew Drop*, for the sum of nine pounds 6/6d, given me by Mr. Buchanan, for provisions supplied to the crew and passengers, wrecked here on the Schooner, *Pedlar*, and as yet no returns, now 10 Months.

According to your instructions the Centre Lamp has been left out, for which I am very sorry, as it appears to me, on the spot to have lost its strength, every inquiry [sic] shall be made of the vessels anchoring in the Bays, and the report forwarded to you as soon as possible.

I have sent Martin Batch, for as procuration to my son, he is in the man Watson's place as 1/3d per Diam. Commencing on the 11th. June. The men B. White and William Pink, have requested me to write to you to send them 2 pairs of Boots each, I have been compelled to let each of them to have Shirt and Trousers, as they had not a change, (stores were for my own use, which puts me to a great deal of inconvenience).

I feel much obliged by your kind inquires after the health of the family and myself, and I am happy to say we are all quite well.

In answer to the latter part of your letter, I should imagine my affairs are all arranged by this time, as Charles went to Town for that purpose.

I have the Honour to remain
Sir
Your Obedient Servant
W. C. Baudinet.

Light House Kent Group
January 3rd. 1850.

Sir.

.....I have forwarded you 28 pieces of Iron Railroad used for the building of the Light House, which I found on the beach, it must have been buried in the sand some time as it had not been seen some until [sic] the 7th. November after a severe Gale from the S.W. with a heavy sea setting the beach which washed the sand from it.

I am sorry to inform you that one of the Carts was broken to pieces coming down from The Light House with empty Casks, owing to a piece of rope used as a start ring breaking, and the bullocks taking fright, but fortunately no other accident occurred. I have made a new body, but the Iron Work requires to be new, the same as the patterns which I forwarded with the Iron Railroad, which you can oblige me by forwarding as soon as possible.

Light House Kents Group
May 1850

Sir

Enclosed I beg to inform you a requisition for a Four Oared Whale Boat for the use of the station under my Charge at Kent Group Light House.

I need not explain to you the necessity of a Boat being attached to the station, as it

frequently occurs that means of communicating with vessels proceeding to Hobart Town are necessary, so that I can have the opportunity of informing you of the necessities required for the station which hitherto, has been impossible through not having means to do so, and which you are aware is of great consequences, it has also frequently happened that, had I a Boat, I could have been of very great assistance to Shipwrecked Mariners in aiding them to save their lives and properties.

I have the Honour to be
Sir
Your obedient servant
W. C. Baudinet.

To Lt. Walker. R. N.
Acting Port Officer.

Kents Group Light House
2 Sept. 1850.

Forwarded per *Royal William*

Sir.

.....I am sorry to inform you that this will be the last opportunity I shall have of communicating with you until [sic] you send the Boat, which was promised me when in Town as the Old Dingy which belonged to the Schooner *Pedlar*, wrecked in September 1848 is quite unsafe to cross to the West Bay where all the vessels anchor that put in for shelter, as she is quite done for. I have again to remind you that the man Wm. Pink will be due for Ticket of Leave in November.....

I am Sir your obedient Svt.
W. C. Baudinet.

To Capt. King, Port Officer.

Forwarded per *Yarra*

Kents Group Light House
17th June 1851

Sir

I beg leave to inform you of the total Wreck of the Brigantine *White Squall* of Melbourne, Captain Chattock, bound for Sydney, with a Cargo of Flour, Wine and Spirits, the whole of which is totally destroyed [sic], what Spirits that were washed up I was compelled to destroy [sic] for the protection of the lives of everyone on the Island, as the Steerage Passengers had commenced broaching it within 2 or 3 hours after the Vessel going on Shore.

I have enclosed a list of Passengers and Crew who are still on the Island, by refering {sic} to the enclosed scetch [sic] of the Chart you will find the exact position of the Wreck.

The Captain has enclosed his account of the loss of the vessel, which after your perusal he wishes it to be handed to the Editor of the *Courier*.

I trust that some means may be adopted by the Government to remove the passengers, as soon as possible, as I shall have not sufficient provisions to support them any length of time.

I cannot let the opportunity pass up without my stating to you that the lives of all most all the Passengers was saved by the exertion of the Captain, who was the last to leave the Vessel.

I again call your attention to the necessity of having a Boat attached to the station.

[Remainder missing from log]

Kents Group Light House
March 27th. 1852.

Sir

I regret having to report that the man William Blacker who joined the Station on the 11th. of Janry. Has absconded in a Boat, which put into Squally Cove for him on the afternoon of the 25th. instant, by referring to the Chart you find the Cove is to the N.E. of the Light House, and almost perpendicular and there is no place where they can Beach a boat being all rocks, during their stay they must have made fast to the Kelp.

At 10 A.M. on the 25th. Blacker was asleep on his bed, and the other man B.White was cleaning the Light House, after finishing which he came down to the house and did not return until [sic] 5 P.M. he remained in the hut about half an hour, then he went to light up, being his first watch, but he saw nothing of Blacker, and concluded he was on the Hills, where he had spent his days time, since the 10th. February, on which day he refused to do anything but keep his night watch. About 10 O'clock White seeing no light in the Hut went down and found him still absent, upon looking about he missed a Bag of Biscuit, about 58lb. A Quarter of Mutton and a weeks ration of Tea, leaving the Flour, Sugar etc. which they had drawn the day previous, also from White's Box 2 shirts, 1 pr. Of Boots and a Black Silk Handkerchief.

At day light the following morning White made the Signal that I was wanted, upon my arrival he informed me of his absence, and the loss of the things, and on looking about my son found foot marks leading from the Hut through the bush to Squally Cove, and on the rocks the place where they had made a fire and Boiled the Mutton, and made Tea, the bones of the meat Tea leaves laying all about the rocks. I suppose there were 3 or 4 men by the marks of the boots we also missed his Watch Coat, it is evident they were not in want of provisions, as they left about 5lb of Tea, a quantity of Sugar, near a Cwt. Of Flour, some Salt Beef and Rice.

After leaving Squally Cove, they must have pulled around the North part of the Island, during the night and into Murray's Passage, as they took 2 Oars from the East Bay which belonged to the Wreck of the *Granel*.

I had my suspicious that he intended to abscond most part of this month, and did not allow any boats or Vessels to leave without seeing that he was on the Station, it is quite evident it was planned before he came, as no boat would attempt to put in where they had.

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your obedient servant
W.C. Baudinet.¹⁶

Wreck of the *White Squall*.

The schooner *White Squall*, entered out of Melbourne, for Sydney on 5 June 1851, under the command of Captain Richard Chattock with a cargo of rice, tea, flour and brandy and twenty-nine passengers. Clearing Port Phillip Heads on the 7th. on the 10th. she encountered heavy seas east – north easterly gales that impeded her progress, and then drove her back across the straits. Early on the 12th. the master found the vessel was short of water, and decided to put into the Kent Group to replenish. The schooner anchored in East Cove about noon, with forty – five fathoms of cable let out, and over the next day or so the water was obtained.

An attempt to get under way again on the evening of the 14th. was thwarted by strong currents and little wind, so anchor was dropped again for the night. At 2.30 am. on the 15th. the second mate called the master back on deck – strong southerly winds had developed and the vessel was straining at her anchors. Chattock ordered more chain to be run out on the starboard anchor, but it suddenly parted and the vessel had drifted closer to the beach by the time the port anchor was dropped. Before the kedge anchor could be dropped the *White Squall* dragged onto the rocks at the extreme northern end of the cove. She struck heavily on the starboard side, and an attempt was made to force her off under full sail, but she then struck her heel heavily and lost her rudder.

As the *White Squall* was taking in water, it was decided to abandon ship. The cabin passengers were taken ashore in the longboat, while the steerage passengers crawled along the main boom, the outer end, which was lashed to a projection on the rocks. The crew followed later by the same means. By 4.30 am. the vessel was full of water, and shortly afterwards she fell over her beam ends. By 2 pm. On the 16th. the schooner's bottom had

been knocked out and all the cargo washed away and lost, and by the morning of the 17th. she had completely broken up.

The castaways all remained at the lighthouse till the master, first and second mates and two crew and a passenger were picked by the schooner *Yarra*, and landed at Hobart on 21 June. It was arranged for the *Victoria Packet* to pick up the rest on her voyage from Hobart to Melbourne, but when she arrived at the Kent Group, Mrs. Keys one of the cabin passengers was about to give birth and the family remained behind. With their family increased from six to seven children, the Keys were picked up later by the brig *William* later in July.

One of the passengers, Joseph Pattison of Melbourne, later successfully sued the owners for the return of 6 pounds passage money, on the grounds that the stopover at the Kent Group had been unnecessary¹⁷

Kents Group Lighthouse
29 September 1853.

Sir.

I shall feel obliged by you sending by the first vessel, a man to replace Thomas Finney who was sent to this station to replace B. White. He is utterly useless in consequences of his right arm being defective, he cannot trim the Lamps, clean the Reflector, or anything in the Lighthouse, the man Poole is often obliged to keep his watch, to get up 2 or 3 times during the watch (Finney's) to trim the Lamps The only thing he can do and will is to clean the 18 globes which he can do in 10 minutes, after which he walks down to the Hut and leaves Poole to do the rest. He has refused to do anything I have given him and behaves in the most insubordinate way and I wish to bring him before you. In my 22 years of employment in the department I have never had a more lazy fellow under my charge, he has done nothing for the last 3 weeks and will not. Poole has been obliged to do everything, whilst he has been lying in bed and resting before the fire, smoking. I therefore trust you will see the necessity of sending 2 men to replace him instead of one to replace him and Poole. My son has burnt a kiln of lime in hopes of getting the ceiling as soon as the weather got a little settled.

I hope you will send a Blacksmith to repair the roof of the Lighthouse as it is worse then when you were on the Station.

The man Finney is still the same and will not clean the floor of the Lighthouse and sleeps and smokes 19 hours out of 24.

Kents Group
17th. March 1860.

Sir.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of yours by the *Kingston* of the 29th. March, Respecting the state of the 3 Bullocks. What I stated in my letter of the 25 November last Was then perfectly correct, and I am at loss to know how the acting Master (Rofs) of the *Twins* could have told you such a deliberate falsehood, as to the state of the 3 Bullocks, I Mean the 2 old ones receive from *Macquarie* in August 1858 and another which was supplied By Mr. Hargraves, sometime before, you will see letter dated 10 January, that one of the 2 old Bullocks id dead and the other from shear old Age is quite incapable of to get up the Lighthouse Hill, - without a great deal of trouble, it will take me most part of a day to get a Hogshead up, he has been judged by competent persons to be 20 years old, the other one I Expect is not many weeks alive, so much for the feracity of Mr. Rofs.

Mr. Hopwood the Master and owner of the *Kingston* has seen the 2 Bullocks.

Kents Group Lighthouse
20 November 1861.

Sir

.....On the 25th. Ultimo the schooner *James Paxton* from Newcastle NSW bound for Melbourne, anchored in West Bay for shelter and repair sails, loaded with Coals, Cedar And Maize.

At daylight of the 28th. the schooner was discovered to be on the shore on the SW corner Of the West Bay. I immediately sent 3 of my sons over in the Whaleboat being to unwell to Go myself, and about 2 hours later 2 more in my small boat to render assistance, it blowing Fresh from the NE. On the evening of the 29th. they succeeded in getting her off, having being Lightened by throwing overboard some tons of Coal and Maize and landing 4 large logs of Cedar and 70 bags of Maize, her bottom did not appear to be in the least bit damaged, at low Water you could walk around her, but her rudder was carried away and my small boat nearly Destroyed, 2 oars of the Whaleboat broken. Capt. Carter and one of my sons much bruised by The rocks.

Capt. Carter states that he got under way at 1.00am when she misplayed with him and, And went stern on to the beach. After repairing the rudder (the materials which I supplied him With) and shipping their bedding provisions and water she sailed about midday, of the 4th. Instant, with a fine breeze from the ENE leaving the Cedar and Maize on the beach.....

Forwards per:

Macquarie 10 August

Kents Group

20 July 1861

Sir

I have the honour of forwarding the returns as per Margin, a copy of the Log Book, and the Metrological tables for the months of March, April, May, June and July.

On the night of the 28th. Ult. two distant fires were seen from the Lighthouse on Hogan's Group, one at each end, and kept up and the succeeding night, I am afraid some wreck has taken place as the Sealers never visit there and the weather has been such for some time previous, and no boat could cross the straits and I believe there is no Anchorage for any vessel, the lights were also seen by the Master of the steamer *Corie* on the night of the 28th. he proposed calling but owing to the heavy seas and contrary winds did not.

On the 14th. April the Cutter, *Water Witch* Mr. Smith, Master called into to take the.....

17th. signalled to the steamer at anchor in West Bay, it blowing to hard to cross the *Prince Alfred* from Melbourne, Bound to Otago, New Zealand, she left next day.

On the 10th. Ultimo the schooner *Mary Anne* from Newcastle NSW bound to Melbourne with Coals put into for shelter in the West Bay, and sailed the next day.

On the 19th. the Brig *Esperance* from Newcastle bound to Melbourne anchored in The West Bay for shelter and Sailed again on the 20th. The Master reports having seen the light 45 miles.

On the 29th. the steamer the *Corie* from Sydney bound for Melb. With Coals anchored in the West Bay, for shelter and to trim her cargo, she left again on the 30th. reported having seen the light about 35 to 40 miles.

On the 16th. instant one of the old Bullocks was found dead in the bush, he appeared to have been dead about 2 months.

By this opportunity I have sent up the Screw Box of the Blacksmith's Vice, to be repaired. I hope you will be so good to give instructions to have it done in time for the next vessel in November, it being much wanted, it has been in constant use since August 1846.

As regards the Smoke Pipes, I think if you will send me down some thin wire, say as that used for Bottling Beer, I could make them last for several years. The cost to have new ones would be very great, as they are fixtures and a mechanic must be sent to fix them. I will try one and let you know the result in November.

The Thermometer has been given in charge to the Master of the *Macquarie* if it can be put in order I should prefer it to those sent, if it makes no difference to you.

I find that all the paint has been used and will thank you to send some by the next vessel as I want to paint the inside of the Lantern in December.

CM Maxcell Esq.
Master Warden

I have the honour
To be Sir
Your Obt. Servant.
W. C. Baudinet

N. B. The Bell has at this moment come ashore and I find it has been much bruised and the spindle bent, The Capt. tells me it was done previous to being put on board.

No writing paper was sent.

Kents Group

Hobart Town
27th. July 1861.

Received the undermentioned Stores for the use of the Lighthouse
Station as per requisitioned.

No.	Stores	No.	Stores.
	1 Oval Pot		2 yds. House Cloth.
	2 Cold Chisels		12 yds. Glass Cloths.
	4 files & 1 Sponge	8	1 doz. Pens, 1 bottle Ink.
	1 Bricklayers Trowel		1 Telescope repaired
	6 Lt. Batten Nails		24 Oil Returns.
1	2 Lt. Copper Wire.	9	1 Smoke Ball.
	3 Lt. Brake Wire	10 & 11	2 Sheets Lead.
	1 Lamp, repaired.	12	13 Pieces Lead.
	6 smoke brushes	13	6 Pieces Lead.
	2 Lt. Litharge		1 Min. Thermometer.
	1 Lt. Ball Cotton.		1 Max. “
	3 Lt. Sheet Copper.		
2	2 Spades		500 Bricks.
3	28 Lts Red Paint		Oil
4	28 Lts. Red Lead Paint.	9	1 Cask sperm 52 Galls.
5	1 Gall. Turpentine.	10	1 “ “ 53 “
6	2 Galls. Stockholm----	12	1 “ “ 53 “
	16 Lts. Nails for Lead.	14	1 “ “ 52 “
	7 Lts. Soda, 32 Lts. Soap.	15	1 “ “ 53 “
	4 Bolts, 2 Short Rings.	42	1 “ “ 34 “
		50	1 “ “ 35 “
			332 Gallons.
			1 Dart.

The Superintendent, Kents Group Light House received the above in good order.

WC Baudinet.

On the 7th. January 1862 Charles Baudinet the son of William and Augusta Baudinet returned from Sydney and the following extracts are from his journal whilst on the island. William and Augusta Baudinet had 12 children, some of the children's names are mentioned in the journal extracts.

Jan. 7 – Landed from the brig *City of Sydney* at about 9 am. Was met by George and Fred. Got home at 11 am. and found all well but Father, spent the rest of the day putting things away and talking etc.

14 – Lit the oven and made bed before b-fast, made shoes for Mother and prepared the soles for her and Lucy. About 4.30 pm laid down and at 30 to 6 went to bathe, at work in garden till 8 pm. This day the Thermometer was up to 102o.

23 – All this day collecting the sheep, preparing to burn the island.

24 – Started at ¼ to 8 looking for sheep and setting fire, home at 10 to 1, fixed Plain, let out sheep, laid down at ¼ past 3 and away again at 4, home again at ½ past 6 tired and not very well.

28 – Setting fire till 11 am. Glossing Father's boots till 1 pm. Then dined and after went with Ted and Father to clean out boat shed, had a bathe and home at ½ past 6 worked on Father's boots till dark.

Feb. 15 – Cut up and salted Pig (75 lbs.) finished Lucys slippers and dug some potatoes,

crushed and shelled Peas and collected dry onions, stored and dried, left at ¼ to 7, no worse today.

March 25 – Cooked fish for b-fast, made my bed and pre-pegged Fred's boots, made a handle for saucepan lid and worked at the Barrow till 1 pm. After dinner went to Salt Water Creek, home at ¼ past 4 making legs for Barrow till 6. After Tea did a little in Garden and swept the hut, then left of at ½ p 7.

April 3 – Digging and putting in Potatoes (6 rows of White) till dinner, took up 3 of the boards Of hut floor looking for rats put them down again and cleaned Onion and Lettuce seeds. After Tea commenced planeing wood for box. Left of at ¼ to 8 Better.

8 – About 8 am the *Kingston* hove into sight. Cut and salted the Pig, and doing various little things about the house till 11 am. Then went on board, Father returned looking very unwell. Returned on shore about 3 and helped get things up from beach and unpack.

9 – Went to the Lighthouse with Father and remained there all day.

15 – After b-fast started for the Lighthouse to see why the man did not come down, met him, I returned, assisted him with the Smoke Pipes and about 11.30 am took him on board the Schooner, got home a little after 1 and nothing to do the rest of the day. No Better.

24 – Got home with the Bullocks at 8, went for a load of dung, home at 5 to 12 went to Beach to meet Boys, home at 20 to 1, wheeled in the dung and otherwise at work in Garden till 5. Swept up the hut and prepared for Shoemaking, left of at 20 to 8.

May 9 – Made further shoes and put 3 doz. Birds to smoke. Finished my gun racks and worked on Isabella's boots, went to Salt Water Creek to put away machinery, at the boots till ¼ to 8. No better.

12 – At work in the Garden till ½ past 12, (put in a few Kidney potatoes) then went to the Cove with Bullocks for Kitty who was dying, Shot and brought her home, free dinner, skinned her with George's assistance, wheeled the offal into the Garden, salted the skin, wheeled in a load of Kelp, finished at ½ past 5. Glossing boots till ½ past 8.

June 5 – Cutting stakes and rails till 4 pm. (Garden Cove). Sharpened Rip Saw and made adze handle by ½ past 8.

23 – Swept up yard, for the sake of manure, wheeled 8 barrow loads into garden. Transplanting cabbages till ½ past 4, put in peas, New Zealand beans and tomato's. Shoemaking till ½ past 8. (Gypsy shoes).

July 17 – Teddy and I went to try and get some Barracouta, got 1 and then went for rabbits and got 10 and home at 5. A fine Tea, mended Frank's and Teds guns. Powder and flasks left at ½ past 7, washed and did a little to my trousers.

Sept 19 – Finished Fred's and Fathers Boots by ½ past 2, did a little tinkering, took wool of sheep skin, sharpened hand saw (Lighthouse). Went to Beach and helped to skin a sheep, that had come ashore, and finished the Knife Handle by 8, washed and put Pocket into trouser by ¼ to 10.

20 – Directly after breakfast went to Beach, skinned and helped to carry home another sheep, then went in search of more and found five, skinned them and got home at 3 pm. Dined, rested and did various things till 6, swept hut and cleaned my boots.

Oct 9 – Went egging and collected 20 dozens and home at ½ past 5 (mended lamp before b-fast)

Nov 22 – Got Cabbage leaves and put onto boil for Pigs, then went out to the Funnel with the boys, Father and Bell, home at 2 (14 doz, Eggs) after dinner cleaned out Pig sty, broke bush, swept hut and watered plants.

28 – Out at 5, left the Beach at ¼ to 7 and arrived at N. E. Island at 8, collected 150 dozen Eggs and home at about ½ past 3 had a rest then did various things till 10 to 8, then let off.

29 – Lined and packed away the Eggs that were here and about 11 am. Went fishing with Frank home at ¼ to 5, put fish onto boil, broke bush, swept the hut, watered the seeds, and finished off

Rev. Canon Brownrigg.

In 1872 the Rev. Canon Brownrigg, started on the first of thirteen voyages to the islands in Bass and Banks Straits. The first voyage starting from the Tamar River was on the nine ton cutter called the *Freak*. He was accompanied by two other men.

.....Sheltered, as East Cove is undoubtedly is from tempestuous winds, landing is at times not altogether free from difficulty and danger. Even while it may appear to be relatively calm in the Cove, a surf occasionally runs high up upon the beach, almost to the very foot of the hill, rendering it necessary that the right moment for landing oneself, or for passing things ashore should be watched, and immediately taken. To lessen, however, as much as possible the risk of damage to goods being landed, a kind of platform has been placed a little distance above the highest surf-mark and upon this, packages are deposited until they can be removed by the bullock dray.

On reaching the Superintendent's house, it was evident to us that our arrival was quite a surprise. Though we had been within a few miles of land for some hours during the preceding afternoon and evening, we had not been observed, and no wonder, for from the towering cliffs of Deal, our vessel could have appeared as a little speck upon the waters, and so might easily have escaped observation. Nothing, however, could exceed the heartiness of the welcome we received, and I availed myself of the request which was kindly urged, that during our stay at the island my quarters should be on shore.

Being desirous of making the most of time, I proposed to visit, late in the afternoon, the families residing at the Lighthouse, but Captain Morgan (the Superintendent) thoughtfully suggested that the visit should be deferred to the next morning, lest the fatigue of the previous day and night added to the toil the ascent to the Lighthouse would involve, should tax to greatly my powers of endurance.

On our arrival at the Lighthouse we found everyone in readiness to receive us, and within a short time assembled in one of the cottages for bible reading and prayers. Before descending the hill, we visited the Lighthouse, and there was one object, which in particular, arrested my attention. It was a Bible, placed in the lantern-room for the benefit of the light-keepers. From enquiry I learnt that the book was always kept there, and often read. I could not help expressing the hope, that while the watchers were tending the light for the guidance of their fellow creatures over the dark and perilous waters beneath, they might, themselves, in the reading of the Bible be guided by that divine light in safety over the waves of this troublesome world, to the true haven above.

On visiting Erith Island we visited the grave of a young seaman, aged twenty one years who accidentally met his death by gun shot. The grave has been securely railed in, and a headboard bears an inscription, some few words we were unable to decipher

A.J. CHRISTIAN JACOBSEN,
He I born the 2 January 1842 and died May 10 1865, on board the
Brig *Diederick Pentzin*, from
OS.....K.....

The name of the port is not legible, but Ostashkov, in Russia is possibly the place which is meant. At one side of, and affixed to the headboard, there is a small box with a sliding lid. It contains a parchment on which a thoughtful care has inscribed a record of the sad event, and a warning sounded thereon, of which the following is a transcript.

"A.J. Christain Jacobsen, met his death by the accidental discharge of a gun. He came on shore with his captain to shoot rabbits, and went poking at a penguin in the bush with his gun, holding the gun by the barrel, when it went off and shot him through the breast. He died at midnight.

"May he rest in peace"

"If this meets the eye of anyone going shooting, it is hoped it will make them additionally careful"

We replaced this document with a hope, that the warning it uttered, might be duly regarded. The poor fellow was buried May 11th. 1865.

From Sunday October 1st. 1854, when Bishop Nixon officiated, until Sunday February 18th. 1872, when I had the pleasure of conducting service myself, the public worship of our church had never been conducted at Kent's Group by any clergyman. It will be scarcely be denied, that without some steadfastness of christian character and purpose, this isolation from the privileges of public worship is likely to beget a general disregard of the Sabbath, and of those duties which relate more particularly to the soul. But in saying this, it must not be hence inferred, that Sunday's at Kent's Group have been allowed to pass without proper observance.

Our service in the evening, consisted simply of family prayer, and thankful we all were for the privileges we had enjoyed that day. For my own part, I was specially glad to have been able to spend the Sabbath day with such kind and hospitable friends, in the quiet of their sea-girt home.

The state of the weather, which lasted throughout Monday the 19th. effectually prevented our leaving the Group, at the time we had intended. It blew hard from the eastward, and the sea was thickly covered with "white horses." We were however, to be congratulated upon having a secure shelter for our little vessel in East Cove.¹⁹

Report on Kent's Group Lightstation.

In 1881 the Master Warden of the Hobart Marine Board made a report on the Kent's Group Lightstation:

Leaving Sydney by the *Esk* steamer on Tuesday, the 1st. November 1881, I arrived at the Group at 9 O'clock on the morning of the 3rd. The strait between Deal and Erith affords a capital anchorage, protected from almost all winds, and the landing place on the former is in a sheltered little bay, accessible in all weather.

The Superintendent having brought his boat off, I landed about 10 O'clock, and started off at once for the Lighthouse. About a quarter of a mile from the boathouse we came to the Superintendent's house, which appears to be a commodious dwelling, prettily situated, and well sheltered on the western side by a grove of the finest she-oaks I have seen. The premises appear to be in good condition, with the exception of some portions of the roof, which will need early repairs. A further walk of about a mile and half along a fair road, the last part of which is very steep, brought us to the Lighthouse, at an elevation of 950 feet. On inspection I found the tower in a very good state of preservation and exceedingly clean, the walls inside and out having evidently not long been whitewashed. The lantern was in good repair, the glasswork uninjured, and the roof and frame work clean. The lamps and reflectors both did credit to the Superintendent and his assistants, the former being clean and well burnished, and the reflectors as bright and polished as they could be. They had no scratches, having evidently been properly treated, and under the same careful management will last for many years. The revolving machinery when put in motion, appeared to work easily and kept good time. The assistant's quarters which are conveniently placed close to the Lighthouse were, in all respects in good repair. The oil store was also in fair condition and clean and tidy. I was gratified, in fact to find that this one of the most important and powerful lighthouses under the charge of the Board was in a thoroughly and satisfactory and efficient state. In some particulars, however there is still room for improvement. The long distance between the Superintendent's house and the tower is a grave defect, which might be productive of serious evil. Should any emergency arise requiring the presence of the Superintendent, more than an hour must elapse before he could be communicated with and reach the Lighthouse and moreover, the length and steepness of the road is certain to interfere with the frequent visiting of the lantern by the Superintendent at irregular hours of the night, required by regulations and so needful to ensure vigilance and care on the part of the men. To remedy this evil thoroughly, the Superintendent's house would have to be moved, or rather a new one built, at the top of the hill near the light. But this would be very expensive work, and I would recommend the establishment of a telephonic communication between the Lighthouse and the

Superintendent's dwelling, and also the purchase of a active pony for his use in performing his visits to the Lighthouse, thus instant connection with the men on duty, and more rapid means of reaching the Lighthouse, would both be supplied.

The land, of Deal Island is generally of good quality, and in some places the soil appears to be even rich. The Superintendent has an enclosed paddock near his house, which seemed to be well grassed, and the cattle I saw were in good condition. There is plenty of water-small streams, abounding, as the Superintendent told me, with eels running in both directions. I was surprised notwithstanding the advantages, thus for culture, the Superintendent's garden was the only piece of ground cultivated. If the men could be induced to clear and fence in plots of ground for their own use they would not only be able to grow an ample supply of vegetables for their families, but a source of interest and amusement would be opened to them that would render their lives happier, and would dispose them to remain longer at their posts. I would therefore recommend that encouragement should be given them by a regulated payment for every quarter of acre they clear and enclose and that the needful supply of tools, be sent down for their use. Two of the bullocks on the island are very old and worn out, and should be replaced by fresh ones by the next store vessel.

The boat, which the Superintendent has, although a good one of its class, is heavy and requires four hands to pull her. It would be an advantage to have a small one, to be worked with two oars, for the purpose of boarding passing vessels, and steamers, and I would recommend that one be supplied.

Through the kindness of a gentleman in Sydney, I obtained and took down with me a large packet of illustrated papers and old magazines, which were received with gladness by the Superintendent and his assistants. I would to the Board that it would be well to endeavour to obtain supplies of this description, of reading for regular distribution at the different Lighthouses in the Straits.²⁰

On July 18th. 1865, Charles Baudinet entered in the daily log that the barque *Page* from Port Albert to Hobart, put a boat ashore for his father, William, who presumably ill, sailed for Hobart Town. William never regained his health to return to the island and died at his temporary residence four weeks later on the 14th, August 1865.

William died of kidney failure and was buried with his daughter Margaret, at Trinity Hill Cemetery, Hobart, situated in the grounds of the nearby St. Andrew's Church of England.

Keepers.

Charles Baudinet was appointed Superintendent in 1866 and held the position till 1868 when Thomas Morgan replaced him. But before William left he was involved in two more tragedies. About noon on September 1, 1863, a distress signal appeared on the schooner *Margaret Chappell* from Table Cape. On visiting the vessel, Baudinet learned that one William Mc. Skimming had drowned when he had cut the painter, which made the ship's boat fast astern and attempted to jump into the boat. He missed his aim and sank and the boat drifted away. Baudinet recovered the boat and helped repair it. On May 10 1865, the brig *Diedrich Pertzin* was noticed in the bay . About 3.00pm the Superintendent visited the ship and was told by the master, Capt. Dahm, that one of his men had accidentally shot himself while rabbiting on Erith and subsequently died. Assistance was given with the burial on Erith Island.

Ships in distress continued to call on the light station in un-diminishing numbers most of them requiring food and other assistance. One such was the schooner *Boscarne* from New Zealand, which went on shore attempting to leave West Cove on January 25 1866 and broke up. The ship was abandoned and the master, his wife and child were taken across to the island. Two days later the crew were brought across and Charles Baudinet

²⁰

began issuing meat to them. On the 30th. he took the master across to dismantle the wreck. Over the next couple of weeks sugar and flour were added to the supplies issued to the disaster victims and it was not until February 21 that the master of the barque *Anglo-Saxon* en-route from San Francisco to Sydney and Melbourne, agreed to take the survivors of the shipwreck to Melbourne.

Thomas Morgan retired from Deal Island in 1877, to take up the position as Inspector of Lighthouses. His successor was Robert Jackson who had previously been an assistant at Goose Island, where he had distinguished himself by attempting to preserve the body of Henry Napier in brine, and also climbing the dome in hurricane force winds to place a protective wire cage over it to prevent damage to the glass. Jackson's appointment came about when, when on a voyage of inspection the recently appointed Port Officer, Admiral Barnard, recognised him as a powder monkey on a vessel of the Royal Navy under his command, and marked him for rapid promotion. Almost immediately Jackson was appointed to the Superintendent's position at Deal Island on the Kent Group. He was a most meticulous officer and expected such high standards from his assistants that on one occasion the whole staff requested immediate transfer. This seems to have been partly, brought about Jackson's habit of imposing periods of suspension from duty (and automatically loss of pay) for such offences as unseemly language. However, his concept of justice was such that he did not allow the rest of the staff to suffer but stood the suspended man's watch himself.

In 1890 Jackson went on to open the new light at Table Cape and R.C. Brown took charge of the Kent's Group light. He is said to have the station like a private and prosperous farm and even had his own sailing boat moored in a little cove.²¹

Lightkeepers had to be careful not to exaggerate when they complained about being neglected. When the French warship the *Le Rhin* was passing Deal Island in July 1880 it was hailed by a boat from the lighthouse. The Superintendent, Robert Jackson, went on board and said that he and his three assistants had been waiting on rations for a fortnight and were at the point of starvation. The captain gave him wine, brandy, biscuits, flour, fresh vegetables, preserves, coffee and sugar and the ships cook made some 'nice cakes' for Jackson's wife and children. The captain then wrote to a friend in Sydney, who sent the letter to the 'Sydney Daily Telegraph'. Next month questions were asked in the Tasmanian Parliament, but the Marine Board accepted no responsibility, saying the keepers purchased rations through their agents in Hobart, who shipped them in the store vessel, which the Board sent to the Tasmanian lighthouses three times a year. The supply ship, however, had sprung a leak and it had taken time to find another. Bad weather delayed the relief vessel and it arrived at Deal Island one day after the *Le Rhin*. The Board considered those on the island – eight adults and six children – had adequate fresh meat and vegetables and that Jackson had accosted *Le Rhin* in order 'to expose the management of the Lighthouses of the Straits to unmerited censure'. It was determined to 'take measures effectually to prevent a recurrence of any such circumstances'.²²

Thomas Brown a Lightkeeper on Deal Island, at the age of sixteen (1896) composed a poem on the trials and tribulations of a 'keeper of the lights. Thomas Brown later drowned off the Inner Sister Island, adjacent to Flinders Island in 1906.

Lightkeepers Lament.

*Through the weary hours of darkness
In the lighthouse lone and bleak
With the tempest round me raging
My dreary watch do keep
Listen to the thunder rolling
Watch the lightning's vivid play*

²¹ Op. cit. Stanley

²² Op. cit. Reid

*And in my hours of mediation
 I slowly pass the hours away
 You who live within the city
 Think to you, fate's been unkind
 When your cares and troubles
 Dwell upon your mind
 But you have your joys and pleasures
 Midst this busy vale of strife
 But where are the joys and pleasures
 Of a lighthouse keepers life?
 Nothing but the deep blue ocean
 Greets his eye from year to year
 What a dismal dreary outlook
 His lonely life to cheer
 There naught to break the deep monotony
 That hangs around from morn 'til eve
 Naught to raise his drooping spirits
 Naught his senses to relieve
 No sights of beauty to greet his vision
 No pleasing sounds his ears
 No merry making for his short days
 His soul is hard to cheer
 But midst this dismal desolation
 Of this wretched spot of land
 He must do his duty
 With a heavy, willing hand.²³*

Report of Expedition to Kent Group.

By D. Le Souef.

In November 1890, the Field Naturalist's Club of Victoria visited Deal and Erith Island on the steamship *Despatch*.

The expedition, which consisted of Messrs. D. Le Souef, A.J. Campbell, T.C. Campbell, C. Lane, Jos. Gabriel, G.A. Keartland, and F.W. Ford, left Melbourne on Saturday, 15th. November, starting from the Australian Wharf at 1 O'clock. On arriving near the Kent Group we were struck by the boldness of the granite cliffs, but we soon steamed into Murray Pass, and into a very pretty little cove, with a nice sandy beach called East Cove. The sound of the steamers whistle soon brought Mr. Brown, the lighthouse-keeper, and his son in sight, and they came out in their boat to assist in landing us and our stores. When everything was safely on the beach we proceeded up a steep incline to the residence of the lighthouse-keeper and welcomed with kind hospitality. We shortly after proceeded to Garden Cove. On the other side of the island, about two miles from the landing, and there chose our camping ground: and Mr. Brown kindly sent a dray and a splendid team of bullocks to the beach for our luggage, and brought it down to our camping ground, and long before nightfall we had everything snug.

Deal Island. Our camp was about 300 yards from the beach, in the cove, and open grass land between, whilst just behind the three tents was a dense growth of Melaleuca, Sheoak and other shrubs, which afforded shelter, while a stream, with quantities of fine water-cress growing in it, ran past the camp about twenty yards away. We had a beautiful view from the front doors down the valley, with the blue water in the cove and sea beyond, and on each side high hills covered in vegetation, and on their summits large granite boulders showing above the dark foliage.

Next day (Monday) we started work early – three members went into the scrub to note the different birds; two others went dredging in the Murray Pass, and the rest to fish

off the rocks in the cove not far from the camp. Those in the scrub were fortunate in finding four different varieties of eggs – namely, those of the Flame-breasted Robin, the Tasmanian Warbler (in which nest was also the egg of a Bronze Cuckoo), and the egg of a Narrow-billed Bronze Cuckoo, which was found in a newly finished nest of the Sombre-coloured Scrub Tit, in which the rightful owner had not yet laid. The scrub was very thick, and difficult to get through. The members who were fishing caught Parrot Fish and Australian Rockling, and they reported that both kinds seemed plentiful; a large crayfish was also seen. Those who were dredging also were fairly successful in securing principally Polyzoa.

During the afternoon a visit was paid to the lighthouse, nearly four miles from our camp. It is built on a hill over 900 feet high, and one of the highest points of the island, and close to the steep cliffs that run down to the sea. The lighthouse itself is built of granite quarried hard by, and is a substantial structure. It was erected more than 50 years ago and has a flash light. The Tasmanian Government intend, I believe, replacing the old light at present used with a new one. The light is visible 36 miles off. The two assistant lighthouse-keepers, Messrs. Franklin and Hutchen, live in quarters close by, while the principal lighthouse-keeper lives about a mile away, at East Cove, in Murray Pass; there is a telephone communication between the two places.

The day being fine we had a splendid view, and clearly saw the high land of Wilson's Promontory, Rodondo Island, the Devil's Tower, Hogan Group, Curtis Group, and Judgement Rocks. The latter consists of three jagged looking rocks – one large and two small – and they seem to lie in a line. The centre one is the smallest, and there is a level platform on one portion on which the seals have chosen as one of their breeding grounds, and go there every year, in November, to have their young; a good many get killed by the half-caste sealers from Flinders Island; but it is only when the sea is very calm that a landing can be effected, which is all in favour of the seals, otherwise the few there are would stand a good chance of being driven away from the islands of Bass Straits. The only other breeding ground near here is Craggy Island, situated between Kent Group and Flinders Island. Before leaving, photographs were taken of the lighthouse and adjacent cliffs, and on our way back to camp a pair of the Yellow-bellied Parrots, and a Brush Bronze wing Pigeon were seen; and specimens were obtained of the Tasmanian Fantail, Sombre-coloured Scrub Tit, Tasmanian Warbler, and a hen, Grey-tailed Thickhead, and also a few beetles, spiders and a scorpions. A large White-lipped snake was seen, but we were unable to capture it. When passing the principal lighthouse-keepers quarters, we were surprised to see two English sparrows. We could only account for their presence through their having been driven over by a strong N.W. wind from our Victorian coasts. As the evening closed in we could hear the penguins uttering their curious cry from a rookery situated on one side of Garden Cove, and they were noisy through the best part of the night. Early on Tuesday morning, a visit was made to the rookery, and we found the birds to be the Little Penguins. It was surprising to see how high up the cliffs many of the birds had their nests – in some cases nearly 450 feet above the sea level. Many of the birds were sitting on their two white eggs, while others again had downy young ones in different stages of growth. The parent birds fought hard when interfered with, and could use their sharp beaks and claws with effect, as those members who incautiously put their hands into the burrows can testify. The birds for the most part made their nests, which consisted of dry grass and weeds, in the cavities under or between the rocks. They breed all round the coasts of the islands, wherever they can secure a foothold to clamber up. In a few instances we found four eggs in one nest – two good and two addled ones – probably laid by different pairs of birds. At 8 O'clock we all started to visit Erith and Dover Islands, Mr. Brown having kindly promised to us over. We arrived at East Cove, and found the whaleboat ready, and soon rowed across Murray Pass, landing on a sheltered sandy beach on Erith Island, close to where the wreck of the s.s. *Bulli* lies, with her two masts appearing above water, about 200 yards from shore. Attempts had been made to raise her, large pontoons having been built for that purpose; but all efforts were apparently unavailing. One of the pontoons is still on the beach, but the other four have broken up and washed

out to sea. The steamer had a cargo of 400 tons of coal, and was entering Murray Pass, when she struck a rock and sprung a leak. She was then brought in here to be beached, but sank before that could be accomplished.

Erith Island. Two of our members elected to remain in the boat for the purpose of dredging, and were successful in obtaining some specimens of Polyzoa. The rest of us ascended the sandy hillocks to explore the island. There were large number of penguins breeding here. The runs they had made on the beach to the places that were most easily ascended over the sandy hillocks, to get inland, showed how numerous the birds must be. It looked as if a small flock of sheep had been driven up. There being no stones under which to make their nests, they burrowed fairly deep holes instead, or laid under the thick tussocks of grass and pig-face, which latter plant was very abundant, and the masses of pink flowers looked very beautiful in the bright sun. The first animal caught was a rabbit, which the dog got in a shallow hole. They appear very numerous on the island, where there are no half wild domestic cats to destroy them like there are on Deal Island. Shortly after the dog turned out a young opossum from under a tussock of grass, and it was secured unhurt, and is now with another in our Zoological Gardens. We were told to be aware of a vicious old billygoat, which lives a lonely life on this island, but fortunately we did not come across him on our rambles. Two pairs of the Tasmanian Sooty Crow Shrike were seen, and a newly finished nest formed in a sheoak tree, but not yet laid in. It is a curious fact that these birds seem to keep to this small island, and are seldom seen on the adjacent islands, which are larger. A pair of White – eyed Crows were seen with their young, which had evidently only lately left their nests. The little White – eyes were numerous amongst the bushes, and a few of the White – fronted Scrub Tit were seen. A specimen of the Shining Flycatcher was also secured. We saw a pair of the White – bellied Sea Eagles gracefully soaring above our heads until they disappeared in the azure. Their breeding season was probably over, as the young birds are generally fully fledged by the end of November. The vegetation, except in the sheltered hollows is scanty, but wherever the scrub was absent the tussock grass grew very thick and in some hollows the Goodenia flourished, and, being in flower, looked a blaze of colour in the distance. It is the favourite ground of the Swamp Parrakeet, but none were seen on this occasion. The cliffs round the island were very steep, and no sea birds seemed to breed on them, if we except the penguin, but in most places it was too steep for them. Dover Island we did not visit, even though it is joined by a narrow isthmus to Erith Island, which the waves break over at high water if the sea is rough, but on the day we were there it was calm – in fact, we did not see the sea anything but calm during our stay at the Group, except the day we returned home, it made up for it. The island seemed to be covered with short, dense scrub, and was very precipitous, and we found climbing about the island we were on quite enough, without visiting the other. We all returned to the beach for lunch, which we had on the rocks alongside the old pontoon. One of our members had been fortunate enough to secure a pair of the Yellow-bellied Parrot. During the afternoon we examined the penguin rookery, but found mostly young birds in the burrows, which we left undisturbed. We left early in the afternoon to give us time to dredge on the return, and as the depth of the water was from twenty to thirty fathoms, we went very slowly, drawing the dredge over the rocky bottom, and, however hard we worked at the oars, it seemed to make very little difference to our pace, and it was great relief to our rowers when the dredge was hauled in, which it was when we reached the sandy bottom of East Cove. However, several interesting specimens of Polyzoa and Sponges were found.

After hauling the boat into the shed, we started for our camp, reaching there about 5 O'clock. Mr. Gabriel stayed with Mr. Brown, and later on helped him and his son to row the small boat round to our cove with the seine net. The first haul only brought to shore one garfish, two or three salmon, and some whitebait, but in the next cast about two cwt of fish were taken, being principally salmon and skip-jacks, with a few mullet and one small shark. As both the lighthouse people and ourselves were plentifully supplied, we did not try again, but returned to camp with our spoils. Mr. Gabriel, Mr. Brown and his son Frank

rowed the boat back again, and had a hard pull against the adverse current before they reached the boat shed.

Deal Island. Some of us started early on Wednesday morning to visit a landslip, which we were told existed on the other side of the island. After a walk of about two miles we came to the place, and found that a very small rivulet of water had worn out a large gulch in open country on the lower slopes of a hill. The excavation extended about two hundred yards down to the beach of Freestone Cove, and was about fifteen feet deep and twenty feet across. During the heavy rains the sides tumble in, and the friable soil soon gets washed away. We soon clambered down and saw from three feet from the surface to the bottom small bones sticking out from the sides in thin layers, and also a good many laying at the bottom. The majority of the bones evidently belonged to seabirds, and those exposed to the air, very brittle. At the lowest depth we were fortunate enough to find a fossil jaw - bone of what we have since found to be the Giant Kangaroo (*M.gigas*). We also collected specimens of all the bones we could find, and they have been submitted to Professor Mc.Coy, who has kindly examined them, and states that, excepting the jaw-bone, they all belong to small marsupials and birds. We regretted not be able to spend more time at this interesting place. Leaving this "valley of dry bones" we proceeded to some thick swamp ti-tree about a mile away, and had a rough walk along the sides of a steep hill to reach it, passing on our way a few musk bushes in flower. The ti-tree was also flowering, and attracted hundreds of wasps, which flew buzzing around in swarms when disturbed. We found the nest of the Olivaceous Thickhead with two eggs in, and secured a specimen of the Allied Pardalotus. Tracks of opossums were numerous, but we did not obtain a specimen. A pair of Brown Hawks were circling over us while we were hunting through the ti-tree scrub. We returned to camp in time for lunch, and at 2 O'clock we all started for a large penguin rookery on the other side of the hill overlooking the camp. We had a steep climb down through masses of Goodenia, pig-face, tussocky grass, and the Native Hop which latter plant is found so plentifully in the timbered country of the Dandenong and other ranges. Underneath this thick vegetation the birds had run and quickly hopped under what we had laboriously to push our way through. We found the penguins numerous, but, as before, with mostly hard-set eggs or young birds, and but few fresh eggs were secured. We found some plants of the Asplenium fern growing in a cave overlooking the sea, close to the waters edge. Salt air appears to be essential for these plants, as both here and at King Island, it was found growing in exposed situations between clefts of rocks close to the sea, and in many instances must have had the spray dashed over it. On our return to camp we secured fine specimens of lizards *Lygosoma (Hinulia) whitei* and *Lygosoma (Hinulia) liseuri*; the latter seemed to vary from those obtained in Victoria. We saw the tracks and burrows of rats in the thick grass, but were unable to secure any for identification.

On Thursday we collected specimens of plants to be found in our neighbourhood, and a good many different varieties were obtained. We also found a few insects and a lizard, which was new to us. During the afternoon a few showers of rain fell, and we took the opportunity of indoor work that had been put off for a wet day. It cleared up in the evening, and some of us went to the mouth of a small creek that flowed past our tent and fished for eels (*Anguilla australis*). We made a fire, which was a matter of some difficulty owing to the wood being wet, and then patiently watched our lines. We succeeded in catching four eels in about three-quarters of an hour, by which time our patience was exhausted, so we returned to camp.

Friday turned out to be a beautiful day, and two members went to the lighthouse, while two more went fishing, and the rest of us, with one of Mr. Brown's sons (Frank) as guide, started off to find some tree ferns, which were said to grow on the other side of the island, but which, so far, we had been unable to find. After a long walk we came to the head of a steep valley that ran down to Storm Bay. There was no scrub of any kind growing in it, and only very little water trickling down. On descending for some distance, we came to a little hollow the water had made, about three feet deep and four feet across, and running for a distance of about seven yards, and in this small place we found six

different varieties of ferns, including three specimens of *Dicksonia antarctica*. Very few had any seed spores on . None of the plants grew higher than the banks of the hollow, being probably too exposed, there being so little shelter. It seems strange that these ferns should grow here and not in more sheltered and favoured localities on the island, but this is the only place where the two species of tree fern are found. After gathering specimens we left "Ferry Spring" and went to Freestone Cove, below where we had obtained the bones. We hunted about in the long grass for opossums, and every now and again the dog commenced barking near a hole under the stones, but each time we hurried up to look in we saw only a penguin gazing at us. They were not disturbed, with the exception of one, which was killed and used as bait to try and obtain some crayfish with, which are said to be numerous in this bay, but none was caught this time, although our guide us, that as much as 20 have been caught in a morning. Our line was probably too short, but we had no means of lengthening it. Shortly after leaving the beach on the way back to camp, the dog found and killed a large opossum. It was the first adult specimen we had seen, and we found it to be the Short-eared Opossum (*Phalangista canina*), common both to Tasmania and Victoria. Later in the day, when one of our members was forcing his way through thick scrub near our camp, he disturbed an opossum with a young one clinging on its back. He shot the mother and secured the young one unhurt. These animals here do not seem to feed on the leaves of the Eucalyptus trees, as they are generally to be found where these trees are not growing, and we could not detect any scratches on the trees, though we looked carefully for them. Their food consists entirely of succulent plants, and they seldom leave the ground. During the day they retire under stones, if near the sea shore, or under the thick tussocky grass that grow abundantly here. The one obtained in the scrub, was sleeping under the old up-turned root of a sheoak, and when disturbed never attempted to climb any of the trees, but kept on the ground. Another White-lipped Snake was caught not far from camp, and also a Giant Cyclodus or Blue-tongued lizard (*C. gigas*), three of these species were obtained during our stay. They are common to both Tasmania and Victoria; and one of our members secured a Lunu-lated Honey-eater, a pair of Fire-tailed Finches, and the nest and eggs of the Olivaceous Thickhead.

During the evening the lighthouse-keeper rode to our camp and told us that a party of six half-caste sealers had arrived from Flinders Island to seal on Judgement Rocks, and that they would probably remain three weeks; so we determined to visit them on the following day. Accordingly, next morning (Saturday) some of us went to East Cove, where they had anchored in their boat, but on arriving we found that they had taken their departure at daybreak. They had heard of our intended visit, and not being sure of our intentions, had gone, probably to the Hogan Group to collect Mutton Bird's eggs. We then went through some thick scrubby, country near the lighthouse, and obtained a few birds and plants. Mr. Campbell went to Freestone Cove and took some photographs of the 'Valley of Dry Bones' where we had collected our specimens. He also shot a Olivaceous Thickhead that had a curious malformed bill, the upper and lower mandibles crossing. The bird must have found it difficult to obtain its food. A specimen of the Tasmanian Ground Thrush was shot not far from the camp during the day. In the early morning, and evening we always found these birds whistling cheerily in the scrub.

During the evening some of our members went eel-fishing, and were fairly successful

A Tope Shark about 3ft. six in. long was also caught with a light line thrown in from the sandy beach.

Next day being Sunday no work was done, and we rose at 7 am instead of 5 am, which was much appreciated by some of the members. We all went to the lighthouse during the morning, and then to lunch at Mr. Brown's and seven of us made a good addition to his family party. During the afternoon a return visit was made to our camp, and we dispensed afternoon tea with the few luxuries we had, such as cake, Swiss roll, preserved ginger, biscuits, figs, dates, preserved fruit etc. etc. to our visitors. We were supplied with a abundance of fresh milk by the lighthouse-keeper. Arrangements were made to visit N. E. or Mutton Bird Island on the following day should the weather permit.

N. E. or Mutton Bird Island. On Monday morning, the weather being beautifully fine, we started for the East Cove, where we found Mr. Brown and his sons, and Mr. Hutchen, one of the assistant lighthouse-keepers ready to start. We were all soon aboard the large whaleboat with our baskets and crooks, and after a good two hours pull reached the island. The sea being very smooth we managed to land without much difficulty, but if it were at all rough, landing would have been impossible, there being no sheltered cove, but only rocky sides straight down to the waters edge, except at one place where it was not quite so steep, and there we managed to land and climb up. We quickly found the Dove-like Blue Petrel or White Bird sitting on their single egg in hollows under the rocks or in small burrows under the thick grass and pig-face plants. They have to be well sheltered, as they and their eggs seem to be at present the principal food of the gulls and falcons. These birds made short work of any eggs left exposed during the temporary absence of its owner. Ascending higher up the cliffs we found some young of the Diving Petrel, but no eggs, they laying early in August. Arriving on the top, which was 346 feet high, we found it covered with long thick tussocky grass and the Goodenia plant. Walking was a matter of difficulty, as one kept breaking through the ground of the Mutton Bird holes, often to the discomfort of the inmates. Although we were there the day before the main flock of birds, there were already a fair number on the island, and we soon had the baskets we brought with us full of their eggs; they lay only one large white one. A few of the male birds were also taken for the lighthouse-keepers larder. What the island would be like when the rest of the birds come in, would be hard to describe, as there is scarcely a square foot on top of the island without a burrow, They are not deep, but are principally under the matted grass and herbage. We found a good many penguins breeding in the same rookery. Small lizards were numerous, and a few White-lipped snakes were seen, but none obtained. On another rocky eminence of the island the nest of the Black-cheeked Falcon was found. There were a pair of downy young ones in it about six weeks old. The parent birds were brave in defending them, and struck the intruder to drive them off, but the little ones were not taken from them. The remains of the Dove-like and Blue Petrel were found around the nests. Not far from the same place, but much closer to the water's edge, the nest of a Sooty Oyster-catcher was found with two fresh eggs in, and from a small burrow hard by the egg, apparently of the Stormy Petrel was taken, but the bird itself was absent. Mr. A. J. Campbell took two photographs on the island – one of the members getting Mutton Bird eggs out of the burrows with their crooks (which saved their hands from the attack of birds) and the other of the landing place with the boat waiting for us. At 2 o'clock, as the weather was looking threatening, we left, regretting that we were not able to stay longer on this interesting island.

On our return journey the dredge was let down, and some specimens of Polyzoa obtained. On arrival at East Cove the boat was hauled into the shed we and started with our spoils to our camp. Shortly after reaching there, the rain commenced to fall and continued all night. Next morning (Tuesday) the sky looked very overcast, but we were up early and had breakfast without rain. We had hardly finished when it commenced again in earnest, and continued throughout the greater part of the day, but cleared up towards the evening. Being kept indoors, we were enabled to blow and pack the eggs obtained the previous day, and were glad of the opportunity to do so.

At 7.30pm., Mr. Brown and his son Frank, with Mr. Gabriel, arrived at our cove, having rowed around in the small boat, and brought the seine net to fish. The first haul only brought in a few salmon and mullet; but we were more successful the second time, landing a few mullet, and thirteen trevalla, the latter weighing about three pounds each. We tried again three times, but did not succeed in catching a solitary fish, and as it was late, and we were getting cold. A fire was made and a "billy" of water boiled, and a pannican of hot "toddy" with a slice of lemon in, handed to each, and we then returned to camp. Mr. Gabriel helped Mr. Brown to row the boat round to East Cove, and the net was again put out there, and a few salmon and a barracouta caught.

Early next morning (Wednesday), some of us went up the gully near the camp to try and secure some quail we had heard calling out the previous evening; one was seen, but we had not the good fortune to bag it, but were enabled to identify it as the Painted Quail.

About 12 o'clock we struck our tents, and shortly after Mr. W. Brown arrived with the bullock dray. We soon had it loaded with our luggage, which was conveyed to the beach at East Cove, ready to be embarked. While waiting for the arrival of the steamer some photographs of the lighthouse-keepers quarters were taken, and Mr. Brown's sons caught some penguins for the Melbourne Aquarium. On the voyage over, one of the birds laid a egg in the box, and several passengers inserted their hands with the object of securing it. The birds, however, made such a vigorous onset on the intruding hand with their sharp beaks, that it was quickly withdrawn without the coveted egg, being touched. The steamer arrived at 6.30 pm., and we were all soon on board, and regretfully bade adieu to the islands which had afforded us such a pleasant and instructive time. The wind was blowing strong from the N. W. and there was a high cross sea, but we soon retired to the cabin reserved for our use and tried to rest, but the way the vessel was tossed about by the heavy sea rendered that impossible, except to those accustomed to it, which we were not. The steps descending to our cabin also broke adrift during the night, and helped to keep us awake. The steamer called in at Refuge Cove, at the Wilson's Promontory lighthouse. We passed Cape Schanck at 2 o'clock, and reached our berth at the Australian Wharf at 8 o'clock, very glad that our short sea journey was over.²⁴

Mammals of the Bass Strait Islands.

The Kent Group lies to the North of Bass Strait between the Furneaux Group and Victoria. The first sub fossils from these islands were collected by the members of an expedition run by the Field Naturalist Club of Victoria in 1890 (Le Souef 1891). At Winter Cove on the eastern side of Deal Island, many bones were found loose and on the floor protruding from the walls of a gully. Le Souef recorded the marsupials *Thylogale billardieri* and *Macropus giganteus* from this gully, but most of the remains were bird bones. Spencer and Kershaw (1910) recorded as sub fossils from Deal Island, *Vombatus Ursinus* and a tiger cat which they thought similar to the species *Dasyurus bowlingi* they had described from the sand blows on King Island. Neither of these two later species nor *Macropus giganteus* have ever been recorded live from the Kent Group. No specimen of the *Macropus giganteus* or *Dasyurus maculatus* from Deal Island could be found in the National Museum of Victoria, which houses the collection of Spencer and Kershaw and the Field Naturalist Club of Victoria expeditions. The museum collection does contain specimens of *Thylogale billardiereii*, *Macropus rufogriseus*, *Trichosurus vulpecular* and *Vombatus ursinus* labelled as coming from Deal Island and donated by J. A. Kershaw in 1909 and Stephson in 1903.

Further subfossil remains have been recovered from the valley at Winter Cove on Deal Island and are listed in Table 2. Of these only *Macropus rufogriseus* and *Trichosurus vulpecular* are certainly still on the island. The status of *Rattus lutreolus* and *Antechinus minimus* is unknown, but these two may still be present and the remainder are definitely extinct on Deal Island. However it is likely that *Thylogale billardiereii* at least was still at the time of European settlement of the islands, as G. A. Robinson in 1831 recorded both 'wallaby' (*T. billardiereii*) and 'kangaroo' (*M. rufogriseus*) on Deal (Plomley, 1966).

The valley is an erosion gully in a stabilized and partly consolidated sand dune. The actively eroding head of the gully is about 90 metres above sea level, and the gully runs about 330 metres downhill, parallel to the beach at Winter Cove at this point, then joins at right angles to a creek emptying into Winter Cove. Le Souef (1891) estimated that the gully extended about 200 yards down to the beach, so even for allowing for some error in his estimate, the gully has grown in the last 75 years. At the head of the gully, the walls

are sheer, and here about 2 metres of sandy soil overlies cross-bedded Aeolian sands. Bones of *Puffinus tenuirostris*, *Macropus rufogriseus*, *Rattus lutreolus* and *Antechinus minimus* were collected from the walls of the gully. The bird bones and eggshells were the most common. Bones protruding from the upper walls were rare and widely scattered, but lower down the hill, where the sides of the gully are less steep, and are vegetated, bones were found concentrated in pockets on the floor of the gully, undoubtedly washed down from above. The only remains of *Potorous apicalis* found were recovered from here.

A small sand blow exists on Erith Island and from this have collected the bones of *Macropus rufogriseus*, *Thylogale billardierei*, *Trichosurus vulpecular*, *Rattus lutreolus* and *Oryctolagus cuniculus*. As well as occurring loose in the sand, bones have been found cemented in calcarenite, a piece of which containing embedded bird bones was collected from Erith Island in 1965 by R. Truscott, and is now held in the National Museum in Victoria.²⁵

John Oxley's visit to the Kent Group in 1810.

The Kents Group is North of Port Dalrymple and nearly in the centre of the Straits. The Group is composed of Two Principal Islands, separated by a narrow Sound running nearly North and South, the Eastern Island is the Largest and the most important, a small cove affords anchorage and Shelter from the prevailing Winds.

This Island contains several thick strata of Limestone and the Ridge which extends in a Sloping direction between the Two Mountains that form two sides of the Cove is entirely composed of soft and detached fragments of Calcareous Earth. The Shore is bounded by high towering cliffs composed of Common Granite, the Soil in the Vallies is chiefly a dark vegetable Mulch nearly three feet deep, under which is the Granite Rock with here and there Stone containing a considerable portion of Lime. On the N. E. side of the Island is a small valley containing about 600 Acres of very good land and at the N. end of the Valley is a Spring of Water, but its Taste is bitter and unpleasant, owing most probable to the great quantity of Rotten Vegetable and leaves that are steeped in it, this Spring causes a small Stream which empties itself into a small Cove, and when other water failed, might be of use as it's Stream appears Constant.

Petrified Bones – A Stratum of Bones lays behind a Sandy Beach on Western Isd. 200 yards in length and 2 feet deep, its extent towards the interior was not ascertained.

On the Western Island a great number of the Bones of the Kangaroo were found in a perfectly preserved state, one Heap of the Bones was close to the Shore, partly buried in Sand, and a number of the animals must have died on the same spot to have caused so large a heap. The Islands are uninhabited, but the Vallies abound with Brush Kangaroo, though the flesh has a bitter taste owing most probably to the Vegetables they feed on.

Casuarina, Vegetable Production. The only Wood which grows to any perfection, is the Oak of New South Wales, but of a coarse quality, there is also a few dwarf Gum Trees. The Vallies contain several species of Staphelia, Mimosa, Pultena etc. but the most dangerous and offensive plant we met with was a new species of Urtica, which grows to the height of five to Six Feet. The Sting of this Noxious Weed produces the most painful inflammation and Swelling, which terminates in a Torpor and Numbness of the whole limbs. When the feet and Hands were but Slightly touched with it, the Unguinal and Axillary Glands in a few Minutes become painful and Tumefied, if the parts are much affected, it induces Spasms and Lethargic Stupor to the whole System. Several of our dogs that were exposed to its effects whilst hunting Kangaroo, died in a few Hours after the Greatest Agony. They first expressed the Torture they suffered by howling in the most dismal manner, a remarkable swelling of the whole Body and numbness of the extremities followed, accompanied with frothing at the Mouth, Wildness of the Eyes, and every other Symptom of Madness, but hindered from doing Mischief by their excessive Weakness.

Two or Three hours generally terminated their sufferings. There was no sign that the Kangaroo, the only quadruped on the Isd. Was affected by its Noxious qualities, perhaps they possessed the faculty of distinguishing and avoiding it.²⁶

Deal Island Lighthouse.

The decade of the 1890's saw the largest changes to the appearance of the lighthouse itself since it was built in 1846 – 48. From 1 January 1890, the practice of painting the Tasmanian lighthouses red on the upper half and white on the lower half was discontinued in favour of an all-white finish.

The year 1891 saw a significant upgrade of the operational part of the station. An announcement of the showing of a temporary light as near as possible to the position of the old light was made in November 1891 while a new light was being installed. The Wilkins lantern was removed and the tower shortened and reworked to take the new Chance Brothers lantern house. At the same time two horse driven whims were installed to get stores from the beach to the lower residences and up the last severe slope to the lighthouse. In all 2,748 pounds 11s 1d was spent on repairs and additions.

Although the lantern house was replaced with a standard 1890's Chance Brothers structure, it appears that the apparatus itself was not upgraded, as the old light was still operating when Captain Brewis examined the station in 1912. After Federation in 1901 the Commonwealth was required, under the Constitution, to assume responsibility for ocean lights. The process of taking over this responsibility from the States was slow and not formally undertaken until 1915. In 1911 Captain Brewis was engaged to report on all Australian lighthouses and concerning Deal Island he reported in 1912.

DEAL ISLAND LIGHT (KENT GROUP)

(52 miles from Goose Island; 48 miles from Wilson Promontory)

Lat. 39o 29oS., Long 147o 19oE., Chart No. 1695 (a) – Established in the year 1846.

Situated on the summit of Deal Island.

Lloyd's Signal Station. No telephonic or telegraphic connection.

Character, - One white revolving every 100 seconds catoptric. Candle power under 2,000.

Stone and brick tower, 46 feet. Height of focal plane, 957 feet above high water.

Frequently obscured by fog. Visible, in clear weather, 36 nautical miles.

Condition and State of Efficiency, - The light-house tower is in good state of preservation, but the light apparatus, catoptric, is out of date, and of insufficient power for modern requirements. The dwellings are very old, and will shortly require renewing throughout.

Four men are stationed on the island. The three assistants live close to the light, but the head keeper's quarters are some 2 miles away.

Three men are sufficient, and the staff should be regulated accordingly. The men should occupy the dwellings in the vicinity of the light. There are no fog signals, auxiliary lights, signal station, or telephonic communication. The landing is about 2 miles from the light, no further distance than some three manned lights. Horse transport is provided.

Area of Light-house site – Practically the whole of area of Deal and Erith Island is leased from the Tasmanian Government at a present annual rental of 47 pounds. This is greatly in excess of requirements.

Communication – Quarterly by steamer, carrying stores by contract.

RECOMMENDED

- (a) The present light apparatus be replaced by a modern quick-flashing apparatus. The present tower and lantern be utilized.
As the new apparatus will be of smaller dimensions than the present one, the tower will be sufficiently large, to enable a fixed light to be exhibited from a staging in the upper part of the tower, while the alterations are in progress.
- (b) The three light-keeper's dwellings in the vicinity of the light be renewed.
- (c) One light-keeper to be withdrawn.

Particulars of light proposed – One white, dioptric, 3rd. Order about 130470 c.p. Incandescent 55mm mantle; illuminant, vaporized kerosene. Flashing, showing three flashes of one-third second duration, every ten seconds. Exhibited from the present tower. at a height of 957 feet, light would be visible for 36 miles, but owing to its great elevation it would be frequently obscured by fog. It would be advisable for the lower rays of the light to be depressed, so as to strike the observer's eye at about 5 nautical miles from the light.

The recommendation to convert the light to kerosene was not implemented. Instead, in 1921 the old revolving apparatus was replaced by a fixed catadioptric lens around an automatic light powered by acetylene gas. The first two lights constructed with Commonwealth money, Cape Liptrap and Citadel Island (both in Bass Strait), were unattended and powered on this new principle developed by Nobel prize winning Swedish scientist, Gustav Dalen. The power of the Deal Island light was increased by 50 per cent by this change. Although the light was now automatic, two keepers were retained.

Deal Island light is listed in Admiralty light lists as an 'unwatched light', and it functions with automatic apparatus, but two lighthousemen reside there as guardians.

In the late 1930's, coinciding with the upgrading of many Commonwealth lights, Deal Island was converted to electric operation. A Chance Brothers revolving catadioptric lens was installed, probably from another station, and a diesel generator shed was built alongside the tower to power the 1000 watt lamp. The light was not automatic and the keepers started the generators each evening and switched them off in the morning.

As the Van Diemen's Land government was financially responsible for the construction of the Deal Island lighthouse, it is probable that the design emanated from the office of the Van Diemen's Land Public Works. It was probably an adaptation of a design by Colonial Engineer John Lee Archer for the Cape Bruny Lighthouse (1838). Stylistically, the original design for the Deal Island lighthouse was very similar to the Cape Bruny, Swan and Goose Island lighthouses. The lighthouses at these stations are all of a straight-sided tapering form with plain architecturally unadorned balconies. This range of lighthouses stylistically predates the sweeping curves of later nineteenth century lighthouses, which tended to follow the example of the famous British Eddystone light.

It is also possible that the current spiralling pattern of window placement at the Deal Island lighthouse which is unlike the contemporary Cape Bruny, Swan and Goose Island lighthouses is not original. While the documentary evidence is not conclusive, c.1850 drawings of the towers indicate that the straight line arrangement of windows, at the Cape Bruny, Swan and Goose Island lighthouses is consistent with original detailing, and according to the drawings, the Deal Island tower had the same linear arrangement. An illustration made of the lighthouse in 1866 however appears to show the tower with a window arrangement similar to the current pattern.

Deal Island differed from the earlier designs in that it had an unusually deep balcony cornice. As well, the extreme elevation of the site meant that a tall tower was not required. There is conflicting evidence, however, as to whether or not the tower was actually built as designed.

The structure of the lighthouse is rendered coarse rubble and cement construction. The tower may also have some brickwork in the upper portion dating from the 1891 alterations. The original construction was typical of its period, and similar to other Tasmanian lighthouses. Most of these towers were later rendered because of the problems with water penetration but the Deal Island lighthouse did not have this defect as the elevated site protected it from sea spray. The tower was probably rendered more for stylistic reasons when the tower was altered in 1891.

The interior of the lighthouse is a spartan and utilitarian space. The main decorative element in the lighthouse interior is the cast iron spiral staircase, which is supported on a central hollow metal shaft. The shaft, which acted as a tube to the weight mechanisms, does not continue to the lantern room floor, and the last flight of steps differs in that it is both narrower and fixed to the wall. The iron spiral staircase is a typical example of the type and does not have the quality of the fine cast iron stair at Point Hicks in Victoria, which dates from almost the same year.

The slate floored lantern room is a typical Chance Brothers example of the 1890's period.

The lens array is a notable feature of the Deal Island lighthouse interior and was probably transferred from another light in 1937.²⁷

Bass Strait Islands Excursion – The New Year Trip 1909, by James W. Barrett.

A party of 15 people, including 10 medical men, left the South Wharf, Melbourne on New Years Day to carry out the programme of this expedition. Mr. Kenshaw of the National Museum, Melbourne accompanied the party, with the object of collecting material for the Museum. The arrangements on the steamer were admirable, only two nights being spent at sea. The usual practice was to anchor about midday, spend the afternoon on shore and dinner at dusk. An early retirement was made and an early start at daybreak for some new position. Abundance of fresh food was supplied, partly from the islands and partly from fish obtained, and the whole excursion proved to be a most interesting and prolonged picnic. Bad weather, with strong wind, was twice met with, and on these occasions the steamer remained at anchor in shelter for the whole day, whilst the party went ashore.

On January 6 the *Manawatu* after visiting islands around Wilson Promontory left for the Kent group, some 70 miles distant from Corner Inlet passing the Clifly Island lighthouse with its group of islands, running close to the Hogan group, on which a landing was impossible due to the strong winds blowing, and reaching the secure anchorage at the Kent group at about midday. The magnificent scenery of this group has frequently been described. The islands are fairly extensive, and on one of them the Kent group lighthouse stands, at an elevation of 1,000 feet. The waters at one time contained a large number of trevalla, which are said to have been netted out. There are one or two kangaroo on the island, a few snakes, an abundance of bird life and penguins and a small number of mutton birds. It is here in the swash-way between Erith and Dover Islands that the nautilus shells are found in numbers at certain times of the year. A very hospitable reception by the lighthouse keeper, Captain Robinson, led to a promise on the part of the writer, that he would restock the island with wallaby. This proposal to restock the island with wallaby from a Toorak paddock has its humorous side. The rock possum is met with throughout these islands, but as the eucalypts and other trees are present in abundance, though stunted in growth, it is probable that he has taken to the rocks as a matter of convenience, and not as a matter of necessity. In fact I have seen possums living in the rocks of the cliffs at Maria Island, where large timber was present in abundance. Captain Robinson says that the possums go up the trees at night for food, and remain in the crevices of the rocks

during the day. Some live specimens were brought to Melbourne by the steamer. On January 8, the steamer left for Flinders Island.....

Every member of the party returned delighted with the holiday, and with its sustained interest. On reflections a number of matters arising out of the excursion, furnish food for thought. The larger animals living on these islands are becoming extinct. The islands are the top of mountain ranges, which once joined Victoria and Tasmania. The animals belonging to those States, which have survived are giving way to bush fire and its cause, the settler. This change is inevitable, but certain areas might be reserved for the protection of anything singularly interesting, for example, Cat and Storehouse islands with their unique rookeries, and the Seal Rocks of Wilson Promontory. The track of the courageous explorer is still evident. Why is it we do not erect cairns and suitable notices at the places touched by such men as Flinders and Bass on their memorable voyages? Why should not the younger Victorians be made aware of those splendid feats in a practical way? Why, for example should not the landing place of Flinders at Westernport be endowed with a simple but permanent memorial, on which should appear a brief account of the celebrated voyage and discovery of Bass Strait.

Why, again, should not our public schools organise such a trip for their senior scholars in vacation time? The boys, would learn something of marine Australia, something of Australia history and geography something of navigation, and a good deal of the biology of the continent. How much better such a holiday would be then spent in Queenscliff or Sorrento. Again, why is it that sanatoria as holiday resorts have not been established at the Kent group, or on Flinders, Schouten or Maria Islands? People would find a perfect climate, a life of peace, and yet, one full of interest – an oasis in civilisation. Finally, why should not our Government erect at Singapore, in the National park, an hotel, distant 10 hours from Melbourne, where visitors under comfortable conditions, could see the native animals, in perfectly natural and beautiful conditions? Some of us may live to see all these things done by enlightened authorities, fortified by enlightened public opinion.²⁸

Purchase of Horses for the Island.

District Officer
Commonwealth Lighthouse Service
395 Collins St.
Melbourne.
5 May 1919.

DEAL ISLAND – HORSES.

The Head Lightkeepr reported to us that the younger of the two mares is very unreliable, running back with the dray, kicking, and also often will not pull the empty dray and he be specially requested the removal of same.

The elder animal has therefore had to do the heavier portion of the work, and the hill work is to much for her, although she is quite, steady, and suitable for the whim.

The old mare would not, in my opinion, fetch much at any sale, and I suggest that she be allowed to remain at the station at least for a time, and if necessary she could be taken away and sold later.

I would recommend that two draught horses be purchased through the military authorities and sent to Deal Island by the August Stores Vessel; and that the younger of the above mentioned animals be brought by the same vessel to Launceston, and sold.

Inspector.

Australian Military Forces.
No, 12 Remount Depot.
11 – 7 – 19.

Inspector of Lighthouse Services.
Salamanca Place.
HOBART.

In reference to the two horses for Deal Island, please find offer enclosed, which I recommend be accepted. The Chestnut Gelding is a medium draught, 5 years old, and will fill out a lot during the next two years or so. The Bay is a heavy draught, about 8 years, and is a little low in condition owing to hard work. I have seen both horses at work and feel satisfied that they will be suitable for the work required by your Department. There have been some excellent horses offered to me at prices from 40 to 50 pounds each, which is the usual price for first-class heavy draught horses in this State, but which you say the Department considers too high.

(signed) J. Olding. Sergt.
N. C. O. in charge.
No. 12 R. D.²⁹

1919 Bushfire

In 1919 fierce fires swept over the island destroying the quarters around the lighthouse and the telephone line. The whim and tramlines at the upper station were severely damaged at a great cost.

The assistant keepers quarters at the lighthouse consisting of random rubble sub-floor and weatherboard at ground level were destroyed, but the remains can still be seen today at the lighthouse with its distinct back to back rubble fireplaces. Further down the hill is the remains of the original quarters of the assistant lighthouse keepers. The building was later re roofed and used again.

The whim was burnt severely and only a few timber and steel fragments remain on the site.

About 100 metres down from the whim near the present road to the lighthouse four tramlines with wooden sleepers, brickwork and sandstone blocks can be seen in the dense undergrowth. Some of the sandstone blocks have white paint, painted on the exposed surfaces. These blocks may have come from the lighthouse when the alterations were made in 1891. The four tramlines extend over about 150 metres, and were found on a trip to Deal Island in May 2005.

Commonwealth Lighthouse Service Correspondence 1915 – 1930.

Extracts from the files of the lightkeepers on Deal Island to the District Inspector, Hobart pertaining to the upkeep and general service on the island.

LIGHTHOUSE SERVICE.
26th. November, 1915.

²⁹ National Archives Australia. General Correspondence Files: 1915-30.

The Head Keeper,

Kent Group Lighthouse.

Please inform Assistant, Nas that the Public Service Commissioner has approved of his transfer from Goose Island to Kent Group at the salary of 132 pounds per annum less ten per centum for rent of quarters.

He will be notified later from when the increase of salary will commence.

For your information kindly note that all the Lighthouse Keepers salaries are to be increased in accordance with a new scale issued by the Commonwealth Public Service Commissioner. You will be advised of the increase later.

C. Watchorn.

For Foreman Artificer and Inspector.

Deal Island
December 31st. 1924.

The Inspector
Hobart.

Live Stock on Island.

3 Horses
2 Cows and Calves
1 Heifer

Commonwealth
Mrs. Hague
“ “

2 Cows and Calves
1 Bull
180 Sheep
120 Lambs

R. J. Hooper
“ “
, “
“ “

R. J. Hooper
Act. Light Keeper

Deal Island
10th. July 1925.

Inspector.
Hobart.

Crossing Yard across Balcony and painting Tower inside.

In ref: to above is the yard to have signal halyards, as same as flagstaff?

Will you please let me know if the tower is to be painted inside, if so are the astragals to be painted white as they are at present. Do I have to make a requisition for Paint and Oil etc.

Asst. R. E. Bridgen.
Act. H. Keeper.

Cross yard and (balcony) to have halyards.

Keep Flagstaff fully equipped :- halyards to head.

Tower to be coated inside with the '—White' sent, observing the instructions as given in the pamphlet forwarded.

Lantern inside, astragals etc. white paint.

Do not requisition for paint in forms for the half yearly stores. Best to send a separate list of same as this Service supplies paints, oils, brushes etc. direct.

A. L. Meech.
31. 7. 25.

Melbourne. 9th. April 1926

The Inspector
Lighthouse Service, Hobart.

Dover Island

The letter from the Commissioner of Police dated the 13. 8. 26 submitted by you on the 1. 9. 26 stating that Dover Island is not leased by the Commonwealth Government, is at variance with your information given in your wire, of 22. 7. 26 after your consultation with the Secretary, Lands Department, Hobart.

Please make further inquiries from the Lands Department and advise definitely whether the lease to this Department of Erith Island includes Dover Island.

From the examination of the Chart of Bass Straits, Erith Island is joined by a very narrow passage to Dover Island. Our map shows the whole to be Erith Island and omits the name 'Dover Island'.

Full reply should be submitted to the points raised above.

C. Stewart.
District Engineer.
No. 3 District.

Deal Island
18th. April 1928.

Inspector of L. Houses.
Hobart.

Timber for Repairs.

Ref. To above: Have put down for timber to repair Kitchen floor, H. Keeper states which is in bad condition, also few extra boards for back room. The 20 sleepers are for the Top whim line. The 'Lower Whim line' the bad sleepers have been replaced by new ones and is in a good condition.

R. E. Bridgen.
L. Keeper.

Deal Island
August 10. 1929.

Deputy Director, Navigation & Lighthouses.
Hobart.

My Sons Illness.

Confirmed Radio to the District Lighthouses, Melbourne, my son very ill, taking fits for the 12 hours, if *Loch* not left, would you allow her to call for him. – Head Keeper, Deal.

Sir, I am of the opinion that this place does not agree with him, and I cannot keep him here as when he has his bad days, he wants to be near a Dr. he upsets all of us and we cannot do anything for him. He is out and under control and may go for 12 hours or 2 hours. So you see why I sent to the District Engineer first, as I new that *Loch* was to sale on or about the 9th. I could not miss her to take him away

I am
Sir, yours faithfully
J. McGuire. Head Keeper.

Inspector.

Deal Island
May 4th. 1930.

Dep. Dir. Nav. & Lighthouses.
Customs House. Hobart.

Subject: On a mail Service for the Station.

Might I respectfully ask the Dept. take into consideration the necessity for a Monthly mail Service to this Station.

We are at present the only Station in Tasmania that has no mail Service and though through the courtesy of Capt. Larssen an occasional mail is landed here, it is purely an act of grace on his part, and months at a time may pass without him visiting the island at all.

Apart from the inconvenience to us, in the event of short-shipment of stores to wait for the matter for 6 months to be rectified, we would deeply appreciate a Mail Service – a quarterly one, midway between each store vessel would be preferable to none – to keep in touch with and know of the welfare of our children and people.

I understand that Capt. Larssen would favourably consider accepting a contract for the mails if approached on the matter.

Sgd.
R. Johnston
a/- H. Kpr.
Deal Island.³⁰

Death of John Hague, Head Lightkeeper, 23rd. September 1924.

In 1923 John Hooper was Head Keeper and the station had just been made a two-man operation.

John Hague using his carpentry skills had completed some work around the main residence, the original Superintendent's house at East Cove. Mrs. Hooper had made a strong plea for a proper bath and District Engineer Weist recommended that part of the existing wash house at Hague's should be portioned to provide a bathroom and bath for Mrs. Hooper. Usually keepers and their families, like many other country residents, used a galvanised tub, oval in shape, and a handle at each end, for both laundry and bathing purposes. The work, a temporary measure since new houses were on the agenda for the near future, was completed on May 4th. 1924. Unfortunately, on September 24 John Hague died and with him went his skills as a carpenter. The logs relating to this event are not available, either because they have been sealed or because no one at the time had the leisure to fill in the details. There would of course, have been reports for an official enquiry. The information that follows, was supplied by Cyril Huxley, a keeper on the station shortly after the event.

Hooper, who had already known great tragedy in his own family life, refused to do more than attend the light, but there was on the station a relieving keeper, Assistant Stan King, whose relief stint had ended but who had to wait two months for the next supply trip to leave. He was employed in doing repairs. Mrs. Hague was anxious to have her husband's body taken from the island for burial, but Deal Island had no means of communicating with passing ships except a heliograph or smoke signals. Both methods were tried but no ship came close enough to see them. So Assistant King used to row out to try and catch anything that appeared on the horizon. He must have known it was useless

and he would have only done it for Mrs. Hague's sake. Finally he refused to try any more and said there would have to be an island burial. Each station was supposed to have sufficient material for six coffins, but at the time there was none on Deal. Mrs. Hague and the assistant requisitioned the pine kitchen tables from two dwellings and contrived a casket. All this time – 12 days – so the story has it, the body lay in the bath, that being considered the coolest place on the island. At last the internment took place, with Mrs. Hague reading the burial service over her husband's body. For some years she was given a free trip on the lighthouse boat once a year to visit the grave.

The event had an embarrassing sequel a few years later. The Head Keeper, Roderick Johnston, had sent three of his four children to boarding school in Hobart and the time came for the youngest daughter to follow them. When she arrived and was given her place on the bathing roster, she announced loftily that she never had baths and did not have to. Lighthouse children were always regarded as curiosities, at school until people became used to them. They were thought to have webbed feet, to go bare foot, (as of course they did whenever they could) to live on a strange diet and, in short to be quite uncivilised. Besides they were quite ignorant of film star idols and knew nothing of current football heroes. But they were usually well ahead of their age group academically, having had intensive one-to-one teaching by parents who were anxious that they would not be at a disadvantage. However, this latest claim simply reinforced the belief that they were little better than savages. Mrs. Johnston was applied to for comment and revealed the reasons behind her daughter's refusal to bath. On taking over the station her daughter had been told the story of Hague's death and became hysterical at the thought of using the bath at the house. She was therefore allowed to be bathed at the kitchen fire in a galvanised tub, on the condition she did not reveal the reason to the rest of the children when they came home for their holidays. It was not until several decades later that the young woman, now Mrs. Edwards of Cradoc in the Huon, revealed why she had been given special treatment.³¹

Marooned With The Dead.

Woman Who Had to Superintend Her Husband's Funeral.

How the Federal Authorities inflicted a Cruel Blow on the Wife of a Dead Lighthouse Keeper, Cut Off from the World in Bass Strait.

Six hours sail due south of Wilson Promontory, lies an island of tragedy. You will find it on the map under the name Deal Island – a speck of land at the extremity of what is known as the Kent Group, and about midway between Tasmania and the mainland.

Perched on the southern edge of the sea lane, through which passes the Eastern bound coastwise traffic, the lighthouse, 1,000 feet above sea level flashes through the fogs of Bass Straits, a warning of dangerous waters wherein the bones of the s. s. *Karitane*, lay awash.

One evening six weeks ago, while that eye of the light was peering into the gathering gloom its keeper died. His widow is in Hobart, her mind full of the harrowing experience and wondering at the strange decree of fate which after 23 lonely years as a lighthouse keepers wife.

The story of these outposts of civilisation around the Australian coast has yet to be written. When it is told it will read like a Conrad romance. But the people whose destiny is to keep alight the lanterns are silent folk – as silent as the rocks upon which they live.

Thus it comes about that after three weeks in Hobart, only to 'Smith's Weekly' has Mrs. Hague told the story of an episode which is tragedy in the darkest form, and even then her reason for seeking the services of the journal was, she says, that public may be

³¹ Op. cit. Stanley

stirred to demand that the Commonwealth Government's Lighthouse Service Department shall give a fairer deal to whose lives are lived in the strange places.

Here, then, is the story of the death of Thomas Hague, head light keeper on Deal Island, and of his burial within the shadow of the tower.

A Grim Jest.

Towards the latter end of September, Hague who had been on leave in Melbourne, returned to Deal Island and resumed duty. He appeared to be then, as he had invariably been, in the best of health. Certainly his demeanour gave no indication whatever that death was hovering near him. It may be, however, that he knew something, but knowing, said nothing.

For two days after his return, he went about his duties as usual. On the second day, there called at the island a fishing boat, the skipper of which was a lifelong friend of the Hague's. They chatted far into the evening, and as the visitor rose to go uttered a grim jest. "Ah, well", he said, "I will say goodbye, we do not often meet and Lord knows when we will see one another again. I am the only one left out of seven brothers and who knows but, what I may drop dead tonight."

Hague laughed, though usually he was a man who hated to talk about death.

Then he capped his visitor's jest with the remark:

"And perhaps I will be dead before you come this way again".

At the end of two days, the grisly joke had been translated into fact.

The Keeper's Will.

On the third day after returning home, Hague appeared rather strange. He altered the routine of the day – a thing he had never done before. That night he was sitting at the table writing. "What's that you are doing" asked his wife. "Nothing" he replied.

But Mrs. Hague looked over his shoulder and saw he was making out a will. "Don't be so silly" she said, and snatched the paper away from him and put it in the drawer.

It was an action of evil consequences. Today the trouble attaching to the recovery of an intestate estate is hers in full.

Collapsed and Died.

Towards the close of the afternoon of the following day, Mr. And Mrs. Hague, their two daughters and Stanley King a young assistant at the lighthouse, set out to look for a heifer calf that had strayed. Later, they rested at a spot from which could be seen a wonderful panorama of adjacent islets and of the ocean.

As they sat there, Hague fell over sideways against his wife. He was dead.

Then followed for the widow, three weeks of nightmare existence. Her companions on the island were her two little girls, young King, and Hooper, the assistant light-keeper and his wife. The awful happening so unnerved Hooper, that he was incapable of giving much help. He is another whom Fate has dealt unkindly. While on the light at Macquarie Harbour years ago he saw the *Kawatiri*, a small coasting steamer on which his wife and child were travelling, dashed to pieces on the rocks at Hell's Gate, as the entrance to the harbour is known. He swears, that above the howling of the storm, he heard his wife calling to him for help as the vessel sank.

Fate Again.

Young King played the part of a hero. After helping to get the body back to the house, he set out in a dinghy to reach a bay, in which the fishing vessel owned by Hague's friend had anchored. He risked his life in doing this, as there was a gale blowing, and a high sea running. After three hours battling, he reached the opposite shore and then had to clamber over miles of steep cliffs and rugged coastline before he made the bay.

Returning to Deal Island with King, the fisherman decided to make sail at once for Welshpool on the Victorian coast, in order to advise the Lighthouse authorities of what had happened, but again Fate played a cruel trick, for the wind swung around to the west and blew with such force that the yawl was unable to leave the bay.

Wife's Terrible Ordeal.

Hague died on Tuesday, September 23, he was buried on Deal Island the following Friday morning. It fell to the lot of the widow – her father had been an undertaker – to

show King and Hooper how to make a coffin from some pine boards and a table top. There was no other timber available.

King dug a grave and with Hooper, while Mrs. Hague read the burial service lowered the coffin and completed the sextons service. As he shovelled the last sods into the hole he fainted.

All this time the wind had been blowing hard from the west, and it was not until Sunday night that it moderated sufficiently for the fishing boat to leave the adjacent island and make for Welshpool, six hours sail distant. They reached Welshpool early on Monday morning and immediately got into telephone contact with the Lighthouse authorities in Melbourne.

Dreadful Callousness.

What followed is a damning indictment of the callousness of Commonwealth officialdom. The message transmitted by the fishermen was that help should be sent to Mrs. Hague immediately. It was not more than reasonable in the circumstances that this should be complied with at once. There was nothing to prevent help being sent. The Lighthouse steamer *Lady Loch*, was lying at anchor at Wilson Promontory and could have reached Deal Island in four or five hours, but it was not until three weeks later that the vessel was despatched to the scene of the tragedy.

If there is an explanation for this amazing delay, Mr. Pratten, as Minister for Trade and Customs, in charge of the Lighthouse Service should demand that it be given.

Out of sight, out of mind, seems to be the attitude of the Department towards its employees, for it does not even take the trouble to end a doctor around with the *Lady Loch*, when she is paying her periodical visits to the lights, some of which do not have a vessel calling for three or four months.

During the period which elapsed between her husband's death and the arrival of the *Lady Loch*, Mrs. Hague suffered an agony of mind such as might well have deprived her of her reason.

It seemed as though Fate had all the cards stacked against her. Two steamers passed, but on each occasion heavy fog prevented signals from the island being seen. The poor woman could not understand why her message to the authorities had been disregarded, and as day by day she kept fruitless vigil for the relief vessel her overstrung nerves and the strain of the suspense became more than she could stand.

"If help does not come tomorrow, I will smash the light" she said to Hooper.

She was spared the necessity of this by the arrival the next day of the *Lady Loch*.

To The Last Farthing.

With her two daughters and her household effects, Mrs. Hague was brought onto Hobart. Then the Department further proved its kindness and consideration, by billing her for the cartage of her goods from the wharf to her place of residence. And now, out of a few hundred pounds managed to scrape together during 30 years of loyal service to State and Commonwealth, both Federal and Tasmanian Treasuries are taking their cut in the form of death duties.

About the only thing that has not been done is to charge her for the six feet of earth in which her husband takes his long rest.

This case demand firstly that there be a thorough inquiry into the reason for the delay in sending help to the affected woman, secondly that she be relieved of all claims upon her transfer to her present home, and thirdly that she be relieved of the necessity of the small sum of money left by her husband depleted by State and Federal duties.

No Communications.

There is another matter, which also must be mentioned and which, in view of the Hague case, demands immediate attention. At the majority of island lights, there is some means of communication with the shore. On Deal Island there is nothing of the sort. An epidemic might break out there, and people die as in the present instance, but unless some vessel happens along there is no method by which the mainland can be advised until the *Lady Loch*, makes her periodical round. It is a scandalous state of affairs, and one, which should not be tolerated.

Statutory Declaration on the Death of John Hague.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

STATUTORY DECLARATION.

Note. Any person who wilfully makes a false statement in a Statutory Declaration is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment, with or without hard labour, for four years.

(a) Name in full and designation I (a) Robert John Hooper, Assistant Lightkeeper of (b) Deal Island in the State of Tasmania
(b) Address (official) do solemnly and sincerely declare that John Thomas Hague, Head Lightkeeper, at this station, whilst at some little distance from his home, in company of his wife, daughter and Assistant Lightkeeper Stanley King on September 23rd. 1924, at 6.30 pm. suddenly collapsed and died.
I believe the cause of death to be heart failure.
The body was buried on this island on the 26th. September 1924.

And I make this solemn declaration by virtue of the Statutory Declaration Act 1911, conscientiously believing the statements contained therein to be true in every particular.

Sd. Robert John Hooper
Declarant.

Declared at Deal Island the 14th. day of October 1924.

Before me
Archibald John Bradley

Commissioner for Declarations.³³

Karitane Wreck, 1921.

The steamship *Karitane* sailed from Devonport to Sydney on 23 December 1921 under the command of Captain Spain with a large and varied cargo, including several hundred tons of copper loaded at Strahan. Soon after clearing the Mersey Heads she encountered dense fog, which at times was so thick that the vessel's fore-castle could not be seen from the bridge.

At 7.30 am on the 24th. the *Karitane* ran without warning into the 1,000 ft. high cliffs at Deal Island in the Kent Group. Although backed off hurriedly, the vessel's bow had been crushed badly on both sides and the collision bulkhead was breached. The watertight

³² Smiths Weekly: 1924.

³³ National Archives Australia. P1130.

doors were also leaking and water was entering the engine room. Mattresses and other items were stuffed into the leaks, while the master endeavoured to steer the vessel to a suitable spot to beach her, but within a half a mile the fires were extinguished. The *Karitane* drifted ashore at Squally Cove, where her bow came to rest in thirteen feet of water and the stern sank in thirty feet of water, leaving the forecastle and superstructure exposed.

All hands landed safely in the boat, and as the vessel was not equipped with wireless, news of the mishap had to be taken to the lighthouse, from where it was relayed to the passing *s. s. Ceduna* which took it to Melbourne. The tug *Eagle* was dispatched to assist, but was withdrawn before arrival as the steamer was a total wreck.

All hands reached Launceston on the *s. s. Koori* and salvage parties subsequently managed to recover much of the vessel's copper cargo. The remains of the ship have been inspected by divers on many occasions, and lay spread over a large area of the seabed, dispersed by explosives used during the salvage operations, and the subsequent action of the sea. It is also believed that the wreck was used by the RAAF as target practice for training missions during World War II.

The *Karitane* had spent most of her career in the ore trade out of Macquarie Harbour, and had been involved in three accidents near the Heads. On the 15 January 1907, she stranded on the channel near Bonnet Island, her bottom being buckled to the extent that twenty-six plates had to be replaced. She had only just been repaired when she went aground near the same spot on the 24 March 1907, but after some of her cargo was lightened she came off undamaged. On the 13 December 1915, the *Karitane* hit rocks about a quarter of a mile off the Cape Sorell lighthouse, as a result of the second officer A. J. Lewis altering the course previously, set by the master J. C. Ross. An inquiry exonerated the master of all blame for the mishap, and no action could be taken against Lewis as he had left Australia.³⁴

'The Diver'- Good Work in Bass Straits. The *Karitane* Copper Successful Salvage.

When the Union Company's cargo carrier *Karitane* was wrecked at Deal Island, Bass Strait on Christmas Eve last, 4,500 bars of blister copper, 61 bags of copper precipitates and 21 bags of copper ore, worth about 25, 000 pounds at present market values disappeared beneath the waves. As a result of one of the most successful salvage enterprises on record all but 50 bars of copper have been recovered. The total loss amounted to about ½ per cent.

How that was accomplished was made in the story of the expedition, narrated by Mr. Leslie V. Waterhouse, of Neutral Bay, yesterday.

A salvage syndicate of which Messrs, D. Hambridge, A. Freeman, and L. V. Waterhouse were directors was found in Sydney in January. The ketch *Phil Forbes* was chartered and she left Sydney on February 6 with Mr. J. N. Dowling late mate of the *Karitane* and Mr. Waterhouse (who were to direct the work), and Diver, John Anderson and seven men aboard. At, Port Albert Victoria, Diver Johnstone who had rendered valuable war service in Scotland, and four extra hands were picked up, and the ketch arrived at the wreck on February 12.

The *Karitane* lay in Squally Cove, where she had beached on a sandy bottom, after striking a precipitous cliff during a fog. Not only was the sternpost fractured, but the bow plates were badly twisted and broken, and the bottom plates were all seriously damaged. At high water all but the forecastle, the chart room and a boat deck were submerged. The copper was distributed through the four holds, and was covered by one thousands sacks of Tasmanian market produce and some timber. When the party arrived, two months after the

wreck, the produce was in a advanced state of purification. So intense was the smell that the salvage party's meat supply went bad. The decaying vegetable matter, had to be first cleared out of the way. Holes were blasted in the ships side to expedite the removal of the rubbish, but it was impossible to dislodge it all and the salvage operations were hindered in consequences. Bales of hay split open when placed in slings, and impeded access to the copper, which was difficult to handle, because of the slime, made by rotten peas and turnips.

The party dived in the forecandle and chartroom and remained on board even during storms, which lasted a week. During the absence of the ketch, a bosun's chair was the sole connecting link to the island.

The divers attached slings to the copper, which was in bars of two hundredweight, and it was hauled to the deck, by hand winches and transferred to the ketch by means of a donkey winch. The *Phil Forbes* landed several hundred tons of copper at Burnie in four trips and 193 tons were transhipped to the steamer *Kooryna* and *Hall Caine* in Murray Pass, three miles away from the wreck. The concentrates, ore, and the ship's gear, which the party removed from the *Karitane* were bought onto Sydney by the ketch. The party escaped serious injury, though a diver had a few anxious moments. He was dumping bags of produce through a hole in the side of the ship, when he was caught in the surge of the sea, and carried through the hole. His life line was cut by the rough edged plate, but by means of his air pipeline, he was able to get back through the hole and to safety.

The loneliness of the lighthouse keeper's life was brought home to the party. The Government steamer calls once every three months, the keeper's and their families have little variety in their lives. The womenfolk were shy, when the party first landed, and they could not be persuaded to talk. This wore off gradually and when the salvors left, mothers and daughters wept bitterly on losing touch with civilisation again.³⁵

Tasmanian Shipwrecks in the Kent Group.

1816 – *Brothers*. The schooner *Brothers*, on a voyage from Port Dalrymple to Sydney under the command of Captain William Hovell, put into the Kent Group to shelter but was wrecked on the 'westernmost island' during an easterly gale on 25 June 1816. One of the crew, Daniel Wheeler was drowned, and the cargo of 800 bushels of wheat and 20 tons of salt was lost. A rather fool hardy attempt was made to reach Port Dalrymple, in a coracle made of twigs and seal skins was thwarted by gales in Murray Pass, and the nine survivors spent ten lonely weeks as castaways. They were finally rescued by the brig *Spring*, from Port Dalrymple to Sydney, which landed them at their intended destination on 6 September.

1819 – *Daphne*. One of Tasmania's most unfortunate early shipowners must surely have been Captain John Howard, for whom the year 1819 brought a series of disasters culminating in his death and the loss of three ships in Bass Strait. Arriving at Hobart as the master of the ship *Duke of Wellington*, on 22 October 1817, he had later taken over the European Store at Macquarie Point, Hobart and purchased the schooner *Henrietta Packet*, for the Sydney trade. The first sea going vessel built in Tasmania, the vessel was soon lengthened and renamed *Young Lachlan*. However on 27 February 1819 the *Young Lachlan*, was seized by a party of thirteen convicts, who escaped to Java in her. Three months later, Howard learned that the stock he had consigned on board the *Duke of Wellington*, for Mauritius had all died. He had just purchased the brig *Daphne*, at Sydney, and now resolved to rebuild his fortunes by selling his local assets and acquiring a cargo of seal skins for the Indian market. The *Daphne* sailed from Sydney for the Bass Straits Islands on the 10th. October 1819, and arrived at the Kent Group on the 26th. to shelter

³⁵ Sydney Morning Herald: 1922.

from heavy westerly gales. Captain Howard and many of his crew went ashore in the longboat, and then noticed that the brig was dragging its anchors. By the time too order to veer out more cable had reached the ship, she was too close to the rocks for this to be done, and all hands left her in the boats. Shortly afterwards the *Daphne* went onto the rocks and broke up in ten minutes. The longboat managed to recover a cask of flour and some pieces of salt beef, which was all that could be recovered from the wreck. On 4 November, Howard, the chief officer and three crew left in the longboat for Port Dalrymple. They were blown eastwards by heavy gales and then headed for Hobart, where they arrived on the 14th. Howard then chartered the sloop *Governor Sorell* to assist those left at the Kent Group.

1819 – *John Palmer*. On the 21st. November 1819, the schooner *John Palmer* on a voyage from Launceston to the Bass Strait Islands, probably sealing, put into the Kent Group to shelter from heavy gales. The eight castaways from the *Daphne* including two women passengers were located and four were taken on board, along with a bag of 400 dollars belonging to Captain Howard, bringing to fourteen the total complement of the schooner. While beating out of Murray's Pass two days later, however, the schooner mis-stayed and went onto the rocks at East Island. Like the *Daphne* four weeks earlier the *Daphne*'s passengers as well as Captain Howard's dollars were lost. The two groups of castaways did not get back together again, and the schooners Master, Captain Bastian, the owner, and part of the crew later reached Launceston in one of the boats.

1831 – *Ionia*. The scow *Ionia* on a voyage from Mauritius to Sydney, with a cargo of sugar under the command of Capt. C. I. Buck, was totally wrecked in the Kent Group in Bass Strait, on 2 September 1831. The Hobart press stated that three lives were lost, although a letter from the master to the Civil Commandant at Launceston stated that all hands landed safely. The longboat was stoved and took some time to repair before Buck and six of his crew were able to leave for Launceston in it, arriving on the 25th. The Government cutter the *Opossum* was immediately sent to assist, but returned with only an anchor, cable and sails from the wreck, the remaining castaways having previously been taken off by another vessel.

1848 – *Pedlar*. On 26 August 1848 the schooner *Pedlar*, sailed from Melbourne to Port Albert with three passengers and a cargo including 247 bags of sugar and 25 chests of tea, under the command of Clement Powell. She was driven off course by heavy gales and forced to seek shelter in the Kent Group. Here, on 2 September, her cables parted and she was swept onto the rocks, rapidly going to pieces. All hands landed safely, and the master being picked up soon afterwards by the schooner *John Bull*, and the remainder by the schooner *Dew Drop*, they were landed at Melbourne on 19 September and Hobart 1 October, respectively.

1850 – *Ida*. The schooner *Ida*, sailed from Melbourne to Launceston on 24 April 1850 in ballast, under the command of Captain James Anderson. She met with dreadful weather, part of her bulwarks being washed away, and the cook was nearly killed, when a cask of water fell from the deck across his chest while he was below. Then the ballast shifted, and the schooner ended up on her beam-ends, half full of water. Forced to run before the wind, the master decided to seek shelter at the Kent Group, and dropped anchor off Deal Island on the 27th. Conditions continued to remain rough, and the vessel dragged her anchors and went ashore, breaking up within two hours. All hands landed safely and were taken to Launceston by the barque *Victoria Packet*, which was also forced to shelter at the Kent Group because of the gale. The only things saved from the wreck were a few spars that were washed ashore.

1852 – *Dorset*. The brig *Dorset*, sailed from Hobart to Melbourne under the command of Captain Birdwood on 21 May 1852 with twenty-nine passengers but was wrecked on the

Kent Group on the 28th. Although the circumstances do not appear to have been reported in the press, all hands landed safely, and recovered much of the cargo. Some of her compliment arrived at Geelong on board the brigantine *Margaret and Mary*, on 23 June, and others at Melbourne on board the schooner *Lady Leigh*, on 7 July.

1852 – *Mary*. The brig *Mary*, Newcastle to Melbourne with coal, parted from her cables and went ashore in the Kent Group on the morning of 1 August 1852. All hands landed safely, two passengers reaching Melbourne on board the barque *Gratitude* and eight others on the schooner *Spy*, which had also stranded nearby but was soon refloated. The brigs master, chief officer, and four of the crew remained behind to help salvage until the vessel broke up, and reached Melbourne on board the *Victorian Packet* on 7 September.

1855 – *Elizabeth Mason*. The schooner *Elizabeth Mason* was on a voyage from New Zealand to Geelong with potatoes, under the command of Captain McIntyre, when she was wrecked on the Kent Group on 1 June 1855. All hands landed safely, but were forced to remain on the island for some time before being rescued. The master and two crewmen were eventually picked up by the schooner *Agnes* 113 tons, Captain Foyle and landed at Melbourne on 19 June while the remainder were picked up by the barque *Nautilus* which landed them at Geelong on the same date.

1856 – *Kendall*. The schooner *Kendall* sailed from Newcastle to Melbourne with 210 tons of coal on 25 August 1856, probably under the command of Captain Romeyn Mead, but was subsequently wrecked on the Kent Group. The crew were later picked up by the brig *River Chief* which was in the process of suffering a protracted voyage from Newcastle to Sydney and was twice forced back to Twofold Bay by severe gales. On 13 October the *River Chief* was spoken by the schooner *Emma Prescott* when it was reported that the *Kendall* crew were on board, but when she finally arrived in Melbourne on 3 November there were no passengers. Evidently the *Kendall's* crew were left at Twofold Bay, and consequently no account of her loss appears to have been published.

1859 – *Melbourne*. Early on the morning of 15 August 1859 the brig *Melbourne*, Captain Shelton, encountered a heavy gale of the Curtis Group, which left her virtually crippled with her decks swept and her only boat washed away. The master decided to bear up to the Kent Group, arriving later that day and dropped anchor in East Cove. However, she dragged her anchors and went ashore and was a total wreck. All hands were rescued by the lighthouse boat and later taken to Melbourne by the schooner *Pilot*.

1863 – *General Jessup*. The barque *General Jessup*, sailed from Hobart to Port Albert on 25 June 1863 under the command of Captain Hodge. By the 7 July she was labouring in the Straits in a gale that was to claim six other wrecks on the Victorian coast, and bore up to the Kent Group for shelter. She anchored in eight fathoms off Deal Island, dragged her anchors and went ashore at 6 pm. and within half an hour was broadside to the beach. All hands landed safely and recovered much of the vessel's gear. Most were picked up by the schooner, *Vibilia* on the 13th. and were landed in Melbourne on the 16th. A month later the master of the schooner *Circassian*, reported that the wreck had been washed high up on the beach.

1866 – *Boscarne*. The schooner *Boscarne*, sailed from Hokitika, New Zealand to Melbourne on the 13th. January 1866 under the command of Captain Black. After encountering heavy south-westerly gales in Bass Strait on the 25th. her master sought shelter under the Kent Group. Conditions having improved markedly by noon on the 26th. he decided to get under way again, only to have his ship struck by a heavy squall off Erith Island that threw her aback and completely disabled her. An anchor was dropped, but did not hold, and the vessel drifted onto the island. After much effort she was hauled off using the kedge anchor, but when the rope broke the *Boscarne*, went ashore again and broke up

rapidly. On the following day the lighthouse boat rescued all hands, and they remained at the lighthouse until being taken off by the barque *Anglo Saxon*, on 22 February, and were landed at Melbourne.

1875 – *Essie Black*. The barque *Essie Black* Newcastle to Port Adelaide with coal under the command of her owner Captain Thomas I. Sivier, was totally wrecked or foundered in the vicinity of the Kent Group on or about 1 December 1875 with the loss of all hands. After a gale lashed the Kent Group on that day, the lighthouse staff found large quantities of wreckage washed ashore and on the 21st. the *Essie Black's* stern, with the name legible was found on the north-western part of the group by the crew of the ketch *Stormbird* which was delivering stores to the lighthouse. Following gales in May 1876, large quantities of wreckage came ashore on points all around Bass Strait, including the Hunters, King Island, the Kent Group and northern Flinders Island, much of which was believed to have come from the wreck of the *Essie Black*.

1877 – *Bulli*. On 25 June 1877 the steam collier *Bulli*, sailed from Bulli, N. S. W. for Point Lempriere, River Tamar, with 450 tons of coal under the command of Captain Randall. After encountering heavy southerly gales in Bass Strait she dropped anchor at West Cove, Erith Island in the Kent Group on the afternoon of 28 June. Around midnight conditions had improved sufficiently for the master to get underway, but he soon changed his mind and decided to put back to West Cove. In cutting to close to Erith Island, the vessel hit a rock, which left her leaking freely in the bows. The *Bulli*, was anchored at the northern end of West Cove and some of the cargo was jettisoned to free her, but suddenly the engine room began to fill, possibly as a result of the forward bulkhead failing. She sank rapidly up to her topmasts, the stern lying in about fifty feet of water and the bow in forty.

All hands, twenty-seven in number left the ship in boats before the *Bulli*, sank, and landed on Erith Island. On the following day the s. s. *Tararua*, answered their signals of distress, took them on board and landed them at Melbourne on 1 July. An attempt to hold an inquiry in Melbourne shortly afterwards was aborted when it was found that the Victorian authorities, had no jurisdiction over incidents concerning vessels that were neither on the Victorian register nor on voyages to or from its ports. An inquiry then was held in Sydney in late July, at which it was considered that the master had made two grave errors of judgement, in cutting too close to the rocks in the first place, and then anchoring instead of beaching the vessel. However they did not suspend his certificate.

A relatively new vessel, which had not suffered major damage before the sinking, considerable efforts were made to refloat the *Bulli*. In 1879, Mr. E.H.T. Bottrel of Sydney formed a company to refloat the vessel, and after two years of work, it was reported close to success when a gale in March 1882 destroyed the lighters brought to the Kent Group for the purpose. The syndicate was reported to have lost over 10,000 pounds in the attempt. The wreck remains a popular dive site to this day.

1881 – *Enterprise*. Oddly enough the *Enterprise* had previously been purchased by W. J. Taylor as a wreck. This was after she had been stranded at East Cove, Deal Island on 29 June 1881, while on a voyage from Sydney to Portland Bay with coal under the command of Captain Holyman. The crew were later picked up by the barque *Verulam*, and transferred to the s. s. *Albatross*.

1930 – *Ida N*. In January 1930 the fishing vessel *Ida N*, was attempting to get under way from Erith Island in the Kent Group after sheltering from a gale, when her engine failed at a critical moment and she drifted ashore. The crew of three escaped in a motor dinghy with a small quantity of provisions and remained three days on the island until the lighthouse staff saw their smoke signals. A wireless message was sent to the Victorian Government steamer *Lady Loch*, which on the 21st. rescued the master, Captain Busk and recovered salvage including the vessel's spars, sails and engine. The other crew, owners H. and A. Neave remained behind to continue salvage operations.

1961 – The motor vessel *St. Nicholas* was sheltering from gales in the Kent Group when her cables parted in heavy weather and she went ashore at West Cove (or Bulli Bay) on the night of 1 July 1961. The crew of four landed safely and made unsuccessful attempts to refloat the vessel with the assistance of the fishing boats *Julie Elizabeth* and *Fairwind*. Her rusty remains are still visible, partly buried in the sand.

St. Nicholas was an unregistered steel twin - screw motor vessel of 45 tons. Built at Williamstown during the closing stages of the Second World War, she had not been completed at the close of hostilities and was promptly mothballed. Early in 1961 she was fitted out to freight fish from Tasmanian and Victorian coastal ports to Melbourne, following the installation of twin diesel engines and a 20 ton refrigerated hold. Although not a fishing vessel as such, she was licensed as one for Tasmanian waters, no doubt to allow her to carry cargoes of fish. Making her maiden voyage to Fortescue Bay in May, the sixteen old vessel was wrecked after an operational career of barely five weeks.³⁶

Plane Damaged on Landing on Deal Is. 1933.

Correspondence from Max Huxley.

This is the plane that damaged its undercarriage when it landed on Deal Island, it is on the bottom whim trolley about to be taken down to the jetty for loading on the ship *Jane Moorhead*, the ship that took it away from the island. I am not sure of the man at left of picture, it could be lightkeeper Smithem. Next to him is my father Cyril Huxley (assistant keeper) the young girl is Anne Johnston, the man in the hat is Jim Burgess, a cray fisherman and a friend of the family, regular visitor to the island. Next is Roderick Johnston (head keeper), and the last man's name I have completely forgotten. He used to do a lot of work in the blacksmith's shop, making horse shoes, shoeing horses, repairing the whim, chains, winching gear, iron tyres on the carts etc. used to love to watch him at work heating up the coals with the huge bellows, belting pieces of red hot metal on the anvil and sending up showers of sparks from the big grind stone.

Correspondence from Christian Bell.

Sometime after I received Max's letter I received a call from Nel Edwards (nee Johnston) who was the little girl featured in the photo in front of the crashed VH – UPR. She supplied to me recently two photo's of a Gypsy moth VH – UHG with her sitting in the cockpit. This aircraft is likely to be a photo of the first aircraft to land on Deal Island. I decided last week to track down the registrations of both aircraft from CASA and see what became of these planes after their associations with Deal.

To my surprise I found that the VH – UPR (a Desoutter 11) is still in flying condition (after being restored) seventy years after it crashed landed on Deal. Its owner N. Wilson, says it is the oldest aircraft still flying in the Southern hemisphere. He has some additional photo's of the crashed aircraft being loaded on at the jetty (but he thought the crash had occurred on King Island, rather than Deal) and will send me a recent photo of the Desoutter.

Correspondence from Anthony McArthur, CASA.

A search has been conducted of CASA's records as per your request.

VH – UPR, a Desoutter 11 serial number D.35 was first registered on the register on 6 December 1930 to Hart Aircraft Service P. L. of Aerodrome, Essendon, Victoria. Changes to the ownership occurred on 29 March 1932 to L. Abrahams of St. Kilda Road, Melbourne, Vic. and on 28 October 1932 to Hart Aircraft Service P. Ltd.

The aircraft was struck off the register on 27 October 1933 when the registration lapsed after an accident on 3 July 1933. The aircraft struck a tree while taking off at Sale, Vic. sustaining damage to the rear fuselage and undercarriage.

VH – UPR was returned to the register on 22 March 1934 by Hart Aircraft Service Pty. Ltd. Changes of ownership then occurred on 24 August 1937 to Victoria & Interstate Airways Ltd. Of Aerodrome, Essendon, Vic. On 25 February 1943 to L. Bickerton & L. White of 92A Cremorne St. Richmond, Vic. On 31 December 1943 to J. L. & T.G. Roche of 5 Morton Av. Carnegie, Vic. On 14 June 1945 to F.J. Williams of 64 Nelson St. Nhill, Vic, on 9 May 1951 to W. Campbell-Hicks of 126 Bathurst St. Condobolin, NSW, and on 7 November 1956 to L. Howarth of Back Micabil, Tullibigeal NSW.

The aircraft was withdrawn from use on 4 November 1957 on expiry of its certificate of airworthiness and struck off the Australian Civil Aircraft Register on 5 September 1960.

VH – UPR has been returned to the register on 1 September 1999 by N. Wilson of Melbourne, Vic. And is still currently registered.

VH – UKG, De Haviland DH – 60G Gypsy Moth, serial number 897, was first added to the Australian Civil Aircraft Register on 20 February 1929 by Air Taxis Ltd. of 92B Pitt St. Sydney. NSW. The aircraft was struck off the register on 29 April 1931.

VH – UKG was returned to the Australian Civil Aircraft Register on 5 June 1931 by Haultam & Chapman of Western Junction Aerodrome, Launceston, Tas. and struck off the register again on 26 October 1931. Details of why the aircraft was struck off the register are not available.

The aircraft was again returned to the register on 14 December 1931 by Haultman & Chapman. A change of ownership occurred on 16 December 1931 to N. M. Chapman of 35 North Rd. Elwood, Vic. Another change of ownership occurred on 20 December 1932 to S. Devine of Railway Hotel, Warragul, Vic.

VH – UKG was again struck off the register on 5 January 1935.

The aircraft was returned to the register on 4 June 1935 by B. A. Hall and W. C. Allen of Telegraph Chambers, Queen St. Brisbane, Qld.. A change of ownership occurred (date not available) to C. H. C. Swaffield of Stanley St. Rockhampton, Qld. Another change of owner occurred on 30 July 1936 to the Royal Queensland Aero Club of Eagle St. Brisbane Qld.

VH – UKG was struck off the Australian Civil Authority Register on 8 July 1940 when impressed into the RAAF as A7-84.

Transcript of a radio talk by Roderick Johnston in 1933.

We are situated here in the middle of Bass Straits, somewhere removed from the beaten track, but still in touch with the outside world through the wonders of radio.

Wilson Promontory, the nearest Victorian mainland station is 50 miles away to the WNW and the Furneaux Group on the other side of us, 35 miles to the ESE. This is one of the Kent Group of islands, the others being Erith and Dover, $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to the West and North East Island about a mile and half to the North East. The area of this island is about 5 square miles, about half being cleared. The other half being deep gullies and high hills, is heavily scrubbed and forms quite a sanctuary for birds of all hues and also for the native marsupials. There are only two families on the island, the other keeper (the Huxley's) having his quarters on top of the island over 2 miles away.

On the west side of the island is the landing jetty, situated in a lovely bay that is perfectly sheltered from all easterly weather, a regular haven of refuge for the cray fishing fleet who sometimes get caught in the easterlies that sweep with such force through Bass Strait. A beautiful sandy beach shelves somewhat steeply into the water here and immediately behind it, the land rises abruptly to a height of 300 feet before flattening out to a slight level. A haulage runs from the jetty up to this level, the grade for the first half being 1 in 1 decreasing in the half to 1 in 3.

On this first level then, we, the head keeper quarters, the wireless mast engine and the wireless sheds. Also, the stable for the two station horses, the chaff shed, cart shed etc. Two white picketed graves bear testimony to the Reapers activities, here as elsewhere. A

walk of 2 miles brings us to the foot of South Bluff. A second haulage not quite so steep as the first one, runs from the foot of the Bluff to the top. Here are the lighthouse, the oil store and the other lightkeeper's quarters. The view from the top of the tower will repay the trouble. To the westward is clearly seen the South West Island, the Judgement Rocks. The Devil's Tower, Curtis Group, the Split Rock and further still Rodondo and Wilson Promontory.

To the NW is the Hogan's Group and 18 miles away and close up to the Victorian shore in the same direction is Clifty Island. To the South East, Flinders Island looms up prominently and in very clear weather Prime Seal and Chappel islands are plainly visible. The lighthouse is 957 feet above sea level here, reputed to be the highest in the Southern Hemisphere. It was established in 1846 and is visible in clear weather at a distance of about 60 miles.

Of the events which have occurred on the island in recent years, three are outstanding.

The first was the wreck of the USS Cob cargo steamer *Karitane*, on the SE point of the island on the morning of Dec. 24, 1921 in thick fog. She was proceeding from Strahan on the West coast of Tasmania to Sydney, loaded with a general mixed cargo, amongst which were several hundred tons of copper ingots. Fortunately, no lives were lost, as the captain was able to run her up on the beach in Squally Cove, just below the lighthouse. There she still rests; her forward decks awash, her after decks submerged and the bridge still standing well out of the water. The wreck is an object of interest to all the visiting yachtsmen who like to fish from the top of the chartroom and catch their dinner alive and kicking out of no. 2 hold.

The second event was the landing on the island on the evening of October 17, 1931 of a Gypsy moth aeroplane. To us who have not seen much more of these than is provided by the illustrated papers, the landing of a real live aeroplane at our back door was a notable occurrence. The dread that something was wrong was quickly dispelled when the pilot stepped out of the cockpit and in answer to our enquires said that everything was OK. He merely wanted to know whether we can accommodate him for the night and expressed the hope that he had not dropped in too late for tea (under the circumstances, dropped in was quite in order).

The third event happened in January, 1933. This also was a landing of a plane on the island, but on this occasion the engine had stalled and the landing was a forced one. The undercarriage was broken, but fortunately neither the pilot nor passenger were injured. Since then however we get quite used to planes flying overhead. The Hart Aircraft Co. mail service plane Tasman (Melbourne to Launceston via Flinders) has been passing here twice weekly, also Holyman's plane, Miss Launceston, and last Monday no less than six planes and a flying boat passed here within a couple of hours of each other. Mr. Turner, pilot of the Tasman never forgets to drop us a bundle of reading matter whenever the weather permits, an act of thoughtfulness that we all greatly appreciate. So great had been the stride of radio and aviation have made lately that it seems a far cry from the days of when on at least two Tasmanian lights the carrier pigeon was the only means of communication from one quarterly visit of the store ship to the next. As a general rule the first three that got released on the third week after the boat had left had some chance of getting to the destination. They would be in fair flying condition and provided that the day was clear and the wind favourable they had a fair sporting chance. But the last three that were released after 12 weeks of confinement had in the meantime accumulated so much fat that they became easy prey for the hawks. So that taking it on the whole, whatever their value converted into vitamins, as carriers of urgent and important messages they failed to live up to their reputation.

It is not such a far cry back to the days, when on two Tasmanian lighthouses, the carrier pigeon was king. But we are getting so used to the use of the radio for urgent calls and for summoning medical aid in case of illness that we hardly realise by what a very slender thread the Fate sometimes kept us dangling. The carrier pigeon all said and done, was a very uncertain method of bridging the gap to civilization but with radio we feel that security, which greatly conduces to our piece of mind and certainly to our general welfare.

Wartime RAAF Air Crash – 1943.

On Sept. 23, 1943 an Oxford RAAF plane crashed on Deal Island killing its occupants. The following is an account of the events surrounding the incident.

At 9.30 am on the 23rd. September 1943 Acting Head Keeper Ford was in the wireless room when he sighted a plane travelling at about 2,000 feet in a SW direction. It appeared to do about 3 or 4 slight rolls, then straightened out and suddenly nose dived behind the hills. Mr. Ford thought the plane may have been doing exercises and waited for it to reappear, which it did not. He then received a phone call from lightkeeper Munro who had also seen the aircraft and reported that his wife had heard a crash. Mr. Munro was instructed to proceed to the tower to see if anything was in sight, while Mr. Ford notified Wilson Promontory of the incident.

After Mr. Munro was unable to sight any sign of the aircraft from the tower, Mr. Ford's daughter, Aileen was asked to standby the wireless while the two keepers set out to search the south east end of the island. Mr. Munro headed for Squally Cove and Mr. Ford towards a gully and SE hills. It was near the top of the gully that Mr. Ford noticed what appeared wreckage across the gully. He then made his way through thick bush and reached the aircraft, which was badly smashed. Mr. Ford signalled to Mr. Munro to return to the station. It appeared that the plane had hit head on and ploughed about 30 yards through the scrub. One airman was pinned under the wreckage, whilst the other was a few yards clear. Both were dead. Unable to do anything else and wearied by his trek through the bush, Mr. Ford made his way back to the station and reported what he had seen.

RAAF personnel were landed from a ship on the 24th. September 1943 and were guided to the scene of the accident, where 4 bodies were located. Due to the difficult terrain the RAAF team made a request to the mainland that they be allowed to bury the bodies on site. This request was granted and the bodies were buried on 25th. September 1943. Two RAAF padres conducted the service.

An enquiry was held and the 2 lighthouse keepers gave sworn evidence.

On the 22 March 1944, a request was received from the Directorate of Grave Registrations to have the remains transferred to the Victorian War Memorial Cemetery at Springvale, Victoria.

Permission was granted and the lighthouse re-supply vessel the M.V. *Cape York*, was used to transport the caskets back to Melbourne. They arrived at Nelson St. Pier, Williamstown on 8 June 1944.

Wartime Tragedy on Deal Island.

“The Weekender” Saturday, November 19, 1988.

On the morning of September 23, 1943 an Oxford RAAF craft left the base at East Sale in Victoria to participate in an anti-submarine exercise. It carried a crew of four.

It was just after 9.30 am. September 23, 1943. World War II was raging throughout the globe, but for Mr. Henry Ford, head lightkeeper on remote Deal Island in Bass Strait the conflict was many miles away, something to read in the papers and heard on radio news.

Suddenly overhead a plane appeared, Mr. Ford looked up and spotted an Airspeed Oxford RAAF craft flying normally.

Then, in horror, he saw it, for no apparent reason, dive after rolling three or four times and straighten out then plunge into the ground on the slopes of a steep gully on his island. Four RAAF personnel were killed instantly.

Deal Island is part of the Kent Group, one of Tasmania's most remote and beautiful possessions.

If one was to draw a line between the tip of Wilson Promontory and the northern end of Flinders Island, bisect it, and one would come to the Kent Group. The Group is made up of three major and two minor islands and are perhaps the grandest in natural scenery of all the 126 islands and islets, which are situated in Bass Strait.

Deal Island is the major island of the group and is about 6.5 km. long in a north-south direction and just slightly smaller east-west.

It rises to nearly 300m with spectacular granite cliffs and has a number of delightfully secluded coves. To the west and separated by strong tidal currents of Murray Pass, lie the other islands, Erith and Dover.

The history of the Kent Group is very interesting.

The location has proven to be very important for shipping and scientific study, by being virtually in the centre of the Strait.

The discoverer of the Kent Group was Mathew Flinders, who sighted the islands from the schooner, *Francis*, in 1798.

The group was named in honour of Captain William Kent, who was commander of the *Supply*. It is believed that Governor Hunter gave the group its name and not Mathew Flinders as is sometimes thought.

The settlement at Port Phillip on the mainland saw the Kent Group become a hideout for pirates, sealers and escaped convicts.

In 1831, George Augustus Robinson, well known for his philanthropic feelings with the Tasmanians aborigines, found a number of sealers and escaped convicts living with aboriginal women at Garden Cove on Deal Island.

The killing out of the seals left the islands forgotten, till both the colonial governments of NSW and VDL became concerned over the alarming number of lives lost because of wrecking on the islands.

Consequently, in 1846 a decision was made to build a lighthouse on Deal Island.

In 1847, it was built with the help of bullock teams to pull the timber and quarried stone up the precipitous pitches to the site selected for the tower.

During the next decade, a fine house was erected. This belonged to the head keeper and his family.

Interestingly, Bishop Nixon (first Anglican Bishop of Tasmania) and Canon Brownrig visited the building to conduct divine service.

The light has the greatest elevation above sea level of all lighthouses in Australia. In February, 1921 the original revolving catoptric light apparatus was replaced by a fixed catadioptric lens, increasing the power of the light from under 2000 to 3000 candles.

In 1937 the fixed lens was replaced by a first order, revolving lens using a 1000 watt electric lamp as the light source, taking power from an engine driven generator plant installed near the tower.

In 1926, of some significance to our story, wireless telephone equipment was installed providing communication with the mainland. Before this the only means of communication was by the stores vessel or by hailing passing ships.

Towards the end of the last century, the Kent Group received a major scientific expedition from the Victorian Field Naturalists Club. Since then, there have been further expeditions studying the fauna and birds, up until the mid 1960's when the island was leased for grazing, the cattle and sheep in the care of the lighthouse keeper.

Around the waters of Deal Island lay several wrecks and on Christmas Day 1921 the island hosted the captain and crew of the vessel *Karitane*, which was wrecked just down below the lighthouse itself. The crew calmly walked onto the island to await rescue.

Later on the morning of September 23, 1943, an Oxford RAAF craft left the base at East Sale in Victoria to participate in an anti-submarine exercise. It carried a crew of four with Flight Sergeant Joseph Docherty in charge.

The A25 Oxford was designed for all aspects of aircrew training, the prototype first flying in England in 1937.

In Australia the A25 prefix was allocated for RAAF use, but the imported Oxfords retained their RAF serials. Although 391 Oxfords were shipped to Australia, the first aircraft was received on October 28, 1940.

The last was received March 20, 1944. The craft was employed mainly for pilot and navigation training, known as the "Ox-box".

In the years after the war, Oxfords remained with the RAAF as trainers and communications aircraft until they were finally withdrawn from service in 1953. Together with the Avro Anson, the Airspeed Oxford was responsible for all initial multi-engined training in the RAAF for over a decade. Maximum speed was 303 km/h.

The skies on the day over the lighthouse were clear. After rolling, the craft dived at an acute angle for about 300 metres and slammed into the ground of a steep gully.

Head lightkeeper, Ford, was an experienced observer. He saw other lighthouse work at Cape Everard, (now Point Hicks), at Cape Otway, Cliffy Island, Cape Nelson and Wilson Promontory. He was acting as head keeper at Deal Island while the regular occupant of that position was on wartime duties.....

Mr. Ford, the lightkeeper, made a sketch of the crash site and burial places which is lodged with the Australian Archives Office, Hobart, Tasmania. It is on public view.

Those that were buried were Sergeant Norman Graham (22), born in Burma and trained as a navigator; Flight Sergeant Joseph Docherty (30), born in Glasgow, Scotland and trained as an airman pilot, Pilot Officer Kenneth Cowling (19), born Bendigo, Victoria and trained as a gunner, Leading Aircraftman and Gunner Peter Hendrickson, (21), born Maryborough, Victoria and trained as a wireless operator and air gunner.

The bodies remained on the island for nearly eight months. In March 1944 a request was received from the Directorate of Graves Registrations to have the remains transferred to the Victorian War Memorial Cemetery at Springvale, Victoria.

Permission was granted and lighthouse re-supply vessel, the M.V. *Cape York*, was used to transport the caskets back to Melbourne. They arrived at Nelson St. Pier, Williamstown, on June 8, 1944.

Springvale is the principal war cemetery in Victoria. It is situated on an area of 158 ha set aside for burial purposes in the early part of the 20th. century by the Government of the day. It is on the Princess Hwy. 24km. by road from Melbourne.

All; except Flight Sergeant Docherty had family in Victoria.

Today the lighthouse on Deal Island is still manned, administered from Victoria through the Department of Transport and Communications.

It is a lonely dot in Bass Strait where once a tragic and forgotten accident occurred.

The cause of the crash has never been fully ascertained. The official preliminary report made the following day of the crash (September 24, 1943) states: "Probable Cause: Unknown". It is now believed by the Department of Defence that the probable cause was the craft being forced by violent air currents.

Was this the cause or not?

It still remains a mystery, the true answer being lost with the men who died on that day.³⁷

Lightning Starts Series of Fires – November 1951.

Extracts from Logbooks (Thurs 9 Nov.- Fri. 8 Dec. 1951)

Packing effects, Cleaning out paint shop, engines and wood rooms.
Lightning set tussocks on fire, burning down Garden Cove and Freestone way.

Fire still burning, kept watch until 3 pm. some rain fell about midnight & fire appears to be abating.

House duties, Head keeper packing effects, the fire just about out, just still burning slightly over Freestone way.

Fire flared up again during the night, started to come down gully from Freestone. L/K. Jackson and self, fighting fire, got it partly under control.

Monday 13th.

Jeep self starter jammed. Dismantled jeep s. starter and got jeep going again. A south easterly gale blew up during the afternoon, fanned the fire into a inferno, with ¼ mile front, advancing up the gully towards the Middle Quarters. Mr. Jackson proceeded to the Tower & Mrs. Jackson & child sheltering.

Showers during the day appear to have extinguished the fire, although a few puffs can be seen now and again from burning peat.

All quiet on the home front. Cutting and carting wood from fire. Fire flared up again with the S. Easterly wind, has a firm hold and sweeping up the gully towards the light. Watched fire all night, putting out small outbreaks.

Fire still burning up Lighthouse gully. L/K Jackson and self standing by. Mail ketch *Alpha*, arrived at 6.30pm with mail and stores. Departed m/n for return to Vic.

Fire still smouldering up Lighthouse Gully way. No danger while wind in the W. Fitted new centre bolt to jeep spring.

Fire still smouldering. House duties, keeping an eye on the fire.

Fire still smouldering, light rain falling, may do some good. Health of the station good.

Monday 20th.

Fire smouldering in odd places. General maintenance of Lighting plant. Head keeper packing effects, painting Tower quarters.

Fire still smouldering, mustering, killing and dressing sheep.

Fire still smouldering. Sending down Head keepers effects and D. I. Lighthouse returns.

Fire still smouldering, sending down H/K. effects. Overhauling jeep.

Fire still smouldering away up Lighthouse Gully. Cleaning outside lighthouse lantern house. Cutting thistles and clerical duties.

Cape York arrived. Mr. Ault and Mechanic arrived. Mr. Ault for inspection and mechanic installed battery charger plant for L. House lighting plant. *Cape York* completed work and departed at noon for Clifty Island. Mechanic starts plant overhaul.

Monday 27th.

Charging batteries house, Radio. Mechanic, Prince overhauling main lighting plant. Staff taking time off in lieu of o/time worked on *Cape York* day 25th.

Whimpering up Mr. Rixons effects, mechanic Prince overhauling main lighting plant.

Whimpering up Mr. Rixons effects and stowing away. Mechanic Prince overhauling main light.

Whimpering up drums and stowing same away. Mechanic Prince overhauling main light.

Whimpering up drums and stowing away. Mail ketch *Alpha* arrived at 6 pm with stores and mail. Departed for Port Albert at m/night.

Fire springs up again, heading towards 'Karitane' Bay, keeping it under observation. House duties.

Fire still burning over 'Karitane' way. Hot dry weather continues. Health of the station is good.

Monday 4th. December.

A hot north wind sprung up during the night, fanning the fire into a blaze, sweeping up towards the Middle Quarters. All hands standing by & attempting to keep the fire in the vicinity of the Quarters under constant attention, the fire passed the Middle Quarters.

So far all property and persons OK. Fire burned throughout the night. (a good effort on the part of Lightkeeper Jackson in getting to and from the light). Fire burned itself out about 5 am.

Fire completely gutted the old wooden quarters & contents also whim landing woodwork, main hauling whim unworkable.

Inspected damage at top, clearing away debris in burnt out quarters. Erected new telephone poles to carry alarm etc. 65 points of rain fell during the night, putting out many small fires.

Clearing trees and debris away from the road and the telephone line. Charging house radio battery. Mechanic Prince overhauling jeep.³⁸

Promotion to Head Lightkeeper.

Mr. K. P. Underwood.
Head Lightkeeper.
DEAL ISLAND.

Your provisional promotion to Head Lightkeeper, \$2236-2348, Position Number 55, Deal Island, as notified in the Commonwealth Gazette of 3. 11. 1966 was confirmed on 1. 12. 1966.

As you were in receipt of a higher salary than that of Head Lightkeeper, Deal Island, during your occupancy of the position of Lightkeeper, Gabo Island, no salary variation is applicable until you took up duty on promotion when your salary was varied from \$3001 (A) to \$2667 (A) per annum.

The Public Service Board recently advised that you were not considered fit for Superannuation and that you should become a contributor to the Provident Account. Consequently your contribution has been varied from \$3-62 to \$4-90 per fortnight, including the higher contribution applicable as Head Lightkeeper, Deal Island.

H. M. Head

Regional Controller,
Department of Shipping and Transport,
VICTORIA.

13th. December, 1966.³⁹

Plans to Pull Down Buildings. Correspondence from Stephen Murray Smith
Ti-tree Lane.

³⁸ National Arcives Australia. Log Book: 1949-53.

³⁹ NAA P1130.

Mount Eliza.
20 February 1967.

..... I went to see Captain Head and Conway. Head was out of his office and I didn't see him, but I wrote him a letter of appreciation, and told him what a marvellous job we thought you people were doing out there. With Conway I had a long talk, saying how lucky we felt the Department was to have people like the Underwoods and Duncans in their service – and also slinging in a few references to matters like a water supply and septic sewerage (I didn't mention the outboard – at this stage I didn't want to lay down the law to him to much). I also said how much the lighthouse people appreciated the work being done by Frank Gould, and how desirable it was that his contract should be renewed, so he could do up the *Marjorie Phyllis*, etc. Conway, as you know a terrible old stick-in-the-mud in many ways was sympathetic to everything I said. Remarked that there was a long term plan for Deal Island station, and that the question of the water supply was the first priority, but complicated by the poor quality of the Garden Cove creek water. One thing he did say worried me, and has annoyed Robert and the others too – that there is a definite plan to pull down Captain Brown's house. When I said that it was a fine and historic building that should be preserved, he said that it was an "eyesore". Clearly they are prepared to spend more money on pulling it down than on preserving it in a modest way. Anyway, I am sending photographs to the Tasmanian National Trust, together with a statement of its history and interest, and I will suggest to them that at least they demand from the Department prior notice of any intention to demolish it. It would be a tragedy to see it pulled down.....⁴⁰

Very best wishes to you all,
Stephen.

Correspondence from Commonwealth Departments regarding the preservation of the Head Lightkeepers House on Deal Island.

Department of Shipping and Transport

25 Oct 1967

The Secretary
Prime Ministers Department
Canberra A.C.T. 2600.

Preservation of Commonwealth Owned or Controlled Historic Buildings
And Structures.

It was the intention of this Department to demolish some old buildings associated with the lighthouse on Deal Island in Bass Strait.

2. However the National Trust of Australia (Tasmania) has made a written request for the preservation of one of these buildings because of historic interest. The following is an extract from this appeal:

This settlement has had a romantic and sometimes a dramatic history. Its chief historical and aesthetic interest today resides in the old headkeeper's home, dating back to the 1850's, as far as I can judge (perhaps earlier), and celebrated in accounts of 'missionary' voyages to the Bass Strait islands such as Bishop Nixon's, The Cruise of the Beacon (1857) and Canon Brownrigg's

⁴⁰ Op. cit. Bell.

The Cruise of the Freak (1872). Photographs of the front and rear of this house are attached. For purposes of convenience I and my friends refer to it as 'Captain Brown's house', after a well known headkeeper who was in charge of the island station for several decades in the late nineteenth century.

Architecturally the house is, I think you will agree, an interesting example of the type of nineteenth century domestic architecture and this impression is much heightened by internal inspection: the thick stone walls, the interesting deep cut doors and windows, the dormer rooms, even the lay-out of the back yard with its two detached storehouses are all variety of note. The walls of the house internally, are papered with pages from old magazines going back to 1870's. Altogether, from the point of view of history of lighthouse architecture and of colonial remains, this building is worthy of National Trust Classification 'B' or 'C'.

The house has not been occupied for a number of years, but remains in good repair. It is used as a store for lighthouse purposes, and its fabric, roof timbers, etc. are in excellent shape.

3. The National Trust of Australia therefore feels that this building presents an overwhelming case for preservation and has requested that we re-consider our plans for demolition.

4. Consequently this proposal is referred to your Department for consideration of an inspection of the lightstation buildings by a member of the inter-departmental committee, established under your auspices for the Preservation of Commonwealth Owned or Controlled Historic Buildings and Structures with possibly also a member of the National Trust (Tasmania) in attendance.

5. Meanwhile our plans for demolition will be deferred pending your reply.

D. C. L. Williams.
Secretary.

Department Of Works.

26th. March 1968.

The Secretary
Prime Minister's Department
Canberra A.C.T. 2600

Preservation Of Commonwealth Owned Historic Buildings
and Structures, Head Lighthouse Keepers House, Deal Island.

Reference is made to your 67/5937 of 9th. November and discussion at the second meeting of the Historic Buildings Committee.

The request for a survey of the old house may appear to be a relatively simple exercise but the probable of selecting a suitable officer and arranging for him to make a 21/2 hours very rough passage to the Island by fishing boat has taken some time to arrange.

When making the inspection, it was suggested a survey and report should be made of the Head Lighthouse Keepers House, with some comments on other buildings, together with some notes on the vegetation and marine life of the Island. It was thought that the old buildings and their environments were related to each other and that the report should cover both factors.

Coinciding with a request for us to make a survey of the old house, our Department was concerned with a programmed item of work, mainly 'improvements to the water supply' – and as a result of an earlier inspection by our Hydraulic Engineers, a suggestion has been made to utilise the roofs of the old house and other buildings as a catchment for rain water. This proposal is still relevant and it would in itself warrant restoration of the roof of the old building for this purpose.

The report 67/992 on the Historic Quarters, together with plans of the old house, photographs and maps relating to the project, are attached for your information.

It will be noted that Deal Island is within the Territory of Tasmania, but that it lies quite close to the tip of Wilson Promontory, which is preserved by the Victorian Government as a National Park. It is also understood that the island has natural vegetable cover and is reputed to be one of the most attractive islands in Bass Strait.

A copy of this report has been sent to the Department of the Interior, for them to report on the present ownership and tenure of the Island.

It should be noted that the report refers to an interest by Sir Garfield Barwick, President of the Australian Conservation Foundation, on one or some islands in Bass Strait as National Parks for the protection and preservation of land and marine flora and fauna.

With regard to the Head Lighthouse Keepers House, it is desired that the roof of this building should be retained as a catchment for rainwater and that the old building could be repaired at small cost. However, the report suggests that a walled garden should be formed and planted to improve and preserve the environment of the building.

If repaired and restored, the building could be used to house relief staff and provide some storage accommodation as at present. In addition, it could be used to provide accommodation for approved visitors to the Island who wish to study botanical and marine life.

In view of the information obtained on the beauty of the Island and its natural habitat for marine and bird life, it is suggested that the significance of the Island in this regard should receive further consideration. Preservation by the Commonwealth may not present undue difficulties since the property is reported to belong to the Commonwealth and the entry of a few selected visitors could overcome the isolation and loneliness problems which affect recruiting and postings of Lighthouse staff. Perhaps an added interest in conservation and protection, could add variety to the lives of these people and preserve for the Nation, one Island in Bass Strait with its flora and fauna intact.

Estimate

Restore House \$9.000

Garden	\$ 1,000
TOTAL	<u>\$10.000</u>

A copy of this letter and enclosures has been forwarded for information to Mr. Hunter of the Department of the Treasury.

A. S. Reiher
Director-General.

Department of Shipping and Transport.

16th. Aug 1968.

The Assistant Secretary (Property).
Dept. of Interior.
Canberra. A.C.T. 2600.

Preservation of Commonwealth Owned Historic Buildings
Former Lighthouse Keepers Residence – Deal Island.
Your P67/99 of 8 August.

The continued growth of trade to the north coast ports of Tasmania gives Deal Island special significance as a site for aid to navigation station. At present the Deal Island lighthouse would rank as a moderately important aid and its importance is likely to increase rather than decrease in future years.

2. Although the Department is required to operate the total aids to navigation system in the most economical manner and it is probable that a number of stations which are now manned by 2 or 3 lightkeepers will be converted to automatic operation and the staff withdrawn, Deal Island will continue as a fully manned station indefinitely on our present assessment of the situation.
3. It is likely, however, that there will be some change in the number, type and disposition of the aids to navigation on the Island. The present lighthouse is at too great an elevation to be seen in conditions of low cloud and investigations are in hand to locate sites on the Island on which 2 or 3 low level lights could be built to replace the existing lighthouse. If this plan is adopted access to the new lights would be obtained by Landrover from the existing lightstation area and they would be continuously monitored from the central location.
4. There is also the possibility that the Department would be called upon to establish some form of radio or electronic navigational aid station on Deal Island within the next 5 years or so. If this were done there would probably be no significant increase in the number of resident staff.
5. Experience over the years in operating this lightstation has shown that it is very desirable for the residential and operational activities to be consolidated as much as possible in the one area and the most suitable part of the Island is in the vicinity of the all-weather landing near the existing Head lightkeepers house.
6. At a fairly early date it is intended to discuss with the Department of Works Head Office, Master Planning Section, our present and future requirements at Deal Island with a view to the production of a master plan leading to rehabilitation of the station. We will probably advising the Department of Public Works that our permanent requirement includes residences for 2

permanent technicians together with the associated store sheds, garage etc. and accommodation for electric generating plant and radio communication equipment. It is Departmental practise to send a relieving lightkeeper to the station to cover annual recreation leave of the permanent staff, mounting to about 21/2 months per annum. Accommodation for the relieving lightkeeper will therefore be required in addition to the above and although occupied on a part time basis only, it should of standard equivalent to that found in a reasonably good quality modern motel. In addition Departmental maintenance officers visit the station periodically and less frequently Department of Works personnel for construction and repair projects and, of course, acceptable accommodation on the Island is necessary for these parties.

7. With regard to the question of the preservation of the old lighthouse residence known as 'Captain Brown's House', this Department would have no objection to the building being modernised internally to provide accommodation for the relieving lightkeeper and official maintenance staff providing that the desired standard of modern services is achieved. The Department could use all or some of the remainder of the house for bulk storage purposes, again providing that some improvements were made to make the space suitable for the purpose. This view is, of course, dependent upon the Master Plan confirming the view that the rehabilitation of this house is economically feasible and that its utilisation as suggested will fit in with other aspects of the Master Plan.
8. There would be no objection to visits being made to the Island by scientific parties and persons with allied interests and if the old house has been modernised in the above manner and the accommodation is not required at the time for Departmental purposes it could be made available for use by the selected visitors. It should be noted, however, that the Department's interests in the operation and maintenance of the aids to navigation station at Deal Island would always be given first priority and the accommodation would be available to others only if not needed by the Department.
9. You will note that comment so far only deals with the question of restoration of the inside of 'Captain Brown's House' to satisfy continuing operational needs of this Department. It is assumed that some alteration to the exterior of the structure will be needed for our purposes but that some further expenditure based on the 'preservation' aspect may well be necessary or desirable. The Department would be appreciative if any further expenditure for non-operational purposes was not regarded as a charge on its normal annual civil works programme.
10. In your minute you refer to the 'Preservation of....Head Lightkeeper's Residence.....'. It should be noted that this historic building in question has not been occupied by the Head Lightkeeper since a new residence was built nearby for the Headkeeper several years ago. For this reason the old historic building has been referred to in this memo, as 'Captain Brown's House'.

D.C.L. Williams.
Secretary.

Historic Building Committee – Meeting.
21 July 1970 – Agenda Item 6.

Old Head Lightkeepers Residence.
Deal Island Tasmania

Deal Island, a Commonwealth property in the Kent Group, is situated about mid-way between Flinders Island and Wilson Promontory. The island, of about 4,000 acres, was transferred to the Commonwealth at Federation in connection with the Commonwealth's responsibility for marine navigation.

2. On the 25th. October 1967, The Department of Shipping and Transport advised the Prime Minister's Department that it was intended to demolish some old buildings on the island but the National Trust (Tasmania) had written appealing for the preservation of one of them – the old Head Lightkeepers Cottage – as it was an interesting architecture, dating back to the 1850's.
3. A report obtained from the Department of Works in March 1968 indicated that the house was erected before 1840 of local stone and bricks. It was occupied until the 1930's. The Department proposed to repair the roof and provide new roof gutters to augment the water supply to the island. The Department of Works recommended restoration of the cottage, at an estimated cost of \$9,000 plus \$1,000 for restoration of the garden area. The Department considered that the dwelling could be used as a dormitory for visitors.
4. On the 16th. August 1968 The Department of Shipping and Transport advised that Deal Island is to continue indefinitely as a fully maintained station. There is permanent requirement for residences for two technicians, together with additional accommodation for a relieving lightkeeper (21/2 months of the year) and visiting maintenance officers. The type of accommodation would be that provided by a motel.
5. The Department advised that there would be no objection to the restoration of the old Head Lightkeepers Cottage – to provide accommodation for the relieving lightkeeper and other official visitors. Restoration work other than for operational purposes should not however, be a charge to Shipping and Transport votes.
6. The Department of Works was then asked to review the estimated costs of restoration and on 11 December 1969 The Director-General advised that having regard to the varied requirements (provision of bathroom, kitchen, septic tank and water supply) the estimates had been revised to:

- a. \$15,000 for the cottage: and
- b. \$1,500 for the garden

The cost of a new pre – fabricated house would be \$13,500 whilst the same house in brick would cost \$17,000.

7. 7. The Department of Shipping and Transport has advised that in the light of this later report it is not proposed to put the old house to any operational use.
8. 8. Copies of relevant correspondence are attached.
9. 9. The Committee might consider whether the estimated cost of restoring the old cottage is justified and if so, what use could be made of the building in a restored state.⁴¹

Dover Island Nomenclature

The Nomenclature Board of Tasmania
Chairman.
The Surveyor-General
Lands and Survey Department, Hobart.
22nd. June, 1967.

Dr. S. Murray-Smith.
School of Education
University of Melbourne.
Parkville. N. 2. Victoria.

Dear Sir

Re; Dover Island Nomenclature

Thank you for your letter of 19th. May. The meeting of the Board scheduled for that date was cancelled, so the delay in receiving your letter was of no consequence.

I am sure that you will be pleased to learn that the Board at its June meeting, assigned the name of Mt. Mullett to the feature shown on the provisional map as Mt. Brown. This name will be gazetted in a few weeks, and an extract of same, forwarded to you.

In regard to the naming of some features after Robert Brown, the Board would be very pleased to receive suggestions from you, or others, concerning place names in the Kent Group, when this is convenient. I am sure that Robert Brown's name can be commemorated at that time.

Thank you for your information concerning "Murray Pass". The Board has decided to retain the name in this form.

A decision on whether or not to adopt "Mother in Laws Leap" has been deferred. I should be able to inform you of the outcome of discussions on this name when I forward you the "Gazette" extract.

I am pleased to learn that you may be coming to Hobart soon, and would appreciate it, if you called at the office.

Yours faithfully
Secretary.⁴²

The Vegetation and Flora of Deal Island, Kent Group

By Stephen Harris and Georgina Davis.

A Summary of the Report for the Australian Heritage Commission.

There are eight formations mapped for Deal Island, comprising, forests and woodlands, scrub, sedgeland, grassland and a coastal complex. Tussock grassland, which results from burning and clearing of *Allocasuarina* forest, occurs on the limestone soils, while the soils formed directly over the granite are clothed with Eucalypt dominated scrub and woodland with a heathy or shrubby understorey. A total of 176 plant taxa are recorded of which only

⁴² Op. cit. Bell.

two are Tasmanian endemic. About one quarter of the flora comprise exotic species. A distinct Bassian floristic element is present, which includes some Ereman flora. Deal Island is the largest (1575 ha) of the Kent Group of islands situated in Eastern Bass Strait, midway between Flinders Island and Wilson Promontory. It is a rugged granite island, with lenses of Tertiary limestone mantling the topographically more subdued areas on the northern and western parts. The highest point is about 395 m above sea level. The other islands comprising the group are Dover and Erith, which are joined to each other at low tide by a narrow isthmus, and the more outlying islands of the group, North East and South West Islands.

Deal Island was formerly transferred to the Commonwealth on 1 July 1915 and was gazetted a Wildlife Sanctuary on 28 July 1941, effective under the Tasmanian *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1970*. The island was nominated for the Register of the National Estate on 23 December 1976, and registered on 28 March 1978.

Botanical exploration of Deal Island has been sporadic and opportunistic, resulting in the publication of incomplete species lists and fragmentary accounts of the vegetation. Robert Brown made extensive botanical collections in 1803, especially of marine algae. Visits by parties from the Victorian Field Naturalists Club have made important contributions, but the first published list of Deal Island flora is that of Baron von Mueller (1885). The historical background to this collection has been discussed by Whinray (1993), who is known to have visited the island many times and published the results of his work (1971). Hope and Hope (1968) attempted a synthesis of information about the island and made a preliminary description of the island's vegetation.

The Kent Group located at the convergence of the three Southern Australian marine biogeographic provinces (Peronian, Masgrean, and Flindersian), resulting in a high faunal diversity. The number of seaweed species is not greater than elsewhere in the rich Bass Strait area. Edgar (1984) discussed the possibility of similar marine ecosystems occurring at Wilson Promontory and around other islands, and concluded that the Kent Group was probably unique because of the diversity of habitats, different degrees of exposure, situations with respect to water currents, and the absence of the influence of large estuaries.

Accounts of the vegetation and flora of the Bass Strait islands are few, especially given that there are just over 100 vegetated islands in Eastern Bass Strait alone. Contributions to the biogeography of these islands are, therefore, a source of interest to a wide range of workers.

Vegetation Communities

Poa poiformis tussock grassland.

This formation occupies about 305 hectares, or 19.45% of the island and is generally confined to the areas of relatively more fertile and uniform soil cover. Such soils are more or less coincidental with the extent of limestone on flat to gentle sloping areas.

The protective foliage cover of the dominant *Poa poiformis* varies but is commonly 100% on the areas more distant from the lighthouse, out of range of domestic animal grazing.

The boundaries of the community are fairly sharp and coincide with higher soil fertility and fire boundaries, for example the boundary above Wintry Creek, near Winter Cove. The community mostly adjoins *Allocasuarina verticillata* dominated formations and there appears to be active invasion of the grassland by *Allocasuarina verticillata* in some places.

Stipa stipoides tussock grassland.

This formation occupies about 0.6% of the island and is confined to a narrow strip around the more exposed areas of the coast, forming a zone exposed to salt spray. Soil type or fire frequency do not appear to be controlling factors in the distribution of this grass except in an indirect way. The most extensive areas of *Stipa stipoides* tussock grassland is on the slopes above Little Squally Bay where there is a high exposure to the predominant storm weather direction and where protective tree and scrub cover has been eliminated.

The community is of open structure with *Stipa* rarely exceeding 30% ground cover. Bare ground and rock is common. Associated plants are typical of rocky shore vegetation and includes *Apium prostratum*, *Disphyma crassifolium*, *Calocaphalus brownii* (on unstable slopes) and *Cyathodes juniperina*.

Beach dune complex.

Beaches comprise less than 1% of the coast, therefore this is only a minor mapping unit but comprises distinct plant assemblages. The sand dunes occur at East Cove, Garden Cove and Winter Cove. All differ in degrees of exposure, landform profile and plant species composition.

Cliff complex and steep granite slopes near the coast.

A high proportion of the of the coast is cliffed or at least comprises very steep granite slopes. The species occurring on the cliffs and slopes is often very similar to granite areas with skeletal soils, further inland, except in the more exposed *sites* where a typical coastal flora becomes dominant. The micro topographic variation gives rise to variable soil and moisture conditions, which provide numerous different niches for plant species. There are rarely sections where an ordered zonation can be seen but broadly there are three zones on exposed granite coasts in Bass Strait. The sequence is illustrated below:

Sea - *Sarcocornia quinaeiflora* – *Stipa stipoides* – *Poa poiformis*
 zone zone zone

Eucalyptus nitida forests, woodlands and scrublands.

Eucalyptus nitida formations occupy 47.5% (747 ha) of the island, mainly on the more rugged southern and eastern hills. Communities dominated by *Eucalyptus nitida* are most common on the granite substrata whereas *Allocasuarina verticillata* displaces *Eucalyptus* on limestone.

E. nitida dominated communities are mapped as either forests or scrublands but there is a complete graduation in height classes.

The *E. nitida* on Deal Island is commonly of mallee-form pronounced coppicing. Some lignotubers maybe up to 5.6 m in diameter. On deeper soils, particularly in areas that have escaped a high fire frequency, there are eucalypts with single main stems.

Allocasuarina verticillata forests and woodlands.

Allocasuarina verticillata low open woodland, low open forest, and low closed forest together comprises 24.6% or 387 ha of the island, with low open woodland being the most common formation. Communities dominated by *A. verticillata* occupy limestone substrates on the northern part of the island. *Allocasuarina* formations occupy slopes around the granite coastline.

The *Allocasuarina* usually forms pure stands but occasionally shares the canopy with *Leptospermum laevigatum* and *Melaleuca ericifolia*. Association species composition depends on proximity to onshore salt laden winds, geology, soil depth and moisture availability. On the limestone slopes at East Cove where soils are shallow, alkalinity is high, and there is influence from the sea. *Leucopogon parvifloros*, *Leptospermum laevigatum* and *Helichrysium paraliium* occur as a very sporadic shrub 'layer'. Although there is a great deal of bare ground, there are a number of low shrubs and herbs.

Lepidosperma gladiatum sedgeland.

This formation occupies only about 5 hectares, which is about 0.3% of the island. The species occurs on the beach systems, described above and sometimes forms locally dense patches on some of the dune systems.

At the eastern end of Squally Bay there is a slope of limestone, which is dominated by *Lepidosperma gladiatum* but is associated with *Poa poiformis* and *Pteridium esculentum*

and *Carex apresa*. *Callitris rhomboidea* less than 1 m in height and severely wind pruned occurs patchily, especially on the slope immediately west of Ferny Spring Gully.

Myoporum insular scrub open and closed.

This species is the smallest mappable vegetation type occupying no more than one and half hectares south of East Cove. It is described here because it is so distinctive and also because both the species and the vegetation type may have been more widespread on the island in the past.

The stand occurs on a moderate slope with northerly to north westerly aspect close to the shore. The substrate is calcareous sand with limestone cobbles occupying 95% of the surface. Most of the soil is completely bare. There are, a small number of granite boulders strewn about derived from upslope weathering. The *Myoporum* trees occur in a very shallow broad depression running uphill from the shore.

The community is very species poor, which must be largely due to the low light levels under the canopy of the closed scrub

Leptospermum scoparium – *Melaleuca ericifolia* closed scrub.

The only notable patch occupies about 6 hectares or 0.4% of the island. There are small discontinuous patches on Little Squally Creek, which escaped the fire. Small patches also occur on the middle reaches of Garden Cove Creek. The largest patch occurs in an elevated gully in the central south east of the island, at the headwaters of Winter Cove Creek.

The large patch occurs on black peaty soil overlying siliceous colluvium gravel derived from the weathering of adjacent granite hills. This colluvium maybe fairly deep and acts as a large 'sponge' enabling slow release of groundwater into one of the only three reliable creeks on the island.

The largest patch comprises *Melaleuca ericifolia*, *Leptospermum scoparium* and *Callitris rhomboidea* between about 3 – 3.5m height. There is occasional emergent *E. nitida* while the understorey is mostly leaf litter with partial moss cover and some bare ground. The small patches on Little Squally Creek and Garden Cove Creek are dominated by *Melaleuca ericifolia*.

Analysis of the flora.

There were 158 vascular plant species recorded from the island in May 1990. The total recorded vascular flora for the island is about 185. The number of exotic species recorded in May was 36. The total recorded exotic flora comprises about 25% of the flora.

The 'complete census' of the island flora was compiled by Baron Von Mueller in 1884 from specimens collected by the lighthouse keeper. He recorded *Eucalyptus obliqua* but none can be found today on the island. This suggests that *E. nitida* may have been mistaken for *E. obliqua* possibly on the basis of an incomplete specimen.

F. von Mueller again identified a list of plant specimens from the Kent Group by the expedition of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria (Le Souef, 1891). There were 84 species (excluding exotics) recorded but there is no indication of which of the islands the species are from. *Goodia latifolia* has also been identified but *Phyllanthus gunni*, to which it bears a superficial resemblance and is very common on parts of the island was not listed. We did not see *Goodia latifolia*. Von Mueller draws particular attention to several species as being noteworthy. One is *Didmothea thesioides* (*Gyrostemon thesioides*). This species was recorded by us as common in patches on the island but it appears as uncommon to rare elsewhere in Tasmania. Von Mueller (Le Souef, 1891) implies that the species is uncommon on mainland Australia and Willis (1972) does not list the species for Victoria.

A plant list compiled by G. K. Thompson (source of data unspecified) is given in Hope (1968). This lists 64 species of vascular plants specifically for Deal Island but again *Goodia latifolia* and not *Phyllanthus gunni*. *E. obliqua* is also listed for the island in addition to *E. amygdalina* (*E. nitida*). A further 36 species are listed as general records for the Kent Group.

Whinray (1971) lists 76 species of vascular plants from Deal Island, which were new records. Of these 44 were exotics.

Discussion.

Deal Island is in many ways typical of the islands in Eastern Bass Strait in terms of vegetation. The major formations dominated by *Poa* tussock and *Allocasuarina* are common. *Eucalyptus nitida* communities are common on Flinders Island. The plant species list recorded on Deal Island is also very similar to that of other islands in the Furneaux Group (Harris and Buchanan in prep.). As with the other Furneaux Islands, the vegetation patterns reflect the same influence by humans. The dominant influences on vegetation patterning are salt spray, fire, human activity and soil fertility (limestone versus granite).

Exposure to salt spray imposes a major dichotomy in patterning of plant communities, which generally overrides geology type (Harris and Kirkpatrick, 1982) and is a general feature of islands. The typical coastal vegetation is distinguished by salt/ drought adapted herbs and shrubs in the genera Chenopodiaceae and Aizoaceae. The most salt tolerant zones can expand inland as a result of burning or clearing into the scrub or woodland behind the usually narrow *Stipa stipoides* zone. If a wooded island is repeatedly burnt it will convert to tussock grassland and the greater exposure will result in greater input of salt to the ground, therefore favouring the more salt tolerant vegetation usually found in a narrow band.

Fire has had a dominant influence on present vegetation patterns in the islands. Islands have often been burnt to extend and maintain the tussock at the expense of woodlands and forest communities. This has also been the case on Deal Island where Garreau (1958) commented that: "Very numerous is the Dropping Sheoak (*Casuarina stricta*) but this lovely old tree is slowly losing ground due to the annual burning off killing young ones".

Soil fertility is a major factor. There are 2 lithological types of the island – granite and limestone. The granite dictates the rugged nature of the island and forms very uneven topography. Soils are of variable depth but are mainly skeletal and acid.

The limestone occurs as a thin veneer on the island and remains on the area of more even topography. The area covered by *Poa* tussock broadly coincides with the area of limestone. The soils on the limestone are alkaline and shallow. There are some areas at the surface forming broken rocky ground. This kind of substrate generally has retained *Allocasuarina* forest or woodland. Eucalypts are generally not tolerant of high pH soils (Pryor, 1976) therefore most of the area occupied by *Poa* tussock grassland was probably occupied formerly by *Allocasuarina* forest.

The flora of Deal Island can be used to demonstrate some interesting vegetation patterns. Of the 158 vascular plants in our list, only 3 are endemics. This is expected, given the proximity of the island to the Australian mainland.

The search for a finer scale analogue of the "Wallace Line" for flora in Bass Strait would probably result in disappointment. The boundary between Tasmanian and mainland fauna is much more distinct and Deal Island is close to that boundary (Hope, 1972).

There is a more complicated pattern for flora distribution with the interesting aspect being the existence of a dry southern Australian and eremean component of the flora reaching the southernmost extension in the relatively more reliable rainfall areas of Eastern Bass Strait. This paradox is only apparent because the abundance of Tertiary limestone throughout the Furneaux Group and Kent Group provides a substrate, which requires a drought tolerant flora, especially as high salt concentrations in onshore winds exacerbate drought conditions. Examples of species and genera, which represent this group include *Threlkeldia diffusa*, *Ixiolaena*, *Zygophyllum*, *Gyrostemon*, and (in the Furneaux Group) *Frankenia* and *Sicyos*.

A distinct Bassian flora element is also represented throughout the Bass Strait islands and sometimes touching on the coasts of Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. This element is represented on Deal Island by species such as *Apium insulare*, *Ixiolaena*, *Pomaderris paniculosa*, subsp. *Paralia*, and *Swainsona lessertifolia*. Taxa near the limits of their

distributions, occurring on Deal Island include *Sarcocornia quinqueflora*, subs. *tasmanica*, *Posidonia australis*, *Eucalyptus nitida*, and *Centrolepis pulvinata*. *Asplenium obtusatum* is listed by Gullen et al (1990) as vulnerable in Victoria.

The number of exotic species on the island is much higher than on islands such as Rodondo or Dover Island but most other islands of comparable size in Eastern Bass Strait have a very high exotic species component reflecting the long history of European activity in these islands.

Species invasion is still occurring on the coasts. A small patch of *Ammophila arenaria* occurs on the beach at Winter Cove. *Euphorbia paralius* is a recent invader of sandy beaches on southern Bass Strait coasts. The species was first noted on Deal Island by the wife of the Head Lightkeeper (Shirley Gray, pers. comm.) at East Cove in 1988 as only a few plants which shortly afterwards expanded into what is now a dense infestation on the foredune.

Fauna Survey

During the last glacial period in the Pleistocene (from 70,000 to 11,000 years ago) the Kent Group and other Bass Strait islands were part of a land bridge linking Tasmania with the Australian mainland (Jennings 1971). As a remnant of the land bridge, Deal Island is of significant interest in evolutionary and biogeographic studies as it harbours populations of animals and plants that have been isolated geographically for the past 100,000 – 12,000 years.

Within 30 years after its discovery by Flinders in 1798, Deal Island was occupied by sealers. G. A. Robinson visited the Kent Group in 1831 and found several sealers living at Garden Cove (Plomley 1966). To date no further archaeological evidence of seals or sealers on Deal Island has been discovered and it is supposed that sealers mainly lived aboard their vessel, hunted at nearby Judgement Rocks and used Deal Island as a safe anchorage (D. Pemberton, pers. comm.).

With the construction and manning of the lighthouse in 1846-48 human habitation has continued on the island. In the presence of people the island has seen change in regard to the distribution of plant communities. The vegetation has been altered by periodic firing and grazing to a reduction by half of its former woodland to tussock grassland.

In 1842 Commander Stokes released rabbits onto the Kent Islands to provide a source of food for shipwrecked sailors (Stokes 1846). In 1941-42 English hutch rabbits were introduced on the island (N. Brothers, pers. comm.). Measures for the eradication of rabbits on Deal Island have been conducted since 1973 by shooting and fumigation. Fumigation was not effective, because the rabbits on Deal Island are surface dwelling. Until November 1963 Deal Island was used for grazing sheep, but this proved unprofitable and uninviting to former graziers. Feral domestic cats, *Felis catus*, are present on the island, and like the rabbits appear few in number. The ship rat, *Rattus rattus*, has been recorded in 1966 by J. Hope (Hope, 1972) and again in 1976 (last National Estate evaluation).

Discussion

General

Although the present proportions of grassland to woodland differ markedly from that of pre European occupation the size and extent of the present vegetation types still support large populations of two marsupials, the Brush Wallaby, *Macropus rufogriseus*, and the Brushtailed Possum, *Trichosurus vulpecular*. The potential habits for the more smaller cryptic mammals do exist, such as the Dunnart, *Sminthopsis leucopus*, found on nearby Northeast island in 1987 (N. Brothers and P. Mooney pers. comm.), the Swamp Antechinus, *Antechinus minimus*, the Velvet Furred rat, *Rattus lutreolus*, sub-fossil material for the latter two has been found on Deal Island (Hope 1972): the New Holland Mouse, *Pseudomys novaehollandiae*, fossils found in Ranga Cave, Flinders Island (Hope 1972): and the Water Rat, *Hydromys chrysogaster*, recorded on several other Bass Strait islands (Green 1969, Whinray 1971a).

Fossil material collected from the sand dunes of Deal Island by J. Hope (1972) and earlier by Spencer and Kershaw (1910a) indicates that the mammal species diversity, perhaps as far back as 6,000 years ago, was much higher than it is today. Fossil bones of the Wombat, *Vombatus ursinus*, and Potoro, *Potorous apicalis*, Pademelon, *Thylogale billardieri*, Brush Wallaby, *M. rufogriseus*, possibly the Forester Kangaroo, *M. giganteus*, Tiger Cat, *Dasyurus maculatus*, Swamp Antechinus, *A. minimus*, Brush-tailed Possum, *T. vulpecula*, and the velvet furred rat, *R. lutreolus* have been unearthed from sand dunes deposits on Deal Island. Today only two of the nine species are recorded extant on the island although it is possible that the Swamp Antechinus and/or the White footed Dunnart are also extant there. It is apparently likely that the Pademelon may have become extinct only within the last century, because Robinson recorded both “Kangaroo” (*M. rufogriseus*) and “Wallaby” (*T. billardieri*) on Deal Island in 1831.

Mineral deficiencies in the soil may have been found to be the cause for problems in calving cows and as such may also lead to similar problems in other introduced herbivores such as the rabbit (n. Brothers, pers. comm.). The ground is not very suitable for burrowing and consequently rabbits are mainly surface dwelling. The rabbit population seems to be small and confined to areas of pasture grass. Penguins also have difficulty in burrowing and so make their nests in rock crevices or under ledges.

Grazing

The northern part of the island was leased for sheep grazing by Mr. A. H. Stackhouse and his brother from the mid 1950's to 1963. Up to 1500 head of sheep were grazed. There are no significant material relics, which remain as the result of the grazing period. Beside the track leading down to Garden Cove from the Lightstation, there is a standing chimney and some foundation stones nearby. This is all that remains of the shearing shed/ mustering hut, most of which was dismantled and removed by the Stackhouse's when their lease expired. The chimney was already on the island and stood closer to the existing lightstation prior to its incorporation in the mustering hut (A. H. Stackhouse pers. comm.). The chimney consists of 2mm sheets of iron bolted together along the seams.

Status and condition of *Ixiolaena supina*.

Ixiolaena supina is one of 7 species in the family Asteraceae. The genus endemic to southern and eremean Australia.

Ixiolaena supina is confined to coasts and islands of northern and eastern Bass Strait. It occurs around the coast of South Australia including Kangaroo Island. It is presently known in one location on Deal Island but is probably more extensive on the island.

The species grows in crevices on granite cliffs near the sea, and can form dense mats. The species also grows on a coarse conglomerate cemented by an arkosic matrix. Jessop and Toelken (1986) give the habitat of the species as “Usually among limestone or granite rocks along the seashore, often on cliff-faces and cliff-tops, in sandy soil”.

The species is rare in Tasmania and Tasmanian populations are unreserved because they do not occur within State Reserves. There are no apparent threats to the Deal Island population of *Ixiolaena*. The only conceivable threat would be from over collection, but this is not a threat at present.

Status and condition of *Pratia irrigua*.

Pratia irrigua in the family Campanulaceae is one of about 35 species of *Pratia*. The genus occurs in South America, tropical Africa, and Asia as well as Australasia and the Pacific Islands. *Pratia irrigua* is confined to Deal Island and Long Island in Eastern Bass Strait (specimens in Tasmanian Herbarium, lodged by S. Harris and J. Whinray). Its status is vulnerable (Briggs and Leigh, 1988). Its presently known Deal Island distribution is one site on the slopes above Little Squally Creek. The specimen in the Tasmanian Herbarium collected by J. Whinray is annotated with the location “near the lighthouse”. This notation must refer to the Little Squally Creek population (see Whinray, 1971). No sites could be found closer to the lighthouse.

The species grows prostrate to the ground on poorly drained black peaty soil in *Carex apressa* tussock sedgeland. Other species growing in association include *Baumea juncea*, *Schoenus nitens* and *Hydrocotyle muscosa*. Other areas were searched in vain for *Pratia irrigua* especially amidst the *Carex apressa* tussocks on the lower reaches of Garden Cove Creek.

The *Pratia* is abundant in the location and forms locally dense patches of creeping stems with small delicate leaves appressed to the ground. The species occurs above and around the water hole near the fence line. North of the fence line, the area is trampled by cattle but the *Pratia* persists. This is probably due to the frequency of roots along the stem. Each time the plant is broken by a hoof, the broken portions of the plant are likely to survive.

Status and condition of *Centrolepis pulvinta*.

Centrolepis is a genus of about 24 species, 19 occurring in Australia and the remainder in south eastern Asia, New Guinea and New Zealand.

Centrolepis pulvinta is endemic in Tasmania and apart from Deal Island, has been recorded from Eastern Cape Barren Island and from the Mt. William National Park (Kirkpatrick and Harwood, 1981). It occurs on siliceous granite derived soils and the specimen collected by the present writers was found fairly close to the top of the cliffs, south of Little Squally Cove. It is likely that the species is rare on Deal Island as most of the *Centrolepis* specimens collected were *C. strigose*, and *C. fasciculata*.

Summary

A combination of factors make Deal Island very worthy of its place on the Register of the National Estate.

Consideration was briefly given to narrowing the areas on Deal Island which had National Estate value. For example, lines can be drawn around the lightstation structures, around the concentration of rare plants, or around the possible Aboriginal site. Such a reductionist approach fails in reaching a proper perspective of the island's significance.

Deal Island is a rugged island occupying a unique place in Australia's cultural history. It is located in one of the most biogeographically interesting regions of Australia and an analysis of its total flora will provide a crucial key to understanding the phytogeography of southern Australia. It is the northern limit of some Tasmanian flora, the eastern limit of some Bassian and eremean flora and the convergence of three great marine biogeographic provinces. Organisms at their geographic limits of distribution are regarded as having genetic conservation value.

The island has remained in good condition because of the continuous presence of the lightkeepers. There is little doubt that without such a presence the National Estate values of the island would be degraded considerably.⁴³

A Survey of Potential Marine Reserve Locations in Bass Strait 2003.

A Summary of the Final Report

General Introduction

The need for improved marine resources is gradually being recognised as coastal marine resources decline locally and worldwide. Unfortunately the restrictions on fishing effort necessary to arrest this decline are often long overdue, because the long term baseline studies necessary to objectively assess the extent of any changes have not been undertaken.

Reserves have consistently been found to enhance both numbers and average size of many marine species (Roberts and Polunin, 1991) with the greatest change being evident amongst heavily exploited species (Cole, Ayling and Creese, 1990).

In addition to simply conserving the resource, marine reserves also offer a number of other important benefits (Ballantine, 1991). These include:

1. The moral and aesthetic value of preserving small sections of our coastline in their natural state.
2. Recreational and tourism attraction.
3. Educational benefits of providing locations where children and adults can learn about our coastal ecosystems and the importance of conserving marine resources.
4. Scientific studies. Marine reserves act as a reference or baseline to which changes in adjacent fished areas can be compared. Experiments within reserves can also be used to predict the impact of different management strategies being developed for the rest of the State.
5. Enhanced recruitment to adjacent areas. Because most species of marine flora and fauna have dispersive stages in their life history, marine reserves act as a 'seed' source, replenishing adjacent areas.

The Tasmanian coastline is influenced by three separate ocean current systems and this is reflected by its coastal biota which can be loosely categorised into 3 major biogeographic regions. These include a region with an entirely Maugean (Tasmanian) biota, including most of the west, south and east coasts, a region with a component of Flindersian (Southern Australian) species including most of Bass Strait, and a region with a component of Peronian (New South Wales) species, restricted to the eastern extremity of Bass Strait.

Kent Group

The Kent Group of islands is situated approximately half way between Wilsons Promontory, Victoria and the northern end of Flinders Island. The group consists of 3 large islands, Deal, Erith and Dover 2 small islands North East Isle and South West Isle, as well as a number of rock outcrops. These include Judgement Rocks, the site of Tasmania's largest breeding colony of fur seals. Dover and Erith islands are partly cleared and grazed by cattle. Deal Island is presently owned by the Commonwealth of Australia and, until 1991, was the site of a manned lighthouse. This has now been decommissioned and the island is inhabited by a caretaker until the fate of the island is determined. Murray Passage is a safe all weather anchorage, although deep in places (to 40m) and subject to strong currents. Safe landing beaches occur on Erith Island in West Cove and Deal Island at East Cove, where a jetty is also situated. A more detailed description of this group is given by Edgar(1984).

This survey was intended to build on the results of Edgar, to gain a more quantitative appraisal of the Group, and investigate further sites within the area.

Fish: A total of 48 species of fish were identified during the fish transects in the Kent group, while a further 4 species were encountered during the invertebrate survey. The total species present per size ranged from 4 to 34. On average the diversity of species per size was far in excess of that encountered during the north coast survey. The two low values of 4 and 10 were at sites 5 and 6, which were surveyed to determine the impact of a fur seal colony on the reef biota. The lowest value 4 was at Big Rock the site of the seal colony itself, while the count of 10 was at the nearby South West Isle, where seals were still plentiful in the water but were not present ashore.

Of the 52 fish species encountered during the survey, 34 species were those with a widespread Tasmanian distribution, while 18 species were either those not recorded from

Tasmanian coastal waters at all, or whose southernmost distribution extended to the Tasmanian north coast.

Many of these are uncommon or not recorded in Tasmanian coastal waters, indicating that the Kent group biota is under strong Peronian influence, much more so than the other locations covered by this survey and those of Edgar (1981, 1984). While the abundance of northern species partly explains the unusual species richness of the Kent Group fish fauna. 34 species with a southern distribution were also found, and this is far in excess of that found at any other location covered by this study. Much of this is likely due to both the extensive range of habitats found within the Kent Group, and also the isolation of this group which has protected its fish fauna from the amateur and commercial gillnet fisheries which have been implicated in the degradation of fish stocks in Tasmanian coastal waters.

Habitats: A wide variety of habitats were encountered during the Kent Group survey. In Murray Pass itself there are sheltered deep and shallow reefs, some of which are exposed to strong currents with communities dominated by filter feeders. Large areas of urchin barren also exist in Murray Passage, and present a unique habitat in themselves, supporting large densities of planktivorous fish and extensive sponge gardens rarely found in shallow water due to competition with macroalgae. As well as reef habitat, Murray Pass also contains areas of seagrass, some of which extend to depths in excess of 20m due to the unusual clarity of water at this location. Outside Murray Pass more exposed habitats are found, with the most exposed sites being situated on the western coasts of the islands. While much of the outer coastline is limited to deeper water, there are a number of embayments offering shallow reefs such as site 7 at Squally Cove, Deal Island, where the highest fish diversity of the entire survey was recorded. Because of the granitic nature origin of these islands, the reef topography is often structurally complex, with large boulders, and numerous caves and this adds to the range of habitat available at any site.

Summary of Kent Group survey.

1. The Kent Group encompasses a diversity of habitats within a small area, including shallow and deep sheltered reef, deep and exposed reefs, and areas exposed to strong currents. The *Centrostephanus rodgersii* urchin barrens provide a unique habitat not found elsewhere in Tasmanian waters, and likewise, the deep seagrass beds in Murray Passage also comprise a habitat uncommon in Tasmanian waters.
2. The diversity of fish species is significantly higher than any other area covered by this survey, and maybe the highest of any Tasmanian waters, with the fish fauna in pristine condition as it is essentially protected from gillnet fishing due to the isolation of this location.
3. There is a significant Peronian component to the fish fauna, far in excess of that found elsewhere in the Bass Strait region, making this a unique zoogeographical location, at least amongst the locations investigated during this survey and those of Edgar (1981, 1984).
4. Any reserve in the Kent Group would need to include the unique urchin barren and deep seagrass habitats available in Murray Passage, as well of a number of exposed shallow reef areas such as Squally Cove, Deal Island as these contain fish communities of unusual diversity, abundance and biogeographic affinities.

Discussion

This present survey investigated the Tasmanian north coast and Bass Strait islands to identify any alternative sites to those suggested by Edgar (1981, 1984) and to reevaluate the Rocky Cape and Kent Group sites selected during the previous survey. Of all the locations investigated, the Kent Group was the most outstanding. The fish diversity and abundance was exceptional whether measured by the species present per site, or by the Shannon diversity index, with the average value per site far in excess of that encountered elsewhere. A diverse range of habitats occur within the Kent Group, encompassing most of those

typical of the region, and including *Centrostephanus* urchin barrens and deep seagrass beds, two habitats rare or unique in Tasmanian waters. This was the only location with a high proportion of Peronian species and is the natural selection for a regional reserve to protect species and habitats within this biogeographical region. As well as having a significant proportion of Peronian species, most of the species encountered during the entire survey were found within the Kent Group, highlighting this locations suitability as a regional reserve.

While a major regional reserve at the Kent Group is a high priority, affording protection to many marine floral and faunal communities representative of the Flindersian and Peronian influenced waters of Tasmania, it lacks some examples of inshore habitat and has restricted public access. The only suitable regions which offer these, are the Rocky Cape to Jacobs Boat Harbour sections of coastline and the Waterhouse Point to Cape Portland region.

Conclusions

The process of choosing a marine reserve site is a balance between a variety of factors, including biological and geomorphological suitability, public access, ease of policing, and levels of development and pollution, and recreational and commercial fishing activity. If representative marine reserves are to be established in the eastern and western Bass Strait region, then the choice of the Kent Group for a reserve in eastern Bass Strait is inevitable. Biologically it is an outstanding location, as it contains a diversity of habitats, some unique to Tasmanian waters, and a significant Peronian component to its biota. It presently also has a relatively pristine reef fish population of exceptional diversity, a situation which may change in the near future if the reef fish market continues to be developed. The positive factors which suggest the creation of the Kent Group Marine Reserve greatly outweigh the negative considerations, namely the difficulties in policing and in providing public access. There should be little negative reaction from the public because of the lack of present users. Waterhouse Island could also be considered as a second reserve in eastern Bass Strait, representing coastal habitats not encountered in the Kent Group, and providing a reserve with easier public access.⁴⁴

Inquiry into the establishment of a MPA for the Twofold Shelf Bioregion Kent Group National Park.

Background Information

The Kent Group is located at the convergence of the three Southern Australian marine biogeographic provinces (Peronian, Maugean and Flindersian). The marine fauna of the Kent Group is basically Peronian (New South Wales). In contrast the marine plants are largely Flindersian (southern Australian). The overlapping of these three distinct biogeographic regions has resulted in the high faunal diversity of the Kent Group (Edgar 1984).

While the island group has a range of underwater habitats and marine animals and plants representative of Bass Strait, the marine biota has a much greater Peronian component than any other Tasmanian locality (Last 1979, Kuitert 1981, Edgar 1984), due largely to the influence of the warm southward flowing eastern Australian current.

The marine biota (particularly the fauna) of the Kent Group is unique because of the diversity of habitats, different degrees of exposure, situation with respect to water currents, and the absence of large estuaries (Edgar 1984).

⁴⁴ Barrett, N & Edgard, G. 2003 Report.

The Kent Group has a diverse range of habitats reflecting the regions bathymetry, oceanography and geomorphology, including rocky reefs of varying exposure and depth, sheltered coves with seagrass and extensive areas of sponge and sand habitat. The island group is dominated by hard sand and light sponge habitat, however, the distribution and extent of habitats varies by depth. In shallow to medium depth waters (0-40m), the benthos is dominated by reef and over 40m by hard sand and sponges (Jordan, Halley, Lawler and Barrett 2002). In some places there are scattered small sandy ridges which are partially consolidated into calcarenite, providing crannies, and ledges for species such as rock lobster. Anecdotal information from local fishers, suggest that the ridges are used by rock lobsters as migratory routes in the region. The reefs include large areas of sea urchin barrens (Barrett and Edgar 1992) as a result of relatively recent incursion of *Centrostephanus rodgersii* to the area.

Of the 52 fish species recorded at the Kent Group during the 1992 survey, 65% species were widespread around Tasmania and the remaining 35% were not recorded from Tasmanian coastal waters or were only found south as the Tasmanian north coast (Barrett and Edgar 1992). The Kent Group represents the southernmost stronghold of several species, including the violet roughy, mosaic leatherjackets and wilsons weedfish and the southern limit of distribution of several other species, including the maori wrasse, one spot puller and banks shovelnose ray (Edgar 1984). The abundance of northern species partly explains the unusual species richness of the Kent Group fish fauna (Barrett and Edgar 1992).

Beyond the islands, the sandy seabed supports benthic faunal communities dominated by sponges.

In terms of fish fauna, the Kent Group has a mean of 23.4 fish species per site (minimum 16, maximum 34) far more than any other location studied by biologists during the bioregional surveys (1992) in Tasmania. In terms of benthic animals and plants, the 1992 diving survey found that species diversity of both plants and animals was slightly higher in the Kent Group than for most other sites surveyed in Bass Strait (Flinders bioregion).

Murray Passage contains seagrass beds, which extend to depths in excess of 20 m, due to the unusual water clarity at this location (Barrett and Edgar 1992). These deepwater seagrass beds are an uncommon habitat in Tasmanian waters (Barrett and Edgar 1992).

The Kent Group has been assigned to a different bioregion from the other islands nearby because of its unusual complement of fish species and its similarities to NSW reef communities. It is the only location representing this Twofold Shelf bioregion in Tasmanian waters.

Extensive grazing of seaweeds by the long-spined sea urchin, *Centrostephanus rodgersii*, has resulted in sea urchin barrens in many reef areas, where seaweeds have been over grazed leaving bare rock. In some areas of Murray Passage, large areas of reef support little seaweed between 5-20 m depth due to this phenomenon.

At the hearing Professor Buxton, represent TAFI (Exhibit 10) gave evidence that “*the Kent Islands were under considerable threat from the introduced long-spined sea urchin, Centrostephanus and their associated barrens.*”

The TAFI report (Jordan, Halley, Lawler and Barrett 2002) tabled at the hearing that:

“barrens were found at numerous locations...and these constitute a distinct habitat of their own within the overall depth exposure classification of the reefs. The habitat is characterised by the almost complete absence of macroalgae, and an enhanced

presence of planktivorous fish. Barrens can extend from depths of 4m to over 30m, are most characteristic of the more sheltered locations and have been present at the Kent Group from at least 1983 when they were first reported in Murray Passage...

Dr. Graham Edgar indicated that a plausible explanation of the phenomenon is that the sea urchin barrens result from over exploitation of large rock lobsters that are predators of the urchin.

The Kent Group is a popular destination for yachts and other recreational craft crossing the Strait and a safe anchorage in rough weather conditions. Little recreational fishing occurs due to the area's isolation.

The Kent Group offers spectacular diving in clear waters with a high diversity of marine life (especially fish), as well as several shipwreck sites. There has not been a great deal of activity to date, however, due to the area's isolation and the frequent rough weather conditions. Dive groups sometimes visit the islands by sea during summer from Victoria and Flinders Island.

A total of 20 shipwrecks are known to have occurred at the Kent Group since 1816 (Nash 1988). Only four actual sites have been located of which three are historic shipwrecks protected under the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976*. The *Bulli* and the *Karitane* are visited by recreational divers. The wreck of the *Bulli* is one of the best preserved historic shipwrecks in Australian waters, and provides spectacular diving in clear and relatively shallow (13-16m) waters (Nash 1988). The wreck is substantially intact, and stands up to 5m off a flat sand bottom. The *Karitane* is less well preserved, but still provides good diving in even shallower waters.

The unpublished paper titled 'Proposal for a Marine Reserve at the Kent Group of Islands, Bass Strait – for Public Comment, October 1998,' prepared by the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, stated that the "*training ships from the Navy and the Australian Maritime College may visit the Kent Group at any time of the year. Erith Island has been visited annually since 1966 by a group of Victorians, including naturalists and artists (the 'Erith Mob' and the Kent Group Association).*"⁴⁵

Register of the National Estate

Class: Historic.

Legal Status: Registered (21/03/1978).

Place ID: 12591.

Place File No. 6/03/052/0027.

Statement of Significance:

Deal Island Lightstation, built in 1848 is significant for its association with the development of navigational aids along the Tasmanian coastline. This agreement between the governments of New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land to share the costs of building and maintaining the light was an important and unprecedented milestone in the path to Federation (Criterion A4).

The lightstation complex, comprising the lighthouse, former oil store, superintendent's residence, store rooms and privy are significant as they form the oldest group of substantially intact lighthouse buildings in Australia (Criterion B2). Deal Island Lightstation, with its unusually wide distances between the tower and residences, its significant as accommodation and the addition of other service buildings (Criterion A4).

Official Values: Not Available.

Description:

Deal Island is part of the Kent Group in Bass Strait. The island is 80 kilometres off Wilson's Promontory, Victoria's southernmost point. It is approximately 6 kilometres long and 4.5 kilometres wide and has an area of 1,623 hectares. The Lightstation occupies the whole of Deal Island, which is the largest of the Kent Group in Bass Strait. The island is made up of granitic hills and bluffs which are the tops of former mountains, now submerged by Bass Strait. The lightstation buildings are contained in two separate sites in the west and south of Deal Island. The Lighthouse Precinct is located on a high bluff at the south of the island. The residential precinct is some three kilometres away just above East Cove. There is also a jetty at East Cove. The establishment of Deal Island light was undertaken as a joint project by the Victorian, New South Wales and Tasmanian governments in 1846. Both bullock teams and convict labour were used during the course of construction. Work was completed in January 1848.

The Lighthouse Precinct comprises the lighthouse, generator shed, and oil store and the ruins of three residences and a former whim. The Residential Precinct comprises a loosely arranged group of residences, office, generator shed, garages and out buildings situated on a saddle above East Cove. The tower, built in 1848, stands at an elevation of 305 metres at the southern tip of the island, it has the distinction of being the highest light exhibited in Australia. The first order lens currently in service was installed in 1892. Since this time, oil, acetylene and electricity have been successively used as the source of illumination. The tower is constructed of cement rendered granite rubble and is 13 metres high. It is surmounted by a 12' diameter first order lantern manufactured by Chance Brothers of Birmingham, England. The optical apparatus consists of a Chance Brothers first order 920 mm focal radius, revolving lens mounted on a rotating pedestal. The apparatus gives a character of group flashing 3 every 20 seconds with an intensity of 1 000, 000. candelas resulting in a nominal visible range of 26 nautical miles. On clear nights the light may be visible from Wilson's Promontory. However, due to its elevation it is frequently obscured by low cloud or mist.

The former Superintendent's Residence c.1847 (now Museum and Store) is a typical Georgian style cottage with characteristic well proportioned, symmetrical front, plain wall surfaces and simple but refined detailing. The planning is also close to symmetrical, with similar flanked wings at the rear of the house under the skillion roof, and the two identical pyramidal roofed stores behind the house. The hip roof and skillion form is typical of houses of the era where the primary rooms (usually four in number in house of this size) are under the hip roof, and the service rooms under the skillion.

The former Principal Keeper's Residence, built in 1936 is a timber framed sheet fibro structure painted white. It has a hip and gable roof with a skillion verandah and porch with corrugated-iron sheeting. The porch has been infilled to form a sunroom.

The Principal Keeper's Residence, built c. 1969 is made up of prefabricated panels with a skin of brick veneer. The building has a flat roof with a skillion over the sunroom.

Other buildings in the complex comprise the generator shed, office former privy (now pump house c. 1848), garage and sheds.

There are three ruins on the site, all being former cottages for the lightkeepers. Two of the ruins were former Assistant's Quarters, built c. 1890. One was a weatherboard building, which was probably a pair of cottages, and was destroyed by bushfires in 1919. This ruin consists of random rubble sub-floor walling and the hearths to four diagonally placed back-to-back fireplaces. The second ruin consists of rubble sub-floor walling. This house escaped the 1919 bushfire but was abandoned in 1936 and burnt down in 1950. The third ruin is the remains of the original quarters of the Assistant Lighthouse Keepers. The building was reduced to a shell in the 1919 fires but was subsequently re-roofed and reused. It is now a ruin again and consists of coursed and random rubble walling, brick and stone fireplaces and some remnants of joinery.

A horse driven whim with a brake platform, a side leading platform, and two trolley ways is also on the site. It has a narrow cable drum capable of holding only two or three turns and wound a trolley up one track as the other trolley was let down the other track. The

horse was then turned and walked the opposite direction, reversing the direction of travel of the trucks. A brake was applied when a loaded truck reached the brake platform edge, and the top truck was unloaded while the lower was loaded near the jetty. The whims are timber structures, with iron components forming the mechanical elements. Although components have been replaced during the life of the whims, the technology of the system appears to be consistent with its original construction. The rails are iron on wooden sleepers.

Other structures include fowl sheds, pump shed, dam, iron chimney, survey cairns, quarries and graves. The graves consist of four marked graves. The jetty is of composite reinforced concrete and timber structure, which has undergone considerable change over its lifetime. The majority of the structure is reinforced concrete, which is generally sound but some defective members are becoming detached from the structure due to their deterioration through spalling. There is also an oil tank farm, airfield, aircraft wreck and a halfway house site on the lightstation complex.

History: Not Available.

Condition and Integrity:

The lightstation is generally in good condition. Changes have occurred over time to various sections of the lightstation complex but this does not diminish its integrity as a whole. The lighthouse has been well maintained but has some minor problems with cracking and water penetration. At this stage it does not threaten either the existence nor the heritage value of the tower.

The former Superintendent's Residence (now Museum and Store) is in good condition. There are a substantial amount of original skirtings, architraves and joinery remaining. The layers of paper on walls in the upper floor are of particular interest.

The Oil Store is basically the same form as when it was constructed. The original doors and possibly the windows have been replaced at an unknown date, the floor is now concrete, and a corrugated fibre cement sheet roof has replaced the corrugated iron which itself replaced the original shingle roof.

The machinery, rails and sleepers of the whim are in a bad condition but not so far gone as their mode of use cannot be readily appreciated.

Location:

Comprising Tower, Oil Store and remains of three houses. All on Lighthouse Hill; Lightkeepers houses, two yard sheds, privy and remains of Whim, all at Browns Bay, Deal Island, Bass Strait.⁴⁶

Kent Group National Park (Terrestrial Portion).

Summary of Management Plan 2005.

Kent Group National Park is Tasmania's newest national park. Named after the captain of the first fleet vessel *Supply*, the Kent Group is an archipelago of five main islands and associated off-shore rocks with a total area of 2,374 hectares. It is isolated from mainland Tasmania on the northern side of Bass Strait and access is by boat or helicopter. While Deal and Erith, the two largest islands of the group, are quite easier for the mariner to land on, the other islands are much more difficult to land on and have been little visited.

Park Values.

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Department of Environment and Heritage. National Estate Register Listing.

The Deal Island Lightstation, an historic heritage site of outstanding significance, is one of the most important lightstations in Australia and is on the Register of the National Estate as well as the Tasmanian Heritage Register.

Several sites relating to Aboriginal occupation are known and are of particular significance in assisting develop an understanding of the settlement of Tasmania by Aboriginal people.

The islands of the park have major nature conservation significance in providing habitat for seals and seabirds. Two small islets, North East and South West islands, support large colonies of breeding seabirds including penguins, shearwater, fairy prion, Pacific gull, common diving petrel and sooty oystercatcher. Judgement Rocks, an islet of the park, supports the largest Australian fur seal breeding colony in Tasmania.

Five sites of geoconservation significance have been recorded

The islands have important natural and cultural landscape values, along with the aesthetic values associated with remoteness and isolation.

The park flora has biogeographic significance, being transitional between mainland and Tasmanian floras. Of all the larger Bass Strait Islands, Dover Island may well be the least disturbed by human influences. Its heath communities are unique and only reserved in this location. Within the broader park there are 14 individual species listed under the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*.

The primary recreation value of the park is an off-shore destination for Victorian pleasure-boat owners. Other visitors include the 'Erith Mob', sea kayakers and commercial fishers. Visitors numbers are less than 1,000 per annum.

Threats to Park Values.

Given the isolation of the park, the critical management issue is how to provide adequate protection to values, particularly the lightstation on Deal Island. A management presence is considered the prime requisite. The cost to the Crown of providing a ranger presence, or alternatively supporting a volunteer presence, is considerable.

Other major management issues include wildfires, weeds, introduced pets including cats and rabbits, and vulnerability to increased disturbance of important breeding habitat for seals and seabirds on the more isolated islets of the park.

Vision.

A future visitor to the Kent Group National Park finds an intact and well-presented lightstation on Deal Island, healthy natural biodiversity free of exotic species (both flora and fauna), and viable populations of all indigenous species. The park continues to provide a safe breeding haven for key species such as the Australian fur seal and many seabird species.

Relatively small numbers of visitors enjoy the park for its special natural and cultural landscapes. Visitor facilities are relatively few, unobtrusive and basic in character.

Management Proposals.

The plan provides a clear basis for the management of the values of the park.

Prior to this management plan being prepared, Deal Island has been the subject of two separate 'expression of interest' processes to locate a tourism operator interested in establishing on the island. It has been considered that, if successful, a partnership arrangement between the Crown and an operator could provide long-term benefits to both parties. Many potential could accrue to the Crown, most importantly a permanent management presence on Deal Island. Commercial benefit could accrue to the tourism operator. The current 'expressions of interest' has been put on hold while this plan is developed. A major purpose of this plan then is the establishment of ground rules for the development of such a partnership in the park.

The major plan initiative aimed at long-term conservation of the heritage values of the lightstation is the establishment of a commercial basis for future permanent occupation of Deal Island. Pivotal here is the provision of defined development rights both within the lightstation residential precinct and outside it. Development rights within the lightstation residential precinct are designed to assist the maintenance of this residential function. Development rights outside the lightstation residential precinct are limited to the Visitors Services Zone on Erith Island and the Conservation 2 Zone (with special use overlay) on Deal Island. Development rights associated with the Conservation Zone 2 (with special use overlay) will lapse if an 'in principle' agreement is not in place within one year of the plan being formalised.

To protect the important natural and cultural landscapes of the park a zoning system is proposed to guide future development into less sensitive areas.

An important initiative of the plan is further protection of vulnerable seabird breeding habitat on the three small islets of the park.

There are key outcomes with respect to erosion, weed management, exotic animal management and monitoring.⁴⁷

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