

## DEDICATION

Tramping over sodden paddocks on an early spring day I came across a sweep of long untended snowdrops, gleaming white against the greyness of dripping ti- trees.

I realized that they must be on the site of the old primary school, already dust before I was born.

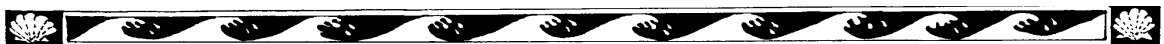
The flowers, scorned by browsing cows due to their bitter taste, flourished and multiplied to cover a large area. I mused on their immortality.

The loving schoolmistress who planted them unmourned or remembered; yet still they flower, each year.

Immortality in a snowdrop, or perhaps a poem, or a painting?

My book is dedicated to our immortal love affair with Mallacoota, beginning in the early years of this century and continuing, undiminished, through this generation of artists and poets.

Edna J. Brady



## CREDITS

*With grateful thanks to the following people...*

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*This book contains archaic spellings which were correct when the material was created.  
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The author regrets any omissions that may have occurred.*



## MALLACOOTA

*Ted Harrington*

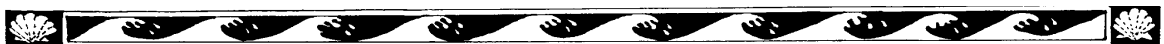
To the shores of Mallacoota,  
Feeling heartsick and depressed,  
From the tumult of the city,  
I arrived a stranger guest,  
Kindly hearts were there to greet me,  
Friendly voices welcomed me;  
In the house above the inlet,  
Looking o'er the sunlit sea.

On the shores of Mallacoota,  
Where the billows shoreward roll,  
I have found a balm and solace,  
For my overburdened soul,  
For the glory of the morning,  
And the splendor of the eve,  
Has enchanted me and chained me,  
And has made me loath to leave.

Mallacoota in the limelight,  
Has a glory all its own;  
When the mighty sea is muttering,  
In a muffled undertone.  
And when the rain is on the waters,  
And the heavens give no light,  
Then the light of mighty Gabo,  
Like a great sword cleaves the night.

I have always loved the forest,  
I have always loved the sea;  
Now here in Mallacoota  
Both my loves seem close to me.  
I can feel their mighty pulses,  
I can hear their great hearts beat,  
With the forest close behind me  
And the ocean at my feet.

We are all a part of nature,  
Part of what we feel and see;  
And I feel that Mallacoota,  
Has become a part of me.  
And wherever I may wander  
Or whatever beacons burn,  
To the shores of Mallacoota  
I will once again return.



## A SHORT HISTORY OF OUR AREA

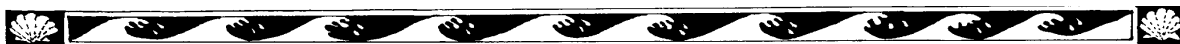
In the early part of this century large areas of East Gippsland were relatively unexplored. The Princes Highway did not exist and the movement of men and animals through uncharted bush and thick scrub was a slow and arduous task. Mallacoota first came to the attention of settlers as possible farmland, marine harvesting and also as a source of wattle bark which was used extensively in the tanning process. With the discovery of gold in 1894 mineral deposits became important as well. E.J. Brady, commissioned by the Australian government of the time to write a book on Australia, came through this area and was immediately smitten by its untouched beauty.

*"No coarse hand of progress will ever tear from Mallacoota and its surrounds the mystic beauty that still clings to it like an enchanted veil, showing under the soft transparency of sky and air a loveliness amongst the rarest in Australia"*

E.J. BRADY Overlander

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON MALLACOOTA

19/4/1770	Captain Cook's ship "Endeavour" arrived off Cape Howe .
1/2/1797	Shipwrecked crew of the ship "Sydney Cove" driven onto our shores off Cape Howe.
1797	George Bass's whale boat rounds Cape Howe.
1840	Attempts made to establish runs in the Genoa district.
1837	William Morris takes up "Nungatta" station.
1840	Devlin, an early settler, establishes a cattle run
1845	James Allen married the daughter of Captain Stevenson
1870	Last record of Aborigines in the Mallacoota area.
1886	Gipsy Point taken up by Bucknell..
1890	Fish cannery opened.
1894	Spotted Dog Gold mine opened up across the lake.
1901	Ship "Federal" wrecked at Sand Patch Point near the aerodrome. The bodies found on the beach were buried at Mallacoota
1925	Mallacoota settlement moves to this side of the lake.

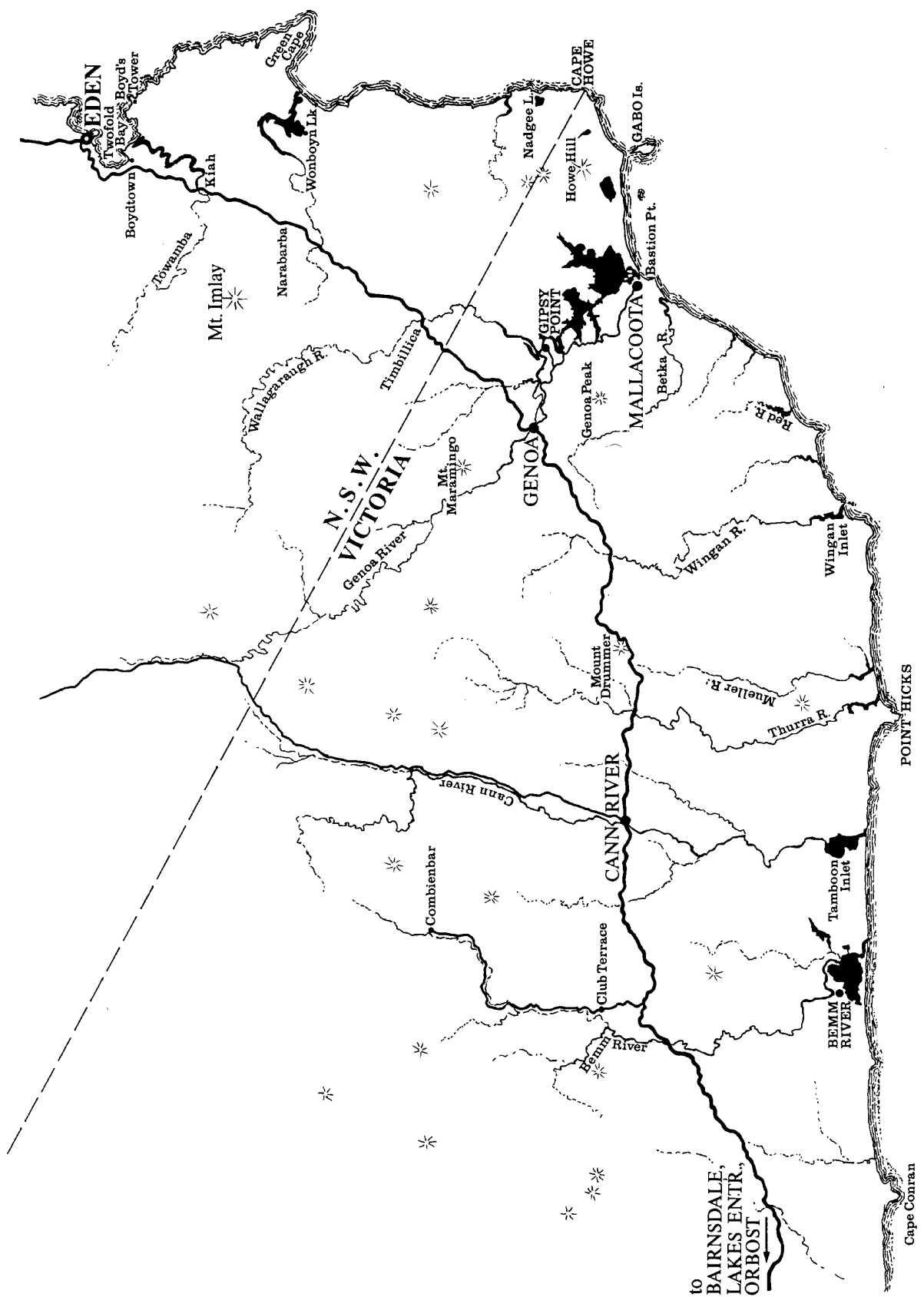


SKETCH MAP OF MALLACOOTA AT TURN OF CENTURY

KNOWN SELECTORS - CIRCA 1900.

Underlined areas referred to in literature

# MAP OF AREAS MENTIONED IN TEXT



**OLD STATE SCHOOL 3516, MALLACOOTA  
(AROUND 1910)**



*Courtesy of the Mallacoota Historical Society*

Complete attendance, including teacher Mr. Clem Baker and students Brunhill or Dorothy Stocks, Neil and Ben Buckland and Hugh Brady (seated)

This is the second bark hut school and was situated near Roy Buckland's orchard, about 50 metres from "Sunny Corner", above what is now Buckland's Boat Hire.



## THE KURNAI OF SOUTH EAST GIPPSLAND

The allied tribes of East Gippsland were called the Kurnai or Men.

In our dense scrubby area lived the Bidwel, a small tribe who were probably refugees from tribal justice from all the surrounding people. They bore a bad reputation amongst their neighbours, none of whom acknowledged relationship with them. The last wild native in Victoria was a Bidwel called Tongi Jimmie, who clung to his native scrub until 1870, before eventually succumbing to the lure of "civilization".

Extract from "Bunjils Cave" by Aldo Massola

*The Victorian Archaeological Society Survey of South Eastern Victoria FEBRUARY 1984 has the following to say:*

*"The study area was the domain of a tribe called the Bidawal. According to Tindale\* the Bidawal (also called Bidwell, Bidwill, Bidwelli, Biduelli etc.) possessed the territory comprising an area bounded in the north by a line running from Delegate to Green Cape in NSW the coast between Green Cape and Cape Everard and a line running approximately north west to the head waters of the Cann and Bemm Rivers then North east towards Delegate. There is surprisingly good correspondence between the boundaries of this area and those of the catchment. The tribal boundaries suggested by Smyth \* are different from those of Tindale but the latter was in possession of more information than Smyth and is likely to be more reliable. The Bidawal tribal area consisted of a large area of highlands, a comparatively small area of coastal plain and a section of coastal shoreline. Much of the area, including the coastal plains, was covered in a dense canopy of rain forest and forest, with few open areas; these occurred mainly on the margins of the stringy bark forests near the coast. Specialized adaptation to the unusual environmental conditions could probably be anticipated. Unfortunately almost nothing is known of the Bidawal.*

*Robinson \* visited the area in 1844; he passed through the Great Dividing Range to the north end emerged at Twofold Bay. He then made an excursion southward through Bidawal territory via Cape Howe, Ram Head and Mallacoota to Cann River, north through the mountains and back to Twofold Bay. He found the going rough, the coast fraught with danger, and the mountains thickly wooded with scrub and timber. Mallacoota inlet was open to the ocean at the time and was well stocked with fish and wildlife. Unfortunately he made few comments on the Aboriginal population in the area, They were called Mallekotang Mitton and he lists the names of a few he met en route.*

*He saw aboriginal camps in the vicinity of Lake Wau Wauka, which consisted of sheets of bark bent double to form a tent-like structure and he saw canoes in the Inlet. The latter were made the same way as those at Twofold Bay and at the Gippsland Lakes. They were constructed of bark sheets about 10 ft long, tied at both ends, with wooden ribs.*

*Howitt \* also visited this area and found it to be one of the most inhospitable that he had encountered. He commented that the local tribe had all but disappeared. Howitt collected some information from informants but there is no critical assessment of the data and it is not always possible to determine whether his comments apply to the Bidawal before or after contact with Europeans.*

*According to him the Bidawal occupied the forest and jungle country between the ranges and the coast and confined themselves to "the few small open tracts" Their language was a composite of the tribes surrounding them and they had an anomalous clan system*

*Howitt\* expressed the view that the Bidawal were a group of people made up of refugees from other areas in Victoria, thereby accounting for their social structure.*

*There are no details of economy or material culture and Howitt\* mentions only that there was a bush track leading from the area to "the settlement" (presumably Twofold Bay in NSW). In summary, almost nothing is known about the recent Aboriginal occupation of Mallacoota and the Bidawal territory."*

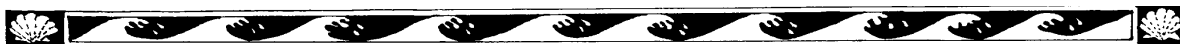
Tindale (1974 p.203)

Smyth 1878

Robinson 1844

Mackness 1941

Howitt 1886





## A MAN FROM THE STONE AGE

*Dreams & Realities.*

*E. J. Brady.*

Fern roots had crept into the roof of it's mouth and the skull was full of black dust when they unearthed the skeleton, one clear blue day with a cool wind blowing.

When the wind dropped, waters of the inlet glimmered like scales on the back of a fish. Had the lads been older and wiser they might have reflected on the evolution of living forms, on terrestrial life, on intelligence, and the universal struggle to live despite the absolute certainty of death. They were a bit awed and afraid without knowing the biological significance of fear.

The bones they had dug out of the midden were fragile. The warrior had lain there for a long time. He might have been a notable member of his tribe when George the Third began to reign in England.

From the manner of his interment it could be seen that he predated His Majesty's first colonists. He lived his tribal life in forests untouched by axes of steel, virgin to roads; no fences, clearings or houses breaking the endless canopy of leaves; no domestic animals wandering in search of water or herbage; no echo of human industry; no sounds of music, song or speech which a White man could understand. This forest ended at the shore. Beyond that spread an eversailless sea. Human figures in that landscape would be dark, primitive and nearly naked - with low foreheads, brown eyes, large mouths, and straight black hair. This framework of a man, once flesh-covered, alert and active, stood erect among them in bygone days.

While he was a piccaninny his mother carried him on her back as she went about her daily tasks of gathering shellfish, searching for berries and seeds, digging out edible roots with a sharpened stick, and looking for reeds and fibers to make baskets or nets.

As a small boy he waded in shallow places to pick up mussels and cockles, cracked them open with stones and enjoyed their salty flavor. Having learned to walk and swim at the same time he was in no danger of drowning and quite unlikely to catch cold from taking off his clothes!

He also captured lizards, found geebung and ground berries, caught white grubs and other savory insects - chewed wattle gum, and sucked the nectar out of certain wild flowers.

In childhood he did not wander far from the camping grounds of his people; much of his time was occupied in romping with the juniors of his group. He never attended school and was never scolded for tearing his trousers or smearing his face. He slept soundly at nights afraid sometimes of mysterious things which appeared in dreams.

That dream-life puzzled him. It continued to puzzle him as long as he lived. Neither he nor his tribal contemporaries were ever quite aware of unreality.

Before the age of puberty time passed pleasantly.

With growing boys of his own age, he extended the horizon of his experience, penetrated further into the bush, waded deeper into the salt water, even crossed the shallow bar to seaward beaches where garrulous waves pounded white sands or smashed themselves in spray on slippery rocks.

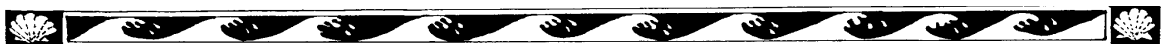
On cloudless mornings a golden disk rose up from a blue waterplain, climbed into a blue arch, traveled slowly towards its hiding place in the far blue hills, and disappeared. Unquiet darkness followed, when it was not good to be away from camp fires, not wise to venture out amongst the shadows.

Indefinite forms of the newly-dead lurked there, or hostile tribesmen might be waiting a chance to hurl their sharp spears into unwary victims.

He had seen a dead man covered with blood and dust carried into the camp. Head lolled and legs dangled. There was a red opening in the belly where the kidney fat had been removed. This had been followed by loud fierce talk, wailing and ceremonies from which he was excluded because the time of his manhood had not yet come. He noticed that women belonging to the dead man went about smeared with pipe clay for a long time afterwards. He knew that preparations were made to avenge this death. In these likewise he was not permitted to take part. Round this time he was uneasy, especially in the dark of the moon.

When he arrived at the age of seventeen years the old men took him with the other youths to a secret place in the bush to be initiated. He was given certain instructions and prepared for painful ordeals, which he resolved to bear with fortitude.

Among the Kroatungolung tribe into which he had been born, circumcision was not



practiced. He escaped that. Two of his front teeth, however, were knocked out by inserting a sharp stick under the gums and using a black basaltic stone as a mallet. The septum of his nose was bored with a bone awl and a small stick inserted. An old man performed the operations while another graybeard held him. His back, shoulders and breast were ceremoniously scarred. After that he was permitted to eat certain animals and fish which had been forbidden. He was also free to absorb portions of the skin and hands on any enemies he might slay. Further, he might, in due course, procure himself a wife by bargain, capture, or bestowal. He was tutored in the arts of protecting himself against magic, and invested with his tribal name. This name he was solemnly warned not to disclose to anyone outside his own tribe lest a witch doctor made use of it to do him evil, or an enemy charm the life from him or paralyze his arm in combat. If his makthar, his real name became known, those who wished to destroy him would go into a secret place, draw a picture of him on the ground and weave death spells, from which there is no escape.

Occult knowledge was imparted to him by old men: the story of that gigantic Gippsland Blackman of long ago who made all living things and went afterwards to live among the stars. The legend of Tirtelak the Frog, which swallowed all the waters of the earth and had to be made to laugh and disgorge them lest every living thing perish. The animals presented themselves before the over swollen Frog and performed ridiculous antics. The Frog restrained himself until an eel stood on the tip of his tail. Tirtelak was so amused that he burst out laughing. A deluge poured from his mouth, which would have drowned all the blacks if a quick thinker named Loon had not saved some of them in a canoe.

Loon asked for a wife as payment of his service. When the ungrateful survivors refused his request, he decorated himself with pipeclay and declared war on them. Portent magic of a sorcerer transformed him into a pelican. From another bird, Bimba-mrit, the fire-tailed finch, his Gippsland ancestors first procured fire. That was before some legendary blackfellow learned how to get it by a difficult process of friction. The initiate had seen the firemakers in action and would copy them as need arose. He would from now on acquaint himself more intimately with the industry and culture of the Kurnai people to whom he belonged; learn to make boomerangs and spears, clubs, swords and throwing sticks, learn the difficult art of shaping stone tomahawks, axes, spearheads.

Hunting and fishing were pre-eminently masculine occupations. He would paddle a canoe of bark, the smooth surface outside, to a good place and wait with his spear poised for fat mullet, black-fish, and salmon. Occasionally he fished on seaward rocks with a bone hook, the special invention of his tribe. Sometimes he engaged with others in handling scoop nets of grass fibre, and helped to set wider nets in shallow channels, into which fish were driven by shouting, splashing and beating the water with flat sticks.

Kangaroo and emu hunts took them further afield. The animals were beaten up and headed towards places where spearmen had planted themselves. After a successful haul or hunt there was feasting on the foreshores, and the men of his group - excepting those to whom certain animals and fishes were taboo - glutted themselves. While eating they sat cross-legged heels underneath, one thigh resting on the ground, - a position entirely uncomfortable to Europeans. The women squatted behind with both heels under one buttock. Choice parts of all animals were denied to them, and emu and echidna entirely forbidden.

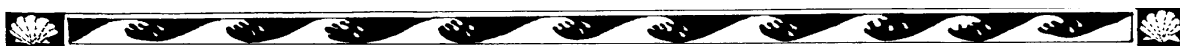
Flesh food was torn by the tribesmen rather than carved; fingers performed the duties of knives and forks.

The refuse was burned as protection against witchcraft. Human hairs or personal leavings in the hands of enemies might be used in incantations, to cause sickness or death. Death was invariably the result of old age or sorcery. In the latter case it had to be avenged. For that social - religious reason Australian aborigines lived in a constant state of inter-tribal feud, in which surprises and massacres rather than pitched battles prevailed.

After initiation it behoved him to become prominent among his group, in order to gain respect and establish a right to wives.

In this he probably succeeded: his bones proved that he had lived to an advanced age. It could be assumed from his longevity that he had been a warrior of account. Chieftainship or kingship - like agriculture and the use of metals - was unknown amongst Australian neoliths. They had not advanced to that stage in the process of social revolution.

Opinion, not authority, ruled. A father had power over his family group and the views of elder men carried weight in the assemblages. Beyond that, government as we understand it did not exist. Individuals, with rare exceptions, conformed to the customs of their tribes. For the exceptions



punishments were provided, inclusive of the death penalty.

It was not possible for a man to leave his tribe and join another. It was not possible for him to live for any length of time apart from his tribe. In general acceptance the tribe was held responsible for the actions of individual members. Women were regarded as chattels. They could be bought and sold and were subjects from tribal interchange. Females could not inherit, nor were they ever permitted to eat human flesh.

Weapons and effects, hunting rights, perhaps priority of occupation were bequeathed by fathers to sons, with limitations. This seems to have been more formal than real in regard to territories which were used in common and never carried boundary marks.

Food and native materials were plentiful in the country where our subject was born, lived and died. Consequentially, more time was available for fine - finishing of nets, bags, weapons; for the gentle art of ornamentation, for entertainment, in which corroborees were frequent.

About the age of 25 the last restriction imposed on a young man, before and after initiation, ended. He now partook of all food, except mushrooms, which were taboo to his group. No restrictions were placed on his mating - within the ambit of established custom, opportunity, and choice. Such intrigues as he had secretly attempted were no longer necessary. He obtained a woman outside his blood relationship - the first of his wives. Of the children born to him by this and subsequent alliances some would probably on his own decision be destroyed at birth; others were reared; the males being tutored in the use of weapons for war and chase, taught how to snare and spear, instructed how and when to throw boomerangs, find edible plants, honey, eggs, reptiles, goannas, gum, native fruits; track men and game; how to avoid spells and how to fit themselves for primitive life.

The females learned from the mothers to broil fish and meat on coals, to prepare sinews for thread, and stitch opossum skins into cloaks with bone needles; to make nets, dilly bags and ornaments from shells and kangaroo teeth; to make torches and carry fire.

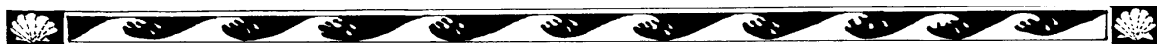
When our subject died, for whatever cause, he was buried in a sitting posture, with his knees bound to his neck, his arms bound to the sides of his body and his thumbs tied.

This had been done to prevent his escaping from the tomb and making future mischief. He might have rotted in a rug of skins or in strips of bark, of which there were, however, no signs. They found only a stone knife with the warrior's bones.

The place of sepulture would be marked, at the time for the burial, by notches on nearby trees, and a curved path around the grave. Before the interment his relatives and womenfolk burned their bodies with firesticks or cut themselves with stone knives and wailed bloodily for a season. The men put mud and dust on their hair and beards. After burial his name was never again spoken aloud.

His sons hunted, fought, danced the corroboree, married and died; were buried in similar manner, until the Whiteman came - bringing alcohol, diseases, poison, gunpowder and other blessings of civilization.

Against the Age of Steel a Stone-Age culture had no chance of survival. The tribesmen were driven from their hunting grounds. In feeble, albeit courageous, efforts to prevent dispersal many were slain. The remainder, broken and degraded, rapidly died out. From all this wide area of forest and



## REPORT ON MALLACOOTA AND ENVIRONS

*Australian Unlimited, E.J. Brady (1929)*

Owing, mayhap, to engineering difficulties, a large selection of interesting country, known as East Gippsland, between Tambo River and the border of NSW, remains unsettled. There are yet within this belt three million acres of unalienated Crown lands, covered for the most part with hardwood forests, which in themselves are a valuable asset to the State.

Leaving Twofold Bay, in NSW, traveling towards Victoria by rough bush road one enters a region of tall trees and sparse settlement. The straight border line surveyed by Black and Allan in 1870-72, beginning at Cape Howe, crosses constantly over hills and gullies, which become mountains and ravines as the line approaches nearer to the point where it reaches the Murray River. Amongst the Australian bush lands there is none with greater appeal to the eye and the imagination that which rolls upward from the Victorian coast into the heart of Australian Alps.

From the summit of the trigonometrical cairn on Howe Hill, you may look down and see the actual corner of the Continent.

Facing seaward, you behold the coastline on your left hand, making off towards Thursday Island, and falling way on your right towards the Leeuwin. You may stand at this southeastern angle of Australia with the tall pillar of Gabo Lighthouse right under you, and overlook the states of NSW and VIC.

Inland, an impressive panorama faces you. Over a foreground of fresh and saltwater lakes, forested hills rising into blue forested mountains make the picture as far as your vision carries.

Below you, like mirrors in the sun, glitter the ever changing, ever beautiful Mallacoota Lakes, with their wooded shores and islets.

Southward are Red River, the Wingan, Timboon, all the lone, mysterious coastal creeks and inlets that follow one another from Bastion Rock to the Snowy Bar.

Sometimes in Winter a fishing cutter feels a cautious way over their uncertain bars, and a camp fire reddens the foreshore for a few nights. Sometimes a bushman rides down to Mallacoota from Cape Everard beyond the vista of these passing strangers, the first hundred miles of Victorian shore faces the Southern Ocean in greater quietude than when Captain Cook sighted it. The cooees of dusky huntsmen are no longer heard in the bloodwoods, or their shouts over its healthy plains. It is a region filled with the voices of the wind and the wave, the making and turning of ocean tides, cries of whimbrel on sandy flats, howling of wild dogs in the scrub. Wreckage of unknown ships

strew its beaches and spindrift sweeps over lone white sand dunes; restless waves leave their tributes of red coral, kelp and shell along untrodden shores.

Westward the Drummer and Genoa Peak stand out in near prominence. Once a week the mail coach leaves Genoa for Orbost, a link that binds a handful of far distant Victorian settlers to their seat of Government in Melbourne. Their few frontier farms are on good black river flats, but the difficulties of transport hamper their progress. Apart from these fertile patches, Eastern Gippsland is heavily timbered. When cleared it will grow excellent grass.



E.J. Brady, *Photo courtesy of National Library*

## HILLS AND THE SEA

*The following work from E.J. Brady's "The Overlander The Princes Highway, 1926", shows what a deep love E.J. had for this area.*

Just under the Heel of Australia, not very far away from the place where Captain Cook got his first glimpse of the Southern Continent, lies Mallacoota Inlet. A long, in-curving beach runs from Gabo Island to Bastion rock. At its more southern end, a tidal channel, constantly changing in depth and position, gives uncertain entrance to a land-locked sheet of water indented by scores of miniature bays and glimmering havens.

The inlet is divided into two lakes, connected by a deep channel, over shadowed by forested hills. These narrows .. corresponding to the handle of a heavy dumbbell, are about a mile long, and run in a straight line like a Titanic canal.

A continuous play of light and shade banishes monotony from its varying shores. Its days are heralded by sunrises in rose and gold, and dayfall is frequently presaged by colour splendor, rivaled only by the rare Aurora Australis.

I have never seen anything in Australia to equal some sunsets that have held me spellbound in Mallacoota. Picture a perfectly still sheet of water, three or four miles in width, with a number of little islets clustered in one corner, covered by green coast currant and honeysuckle, with billowing ranges at the opposite margin; the pacific Ocean spreading its glue floor eastward, and purple hills and peaks over in the west, where the sun is radiating bands of colour towards the zenith: green, blue, vermilion and a hundred intermediate shades of rose and yellow! Slowly the gorgeous riot gives place to a harmonious arrangement of purples, hyacinths, mauves, lilacs, heliotropes and violets, all allied, but distinct, in tone shade and intensity. If you are out in a boat, you find yourself drifting over a hyacinth sea, surrounded by lilac mountains, with clouds in every shade of heliotrope drifting overhead, and so, full of wonder and appreciation, you very slowly and reverently ply the transfigured paddle with a llac blade into the violet tide.

In hours like this Mallacoota enlarges the merely human conception of Heaven.

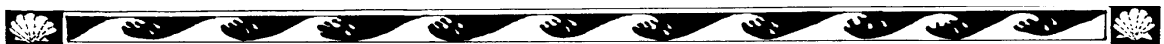
On a clear summers day, the lake gleams intensely blue. Against this foreground of sapphire stands the occasional emerald of a clearing; but the wide ranges of the horizon is, for the most part, occupied by dun Australian woods and shadowy gorges, wherein vine, tree fern and the jungle growths of Gippsland make covert for lyre birds and bronze wings.

Eastward, towards Cape Howe, lies a lovely little lake of fresh water, about two miles long and a mile or so wide. Beyond that again are the beautiful WauWakuka and Nadji Lakes .. remote and rarely visited.

The way to the Freshwater lake from Mallacoota is across a level plain, with hummocks for one boundary, and hills as the opposite frame of the picture. Here the great gray kangaroo survives, and the black wallaby is frequent. At certain times of the year, December to April, particularly in dry seasons, wild duck are plentiful about the inlet, and bream, schnapper and other fish bite freely during the summer months.

Mallacoota has a historical interest for Victorians. almost the first white settlement on any territory of the southern State took place by the shores of the inlet.

On a green knoll facing the bar the outlines of an old stock-yard can still be traced.



## CINDERELLA

### From "Dreams and Realities"

*E.J. Brady*

On a hiking trip through Eastern Gippsland, which ended at Sydney in 1907, I first heard of Mallacoota Inlet, I located the place on the map and found that it was 160 miles from the nearest Victorian railhead.

A year later - after navigating a motor skiff from Albury to Lake Alexandrina, returning to Watson's Bay and writing a book about it - I went round to the local post office one day and asked to have a look at the Postal Register. When the postmaster heard what I was seeking, he said:

"I know something about Mallacoota. My brother was down that way helping to build the Gabo lighthouse; there were plenty of wild cattle in the bush."

That sounded good to me. We would not want for beef; but what about bread?

"Better write to the local postmaster," he suggested.

A reply from Mallacoota Post Office informed me all I wanted to know. They enjoyed a weekly mail and telegraphic service. Settlement to date consisted of eight scattered homesteads on the shores of the Inlet. Supplies came from Twofold Bay. Fish was plentiful, game abundant. I was free to camp anywhere. We could be supplied with milk and bread.

A coach ran from Eden to Genoa. My new-found friends advised me to catch it, as sailing of the cutters were uncertain. The track terminated at Genoa - head of navigation for the Inlet. If we sent a telephone message from Eden they would have a boat at Genoa to meet us...

On the eleventh February, 1909, a South-Coast steamer swung through the heads and dipped her nose into the long Pacific roll; the passengers went below.

Following afternoon, the village of Eden with its golden beaches, jade and turquoise waters, hillside cottages, made an inviting picture. We thought we would like to come back there after a spell at Mallacoota and occupy Sir Oswald Brierley's old cottage at Boydtown. Ben Boyd built the cottage. He also built a hotel and a lighthouse. The cottage was a quaint place with Gothic entrance, gables, and a garret overshadowed by two old mulberry trees.

We consigned our heavy baggage - which included a wash-tub, a camp oven, and a Webster's dictionary to Captain Ike Warren of the "Clara", and boarded Carragher's coach on Monday morning with the rest of our belongings. The track wound for forty miles through a maze of mountain ash, bloodwood forest, oak, wattle, banksia and dogwood. We had a salt beef lunch at Narrabarba. They told us to go into the orchard and help ourselves to ripe nectarines, apples and plums for dessert. About 4 o'clock we came to Timbillica - one house, Allen's, where no passenger was permitted to pass without having a cup of tea. The coach pulled up, Carragher delivered his mail bag. We went into a great kitchen where camp ovens stood in the cavernous fireplace, and a corpulent fountain hung from a hook over the fire. They gave us refreshing tea, hot brownie, fresh fruit, and indignantly refused payment.

Tired horses climbed a steep hill at sundown. From its woody crest we looked down on a clearing where green maize was growing along the banks of a stream fringed with fern, pittosporum and myrtle.

"Genoa!" said Carragher, waving his whip towards a shack at the foot of the hill.

Next morning two friendly figures appeared at the shanty. They had arrived with a boat to take us to Mallacoota.

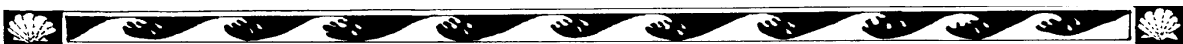
They rowed us slowly down the beautiful Genoa River. A fair wind was blowing as the boat entered the broadwater. Virgin forests fringed its indented shores and mantled the low-lying hills that encircled it.

We crossed this quiet sheet of water, entered the narrows, sailed through a mile-long rent in the forested hills and broke out into a wider inlet dotted with little seaward islets. Eastward it was fringed by Howe Ranges; Northward it lost itself in a maze of woodland havens, jungled creeks. and hidden bays.

We had, by happy accident, found an Australian Arcadia where Virgin nature abided, an Arcadia yet innocent of progress, still undisturbed by despoiling hands.

We made a camp on the shore of the Inlet. Soon, Sir Oswald Brierley's cottage at Boydtown appealed no more. Here was al-a-ba-ma; here one could rest, dream, write and live.

On the beach, bent like a golden harp between Gabo and Bastion Point, seas of Bass Strait made wild or gentle music- lullaby at night and reveille in the morning. When a full moon rose over



the sea rim and laid a broad hand of light upon still lake waters, black swans glided across it-fluting.

In daylight vision the silver picture of the lake was framed by near hills. Beyond these Mount Imlay stood, tall sentinel in blue uniform guarding the gates of peace and solitude. Half a mile up channel was the homestead of old-timer William Allen- kindly son of colonial days, post-master, magistrate, hidalgo of the hinterland.

From our permanent camp on Captain's Point, I rowed every morning for twelve months to Allen's for fresh water, milk and home-made bread.

For twelve months we enjoyed our gipsy life. On Captain's Point I wrote to The King's Caravan which Edward Arnold, nephew of the Great Matthew, liked well enough to publish in 1912. On the money I earned from poems, short stories and newspaper articles, we lived carefree and content. It was a halcyon year, a memorial year that rooted happiest of all recollections deep in my memory. So deep, they have drawn me back to Gippsland again; so deep that losses, sorrows and enmities, disappointments and changes have not torn them from my heart.

We left Melbourne for Mallacoota again after the Battle of the Marne when ultimate victory for the Allies seemed to be assured. People believed that the war would be ended in a year. We provided ourselves with twelve-months supplies and a full camping outfit and teamed them from Eden to Genoa. Thence they were taken by boat to the Inlet. I intended to complete Australia Unlimited and return to city life. We had stored the furniture of a small villa in Melbourne with this idea. But the lure of Mallacoota, the beauty and peace of the place, proved magnetic. It drew us into deeper commitments. We began by buying a fifteen-acre freehold, sloping to the waterfront. It was covered with green and dead timber and matted second growth. The soil, when cleared, would grow fruit, vegetables, pasture grasses.

Then we were led into purchasing the balance of the selection - 105 acres. Then I took an adjoining selection - purchase area of 360 acres, to which another 860 was added later as a family 'investment'. When the fifteen acres were partly cleared and grubbed, at a considerable cost of money and personal labour, we built a house on it. Being my own draughtsman and architect, we could plan it to please ourselves.

In time we cleared fifty acres of ground and enclosed some hundreds more. Felling trees, grubbing stumps, burning off, digging dams, fencing, ploughing, planting and cultivating is fascinating work when you are not depending on the results for a livelihood.

Nothing is sweeter than the smell of sap and soil.

Nothing tastes better than your own cream, fresh vegetables from your own garden, ripened from your own trees.

We made butter, reared poultry, preserved eggs, cured bacon, salted beef and mutton and decorated the dining table with own flowers. We had an abundance of fresh fruit, game, oysters, and honey.

We made our own preserves. We had bucketsful of strawberries, and cases of passionfruit; we laid by dried prunes, strings of garlic and onions, bags of potatoes, lima beans, swede turnips, maize, apples and pears for winter use.

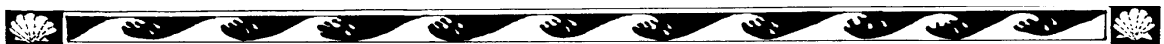
When we began our pioneering labours the railhead was at Bairnsdale. Until the line was completed to Orbost in 1916 settlers nearer to the N.S.W. border-line continued to get their requirements from Twofold Bay. They established credits in Orbost, and Orbost cheerfully charged as high as ten pounds a ton for carriage on supplies! Improvement of the road and its extension to Mallacoota made exploitation possible. It was merciless.

The history of settlement in Eastern Gippsland, from its genesis in 1837 to the year 1943 is not inspiring. The district between Cape Everard and Cape Howe was supporting more black people when Cook sailed along its shoreline than it carries of white folk after a hundred and two years of European occupation!

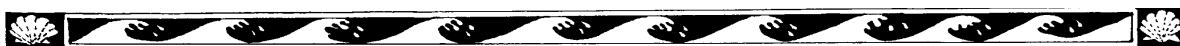
Its earliest story begins with cattlemen; some of whom were compelled to abandon their grazing licences because of the blacks.

The Land Act of 1865 gave settlers security of tenure, but they were left without a road for another fifty-seven years!

Captain Stephenson took up a holding at Mallacoota in 1846. It was eighty years before any of his descendants could visit the site of the old homestead in anything that went on wheels! Landward transport, when we arrived at the Inlet in 1909 and for eleven years after, was conducted by "Croajingolong carriage" - sleds drawn by a bullock or horse, after the manner of the Incas of



Peru, who made remarkable advances in other directions but missed the wheel.





There was a scheme afoot to re-establish unemployed bushworkers in groups and assist them to become self-supporting. Although doubtful of Utopian Socialism, I was willing to assist the idea. When we went to Melbourne and saw the miseries of depression I was still more willing.

Some good comrades, full of human intention formed themselves into a committee. With benevolent support from relief organisations, a fair measure of Government assistance, and private aid, we deported an advance group of unemployed to Mallacoota. The experiment proved unsuccessful; for which none of those concerned can justly be blamed. The reasons for its failure go right down to the roots of our industrial system. To deal with them here would be to convert this chapter into a sociological essay, which readers can be spared.

From these experiments and from the experiences of the pioneers I have learned much.

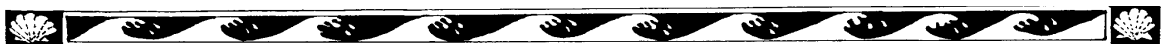
None of us have ever lost our love for Cinderella or our faith in her future.

Youth, in this land that is yet the Benjamin of Nations, is going to build a mighty edifice of Progress and Culture - Cinderella will come into her own.



*E.J. Brady building his camp.*

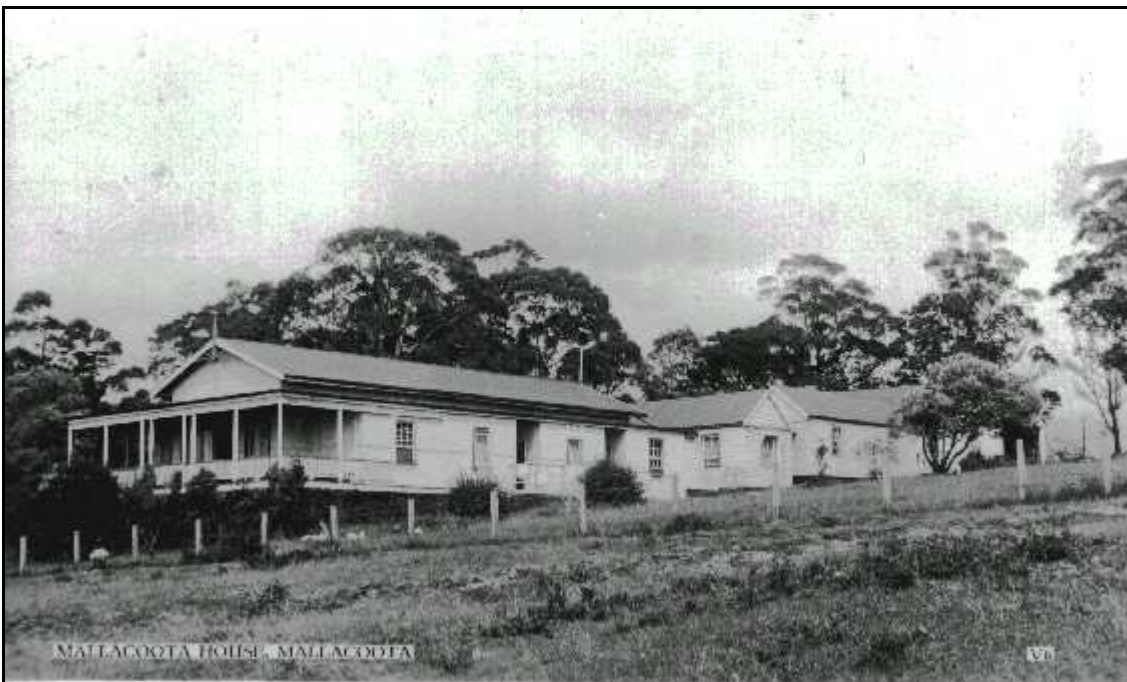
*Sketch by M. Howden*



## FLOS PAINTING OF THE CAMP



*Painting by Florence Jane Brady. "The Camp".*



*Mallacoota House. Courtesy of The Mallacoota Historical Society*



## THE LAKE

*E.J. Brady*

Its call is peace-deep sylvan rest  
Unbroken, save by chords  
The Mozart touch of Nature, best  
In low, harmonic words  
Of Music, draws from bough and breast  
Of tuneful trees and birds.

Through silvern Morns and gold Noons  
And jewelled Nights, ablaze  
With sapphire stars and opal moons  
Of topaz-tinted rays;  
From wooded hills to seaward dunes  
It spreads its sparkling ways.

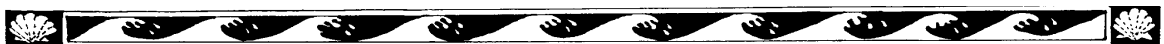
Mount Howe red granite walls uprears  
To guard its northern verge;  
And West, with sharp, forbidding spears,  
The grass-tree plains emerge;  
While South and East one faintly hears  
The warnings of the surge.

So - shielded round by mount and sea -  
O'er scarcely trodden shores,  
The Bird of Ancient Mystery  
On musing pinion soars,  
While yet its beauties virgin he  
To Vandal sail or oars.

No ash of tribal camp-fires gray,  
No cryptic trunk or mound -  
Whereon the naked savage lay  
By vanished fires - are found;  
For 'twas, the dusky grey-beards say,  
All times a sacred ground.

Its note is peace! While Theban kings  
In robes of conquest shone;  
While lions fierce with flaunting wings  
Were carved in Babylon;  
Its autumns and its southern springs,  
To woodland harps, danced on.

No songs Hellenic fluted o'er  
It's calm and placid tide;  
No beacon lights the white dunes wore  
Home-coming ships to guide;  
No mourning voice along its shore  
Proclaimed how Caesar died.



Mailed legions marched; green harvest lands  
Were reddened as they sped;  
Proud monarchs mouthing high commands,  
Came forth, and backward fled;  
Their names were written on the sands,  
And by the sands o'er spread.

As ever Time's all-circling blade  
In steady downstrokes whirled,  
Gaunt prophets, standing in the shade  
Of frowning temples, hurled  
Fierce inspirations forth that made  
And yet unmade the World.

Lone sons of Genius, from the Night  
Where dead Dust crowds the Urn  
Of Nothingness, uprose in bright  
Mortality, to burn  
Their tapers at the Shrine of Light -  
And . . . Into Night return;

Their deathless Words o'er years between  
Yet loud reverberate;  
No Echo fell; in jungles green  
The wild wood-pigeon sate,  
And cooed across that still demesne,  
Love greetings to her mate.

O'er water clear the black swan plied  
His graceful gondolet;  
Or slowly from his glossy side  
A vagrant white wing set  
To sail the lake's unrippled tide  
In roving amoret.

Peace bideth here. Clear skies, unstained  
By smoke of Progress, blue  
Its daylight loveliness. Gold maned,  
Apollo's horses through  
Their cloudless sky-tracks tramp, unreined  
From dew to ev'ning dew;

On slender pipes of reed the West  
Wind plays a silken song,  
When from their dry, discarded nest  
The feathered cygnets throng,  
And Summer's sandalled footsteps rest  
That cooling marge along.

In iridescent flight swift pass  
Winged insects o'er its stream;  
A python windeth through the grass,  
His patterned length a-gleam;  
Their shadows mirrored in a glass,  
The mottled bitterns dream.



But, when the lonely ranges hide,  
Deep-mantled, from the day,  
She lays her golden gown aside  
And locks her pearls away,  
With chilly vassals at her side  
To meet the Cloud Kings grey.

Lean Cares that hunt the highways hard  
And trodden tracks austere  
Of men who hold in most regard  
Earth's goods, and gods revere  
Of Might and Gold, the musing bard  
May not encounter here.

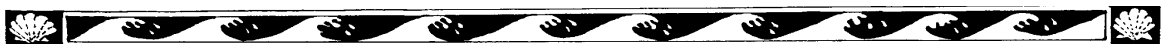
For, velvet Dawn, and damask Eve,  
And Night with stars o'erstrorn,  
Afair from harried Hours that grieve  
And driven Days agroan,  
By this fair lakeside soft achieve  
Their pleasant tasks alone.

And at the Dusk one dimly hears,  
In echoes, faint and low  
As dew upon the rustling ears,  
Or clouds on moonlit snow,  
The Voices of the ended years  
From crystal depths below.



*Along "The Narrows", Mallaquito.*

G. Coles



## A CRUISE IN THE LADY LOCH MALLACOOTA AND GENOA RIVER

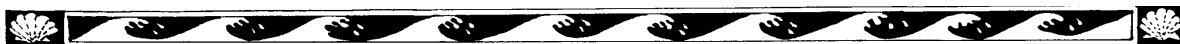
*By our special reporter.*

How shall I describe the journey up the Genoa with its eventful nothingnesses, its joyful hilarity, its exhilarating pleasantries, and its ever recurring reminiscences. We had no adventures by the way, for our boat was well found and storms there were none. The waters were placid, and snags, if such existed were fathoms deep. Any danger of a capsize we discounted by discarding the sail before two miles were traversed, and sending it ashore with the mast as a useless encumbrance. Thereafter we relied solely on the oars. Our two sturdy watermen were equal to the occasion, and rowed us mile after mile with the minimum of ease and the maximum of speed. Brothers they were, sons of the oldest resident in the Genoa district, and worthy chips from a well seasoned block. By their aid the boat shot through the water like a live thing, and we covered our 25 miles in a little more than five hours. They showed unmistakable form, too, so much so that we were compelled to question them. We had our answer. Years ago they were at Wollongong, and used to pull in the same boat the Beach! Should they ever find their way to Sydney then some of the local cracks will have to look to their laurels. Our party had separated, having to be divided into two boat loads, and we - that is, Commodore Dow's party - were fortunate in having such oarsmen at our service. Mr. Groom, who captained the other boat, was handicapped, in that his craft carried more passengers and more cargo than ours. Albeit he was not far behind us when we arrived at Merrimingo. There was a short struggle for the lead, but not for long, for when our lads bent their backs they took the pride of place and had no difficulty in keeping it.

For nearly two hours we glided along the waters of magnificent lakes, passing through two of them and leaving others unexplored. After casting off from the jetty our course was shaped round one of the pretty islets on which cattle and horses were seen contentedly nibbling the fresh herbage. The stock carrying capacity of this little island we were told, but I refrain from repeating it, as it might read like "travellers' tales." Once round this we came suddenly upon the crowning glory of Mallacoota, the parent of the lakes which had, until this, been hidden by a point in the mainland, or one of the islands, I am not sure which. For the sake of assisting description, it may be mentioned here that, roughly speaking, the inlet is divided into two sheets of water. The larger one, which is the inlet proper, narrows towards its north-western arm into a strait about two miles in length, which leads into the second or lower lake, that in turn tapering off in a northerly direction until lost in the valley of Genoa. These two lakes, however, are divided in their turn into numerous lesser lakes, lakelets, bays and coves, for the contour of the shore is continually changing, and therein lies the great charm of the Mallacoota scenery. The stranger passing through the Gippsland Lakes without stopping by the way to explore the numberless beauty spots which lie out of reach of the ordinary steamer route is invariably disappointed. Ask him the characteristics of the scenery, and his reply will in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred be "dirty water and ti-tree scrub." Put a stranger where you will in Mallacoota, drop him down from the clouds at any point you like, and he cannot fail to be impressed with the beauties which surround him. Indeed, his difficulty would be indiscrimination, for the scene changes so rapidly that the beauties you have been dwelling on are quickly blotted out at every turn of the eyes. This is the reason why, as I shut my eyes and try to bring the scene before me again, I am sensible of a rainbow colored mis dropping down and allowing me only occasional glimpses of what I thought was clearly engraven on my mind. After a first visit to a picture gallery one's sensations are similar. Both the eye and the brain are bewildered by the multiplicity of subjects which come under view, and unless you confine yourself to two or three pictures you leave the gallery with only a vague, hazy idea of what it contains. Surfeit, the word in this connection, is happily not admissible in the former. For who is the miserable wretch that could cry "enough" when nature is the artist? What is a definable feeling of over sufficiency in the one case is a sensation of undefinable pleasure in the other. But to return. The full glory of the inlet burst on our view as we weathered the island, and bore away north-westerly to the Genoa Valley.

*Toward the hills;  
Up through an ample vale, with higher hills  
Before us, mountains stern and desolate;  
But, in the majesty of distance, now  
Set off, and our ken appearing fair  
Of aspect, with aerial softness clad,  
And beautified with morning's purple beams.*

Such a prospect so beautifully described by the poet lay right before us. We were steering straight - or as straight as our commodore knew how - for the valley, and gliding along by the green ridge which marked the western boundary of the inlet. To the right of us the waters stretched for miles broadening out into a noble lake. The shores were gently wooded slopes, agreeably broken here and there by patches of white sandwich marked the beach of tiny bays - glorious bathing grounds. The lake wandered away to the mountains until lost in the blue mist of distance.



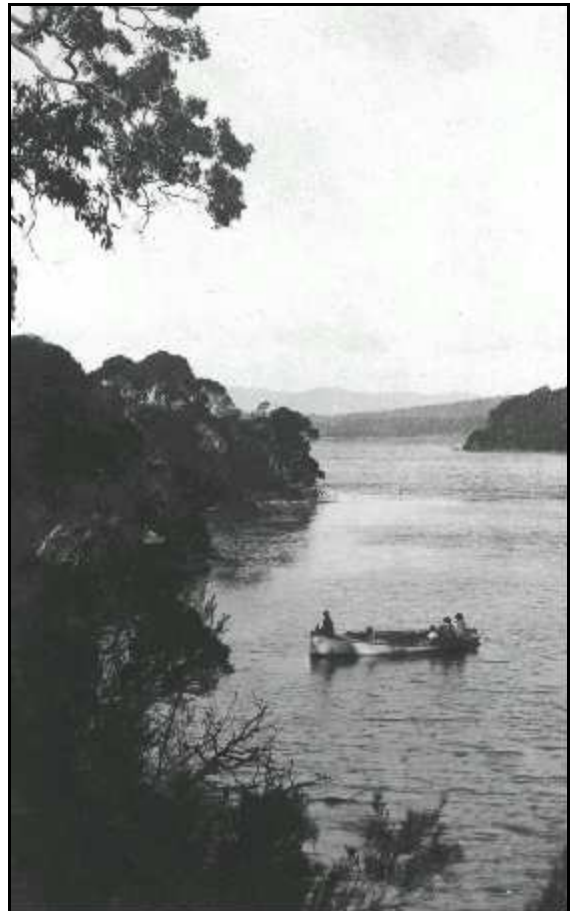
*The mountains look on Marathon,  
And Marathon looks on the sea.*

So it is with Mallacoota. The mountains are its guardians, and from the bosom of its waters can be seen the blue waves of the mighty Pacific.

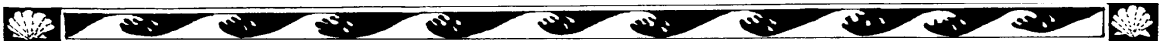
The sun poured down from a cloudless sky, for what little breeze we took from the sea soon died away. A crispness in the air redolent of the neighboring mountains, however, compensated for this, and the sun's fierce rays caused us no uneasiness. Besides were not the beauties of the place sufficient to drive away any feeling but that of complete happiness? Who could help glorying in the sunshine? It invaded every object around with its gladness, and is it to be wondered that it found its way into our hearts? The black swans that lined the margin of the lake shone like burnished ebony, and the pelicans as they waded amongst the sedges in the shallows glistened as if formed of polished marble. And what brush could depict the opalescence of the waters in which shoals of fish were clearly seen. The place was alive with them. A regular army of garfish swam across our bows with their long snouts protruding above the surface - bayonets fixed as it were. Salmon trout and big fat mullet sprang from their native element high into the air, falling back with a splash and disappearing, amidst a shower of rainbow tinted spray. Skipjacks justified their christening by going flippity flop along the surface, leaving behind them a wake of watery Catherine wheels. We were happy, supremely happy, and in the fullness of our hearts our English nature came out. "What a beautiful morning. Let us go out and kill somethin." With such words, or words of a similar import, does Max O'Rell describe one of our idiosyncrasies. We cannot gainsay the truth of this. For bang! bang! went the gun every now and then, and crack! crack! the Winchester repeating rifle, which the Bendock constable knew well how to use. We were giving him a lift on his way home, and he showed us a taste of his skill with the rifle in a most marked manner, as some of the poor shags could testify. If ever I turn bushranger I shall steer clear of Bendock, for a man who can tumble over shags with ball while the boat is going would be an ugly customer to meet in the bush when on the cross." We were a very unsportsmanlike crew notwithstanding, and soon stopped wasting powder and shot, not for lack of bloodthirstiness, but for lack of game. For we made the echoes ring so with laugh, song and jest that we scared all the duck within a mile of us, and it was only now and again when the birds came circling back on us that we could get a crack at them. We passed out of the inlet by a passage from 200 to 300 yards broad, very like some of the reaches in Lake Tyers, and entered a charming lake filled with wild fowl, the banks of which in many places were 100 feet in height, with rocky margins - a regular Highland tarn. The inspiration seized our ancient mariner, and he sang some of those plaintively sweet "jorrams," or rowers' songs, which fall in so well with the rhythms of the oars. We listened to "M'Grimmon's Lament," with its quaint, sorrowful refrain -

*M'Leod shall return,  
But M'Grimmon never!*

Then the words and melody of that Highland gem, "Farewell to funerie," made us realise the feelings of the exiles as they lingered sorrowfully, taking their last look at the home they were leaving for ever. I shall make no apology for repeating one verse, the words speak for themselves.



*Southwest Arm  
Courtesy of Mallacoota Historical Society*



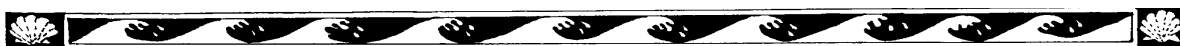


Oft with tender steps I've trode,  
Where Fingal's palace stood of old,  
And listened, as the shepherds told,  
Some ancient tales of Funerie;  
Eirrin agus tuiggan 'O,  
Alas! Farewell to Funerie.

I can see our singer now. There he sat in the stern, clad in a suit which I firmly believe once was part of a mainsail - he said it was khaki - his head crowned in a large straw hat bound round puggaree fashion, with a tattered ensign, which had accompanied the whale boat on its eventful voyage to Mallacoota. This was kept in its place by a band of seaweed. He just wanted a beard and a trident to make him a Neptune. There he sat the picture of contentment, holding in his hand a fishing rod, from the end of which dangled a grilse fly, to escape which the Minister of Lands displayed considerable ability. For the rod kept time, to the tune like a conductor's baton, and the fly for the time being was a real live one. Music begets music, and our commodore was presently trolling a well known song. The words failed him, but, nothing daunted, he essayed the improvisatore. He soared above metre, but another obstacle wellnigh blocked him. The man presently rose superior even to this. With the naive remark, "this miserable rhyme cramps one," he launched forth into the blankest of blank verse that bade fair to stop the way of the boat, so heartily did the rowers enjoy the topical allusions. We had plenty of talent aboard, and presently another voice was raised. This time it was

A simple song  
Whose low tones reached not to the distant rocks  
To be repeated thence, but gently sank  
Inside our hearts and charmed the peaceful food.  
Thus passed the day, the same spirit animating old and young.

We presently left the lakes behind us and entered the Genoa river proper. What a revolution it was. Still the same high banks, but the watery channel had dwarfed in breadth until about 200 yards separated the sides of the valley through which we glided. Now and again, however, a grand reach opened before us a couple of miles in length and a quarter of a mile across, "What a grand spot for the sculling championship of the world to be decided," was the remark, and our rowers' eyes glistened. We knew what was passing in their minds. They would like to try their prowess. The character of the country was all this time changing, for we now were in true river scenery, such scenery as the Hawkesbury folks are blessed with. "Only more so," as one of us remarked. And he was qualified to speak, for his pen has done much to bring the beauties of Australian nature home to us. We passed the remains of a wattle bark camp, with its neglected jetty and ruined shed. Here it was that the illfated schooner, the Henry Leonard was built, the same that sunk in the Mallacoota entrance, and whose "wooden walls" are rotting beneath the unfathomable sands. There was only a narrow strip of wattle country here, and it was soon worked out. Not far from this lies the mouth of the Wallagarough River, a fine stream which flows into the Genoa. We could follow its course for some distance until it disappeared amongst the timber to our right. The water up to this had been salt as the ocean, but now we were getting beyond the tidal influence, and presently were in a fresh stream. Naturally the vegetation changed, and the river banks were now a mass of luxuriant verdure. Fairy-like fern tree gullies ran down in the water's edge, creeperie of all kinds weaved a network about the shrubs, white gums reared their heads above their lesser brethren, the various families of Mimosa threw their leafy branches abroad, and beneath all the verdant grass sprung fresh and bright. A curious olive coloured scum lined the margins of the waters and lent an additional charm to a color picture I have not seen equaled. Bell birds hopped from branch to branch making the air ring with their rather monotonous notes, and kingfishers flitted adeptly about like gleams of living color. At length the signs of settlement became apparent, showing were approaching our destination. The steep banks gave place to pretty patches of river flats whereon were growing maize crops, show giant stalks showed unmistakably the richness of the soil whence they spring. Suddenly the narrowing river was almost bridged by huge boulders of granite, as if same giant hand had torn down the mountain side in a vain attempt to dam the river. "Hell's gates," some one remarked. The simile did not fit. Heaven's portals, rather. There was only just room for the boat to pass but once through the river broadened out to fully





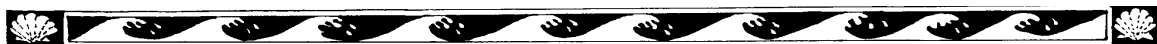
30 yards. Two miles farther saw us at the landing place of Merrimingo, and thus ended our eventful day's journeying. We were heartily welcomed by Mr. Allan, son of the one of the pioneers of the Genoa, and escorted to the local accommodation house, which lay a few hundred yards from the river.

Merrimingo, or Genoa, as a bush township, is unique in more ways than one. For instance it has not even the usual public house and smithy. It boasts of an accommodation house, a post office, and a rough hut, used as a school house. These, with one or two sheds, comprise the architecture of the village proper. There are a few settlers scattered about on the river flats and back country, but not many. Mr. Allan, on one side of the stream, and Mr. Alexander on the other, own almost all the flats, and when I state that neither of them holds more than 300 acres the limited character of the agricultural land can be pretty accurately gauged. The Genoa River is deep and slow running, and up to within a few miles of Merrimingo would float a line of battle ships. The former quality accounts for the lack of alluvial accumulations. The flats which extend on either side of the river for about 5 miles, rarely reach 100 yards in width. The soil is undoubted, and grows maize in perfection, 60 bushels to the acre being rather the custom than the exception. Hardly an attempt has been made to grow anything else but maize if we except a small field of potatoes. This vegetable thrives as well as the maize, and some of the specimens we saw would not have disgraced Koroit.

"But what became of the maize," we ask? "Where is your market?" Mr. Allan smiles, pointing to the pigs, which are in evidence everywhere, and answers, "We turn the pigs in." Then we learn that the staple product of the district is pigs. Afterwards our experience teaches us that there is another staple product inseparable from pigs and as prolific, though not at all as marketable. But to return to our pigs. the grunTERS are turned into the maize, and when they have eaten it down are mustered and driven to Eden, in Twofold Bay, 45 miles off, where they are sold. Over 1000 pigs were sent from Merrimingo last year, and more than 3000 annually exported from Eden. A fine site this for a bacon curing factory. Truly Eden may be termed the pork butchers' paradise. After pigs, cattle are favourite stock, but very few sheep are kept. This we pick up as we stroll along with the Commissioner of Lands who, like the old war-horse, is carrying out his journalistic instincts and gathering information from all hands. As an appetiser for our dinner we are taken to the garden and regaled with apples. The trees are laden, but the fruit is not what it ought to be. The wrong kind of trees have been planted. The garden too is left to take care of itself and has not known a pruning knife for 40 years. The keen eyes of the Viticultural Board secretary turn away with a kind of shudder, for it was but the other day since they rested on the well kept vineyards and orchards of Rutherglen. Before 6 o'clock we are joined by our comrades in the second boat, and make a huge party as sit down to a corn beef dinner. This after the lady Loch menu is but gruesome fare, but strong appetites and a promise of better things in the morning enable us to satisfy the cravings of the inner man. After dinner we are introduced to the village schoolmaster, a man of height and literary aspirations, and from him we nearly complete our Genoa education. The village school is a private one, for although the Education department is to be enriched(?) with about 15,000 acres of the neighboring land as an endowment the State school teacher here is unknown.

There is also another thing unknown, and that is a Victorian newspaper. The Sydney Mail and Town and Country come at rare intervals, but no other journal. In fact, although in an integral part of Victoria, we are to all intents and purposes in New South Wales. What little trade is done goes through the mother colony, and if a letter is wanted to reach Melbourne soon it is sent via Sydney. Even the Victorian capital will not be reached for four or five days, while a mail sent through Victorian territory, that, is via Orbost or the Snowy River will not arrive in Melbourne till the sixth day is broken. A mail that we saw despatched the following (Tuesday) morning did not reach town till the succeeding Monday night!

There is a refreshing absence of all political feeling amongst the "Merriminges," and a hazy idea was abroad that Sir Henry Parkes was their Premier. Was, I write, for we dissipated it quickly. Our own Duncan was also a visionary, and even Mr. Dow an unknown quantity. Such is fame! The sleeping accommodation of our hostelry was taxed to its utmost. The Minister as became his station was treated royally, and actually had a room to himself, while the rest of us camped in two apartments. Our room we entered through a door, for habit is second nature. But it struck us afterwards it would have saved the labor of turning the handle had we stepped through the unwall'd uprights. We sat up late trying to kill time, for we dared not go to bed, having had a foretaste of the pleasures in store for us there ever since we set foot on the verandah. Oh, Merrimingo! How we did suffer. But to bed we had to go at last, and amidst troubled slumbers dreamed dreadful things of bush fires, for the fumes of Bosisto's eucalyptus oil pervaded even our dreams.



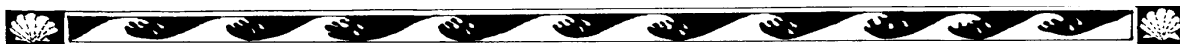
Up with the lark, or its antipodean equivalent, the tuneful magpie, for what was the use of lying tossing about. The "lively flea" would not let us alone, and was as fierce in its attacks at early morn as at dewy eve. So ere the sun had lifted Genoa Peak out the mist of the night the most sensitive of us were abroad. Our boatmen pulled two ardent sportsmen down the river; one was bent on fishing and the other on duck shooting, and both were equally unsuccessful. The one got ne'er shot and other "de'il a fish." It was a wise dispensation of Providence, for had Captain Brewer killed his bird "the perfect angler" would have heard of it not once but often. Ducks there were in plenty, but they, wise in their generation, kept at a respectful distance. And as for fish, why, the river was 'shtill wid 'em." Still, they would not look at flies, which on the Thomson and Glengarry rivers would have been eagerly snapped up.

They were evidently not aesthetically inclined, and preferred filthy looking grubs called "warrigroos," whose habitat is in waterworm logs. This from hearsay only, for when we tried the warrigroos the fish were equally fastidious. The sun was shining hot and strong even at this early hour, when we returned to our friends and then a refreshing swim in the river dissipated the feverishness derived from a sleepless night. The water we found delicious on the surface, but a few feet down was icy cold, showing that a strong undercurrent flowed from the mountains.

After breakfast a move was made for Genoa Peak, from which we were promised a view of the whole district. Mr. Allen, our cicerone, accommodated Mr. Dow in his buggy, whilst the rest went a-horseback. The start was not without its amusing incidents. The ancient mariner looked askance at the charger placed at his service, and a preliminary canter a lad gave him strengthened this feeling into one of actual dislike. So a substitute had to found. A grey mare was trotted out and met with approval. "She looks quiet enough," said the ancient, "and, judging by the way she is flea bitten, she must be an old resident." He has a passion for old identities, and was not disappointed with this last addition. Away then we started, crossing the river by an easy ford, passing by a splendid maize field on the flat and crossing thick clover under our horses' hoofs. Luscious water and rock melons looked invitingly up from their leafy retreats, for they grow wild here and flourished luxuriantly. Our way lay up a grassy spur leading to the open bush, where a clear view of the whole valley was obtained. Refreshingly green it was, and how bright gleamed the Genoa as it sped its quick way seawards. The hills immediately guarding the valley were carpeted with a fine sward of grass, but as we entered the timber the scene changed. A bush fire had a few weeks ago swept across the mountains, devouring everything before it, and leaving a desolate track behind it. The trees were leafless and charred, and, saving a few green sprouts, grass there was none. The character of the country had altered likewise, for the lightwood and wattle and hazel had disappeared, giving place to scraggy stringy bark trees and bastard gums. The rich alluvial soil had stopped at the valley, and now blocks of granite cropped up through hungry sterile ground. The Minister was greatly disappointed, "Is the country all like this?" he asked of Mr. Allan. "Right down to the seaboard," was the reply. "With the exception of the fringe of the Genoa river and Mallacoota ther is a fair sample of what you will find from Cape Howe to Orbost on the Snowy River.

The country soon became too rough for wheel traffic, so the buggy was abandoned and the horses exchanged the traces for saddles. Then the cook formed a camp and set about preparations for lunch, while with a diminished party we set out "to do" the peak. Two of our number could not be prevailed upon to leave the camp. A Mr. M'Gloy had looked upon the peak for 40 years until it interested him no longer, and the other one, ancient, had climbed it 20 years ago, when his limbs were more supple than now. We left them sitting on granite boulders, each with a long "church warden" between his lips, and between puffs giving and taking tales of early colonial life. When we returned two hours after they were non est." But they have dined," said the cook, and we knew by a casual glance round that this was so.

It was no joke that ascent of the peak. Dismounting half way up we led up the horses, and then hands, knees and elbows had to be used as freely as feet. How Mr. Dow got up with his wounded limb was a marvel. But he did it, and was greeted with a ringing cheer for his pains. The noise we made alarmed a large eagle, which with his mate soared aloft slowly and silently, as if resenting our intrusion. It was indeed an eagle's crag. The summit, 1611 feet above sea level, was crowned with a cairn of huge stones, upended, on the flat surface of which only a few yards in extent, Captain Turton, when surveying the coast, had fixed a large stake and propped it up with stones. Round this squatted most of our party, while the others rested on a narrow ledge a few feet lower down. What a magnificent view we had. Behind lay the Genoa valley, surrounded by mountains rugged and grand. We could follow the Howe range from the coast until it disappeared in the heart of the



miles over the New South Wales Border, Mount Imlay stood out boldly. In front of us the coast line from Cape Howe to the Snowy River marked its outline sharply against the ocean. Gabo Island and Tullaburga seemed within a stone's throw. The ocean looked wonderfully quiet, but a white line along the coast showed the breakers were as busy as ever. A schooner lay at anchor off the inlet, and two small steamers were creeping past Ram Head, probably conveying salvage from the ill-fated Riverina, which lay wrecked just behind the cape referred to, but shut out from view. All this Mr. Allen pointed out as he stood on a rock from which, had he slipped, he would have fallen a sheer thousand feet. Then we turned our attention to the inlet, as it lay like a glittering gem in the dark setting of the hills. It was mapped out to perfection, and a perfect outline sketch could have been made of it from where we stood. The course of the Genoa river, with its tributary, the Wallagaraugh, was clearly distinguishable - a silver streak amidst a wilderness of dark color. Another sheet of water we saw, too, close to the coast, was behind the inlet. This was Lake Barracoota, the waters of which, strange to say, are quite fresh. As we made our way down to the camp we agreed that Genoa Peak commanded one of the most wonderful views in Victoria. We returned to Merrimingo as the rays of the setting sun illumined the valley, and threw into bold relief the purple ranges. We were weary and sore, for many of us had not felt the pigskin for years, but a swim in the river acted as a tonic, and enabled us to do ample justice to our evening meal.

As we smoke our pipes on the verandah a programme for the following day was agreed upon. The Lady Loch was not expected back from her Cape Everard trip until Friday morning, and another night in Merrimingo was not to be thought of. Where to sleep tomorrow night was the question. Not at the fish preserving camp! Perish the thought.

Better bear those ills we have  
Than to fly to others we know not of.  
So thought all of us, and to camp out at Gipsy Point,  
half way down the river, was determined on.

Our skipper, with his usual forethought, had supplied us liberally with rugs, and as the weather was warm a night out had no terrors for us. We passed this evening much as we did last night, only some of us more industriously so, for Mr. Groom developed an unexpected talent, and out of kerosene tins and copper wire manufactured "spinners" for the dozen to wage war on the finny tribe on our trip down. His only tools were a penknife and a pair of nail scissors, but his genius rose superior to difficulties, and surmounted them all triumphantly. We mingled with the residents between whiles, and learned something more of the district. Here it was that Messrs. Reay and Brearley were found, after being lost nearly a fortnight. The former recently was on the literary staff of a metropolitan evening journal, and the latter is the son of one of the well known Geelong Tanners. But at the time I speak of they started together from Bega to make Bairnsdale. Both were mounted, but lost their road, and wandered about for the time mentioned suffering terribly. They killed their horses, and eked out a miserable existence on the flesh. When discovered they were all but dead, and had timely aid not unexpectedly come to them another bush tragedy would have been enacted. Then again, not many months ago, a member of North Melbourne Bicycling Club was seen tooling his machine down one of the hills. He had actually come all the way from Melbourne on the bicycle, bound for Eden, and successfully carried his journey to a conclusion. He did not venture to return, by road, however, but shipped home from Eden. The long night passed somehow, and thanks to tired nature and eucalyptus oil we got 40 winks before the sun rose.



*Double Creek Bridge*  
*Courtesy of Mallaacoota Historical Society*

## A CRUISE IN THE LADY LOCH FAREWELL TO MALLACOOTA

*By our special reporter.*

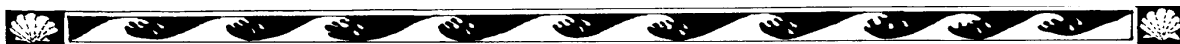
We bade farewell to Merrimingo when the mist still lingered o'er the valley or lay distilled around in sparkling dewdrops. Everything was at its greenest, and the little vale looked refreshingly bright as we threaded our way through the fringe of wattles to the sloping grassy bank off which our boats lay manned and ready. We had just paid our reckoning, and were in a merry humor at the expense (not pecuniary) of our entertainers. For the cheque our treasurer had proffered had been declined with thanks. "Why, you see," said our hostess, "I could not get it cashed for two or three months, and then it might be lost in the post." Whether this was the real excuse, or simply rustic diplomacy, I can't say, but the argument was unanswerable. So we turned our pockets inside out and managed to raise sufficient cash to satisfy the just demands of the landlady. Off we went then with empty pockets but joyful hearts, amidst the cheers of the whole township, and a burst of wild harmony from the fluted throats of a choir of magpies perched on the trees above us. All too swiftly passed the grassy flats, with their fringes of leafy trees and flowering shrubs, for blossoms were out as if spring had only just begun. The maize crops bent to the breeze, and every puff of wind which shook the over-hanging boughs scattered the dewdrops in showers of spray on our devoted heads. Nature was in a variable mood, sunshine and shade alternating. Grey clouds kept flitting along and throwing their shadows on the clear waters, while at intervals a shower swept across the valley, followed by a fitful gleam of sunshine.

The atmosphere was close and muggy, and bronze like clouds gathering round Genoa Peak predicted the coming storm. We proved that the perch here would rise to the fly just as well as their brethren in the Gippsland rivers, by fugitive casts as the boat glided past shady spots. We hooked one - a big fellow, but after playing him for some time, with the line foul at the top of the reel, "the beggar let go," and we lost him. This much being proved, the rod was put up and future fishing carried on by trolling with flies and spinners behind the boats. The growth of maiden hair fern along the banks here was wonderful, and in some places completely smothered the other vegetation. How luxuriantly it grew, and how brilliantly green were the fronds set off by the dark network of the stems. Each gully we passed showed rich in ferns, some of the tree specimens reaching a grand height. What picnic grounds were here. Nothing to surpass them can be found in Victoria, for they hold their own with the brightest spots of Lorne. And to those who cannot enjoy their holidays without the aid of gun or rod what a field for sport, kangaroo and wallaby abound in the scrub and ranges, Wonga pigeons call from almost every native cherry tree, while duck of all kinds make their homes in the back waters and creeks. And as for fish, if you can't catch them it is not their fault. "Captain Brewer" potted a bittern; he wanted the skin. Who would imagine that the little bunch of feathers with long bill, and longer legs, was once one of those whose loud boom in sedgy shallows made the blackfellow crouch fearfully in his mia, with the dread word bunyip on his lips!

A dull oppressive stillness now reigned, for the wind had dropped, and the sun was again in evidence, coming down hot and strong, so a rest and a lunch in the shade was agreed upon. We camped then on a charming little point at the mouth of one of the many creeks running into the river feeders of backwaters. There was a dreamy quiet about. Such a quiet as the poet felt when he wrote:-

For now the noonday quiet hold the hill;  
The grasshopper is silent in the grass.  
The lizard with his shadow on the stone,  
Rests like a shadow, and the winds are dead.

But we were hungry and thought not what the stillness meant. Cold wild duck and Wonga pigeon, besides noble roast beef, were before us and we "ate, drank and were merry." Suddenly the long threatening storm burst with unexpected rapidity. The thunders growled, the lightning flashed and the rain fell with tropical fury. The snow white table cloth was soaked in a trice, and its contents nearly swept away. The Minister, who possessed the only umbrella in the crowd, crouched under its shade while the rest of us sheltered ourselves as best we could, and ate our sodden bread and flabby meat squatting blackfellow-fashion beneath the bushes.



Fortunately the storm passed just as rapidly as it burst on us, and the sun, streaming through the watery clouds soon put spirits into us again. Nature refreshed looked more beautiful than ever, for -

For o'er the unfathomable globe,  
All twinkling with the rain drops' sheen,  
The fern fronds, fell in streamers green,  
And creeping shrubs of thousand dyes  
Waved in the west wind's summer sighs.

A couple of hours before sundown we made Gipsy Point, the old wattle bark camp, and took possession of the shed, a substantial roofed structure but lacking walls. Mr. Groom and his Warregal allies quickly walled in the windward side of the loft for a sleeping apartment, robbing Peter to pay Paul; for they stripped the abandoned huts of their outward covering, and used it to some purpose. While this was going on Mr. Dow and others wandered about the bush to gauge the extent of the settled country. It was simply a strip, nothing more. We then turned our attention to the only occupied hut on the point, which we were led to believe was a store. Unfortunately the owner had not yet brought his stock up, and the place was in charge of the hut keeper, a grizzly, grey bearded old man, and "feara' dull o' hearin'." We had run out of liquor and had visions of replenishing, so we asked him what he had. A shake of the head was the only answer.

"Grog!" we shouted.

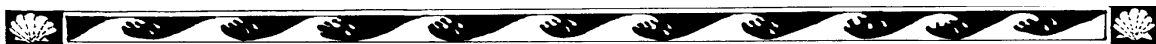
"Eh?"

"Grog!" we yelled, and the echoes answered, but not the old man. We changed our tactics, then made all kinds of pantomimic gestures, and some of them mightily suggestive too, but in vain. At length the diplomatic Minister came to the rescue, having had, as he said, considerable experience with deaf constituents.

"Bottle!" he roared, with a bellow which even penetrated to the old man's tympanum, for he smiled and pointed to a box.

"Ah! Hah!" said the Minister, as he seized it. "Didn't I tell you so? It takes an old dog for a hard road." Then with a look of triumph he opened the lid and produced what - an old black bottle which had evidently been in use as a candlestick ever since the first inhabitant settled in the district. "This is the teetotalest place in existence," growled our ancient mariner, and no one disputed it. However, he refilled our tobacco pouches and replenished our tea caddy, which was better than nothing. Then we sent a couple of the men with a small net to catch us our supper. They dragged once and got such a haul that had to let most of the fish escape, else the net would have been torn to bits. As it was they could have filled the boat with the remainder. We fared sumptuously at supper, while outside the wind howled and the rain fell. Then we spend the night in true bush fashion, seated within the glare of a huge fire smoking our pipes and listening to songs and yarns. We made the echoes ring, I warrant you, with horus after chorus, and we unearthed some typical bush ballads, such as *The Old Bullock Dray*, and *The Stockman's Last Bed*. Both were redolent of the soil, and down the words went in the Ancient's note book to swell the long list of Australian curiosities which is to see the light of day at some future period. Bed time came round in due course, and while we wrapped ourselves in our rugs up aloft our men crept under a sail along-side the fire and "wooed the drowsy god." But our old enemies the mosquitoes, gave us such a reception that sleep only came in fits and starts. From where we lay we had a full view of the river, on which the moonlight was now falling, for the rain had ceased, and only fugitive clouds flitted along the heavens. We heard the boom of the bittern from its marshy home, and now and again the wild cry of the curlew was borne across the waters. The morpoko answered each other with monotonous regularity, and never for one moment ceased the splash, splash of the fish. Had it not been for the unsatisfied desire for sleep, we would have revelled in the scene.

Before the day had quite broken we were up and about, and, breakfast over, were soon rowing down the river. Early morning on these waters was something to remember. The mountain caps were bathed in mists, which floated along in varying shapes, now wrapping into hill sides in flowing drapery, and again forming silvery sheets, until the eye was deceived into mistaking them for upland lakes. Rounding one of the points we were greeted with a cooeee, and stood the old man M'gloy, father of our boatmen. We took him aboard and promised him an hour on the *Lady Loch*. He told us how some years ago a longing for "fresh woods and pastures new" made him leave the *Genoa* and settle up in new South Wales. There it was that his boys met Beach and learned to row with that splendid swing which sent the boat flying through the water.



He was not happy in his new residence, however, and a yearning came over him for his mountain home. At last the feeling became so strong that he could not sleep for thinking of it. So he packed up his belongings and came back to the Genoa, where, "please God," he said, "I shall spend the remainder of my days." His little tale was told with simple fervour refreshing to hear. The sun sparkled merrily on the rippling waters as we entered the first of the lakes, rounding a heavily timbered rocky promontory, which had concealed it from view. As suddenly the beauty of the scene disclosed itself as did the first glimpse of Loch Katrine to the astonished gaze of Fitzjames. And with him we might exclaim -

How blithely might the bugle burn  
Chide on the lake lingering morn  
How sweet at eve the lover's lute  
Chime, when the groves were still and mute.  
And when the midnight moon shall lave  
Her berobed in the silver wave,  
How solemn on the ear would come  
The holy matin's distant hum!

But it was not "the holy matin's distant hum" which smote faintly on our ears. It was something nobler and grander - the distant boom of the ocean as it thundered on the rocky coast. There it was away in the distance, a blue gleam against the grey sky line. And as we lessened the distance with vigorous strokes of the oars the masts of the Lady Loch shot up clear and distinct, then the yellow funnel and the dark hull, and there she lay in the offing a perfect picture. Up went the tattered ensign of the Ancient as he trolled forth in his tenor voice:-

I'm Afloat, I'm Afloat!

We passed readily through the narrows and into the Inlet, the boats keeping merry time to our voices. "Pull, pull together, boys," was the burthen of our song, and together they did it, just as fresh after their 12 miles spin as if they had only gone a few hundred yards. If any holiday party wish to use the glories of Mallacoota, let them write up to M'Gloy, of Genoa. They can't do it better.

The sun was not yet in its zenith when we passed the Genoa Fish Preserving Works. Mr. Phillips was on the jetty, and told us in joyful tones he had just sold out. We were sorry, for a cut and dried scheme to become the proprietors of what must be a thriving industry was knocked on the head. "Drat the man, who would have dreamed it?" was our inward response, as we shot out of sight round one of the sunny islets and into the deep channel of the inlet. Half an hour more our boat journey ended, and we were shaking hands with the mate of her ladyship and passing compliments to the jolly tars. The ocean was like a mill pond as we transhipped to the whaleboat, and were quickly pulled alongside the Lady Loch. We saw the process of loading a little schooner with the produce of the fish factory. There was no difficulty about, tiny dinghies going in and out of the boat harbor as if there was no such thing as a surf in existence. We took the two oldest inhabitants and our two watermen aboard with us, showed them the vessel and then bade them farewell. Then up went the anchor and away we steamed for Gabo Island, where we landed our despatches and bore away on our homeward voyage.

We held a long conversation with Mr. Dow and Mr. Black on the possible future of Mallacoota, and it was agreed that the former's action in preventing selection was quite justified. The Flinders lane syndicate had picked out the frontages without which the possession of our back land was quite valueless. Had their licences been granted they would have held the key of the inlet, and established a monopoly which would have effectually blocked settlement. The land was valueless to the selector, pure and simple, and that being so it required special dealing with. Besides, as marine sites the land was valuable. Mr. Dow thought that a strip of, say, 2 chains in width round the waters of the inlet should be permanently reserved, and the rest of the frontage cut up into 10 and 20 acre blocks and sold at auction as residence sites. This would allow space enough for a nice orchard or garden, for which the soil is eminently suitable.

The future of Mallacoota undoubtedly lay in its suitability as a holiday resort - the only difficulty in the way being the one of transit. This difficulty would have to be overcome. But how?





- that is the rub. In the first place, it is a good 32 hours steam from Melbourne; but this would not be much of an obstacle were there an entrance to the inlet. There is always an uncertainty about surf landing, which makes it impracticable as far as women and children are concerned. Then, can the entrance not be improved? Of course it can, but it would take money - how much only an expert could state accurately.

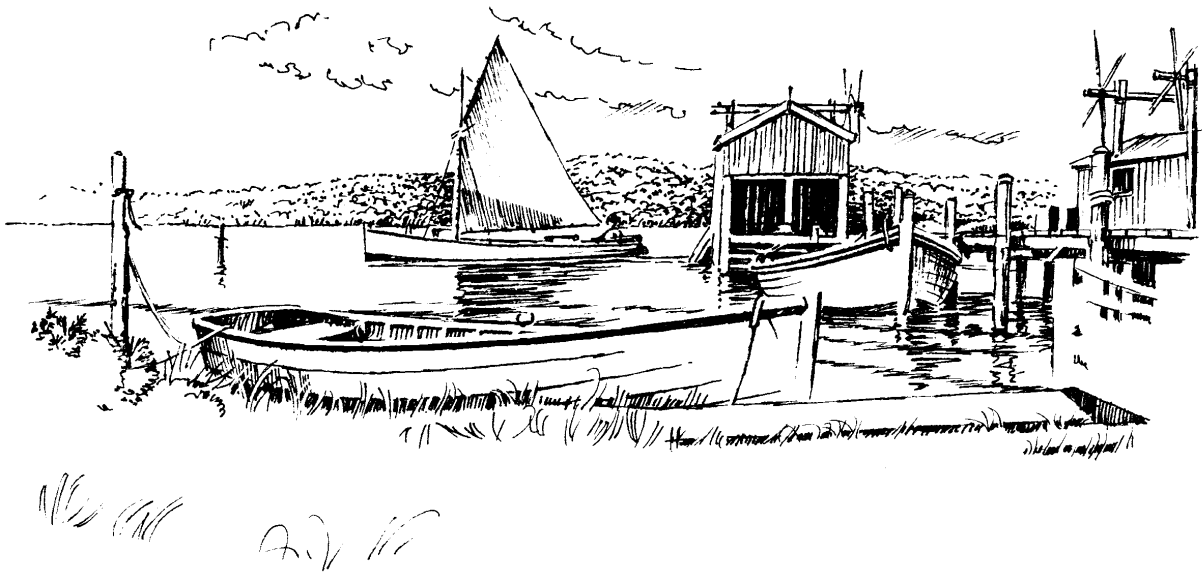
As to its practicality, I think there is no doubt of it. A deep channel runs right down to Bastion Point, and the removal of a narrow sand bank would open up the waters of the inlet to the ocean. The difference in the levels would create quite sufficient of a scour to keep the channel from silting up. Another scheme was mooted viz., making a causeway between Gabo Island and the mainland, and thus forming a break water. Men have before now waded over the half mile of shoal which connects the island and the main. This proposal emanated from Mr. Shillinglaw, and the Minister of Public Works has instructed one of his officers to visit the locality and report on the project. Mr. Dow seemed to think that the Government would not be justified at present in spending a large sum of money in making a permanent entrance, bearing in mind the poorness of the back country. But to this the residents replied that only £1000 to £2000 was required to make the Bastion Point Channel. No doubt the Public Works department will satisfy itself on that point when Mr. Dow places his views and the results of his visit before the Minister. He thinks that if a small sum like that mentioned would suffice the cabinet would not hesitate in sanctioning the expenditure, but as for constructing costly works such as at Portland, Warrnambool and the Lakes Entrance, that was out of the question. Now, as to making the trips by land, the only practicable way is via Orbost, on the Snowy River, and Orbost lies a two days' journey by rail, lake-steamer and coach from Melbourne. You would have then about 95 miles of very rough travelling before Mallacoota was reached. This effectually bars all but an adventurous few from attempting the overland route. The residents spoke about a railway. True, Orbost is bound to be included in the new Railway Bill, the intention being to run the line at some future time to the New South Wales border, and join on to a coast line to Sydney. This projected line could cross the head waters of the Genoa River a few miles from Merrimingo, and would, of course, open the district to tourists. But this evidently in the very dim future, so for all practical purposes we may consider Mallacoota shut out by land. The sea is its only salvation, and no time should be lost by the Government in ascertaining the practicability and cost of cutting an entrance by the Bastion rocks.

*The Age Saturday, 5 April 1890*



*E.J. Brady's son, Hugh (Wingan). Courtesy of Mallacoota Historical Society.*

## THE CANNERY



*The cannery was situated below Bill Bruce's property, off Lakeside Drive. The well can still be seen, although it has nearly filled in over the years. The fish did not can well and the project was subsequently abandoned.*



*Karbeethong Guest House, Mallacoota, Courtesy of Mallacoota Historical Society*





## THE COMMUNAL FARM, DESCRIPTION AND EXPLANATION.

*From Webb's thesis of 1972: "A Critical Biography of Edwin James Brady, "*

In 1931 Brady received a letter from Leslie Burch, a designer and builder of Northcote and Benalla. An Anglican clergyman, Burch was also a delegate to the central committee of the Australian Labour Party and a member of the Central Unemployed Committee. He suggested a plan for the relief of the unemployed which originally envisaged Kinglake, near Melbourne, as a likely area of settlement, but he readily acceded to Brady's suggestion for the use of the Mallacoota site, his only reservation being about the transport because of the distance from Melbourne.

Brady immediately began to use his political friendships to get the scheme underway, but the then Government, although agreeing with the idea, was reluctant to give any great practical support or encouragement.

In a letter written to Tunnecliffe Brady states that he expected no personal advantage from the scheme and that he was prepared to "allocate and alienate" nine hundred acres to the group "for the purpose of a Co-operative holding, free of control or outside interference and as their own collectivist possession in perpetuum." In addition Brady was also willing to loan to the group an area of twenty four acres (later increased to sixty) of ready cleared land upon which to grow vegetables and subsistence crops whilst the larger area was being brought under control, (together with the necessary tools and equipment), and to grant access and cutting rights to any timber needed for buildings or fencing. He also arranged to Allan Taylor and Co., owners of the coastal freighter "Glenreagh" to ship out the timber which the group would cut. He pledged himself to rally what support he could from other political friends and allies.

Brady's activities resulted in the Unemployment Association of Brighton lending their support and the Government agreed to grant sustenance to the settlers as requested, with the Victorian State relief Committee supplying clothes and foodstuffs.

The initial party left Melbourne for Mallacoota on August 8th, 1932.

Burch lived in Mallacoota from the arrival of the original group and was in charge throughout. The Mallacoota Community Farm, in spite of its special letterhead on the stationery Brady had designed for it, had a short life, yet not a particularly merry one.

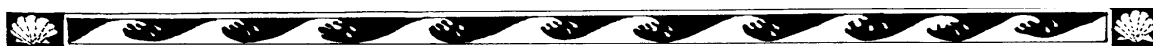
After the initial activities of August only a few months elapsed before the first resignations in October. By the end of October, six members had resigned. Some of the men claimed that the tasks set them were impossible and that so much of the land had to be cleared before cultivation could begin. Some resigned because they felt that the project would fail as too many left it.

A clash of personalities between Burch and Brady, plus the fact the Brady's daughter Mrs Luckins, at Mallacoota House, sold fruit from the orchard, let her cows eat the settlers garden etc also added to the internal problems of the community. The men were not allowed to buy tobacco on their sustenance tickets from the local store, causing grumbling and complaint. When a store keeper did supply this he was blacklisted for three months. The local farmers, who called the settlement "Little Russia" were sympathetic towards it, but the daughter at Mallacoota house and her husband disputed ownership of the produce from the cleared land which Brady had offered the group as a temporary measure. This caused constant bickering and ill feeling. The community affairs staggered along in this fashion until March 1933 when Burch resigned and the scheme collapsed completely.

Burch wrote to Brady, more in sorrow than defeat:

*"In view of the adverse position of the establishment, which is largely due to the lack of manpower, and the lack of agricultural experience in the remaining members, I have decided, after consultation with Comrade Smyth, to recommend that the Mallacoota Community Farm insofar as this location is concerned, be wound up forthwith. It is with regret that I hereby tender my resignation as Executive Officer I remain convinced that our ideal is capable of achievement, but drastic revision of methods of selection and procedure will have to be made before undertaking any further experiment, which I am determined to do and which I hope for your continued support and Cooperation."*

In short the experiment failed, but it was still worth trying. Remoteness from cities was part of the reason for failure, but the human element seems to have been the prime factor. It is not easy for men of diverse backgrounds to live in harmony, nor is it easy for men used to a social system which



emphasises personal ownership and competitive motivations to work within the framework of a collective and Cooperative idealism.

No matter what excuses Brady made publicly and no matter what faith he still overtly retained in the Co operative settlement as a practical application of collectivist and socialistic principles, he must have had private doubts. He wrote to a friend on the staff of the Brisbane Worker

*"I did my level damndest to make the Mallacoota scheme a success and it just about beggared me. I have got to admit that the management down there proved bad. I was up to my neck in the political morass here at the time and could not give it my personal supervision. But even if I had, I doubt if it could have been converted into a success. I had a good strong sympathetic socialist committee which also did it's best. My conclusions are that these utopian schemes within the Capitalist system are not possible."*

## NEWSPAPER ARTICLE ON COMMUNE SUN 15/8/32

### Men at Unemployment Camp Serenade 15/8/32 Sew Visitor With Banjo and Song

THE first settlers under the unemployment relief scheme at Mallacoota, made possible by the efforts of Mr. E. J. Brady, the writer, comprise a kind of little Arcadia—even though the place where they are camped has the unpoetic name of Cabbage Tree Creek.

When a visitor called at the camp recently Mr. Burch, the man in charge, produced his banjo, and the men grouped themselves around him and serenaded the visitor with a chorus song composed by one of the men.

All the men were very happy, and said that they intended to maintain the spirit of comradeship, which is a feature of the settlement.



Mallacoota Settlers.

**MALLACOOTA COMMUNITY FARM**  
**Statements of Account at 9<sup>th</sup> March 1933.**

		Q. s. d.			P. s. d.		
Date		Receipts			Expenditure		
<u>Statement 1 Contingency Fund</u>							
1933	9.	August 20 <sup>th</sup> 1932, to March 1933.					
March.		Vide monthly statements and cash book	34	13	5.	34	12 6
		Cash in hand at 9/3/33			-	-	- 11
			34	13	5	34	13 5

Statement 2 Account with Mallacoota House

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Statement 3 Account with E.J. Brady

1933						
Jan	1	Hire of launch 10/-			10	-
"	5	Sale of fruit (picking charge 3/6)			10	6
"	8	Sale of fruit ( " " 6d.)			2	-
Feb	22	Nett hire of launch			10	-
Jan	10	Paid E.J.Brady at Carlton			10	-
Feb	23	Paid Mrs Brady at Mallacoota			5	-
		1/2 share launch hire			10	-
		Fruit picking charges (1/2d per lb)			4	-
		Balance due Mr.Brady at 9/3/33.				



## MALLACOOTA COMMUNITY FARM

Balance-sheet on winding up of establishment on property of E.J.Brady, at Mallacoota, Victoria,  
9<sup>th</sup> March 1933.

Date		P. s. d. Credit	P. s. d. Debit
<u>Statement 4. Account with Alex Smith</u>			
1933	Contingency fund (vide Statement attached)	34 13 5	
March 9	Account with E.J.Brady (vide Statement)	1 12 6	
	Account with Alex Smith (vide Statement)	1 8 10 1/2	
	Account with A Smyth (vide Statement)	4 5	
	Value of plant, crops, etc. (vide Statement of Assets attached.)	<u>53 10 8 1/2</u>	
	TOTAL	91 9 11	
March 9	Expenditure from contingency fund		34 12 6
	Stores supplied Mallacoota House (unpaid)		1 5 9 1/2
	Credit Mallacoota House (1/2lb butter)		7
	Balance due E.J.Brady (vide Statement)		3 6
	Goods supplied Alex Smith		1 8 10 1/2
	Goods supplied A. Smyth		4 5
	Claim against Settlement by E.J.Brady (vide Statement of liabilities)		106 - -
	Petrol supplied by A.J. Amess, (vide statement of liabilities)		3 15
	Oil supplied by A.Smyth, (vide statement of liabilities)		15 3
	Cash in Contingency fund at 9/3/33		<u>3 6 1/2</u>
	DEBIT BALANCE AT 9/3/33	<u>56 19 61/2</u>	
		148 9 51/2	148 9 5

1/2

Executive Officer

MALLACOOTA COMMUNITY FARM

AUDITED AND FOUND CORRECT

A Smyth

Member Organising and Selection Committee

Mallacoota, 9<sup>th</sup> March 1933



**MALLACOOTA COMMUNITY FARM - STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**  
**ASSETS AT 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 1933**

		P	s	d
2	Floor Clamps	1	-	-
1	24in. Circular saw, spindle & bearings	2	10	-
1	Wireless set and Loudspeaker	2	-	-
1	First aid cabinet and sundries	2	-	-
	Quantity of stock medicines	1	-	-
4	doz. Assorted files	2	-	-
1	6ft Crosscut saw	-	15	-
	Quantity of assorted stationery	1	-	-
1	36ft. Circular bell tent	5	-	-
¾	cwt. Galv. Roof nails	1	-	-
1/2	cwt. assorted wire nails	-	15	-
1	7lb. tin axle grease	-	2	-
	100lbs. (approx) sultanas	2	-	-
1	Masse 6 volt battery	-	10	-
3	Pairs secondhand boots @ 5/- pr.	-	15	-
	Quantity of soling leather	-	5	-
3	bags of flour @ one pound per bag	3	-	-
1	Box soup tablets	-	5	-
5	lbs. (approx) tea @ 2/- per lb.	-	10	-
12	1 lb. cocoa @ 8d. per lb.	-	8	-
	Quantity of assorted garden seeds	1	-	-
25	lbs. (approx) jam @ 1/- per lb.	1	5	-
1	70 Yard seine net	5	-	-
¾	cwt. Sulphate of ammonia	-	15	-
22	fowls @ 2/6 each	2	15	-
1	copper (secondhand)	-	7	6
	Quantity of crockery	1	-	-
	Bean seed in ground 11/2 bus. @ 30/- bus.	2	5	-
	Labour of ploughing and planting 5 days @ 10/- per day.	2	10	-
	Labor of hoeing weeds, 7 days	3	10	-
	Pea seed in ground, 2 bus. @ 15/- bus.	1	10	-
	Labor of ploughing and planting 7 days @ 10/- per day.	3	10	-
	Contra a/c Mallacoota House (M. Luckins)	-	16	71/2
	Contra a/c Mallacoota House (Mrs.Brady)	-	9	2
	TOTAL	53	10	81/2
	Debit balance at 9 <sup>th</sup> March 1933	56	19	61/2
		110	10	3



**MALLACOOTA COMMUNITY FARM - STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**  
**LIABILITIES AT 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 1933**

		P	s	d
1933				
March	9			
	By claim lodged under power of attorney by Mrs N.K. Brady on behalf of E.J. Brady, for value of Labor required to destroy noxious weeds, repair fences etc., as set out in conditions of lease :- Estimated at 212 days @ 10/- a day	106	-	-
	By petrol supplied by A.J.Amess on 5 <sup>th</sup> August 1932, 45 gals	3	15	-
	By oil supplied by A Smyth on the 8 <sup>th</sup> October 1932.	-	15	3
		<u>110</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>3</u>

Leslie Burch  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Checked and found correct

Alpha Smyth  
MEMBER ORGANISING AND SELECTION COMMITTEE



**MALLACOOTA COMMUNITY FARM**  
**10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 1933**

In response to and offsetting the claim lodged against the assets of the above by Mrs. N.L. Brady, under power of attorney for E.J. Brady, the following items of labour and other services are computed :-

	<u>P.</u>	<u>s.</u>	<u>d</u>
Labour of removing Galv. Iron bath, and installing "porcelain" bath at Mallacoota House	1	-	-
Labour of making new garden, owing to illegal possession of original garden by Messrs Brady & Luckins :- 3 men 5 weeks @ 4 pound weekly.	60	-	-
Approximate value of vegetables illegally removed by Messrs Brady & Luckins from original garden.	2	-	-
Balance due for stores and labour supplied Mallacoota House.	1	5	21/2
Labour of cleaning up, digging, and replanting original garden on vacation by Brady & Luckins 3 men, 5 days @ 12/-	9	-	-
Estimated value of bean crop: 11/2 acres, probably 50 bags @ 10/- per bag.	25	-	-
Estimated value of pea crop: 2 acres, (poor crop) say, 30 bags @ 10/- per bag.	15	-	-
Milk obtained by Mallacoota House from cows leased to the Mallacoota Community Farm, at least 1 quart daily for 150 days @ 6d. per quart.	3	15	-
Value of ½ ton flour illegally disposed of by Mallacoota House, 7 pounds, less 30/- cartage.	5	10	-
Labour of cleaning up old orchard : 3 men, 4 days @ 12/- per day.	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL	<u>129</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>21/2</u>

ALL THE ABOVE ITEMS ARE EXTRANEIOUS TO THE AGREEMENT OF LEASE ENTERED  
 INTO ON 2<sup>ND</sup> AUGUST 1932

Leslie Burch  
 LATE EXECUTIVE OFFICER & TRUSTEE



## A HARD DOER

*By E.J. Brady*

He rode down to my camp at sunrise, by previous arrangement, and we turned our horses' heads south'ard for a weeks cattle hunting and sporting in that unknown country which lies between the Snowy River and the Victorian border.

The Hard Doer rode ahead. He wore a faded crepe band around his seedy felt hat. He might have been in mourning for somebody dead, or the band might have been habit; but it was plain that the funeral or the fancy dated back a long time. Cossack boots, old leather gaiters, a blue shirt, and grey tweed trousers completed his dress. Inside one of the gaiters was sewn a sheath to carry a knife. The blade had been much worn by constant sharpening, but its wavy edge was keen.

Across his seat the Hard Doer had a cornsack slung for a pack, with the weight of its contents neatly balanced on each side of the horse. Blanket and hobbles were buckled on before him. A black billy, which had originally been a golden -"surrup" tin, rattled from the "dee" on the off-side.

The Hard Doer was anything over 30 - lean, sallow, and weather-beaten. He had a long nose, with a slight lean to it; high cheek-bones, and straight black hair. The skin of his neck was corrugated, and the palms of his hands hard and raspy with corns. Altogether he looked as if he had been left out in the sun when he was very young, and the people who had put him out had forgotten to take him in again.

It was a sunlit, beautiful day. We rode with sparkling sea on one hand and leafy forest on the other. Sometimes the bridle-track lay close to the edge of the shore, and one could see the waves breaking on the rocks and rolling back in clear cascades from slippery cliffs. At other times we entered a belt of timber, and the shadows of the tall trees enveloped us in a cathedral gloom. Again, we cantered along a healthy plain or across the hard sands of some golden beach, where the gulls rose up with harsh complaints when we neared them.

The Hard Doer burned strong black tobacco in an ancient pipe. When he wakened in the morning he looked round for this pipe, knocked the ashes out, refilled and relit it. Thereafter throughout the day, except at meal times and other short intervals, his black teeth were constantly clenched on the stem. He was a great smoker and a poor talker. We might have ridden seven or eight miles when he made his first remark.

"Shod 'orse." Which, with an inclination of the head towards the track, meant that a shod horse had traveled over it recently.

About twelve miles out we came to a saltwater inlet running up into the hills. Clumped tea-tree fringed its banks, and with rushes and tall sword-grass, made dense thickets along the margins. The Hard Doer cocked his eye at the sun, and said over his shoulder -

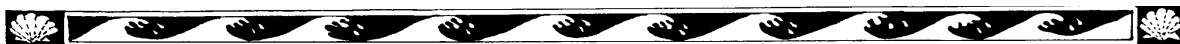
"Time to bile the billy."

So we dismounted, and he took the syrup tin into the thicket, and filled it with brown, brackish water, such as one gets in these coastal soaks. We spread our packs out on the grass and opened them. The Hard Doer's pack was a perfect model of neatness. The man who lives and travels by himself in the bush generally acquires a military habit. He folds his blanket without a crease, puts up his tent as for review, and proceeds like a soldier on the march. His sugar-bag was made of bed-ticking, one sigh of a true bushman; he had butter in a little earthenware pot, with a damp rag carefully tied over the top of it; his own scones, enough for a week, were rolled in a flour-bag; everything, even his bit of household soap, had its own separate bag and place in the pack, and the things came out in order, were put down in regularity, and put back after each meal, according to system - the system of balancing a pack and saving weight and space.

The Hard Doer rarely initiated a conversation, and his replies were framed with no waste of words. He did not throw away speech, or anything else.

We rode on quietly during the afternoon, great calm and restfulness around us. At one tidal creek, shallow water was running clearly over seawards sands. The hard Doer paused by the hitherward edge, and looked up and down with cautious eye. Then he got off, handed me his reins to hold, while he undid his boot-laces and tucked up his trouser legs. As he felt out a safe passage with a pole, I plunged through the quicksand after him.

The horses went down over their knees in the treacherous sand; plunged, strained, and finally floundered out by dint of great effort. While this excitement lasted the Hard Doer delivered himself of short, crisp swear words, framed, I thought, with a view to economic concentration of expression.





They crystallised my own ideas, anyhow; I would have had to take a much more roundabout track through my vocabulary to reach the same result.

We got along to our camping-ground in the mystic hour between dusk and dark, selected a clump of honeysuckle on a tussocky point overlooking the sea, and relieved the tired horses of packs and saddles. As I swept the ground clear of rubbish and pitched the tent, my mate groped about in the gloaming, with his sheath-knife, and cut a good supply of long, dry grass. He spread this out in the tent for a bed, laid the blankets methodically on top of it, and put the saddles at our heads for pillows.

It was now dark, and we had to economise our candles. The Hard Doer piled up dry firewood by the fire, which he threw on by installments as the blaze lessened, so that we found the way to our mouths. Our tablecloth was cornsack laid on the ground. We had cold boiled bacon, black billy tea, and bread, for sustenance. For dessert and sundries we filled our pipes. As the good tobacco smoke curled up the Hard Doer laid back on his elbow, grunted, and remarked:-

“This is what I call comfort.”

“Some city people might think it tough,” I ventured.

He spat contemptuously towards the fire. “I’d like,” he said, “to take some of ’em where it was tough. Like to see ’em in a snowstorm in Monaro - they’d die.”

I agreed with him.

The moon, in its first quarter, went down beyond the trees; the little sea breeze died out, and the mosquitoes began to put in their fine work. The Hard Doer brought cow-dung into the tent, tore up the grass with his hands, and made a clear place for it.

Then he “rose a smoke” which filled the six by eight to suffocation.

He was awake, according to habit, at the white of dawn, and went out to find that one of the horses had broken a hobble strap, and made back in the night. He swore in carefully selected phrases during breakfast time, resaddled, and started on the trail after the roguish delinquent.

It was afternoon when he returned to camp, after a ride of 40 miles, driving the animal before him with his stockwhip.

“Found him at the rails,” he observed. “Where did you put my pannikin?”

With this the incident closed.

I spent a week in the bush with the Hard Doer, an instructive week. The only occasion on which his impenetrability presented an opening was when he shook a lively four-foot tiger snake out of his blanket. He sprang into the air with a yell; while I rushed for my shotgun and cartridge. After I had bagged the reptile he stood looking at the wriggling remains in a rather shamefaced attitude.

He turned the “tiger” over with his foot and said,

“How the -- did he get there?”

It was the only occasion on which I heard the Hard Doer expressed curiosity about anything.



*Mirrabooka House, 1933, Courtesy of Mallacoota Historical Society*

## GIPPSLAND CATTLE

*Louis Esson*

With bells the road tinkles  
As home the mob passes  
To the milk-cans and sheds,  
And the long and lush grasses.

Whips crack at the muster,  
Men shout and hoofs rattle -  
They smell lucerne paddocks  
Wild, winter scrub cattle.

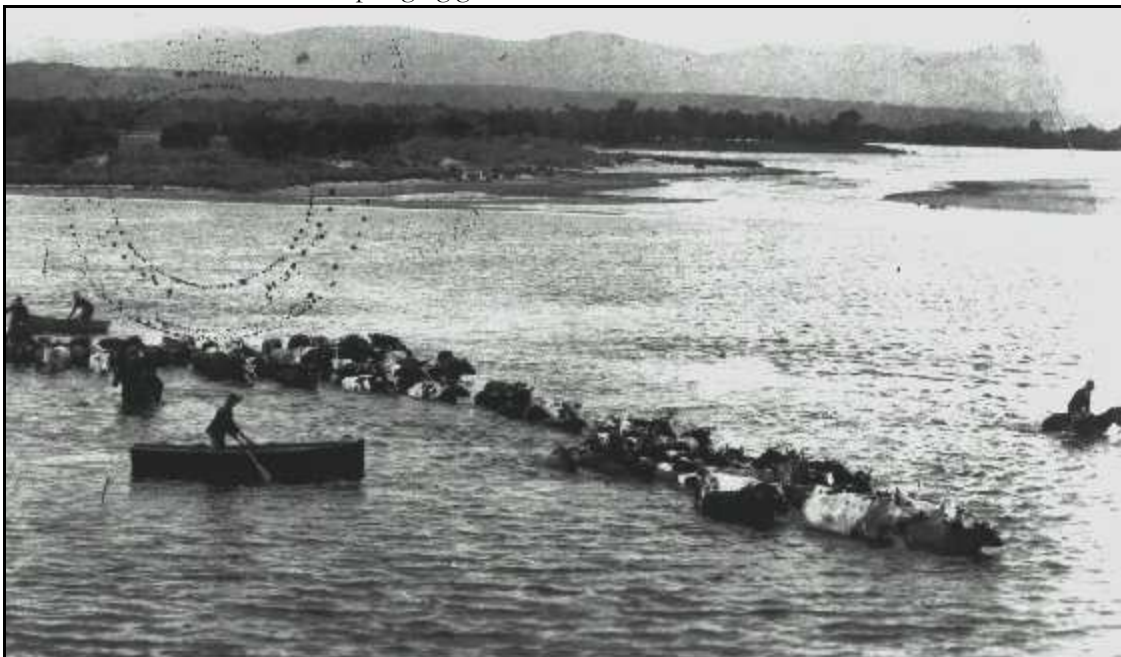
For food long they've foraged,  
Turned out from snows' dazzle  
In the wild blanket-wood scrub  
And the wild oats and hazel.

Driven back to the bails  
At turn o' the seed-time,  
Proud mothers with calves  
For the milk-time and feed-time.

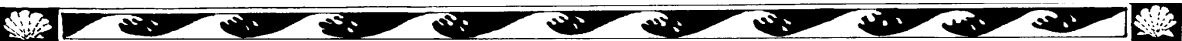
Cross creek and round cutting,  
Up mountainside pushing,  
Flanks steaming, horns gleaming -  
They're roaring and rushing.

And the shouts and bells clanging  
Break louder and clearer,  
Down bush tracks to Neerim  
Still nearer and nearer.

Till the road rings and rattles  
As home the mob passes  
To the sliprails and sheds  
And the sweet, springing grasses.



*Swimming Cattle from the Islands, Photo courtesy of Mallacoota Historical Society*



## WILD CATTLE

*Lois Esson*

Wild cattle from the Wingan,  
Two hundred head of stores,  
On hills and ranges mustered  
And by the lone, salt shores;

Thought sunlit forests stringing,  
Along a Gippsland trail,  
The mob is slowly headed  
Towards Bruthen, on to Sale

On far and open pastures  
They lifted startled eyes,  
To see strange horsemen waking  
The moon with whips and cries.

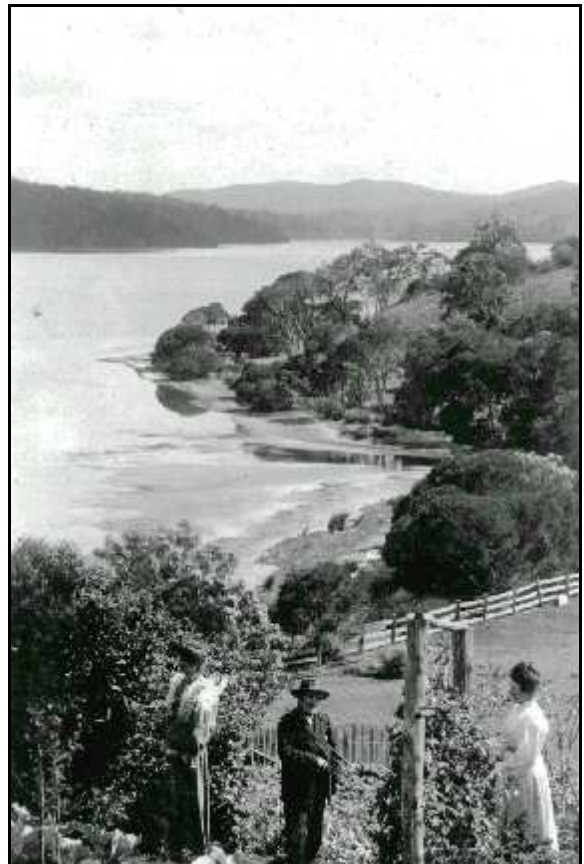
Some, Nemesis accepted,  
But one, with spirit free,  
Charged hillward through the timber  
For life and liberty.

Then cracked the stockwhips louder;  
Then yapped the sharp-tongued dogs;  
The rotten bark in powder  
Flew from the fallen logs.

Bruised fern and sword-grass trampled,  
Torn boughs and saplings bent,  
Marked plains across the ridges  
What way the wild chase went.

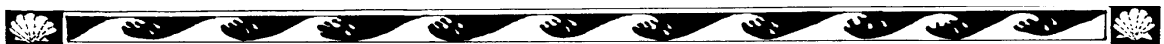
With muzzle dripping freely  
The frantic, long-horned steer  
Left horse and rider striving  
Three times upon his rear.

To blue hills of the Wingen  
'Twas hard to bid good-by;  
In some red shambles driven  
Far from their peace to die.



*"Lakeview"*

*Photo courtesy of Mallacoota Historical Society*



## SWIMMING CATTLE

*Louis Esson*

“Hi! Hi!” Blue-shirted horsemen swing  
Down from the range’s brow.  
When cattlemen are mustering  
From Nadgee to the Howe.

Among the granite hills they ride  
And through the tangled trees;  
Down jagged cliffs they slip and slide  
Above the roaring seas.

Bulls toss their horns and paw the ground.  
Then off for freedom dash,  
As shouting horsemen gather round  
And through the timber crash.

For, rounded up, their fate is hard -  
The wild bush cattle quake  
As far they scent the branding yard  
Across the dreaded lake.

Dogs bark, whips crack, men shout and lunge  
With poles, to drive them in.  
“Hi there!” The leader takes the plunge  
And the rest begin.

Though full of fear, to follow him -  
A dinghy at their wake -  
Great beasts with curling horns, now swim  
The Mallacoota lake.

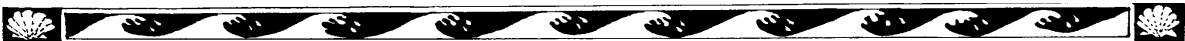
In vain they strain and splash and roar.  
Their race will soon be run  
When once they reach the further shore;  
For, when the drafting’s done

They’ll take the old coast road, that strays,  
Rough and forgotten now,  
Their last red road, to end their days  
Far from the hills of Howe.

*NB Cattle were swum out to some of the larger islands in the bottom lake, such as "Rabbit",  
in order to augment supplies of grass.*



*“Captains Point”  
Photo courtesy of Mallacoota  
Historical Society.*



## VANCE PALMER: LOUIS ESSON & AUSTRALIAN THEATRE 1948

Louis Esson did not attract much notice outside a limited circle of theatergoers. The cinema was taking over from the theatre, which was one reason why the Pioneer Players failed to receive popular support.

Esson was invited by E.J. to Mallacoota.

Mallacoota West, Diary Esson:

*"We are settling down at last under canvas. The tent looks rather pretty, and the boys have built us a humpy with a home made chimney, bag walls and an ant bed floor. Our oven is an oil drum, in the best navy's style. We got a good deal of game, fish, oysters and fruit. The whole country, from Orbost to Eden is full of interest.*

*The coast is magnificent, and the bush at the back is the wildest I've seen. There is plenty of material for literature, the beauty of nature, ocean, lakes, river, mountain and forest, and the interest of the characters, stockmen, hunters, fishers, roadmen, many of them are primitive, and some lawless and a few dotty. It is one of the richest places I have ever been in. We are all in good health. I have done a month's work, and I believe I'll have a good year.*

*Hugh was delighted with the books Nettie and the children sent him. He is better than he has ever been in his life.*

*Brady hasn't begun work yet, but I fancy he'll have a literary boot soon.*

*Some of the last pieces he did a year ago were amongst his best.*

*Lamson, just before he died, sent him a telegram on "The Swede", which, I think, is a really fine and strong ballad.*

*"Three waves will drown a Dago,  
But they cannot drown a Swede"!!*

*We have been talking about bringing out an annual this year which might lead to a monthly magazine ...*

*... It isn't easy to snare a Katherine Mansfield.*

*It is easy to see now that she was a generation ahead of the rest, but her work was so slight and tentative that it was not easy to see at the time. Brady's instinct was sure.*

*Mallacoota West, April 1924*

*We live very cheaply here, so cheaply that I didn't do a line of journalism for seven weeks. I find it hard to mix things. When I'm doing something better I lose all impulse for newspaper work, and it's a bore to write a bad short story or a bad piece of verse ...*

*We have minor tragedies here. We get meat once a week only, that when it comes. We had some this week. But a lean kangaroo dog managed to break the safe, and get away with a roast of beef, two pounds of steak, a kidney and the week's butter. He is a friendly dog, too, and I really like him, but he is a famous thief. He gets into the humpy every night and sends everything flying, but we thought the safe, made by Brady, was safe. We have no protection against the elements. But there has been little winter so far, so the tent is not so bad."*

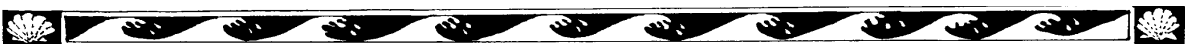




The cool-safe at the camp. Tents were pitched under a tin roof.



*Writers Camp, Mallacoota. Photo courtesy of National Library.*



## AUSTRALIA FELIX

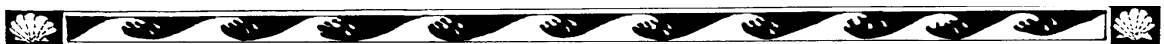
### CHARACTERS

Michael Gavan, a writer and politician, about fifty-five  
Stuart Graham, a young painter  
Helen, his wife  
Dick, a bushman, about thirty  
Willie, Gavan's son, about twenty

**Scene:** GAVAN's permanent camp, a lonely but picturesque spot in far Eastern Gippsland, overlooking the Southern Ocean. It is a big well-fitted up tent, opening on to a long verandah. It is a warm, calm and beautiful summer's evening.  
Inside the tent (that is wide open) seated at the rough solid table are GAVAN, STUART, AND HELEN, finishing their evening meal, oysters and black duck.

GAVAN is a man of fifty-five, six feet in height, active and powerful, with many red streaks in his hair and beard. He has an open shirt, leggings and riding breeches. STUART is carelessly dressed in open shirt and grey slacks. HELEN in short dark skirt and light blouse with short sleeves. Getting their guns and about to leave, are DICK, a typical bushman, with old trousers and leggings, leather belt and old jersey, and WILLIE, Gavan's son, with grey pants, leggings and dark blue shirt.

GAVAN. (to boys) Have a mug of tea before you go.  
DICK. Right-O!  
HELEN. How are the duck, Dick?  
DICK. They're still coming in.  
HELEN. Where are you off to tonight?  
DICK. Swanny Lake.  
GAVAN. It's only a stone's throw from here.  
DICK. We'd better get over before it's dark.  
They gulp down mugs of tea, and get their guns and cartridges.  
GAVAN. Have you got plenty of cartridges?  
WILLIE. Don't you worry, Dad. I've borrowed some of yours.  
HELEN. I wish you'd take me duck-shooting one of these nights Dick.  
DICK. Any time you'd like, Mrs. Graham.  
GAVAN. You won't starve. There's plenty of natural food round here.  
STUART. Natural food! It's safe as far as I'm concerned.  
HELEN. I wouldn't trust him with a gun, but he might learn to catch fish. I caught a lovely schnapper.  
DICK. I'll get you a better line. You could catch twice as many.  
HELEN. Stuart fancies himself as a bushman, because he lives in a tent and only shaves twice a week.  
STUART. You're the sporting member.  
GAVAN. You can't go down Bourke Street and shoot a brace of ducks. You might be able to shoot an alderman, but there seems to be some regulation against it. God knows why.  
HELEN. I'm terribly excited! How do you think the elections will go, boys?  
DICK. It won't affect us much in these parts.  
HELEN. You're a great patriot, Dick. Something new and marvellous and unexpected might happen and you're not interested. I hope we get the results tonight. Have you fixed up the wireless, Willie?  
WILLIE. Yes. It'll work all right if there are no storms. We got the last Tests.  
GAVAN. We're not quite savage, you see. Willie's got a wireless set, so we get the news of the great world, for what it's worth.  
WILLIE. (Going to door.) We won't be long.  
HELEN. (Waving to boys) Good luck.



DICK. (Slowly) We may get a few.  
Exeunt DICK and WILLIE

GAVAN. (Banging table.) It's rough, as I told you - there's no table cloth and there's only tin plates and pannikins - but I feel I belong here, and not to a respectable home in South Yarra.

HELEN. Oysters - and black duck - what more do you want than that!

GAVAN. I'm glad to get away from the city. I'm always happier in the bush. I'm used to rugged outlines - Melbourne is all straight lines and right angles - straight streets, straight tram lines, straight railway lines, straight, narrow lives - damn it all, I've always said the people there were living like wombats in electric-lit burrows.

STUART. We're free here - about a hundred miles from everywhere.

GAVAN. I told you it would be primitive. Is your tent alright?

HELEN. It's splendid . . . better than a house.

GAVAN. I've spent half my life under canvas, and I think it's the best half.  
Another piece of duck, Helen?

HELEN. No thanks.

GAVAN. Bring your seat out here. (They rise from table, and walk out on to verandah.) What do you think of it. We're looking right over on the Pacific.

HELEN. It's beautiful! I can't believe it, the bush and the Pacific.

GAVAN. (In a low voice.) Australia! How I have loved this Australia! A chair, Helen? (Before sitting down.) Look over there - it was along that shore, some miles down the coast, that Captain Cook first sighted Australia. He saw the smoke rise from some black-fellows' camps. There used to be a lot of blackfellows then. I wonder what they thought about it.

GAVAN sits between STUART and HELEN, on an old, long cane chair. STUART has a deck chair.

HELEN. And I wonder what Cook thought of his discovery.

STUART. In my opinion, Australia hasn't been discovered yet. That's a job in store for our writers and artists. Captain Cook discovered only the outline.

GAVAN. My God, you're right, Stuart. People have never imagined what a great country they have.

HELEN. Perhaps we have a bad tradition. Our parents may be to blame for that. They were aliens, and how they hated this country, they really hated it. They hated the natives, white as well as black, they seemed to be a bad lot in those days, mostly they hated the bush!  
Everything was wrong. The birds had no song, the blossoms no scent. They saw no beauty anywhere. Australia was a desert. What could young Australians do with parents like that!

STUART. Pioneers, O, pioneers!

GAVAN. We're still in the pioneering stage. You can hardly expect a cockie farmer to look at nature with the eye of an artist.

STUART. Well, boy, what are you going to do about it?

GAVAN. It seems simple enough. This is a new country with new conditions. We can do as we like, but we never originate anything. We borrow ideas, as we borrow money, from London or New York. We prefer to live at second hand. It's all wrong. It's ridiculous. We need an entirely different system of values.

STUART. I agree.  
Pause

GAVAN. (Slowly) Well - they can't put Harding and his Liberals back into office. I'm not an optimist, but I believe there is a limit to human stupidity. Everybody must know what a blight he is. Yes, it's good-bye Harding at last.

STUART. I was told he was a typical Australian, a proletarian who rose from the ranks, rabbit-trapper to Prime Minister, or something like that.

GAVAN. That's not a rise, that's a fall. A rabbitier destroys pests - Harding breeds them.

HELEN. Perhaps we'll hear good news tonight. It may be the dawn of a new era.





STUART. (Looking out.) Sunset is no less beautiful. Look over there - that's Impressionism for you - just as good as Turner. I must paint it.

HELEN. Why don't you?

STUART. It's these damned elections. You've got been talking politics, the corporate state, bourgeois ideology, planned production, dialectical materialism, art as a weapon of the toiling masses -

HELEN. We've done nothing of the kind.

STUART. The tempo's terrific. I'm a painter, and how can I work in an atmosphere like that!

HELEN. We've been trying to encourage you.

GAVAN. This is Saturday night. It isn't often I have the honour of receiving such highly civilised visitors in my barbaric tent. (He produces a bottle of whiskey, three glasses, and a jug of water.) We must celebrate this historic event. I'm sorry I've no wine, Helen. Can't drink it myself, gives me a headache. There's something Dago and decadent about wine, Helen. Whiskey's better. This had the right Celtic glamour. Steady, Stuart, don't drown the miller.

STUART. Here's to the next revolution!

GAVAN. (Draining the glass at one gulp) Better luck this time!

HELEN. The revolution! But look over there! Isn't it wonderful!

GAVAN. You people have travelled a lot. But have you ever seen anything more beautiful than that!

HELEN. (Looking out) I wonder what it will be like in fifty years.

GAVAN. Fifty years! Anything might happen in fifty year. I sometimes wonder if we're going to hold it. And damn it, do we deserve to hold it!

STUART. It depends on what sort of people we become.

HELEN. But this country may be more important than its people.

GAVAN. I'd give nobody an inch, not an inch if I could help it. I've loved this country all my life. I don't think anybody ever loved it more than I have. But we must have effective occupation. We want people, twenty millions, fifty millions.

STUART. And all Britishers! Millions and millions of Britishers!

HELEN. It's an appalling prospect.

STUART. Why not a few Dagoes sprinkled about - to add a note of colour, wine and straw-covered bottles - mandolins - fritto misso and some Bavarians too. They would improve our music, and they certainly can brew good beer. But if we're all Britishers - Anglo-Saxons -

Pause. A far away shot is heard.

GAVAN. Did you hear that?

STUART. No. What was it?

GAVAN. It must have been the boys shooting.

HELEN. I hope they'll get a bag.

GAVAN. If there's any about Dick'll get them. He's a real bushman. Wait a minute. I'll show you something. I've got some old papers about somewhere. Help yourself.

Exit GAVAN, into the tent.

STUART. He's a remarkable man, no doubt about it.

HELEN. What stories they used to tell about him . . .

STUART. He's pitched his camp in the right place, a painter's paradise.

HELEN. I'm glad Gavan asked us to camp here. You ought to work well and we'll have a wonderful year.

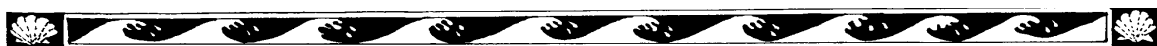
Enter GAVAN, with a big scrap book.

GAVAN. (Putting down book) Here's some old junk I've kept, I hardly know why. I wonder will you be interested in it.

HELEN. What is your guilty secret?

GAVAN. My past.

HELEN. How many pasts?



GAVAN. I suppose it's natural to women to conceive a man's history only as a series of love affairs. I'm sorry to disappoint you, Helen. They're only old papers, articles, photos . . . memoranda - a little secret history long forgotten. Where's the bottle. Fill your glasses. (Fills his glass and tosses it off.) I always take it neat.

STUART. You Irish are bad drinkers.

GAVAN. But you must admit we're good triers. (Opens book) There are some queer old things in this book. It's the past, the romantic past. It's strange how the past always seems romantic.

STUART. (Looking at photos) Who are these heroes? They look very solemn.

GAVAN. Our early leaders, standard bearers, soldiers in the army for the liberation of humanity. There's little Harding with his first whiskers.

HELEN. Not our Harding!

GAVAN. The same. He was a fiery little man, and one of our fiercest soap-box orators.

HELEN. (Laughing) So this is the great Harding!

GAVAN. Just for a handful of boodle he left us. Poor little Harding. We thought he had the soul of a prophet. It turned out to be the soul of an earthworm.

HELEN. (Looking at book) Is that you?

GAVAN. That handsome young fellow, looking like Dan O'Connell - yes, that was Michael Gavan . . . Michael Gavan thirty years ago. Do you think I've changed a bit? (Takes a glass of whiskey) When I see, you, Stuart, I think of my own youth. My future's behind me, and your past is still in front of you. You're the new generation. It's up to you. The struggle is still on and you can't run away from it. I'm fifty-five, and I've got to sort things out. Before I was twenty I thought I could do anything - just like you, Stuart. When we used to meet, a number of wild young men in back rooms and at street corners, we had our great plans for the future. There were all sorts among us, poets and creators, Irish, Germans, Dagoes, lumpers from the wharf, college men, shearers, nondescripts. We had all night sittings. We dreamed dreams. But we were not pacifists, like you people. We wanted action. We delivered fiery speeches, we organised groups, we controlled two newspapers - I edited one myself. Soon we became a power in the land. Sydney was our headquarters, but we put our faith and hope in the bush. There would be a great movement throughout the bush - it might come any day. We just lived for it. Those big brown lanky man, shearers and drovers, silent, slow, stoical, akin to the bush that bred them, with its dry sunlight and limitless spaces, they were the real Australian, we thought . . . We were striving, you see, to create a national sentiment. Does that seem old-fashioned nonsense to you? Here we were with a new country, a rich and beautiful country with boundless possibilities, a fresh sheet, an untouched canvas, a block of marble waiting for the hand of the sculptor. Australia Felix! A whole continent, fresh and unspoiled without history, its soil unstained with blood, surely to God we could do something with it. And we worked, day and night, studied, organised, fought for our ideals. (Slight pause) But now, look what has happened to our leaders! A few have stuck - but the others, respectable old gentlemen with soft hats in Parliament, at Board meetings, in newspaper offices. Some have gone to London for a knighthood or High Commissionership. Not once or twice in our Colonial story, the path to Brixton was the path to Glory. And there's little Harding, still going strong -

HELEN. (Looking into scrapbook and laughing) Fancy Harding in that galley. He certainly has evolved.

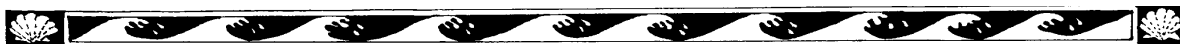
GAVAN. He was not exceptional. We have produced a number of patriots like Harding.

HELEN. GAVAN. We'll know his fate tonight.

GAVAN. I sometimes wonder were we mad, just hare-brained enthusiasts! Can you credit it, we really intended to make Australia a nation, yes, we had the audacity to believe that we could create a new democracy.

STUART. A new democracy. And still think we can do it.

GAVAN. Have another whiskey. (Fills his glass) I can't take it like you, sipping it as if it were wine.



HELEN. Hullo! Here are the boys.  
Enter DICK and WILLIE, with ducks.

HELEN. How did you get on?

DICK. (Throwing down ducks) We got a few.

HELEN. It's a pity there should be all this killing. What lovely colours their feathers have.

STUART. They would make a good still life.

DICK. (Generously) Willie got half of them.  
They put away their guns.

GAVAN. Have a drink, Dick?

DICK. (Filling glass) Here's to everybody . . . The ducks are still coming in.

GAVAN. What about the wireless, Willie?

WILLIE. I'll fix it in a minute. (Arranges apparatus on table)

DICK. I don't think I'll wait tonight. I'd better get home.

GAVAN. Great Caesar! Don't you want to hear the results?

DICK. I don't go much on politics.

WILLIE. (Working at wireless) It's tuned up. Something's coming through.

GAVAN. Listen!

WIRELESS VOICE. The Government has a substantial lead in all states.

GAVAN. Ye Gods! What's that?

VOICE We feel assured of a working majority in both houses. I am immensely pleased with the results of the poll . . .

GAVAN. That's Harding's voice . . . My old friend Harding.

VOICE. The great Liberal party has succeeded in restoring responsible government on the broad platform of progress and reform. The cause of democracy has been triumphantly vindicated.

HELEN. It's incredible. I suppose you're pleased, Dick, that law and order have been restored.

DICK. (Grinning) I dunno. We don't go much on law and order in these parts.

VOICE. I thank the people of the Commonwealth, and the public-spirited Press, for the patriotic support during this great battle for political liberty, and in placing us in the proud position we occupy tonight.

GAVAN. Cut the old fool off. Tell him to go to bed.

WILLIE. I'll burn him down a bit.

GAVAN. To hell with him, and bad cess to him! It's the same old story. I should have known. An election is held. Politicians babble. Newspapers pour forth their usual flood of platitudes. And the nation votes. And what happens? Nothing. It's our own faults. Yours Stuart, mine - everyone of us.

VOICE. Two great parties have united without the sacrifice of a single principle.

GAVAN. O, help! (Gets whiskey bottle and fills glasses) I can't stand it. (Hands HELEN, STUART and DICK glasses) Just a deoch and doris.  
Exit DICK

VOICE. We mean to continue in the future as we have in the past and carry out the policy which the entire people of this great country have so enthusiastically endorsed.

GAVAN. (Cutting off) I can't believe it. That is not the voice of Australia.

HELEN. No it's not. Here's to the future.  
They all laugh, holding up their glasses.

GAVAN. Australia Felix!!

HELEN. & STUART. Australia Felix!

**CURTAIN**



## NOMAD CHANT

*Louis Esson*

To E.J. Brady

The Spring wind, brother,  
With marching music blows.  
Calling to one another,  
Children of the Mother,  
We go where the wind goes.

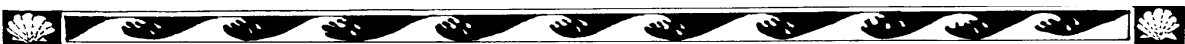
New thoughts to prick sharper  
Than spears at old despair.  
Who can be a carper?  
The wind is a harper  
Playing a lively air.  
Thru hilly lands and hollow,  
From smoky towns afar,  
Like our swift sister swallow  
Untrodden tracks we follow  
To Mallacoota bar.

We are Gipsy rovers,  
That since the world began  
Of trees and water lovers,  
Where'er the blue sky covers  
Drove poaching caravan.

We are Arabs, Pitching  
Beneath the desert palm  
A tent of peace, and stitching  
Into our dreams bewitching  
The starry hours of calm.

With barbaric handles  
We shatter custom's domes;  
We scrape rude sandals;  
Eternal Goths and Vandals  
We sack world-weary Romes.

To fresh adventures blowing  
We follow the Nomad wind.  
Clouds, seas and stars are flowing,  
And with the good wind blowing  
We leave old worlds behind.



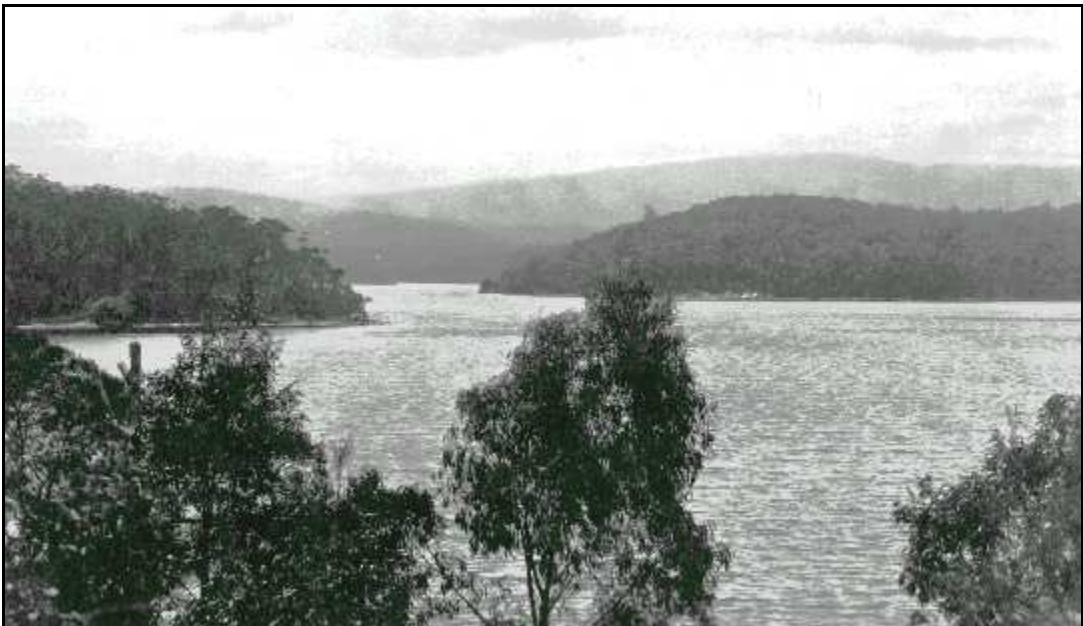
## THE WHITE CRANE

*Louis Esson*

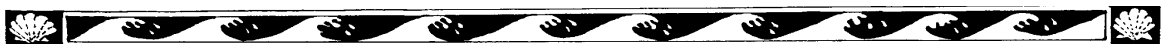
In Mallacoota's sunset sky,  
Above the inlet blue and pale,  
I saw a white crane swiftly sail  
And outward to the ocean fly.  
Over the mountains, out to sea!  
This bird that comes from far Japan  
And artists paint on screen and fan,  
What dream had he in memory?  
What lure of sight had drawn him down  
This strange wild coast, which man has not  
Yet made his own with garden plot  
Or temple court or colored town?

Our lonely fisher flings his net,  
With leads and corks that bob and float,  
As ripples spread around his boat  
Before the golden sun has set.

And little island, green and gay,  
Peep shyly from the sunlit sea -  
The inlet's glittering jewellery -  
And purple hills stretch far away.



*View from "Fairhaven". Photo courtesy of Mallacoota Historical Society.*



## MALLACOOTA HOUSE

Mallacoota Guest House was built by E.J. on land in Mirrabooka Road. Construction was finished in 1922. From that time many famous literary and artistic people came to visit and enjoy the beautiful scenery and friendly hospitality offered by E.J. and his wife Norma.



*E.J. Brady at Mallacoota House. Courtesy National Library..*



## KATHARINE SUSANNAH PRICHARD IN MALLACOOTA

Katharine was a great friend of Edwin James Brady. They come to know each other through their shared literary and political circles in Melbourne and Sydney..

### CHILD OF THE HURRICANE" (AUTOBIOGRAPHY)

Katharine Susannah Prichard

*A&R Sydney*

At Genoa the pub stood on rising ground above the river where a new bridge had just been opened. Timber workers, fallers and men who had been building the bridge were still celebrating in the bar. Logs blazed in the fireplace in the parlour. That fireplace was a white washed alcove, with wings and seats on either side, so that you could sit close to the fire on cold nights when gales were roaring up from the southern ocean.

A stormy wind had been lashing the horses, and freezing the blood in our veins the night McAllister and I pulled up at the pub. I stumbled into the parlour and what a glorious sight that great log fire was! The new bridge, which, as the oldest resident round about she had opened, and about the floods which had swept away other bridges, when a drunken trapper hurtled towards us from the bar. "I want to see the lady journalist, Gran," he protested. "I wanna see the lady journalist."

McAllister's explanations of his passenger, I guessed, had aroused some curiosity; but Gran would not allow unmannerly behaviour in her pub, or let me be gazed upon.

Next morning I said goodbye and thanked Mr. McAllister for his kindness, he had made my days driving with him very pleasant.

E.J. Brady's sunburned and barefoot boys steered his launch to the jetty. They were going to take me down Mallacoota's Lakes to Brady's camp overlooking the ocean.

For two hours the launch chugged through the silvery shining chain of a dreamlike loveliness. The boys smiled shyly at my exclamations and handled their craft with the skill of experienced boatmen. They brought her gently into the landing where Norma was waiting for us: handsome and statuesque, a Juno of a woman, with the strength of mind and body which had enabled her to mother a large family and manage the home Brady had made for her in the wilderness Mallacoota was in those days! A series of large tents with floorboards, comfortable and well-finished, formed the camp. The tents were connected by a pergola overgrown with vines. Wherever you looked there were views of the lake, forest or the sea breaking beyond a narrow strip of land on miles of golden beach, with Gabo looming in a dark bluff on the eastern horizon.

Norma loved the place and was content to live there during E.J.'s long absences. Only the winter storms made her look forward to the time when Brady would manage to build a house of timber and corrugated iron to shelter her brood. He had arranged for me to visit Norma, though, earning a living for the family in the city, could not be home just then.

E.J. regarded it as poaching on his preserves, and, of course, there is an unwritten law which forbids a guest to encroach on a host writer's territory. Mallacoota was surely Brady's. He knew its history, and every man, woman and child for miles around: had found the place, written about its primitive beauty, "the simple life" possible there, and identified himself with it so long that naturally Norma thought Mallacoota yarns belonged to Brady. They did, as a matter of fact: usually he told them to others, who wrote them. I made no notes about Mallacoota because I felt it would not be fair to E.J.

When I returned to Genoa I expected another coachman to take me on to Eden, where the old whaling station has been established on the far side of the bay.

It was a pleasant surprise to find Mr. McAllister waiting to drive me himself. Starting early in morning, we drove all day through the rain drenched forests of Croajingalong at that end of the Southern Alps, now and then catching a glimpse of distant blue sea and rugged coastline. ('The Encounter' was a sketch I wrote of an incident on the way, and The Bridge from that night in the pub at Genoa.)

I admired and respected Norma immensely. As a girl of eighteen she had gone to live with Brady at Mallacoota, and through all their hard times, when often, as she told me, she had only nails to fasten back her long black hair, she remained staunch and courageous in her devotion to him. As he grew older, Brady was not the gay and irresponsible Bohemian with a golden beard I had met





was editor of the "Native Companion." He shaved off his beard and his fecklessness vanished with it. But always, he had a wild Irishman exuberance and charm of manner. I used to think I was the only young woman of his acquaintance Brady never made love to. He like to flatter and flutter most of us. It was just "a way he had with him" not intended to be taken seriously as sometimes it was.

Norma attached no importance to these ephemeral affairs. The bond between her and Brady was too deep and strong to be broken. I won her confidence because she knew I understood.

A few weeks before Henry Lawson had been visiting them at their camp, and Norma told me, smiling over the recollection of the row there had been between E.J. and Henry when Henry talked of writing of Mallacoota folk.

Susannah K. Prichard went on to say "Brady's legal wife was a Roman Catholic and would not divorce him. Norma died before she did. Although Brady grieved deeply for her, after some time he was mercurial as ever. Hilda Esson wrote to me."

"Brady has married ..... a pretty young thing. Over eighty, recently, he begat another child."



*E.J. Brady and guest at Mallacoota House.  
The arch is set of whalebones, found up at "Big Beach".*

*Courtesy National Library.*





## BETWEEN THE LINES

*Bernice Morris*

The Depression soon struck at our family. Dad lost his job in the forest and had to resort to maize picking and any other casual work he could get on the farms. Mum did extra work at home, sorting hundreds of bags of beans at five shillings a bag. These were the beans that farmers grew for seed and the broken, imperfect ones had to be sorted from the good. It was dreary work and it took a day to sort a bag but it earned some money to pay the bills. There were still some boarders, though many of them failed to pay and our bill at the store grew bigger and bigger.

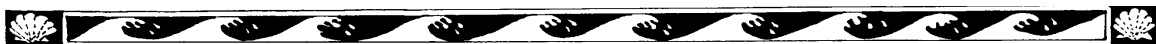
Mum always thought that paying your way equated to a good name and a good name she was determined we all should have. As soon as we turned fourteen or had left school we had to be responsible for our purchases we had to open our own accounts at the store. The boys took poorly paid jobs on the farms. I avoided that by working for Mum in return for food and clothing. Then, when I was seventeen, a phone call from Mallacoota. A waitress was wanted at Mallacoota House for three months. Would I come? Mallacoota House was owned by poet and author, E.J. Brady, but his newly married daughter, Tuppy, and her husband, Frank, were running it. I wasn't sure what to expect but it was something to do. I packed my case and went over on the service car.

Tuppy had lived a life utterly different from mine. She was a socialist, a great reader and possessed a riotous sense of humour. She was a most entertaining companion. One of the prettiest sights I can recall is Tuppy rowing across the lake at Mallacoota on a moonlit night. She was cook and I was the rest of the staff and as we never had many guests. Life was just a frolic. Women were just beginning to wear slacks. Neither Tuppy nor I had slacks but she had two pairs of wide-legged garments called house pyjamas. She wore one pair and I wore the other.

Among her friends were many writers and artists and I was enthralled with her stories about them. I met her sisters and one of her brothers. Compared to my stolid, Methodist relatives, they were a Bohemian lot and tantalisingly interesting. Tuppy nurtured my latent interest in art and literature so that when I eventually gained access to libraries I knew which books I wanted to read. She was the Russian Revolution. I knew nothing about the USSR but Tuppy's eloquence aroused my interest. I had never heard dissenting views about anything, unless one counts the long discussions with my cousins about whether God made us or we were descended from monkeys. It was becoming obvious that there was more to know about the world than I could discover in Noorinbee. After three months, Mallacoota House closed and I went home but I now looked at society with different eyes. What was the cause of all this worklessness and hunger?

The only government relief was the sustenance, a meagre sum for which the unemployed were required to work, including a manual labouring on public works. My maternal grandmother still lived in Buldah and there was no road into it, though Buldah had been settled for perhaps thirty years. "why not suggest building a road into Buldah?" she thought provisions were still taken in by dray over a track as they had been when she lived there as a girl. She and her sisters and brothers had ridden their horses wherever they wanted to go. Grandmother was long past riding horses. To petition for a road she and her youngest son went to Parliament House in Melbourne to see the Representative for East Gippsland and soon gangs of unemployed men on "susso" came to build it. Many of them were unemployed accountants, solicitors and salesmen.

Since the men had time on their hands, being required to work only a short week, many of them came to our place where they played cards or pedalled away at the Guibranson pianola. This pianola, which occupied a proud place in the sitting room, was a cause of some anxiety to us. For as well as those who tramped the roads, there were others - the commercial travellers - who came in cars. They offered to sell, amongst other things, shares in gold mines, pine forests in New Zealand, blocks of land in Springvale and pianolas on time payment. To Dad's dismay, Mum bought a pianola and then fell behind with the monthly repayments. She kept writing her excuses but the finance company became more and more insistent. I entered the fray, dashing off an indignant letter of protest which silenced the hire-purchase firm for months. I suppose the company realised it would cost more to repossess the pianola than it would bring when resold. Of course, Mum paid for it as soon as she could.



## THE ROAD COMES IN TO MALLACOOTA

*Up until 1922 the only access to Mallacoota was by bridle track or boat.  
E.J., having bought a new car and being unable to use it, decided to fix things.*



*E.J. Brady and "THE" car that blazed the Mallacoota trail.*



*At Gipsy Point. Courtesy of C. Davidson.*



## LLEWELLYN MARTIN

The man after whom Martin's Estate was named, died recently in Bairnsdale at the grand age of eighty-six years. He was buried at Cann River.

Here is an article most of which was given by Hugh Brady, some by Nan Bridle and others. Perhaps the story is not in absolute correct sequence as I could not ascertain whether Martin moved to Cann before or after Llew's marriage.

Llew's father, Peter Martin, originally came from Bathurst area where E.J. Brady had met him as a boy. Peter used to ride horses in races. Brady's came in contact with him again when he came to Double Creek to live.

Before this, according to Nan Bridle, Peter Martin worked gold mines out of Bathurst and west of New South Wales, then came to Wangrabelle to work the Uambula Goidmines. From here he and his wife and family came to Double Creek where they bought the house built by people called Rankin, no relation to these Rankins apparently. This place they sold to Bristows when they left. Hugh Brady remembers Peter giving him a demonstration of killing and dressing a sheep. He boasts that he was the fastest in the world at this, as he could beat the record which was something like seven minutes. He was certainly quick and clean, pummelling the skin off with his hands, between cuts holding the knife between his teeth. It must have made a vivid impression on young Hugh who remembers it well. Peter began a meat run weekly from Double Creek to Mallacoota with a box of meat in a wagonette. This was about the time of the First World War. Llew's two brothers had gone to the war.

Llew was the first man, to Hugh Brady's knowledge, who did any paid work for the C.R.B. on the track that the Government had paid Charlie Cameron £20 (twenty pounds) to carve out from Gipsy Point to Mallacoota. Llew had to find any main obstacles on the track, and fix them. One was the sand pit at Double Creek (around which he built a loop road) another was the Double Creek itself which was only a gravel bottom ford. Llew built the first bridge here out of poles and heavy timber for £50 (fifty pounds). Joe Maxwell helped him, a big strong man. This bridge lasted many years, till recently.

Until this bridge was built and the road improved, the new car that E.J. Brady had bought was housed at Gipsy Point at Mrs. Mattsson's hotel garage. Hugh remembers the car was bought in 1916, and in 1918 they tried to bring it down, but it wouldn't go up the steep hill at Sword Grass Creek. This is the Gully the other side of Double Creek where the bell birds are. Peter Martin used his horses to pull the car up. The car once in Mallacoota did not leave until the road and bridge were ready in 1919-20.

Martins sold out at Double Creek and went to Cann River where Peter set up a butcher's shop. Dave Ford used to drive a truck to Mallacoota with meat. Peter Martin bought land in Cann from Paddy Hadfield. Llew married Isabelle Broome, who owned the land in Mallacoota now known as Martin's Estate. These two young people and their young family used to spend a lot of time in Mallacoota, staying in the house that was on the block.

Isabelle died having her seventh child, and Llew moved to Bairnsdale where his sister Rae took charge of his household. Llew eventually sold Martin's Estate to Henry Scott, and we see their names in Martin Street and Broome Street. Llew left a grown up family Bernie, Peter, Jim, Les, Man,



*Cape Horn. Courtesy of Mallacoota Historical Society.*

## LAWSON IN MALLACOOTA

*Edna J. Brady*

*March 29th, 1978*

Henry Lawson was even able to find inspiration in the fall of a current workers' newspaper "The Boomerang" and in its Christmas issue, three months before the paper collapsed, he published the poem "The Cambarooma Star" (which was actually a history of the ill-fated "Boomerang"). There was something in the plight of a man making a hopeless last ditch stand that appealed to him.

Among the many people stirred by his poem was a twenty-two year old poet of Irish descent Edwin James Brady. When he read "The Cambarooma Star" he was editing a paper called "The Australian Workman" and being short of a bit of copy, he reprinted the poem. Lawson learning of its unauthorised use, went around to "thank Brady for stealing it". Brady and Lawson immediately headed for the nearest hotel and a friendship was made that lasted until Lawson's death.

In October 1901, Lawson was brought before the courts for failure to meet maintenance payments to his estranged wife: a sad state of affairs caused mainly by Henry's alcoholism. Into Darlinghurst jail he went, until some of his friends, alarmed at this situation, "sent around the hat" to obtain money for his release. Mrs. Lawson agreed to give up the money due to her if her husband would leave Sydney and stop annoying her.

Thirty pounds was raised and Lawson was offered three alternatives: A tour around the Pacific, a visit to an outback station, or a trip to E.J. Brady at Mallacoota. He eventually agreed to go to Brady's place.

On Friday, 25th February, 1910 he left on the SS Sydney bound for Eden, with Tom Mutch as his companion. When the ship went through Sydney Heads Lawson was heard to mutter some lines from one of his poems:

We fear no hell hereafter, We hope for no reward, We always sail on Friday,  
With thirteen men aboard.'

By the time they reached Eden, however, his mood had improved and he resolved to do his best to "pull himself together ... refusing anything to drink but lemonade" when the party stayed overnight at the Commercial Hotel.

Brady was not quite sure what Henry's reception of him would be as years before, in reply to one of Lawson's complaints in the Bulletin about the hardships of Australian authors, Brady had replied that

"Individuals and not their country were to blame for their own distress.' And that "Literary pessimists were like sick people, looking at the world from a hospital window."

Lawson had taken this as a slight against his own deafness and ignored Brady for the next six months! It was not until the Mallacoota Visit that the friendship was really resumed on its old basis. Edwin Brady and his son, Hugh, aged six, met Lawson and Mutch at Genoa. They had a rowboat ready to take the party down the river to the camp. With Edwin insisting on rowing all the way, they set out, afternoon tea being taken at Smith's of Gipsy Point then on to Allans Guest House for the night.

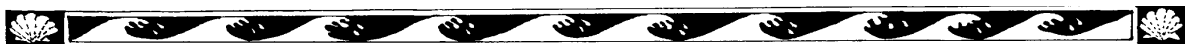
Next morning they went to where Mr. and Mrs. Brady and their children Hugh, Norma and Anthony were camped at Captain's point... "living like gipsies".

Lawson looked over things with a bushman's eye. He was always proud of his bushcraft and discovered that the family was lacking a bush broom. Rejecting the store bought one he set to work.. As E.J. said. "with enough tea tree to roof a fernery and the blue waters of the inlet before him. He devoted the whole afternoon to the architecture."

The broom turned out to be too heavy for Mrs. Brady to lift, so, rather than hurt his feelings they swept the camp every day at dawn during his stay, and when he left placed the broom in the fork of a nearby tree to scare away evil spirits!

Next day, when out fishing, Lawson, Mutch, Brady and son Hugh caught 24 schnapper in under an hour. Mutch mentioned that "the catch would have been considerably larger if the young Hugh hadn't kept getting his line tangled and holding me up in the process."

The three adults also went on camping trips. One, to Harrisons Creek, where Lawson insisted on making Johnny cakes on a sheet of bark and baking them in the open fire. Brady managed to hide his share in a crack in the slab wall, but Mutch, sitting directly opposite the cook, was not so fortunate.



After eating as many as he could stomach, he stood up, hurling the rest out into the night, cursing loudly. Lawson, offended, ate all of this with obvious relish... and later the others wished he hadn't. After a bout of terrible nightmares which kept everyone awake he could only be quietened by Mutch threatening to "brain" him with a log of wood. After sleep finally overcame Henry, the others crept out into the dawn and stuffed the soggy remains of the Johnny cakes down a nearby wombat hole.

On another trip, along to Cape Howe, the party stopped at Barracoota and Lawson built a proper bush camp" which took two days to complete. It was still standing in 1925 and may still be in evidence. For the Bulletin of 1910 wrote the poem "Gettin' Back" which mentions

"I'm staying a lake side home, down here at Never-mind,  
The small hand "separator" the only change I find,  
And there's a girl with kind grey eyes, and hair of reddish gold,  
And she's read somewhere in a book  
That poets don't grow old."

Henry Lawson returned to the city a changed man, sober and rested. He managed to stay "on the dry" for two years after that, but unfortunately returned to the bottle and finally died from the effects of alcohol in 1922.

## **HOW HENRY LAWSON SAW MALLACOOTA TAKEN FROM A LETTER TO HIS SON, JOSEPH HENRY (JIM) LAWSON, MARCH 1910**

*"I only got your letter yesterday, and it was written nearly a month ago. We are away out of the world here, and it will take this letter a week or more to reach you.*

*I've just come back from a 4 day's tramp up the coast and over the sandhills past Cape Howe, and the cairn (a pile of stones) on the border between New South Wales and Victoria. The country is very wild and rough and there is no-one there. We took flour and baking powder, and shot a duck or two at the fresh water lake, a little inland. We are 45 miles by rough bush road, 26 miles by lakes and river (in row boat) from Eden; the only way is by sail boat, or what they call "auxiliary cutter" (a ketch with small oil engine in her) when the weather is favorable and the bar at the entrance of the lower lake is open' that is, not silted up with sand.*

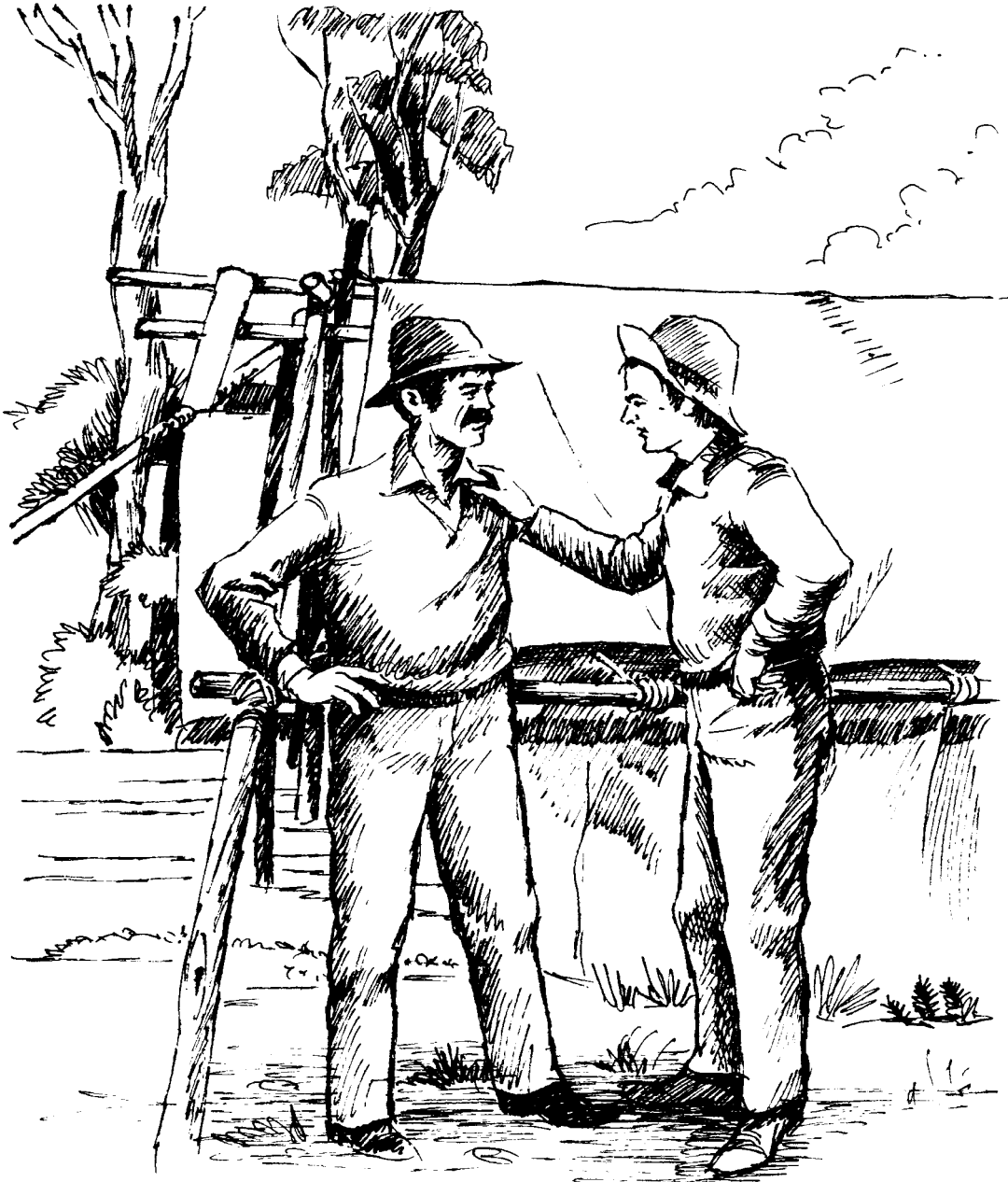
*Sometimes the cutters bump a lot coming over the bar. They are really yawls and luggers but the people call them different. They call the S.E.A. the "Clarie (10 tons) and the little "Lightning" (6 tons), sail only. I saw them all come together Sunday before last. Two bumped on the bar but scrambled over alright ... especially the little "Lightning". They had been weather bound for weeks, and we were living on wild duck and fish. It was called "the Relief of Mallacoota". A cutter was lost last June with six men .... But I'll tell you about that when I see you. Some of the bodies from the wreck of the steamer Federal came ashore and are buried here.*

*All the boys are bushmen, sailors and fishermen. The schoolmaster goes round in a boat, a launch, to collect his scholars. There are only six homes on the lower lake, and none at all on the upper. The horses and cattle have to swim home and out to their runs. We had our old pack mare and "Darky" the kangaroo dog swimming behind the boat when we crossed the lower end of the lake to go up the coast. The people here are wonderfully kind, and would keep me a year, and even the little school kiddies know my work from their papers. My books are about, even here."*

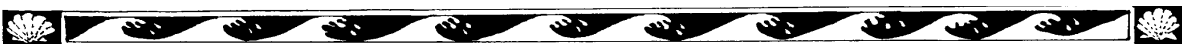


## SKETCH OF LAWSON & BRADY

*Captain Stevenson's Point*



*The point is situated in the main camp park. The Mallacoota & District Historical Society have erected a memorial cairn on the site of Brady's camp*





The Mallacoota Bar has always been a shallow and dangerous passage into our lakes...and also a source of inspiration for poets and artists!

**CAPTAIN'S POINT (To a Fellow Bard Camping Out)**

*Henry Lawson, June 1910*

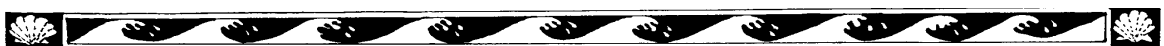
For the sake of those few pleasant  
Sunny weeks we lately spent,  
Linking old times with the present,  
There by ocean, tree and tent;  
From the hard streets of a city,  
Where the times seem out of joint,  
I am sending you a ditty  
For your camp on Captain's Point.

Where no jarring note may find you,  
You can hunt and fish and dream,  
With your forest wilds behind you  
And the wealth of lake and stream;  
And the glorious curve of beaches,  
Like a panorama spread,  
Of your grand front yard that reaches  
From red Gabo to Ram's Head;

Where the fisher folk are botching  
Nets that never were too strong,  
And the silly shags sit watching,  
Watching nothing all day long;  
Free from Fortune's slings and arrows,  
From all thoughts of rent or meal,  
Where the islets, creeks and narrows  
Teem with fish and swarm with teal.

Where no tree marked track seems lonely,  
Where the best of tourists come,  
And the gate is barred that only  
Little cutters may get home.  
Where your finest fancies now range,  
And your songs ring dear and true,  
And the steep and rugged Howe Range  
Is a garden wall for you.

*botching* = patching



## MALLACOOTA BAR, ENTRANCE AND CHANNEL

*The following comes from the memoirs of Victor Dorron, 25/4/1966*

Mallacoota entrance and bar which alter considerably from year to year are generally considered by boatmen to be the most treacherous and dangerous on the coast. The bar is safe when easterlies and northerlies are blowing, but entering and leaving are just about impossible when a strong south westerly, south or south easterly is blowing. These winds are usually strong.

What is now known as Harrison's Channel used to be the main channel until, according to the very old hands, it became shallower than the present channel in 1890. This original channel turned sharply to the right after crossing the bar, leaving the sand hummocks close on one's right. Likewise the shore line until Ti-tree Point was passed, when the northern portion of the present channel was entered.

Apart from Rabbit, Horse and Goat Islands which are permanent, other small islands have formed through accumulation of sand, later silt and still later, rushes, ti-tree, etc. But some of them have eventually been washed away by big floods. For about fifteen years (until about 1944) a small island existed. It was in line with Captain's Point and the sand hummocks just over the channel. Quite large ti-trees had grown on this island which appeared to get to the permanent stage when a big flood took the lot away and left deep water in its place.

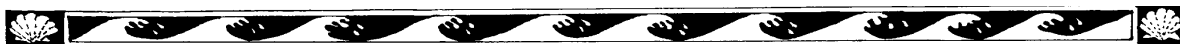
It appears that many years ago Mallacoota Bottom Lake was a bay and that the Narrows was the entrance. Apparently sand gradually collected from Captain's Point to the top end of Howe Flat and Howe Bight. Gradually Horse, Goat and Rabbit Islands formed. The sand washed and settled from the point at Dorron's "Lake View" forming the shallow sand spit from this point to Goodwin's Sand. Called "The Gut", this is only about one foot deep at average tide. More sand was forced on still further to form the very large area known as Goodwin's Sand. In time more sand was washed from the south west end of Goodwin's Sand towards the Narrows forming the narrow bank known as the "Eight foot Bank". This bank extends nearly two-thirds of the way to the narrows. It is only seven to eight feet deep and rather narrow. The end near the narrows drops away suddenly to deep water. Had the lake remained open longer I feel sure that this sand bank would have joined with the north point (Snapper Point) of the Narrows, leaving the Narrows still the entrance and the bottom lake eventually being that water from Baker's Bight to Fairhaven and round to Allan's Head and Dorron's Hotel.

The present channel normally follows the high rocky shore from Captain's Point almost to Boat Harbour. After a very big flood the water usually bursts through the sand hummocks opposite Captain's Point but it always gradually worked back to the rocky shore. However, after the very big flood about eleven years ago, the flood waters broke out in the usual place and gradually washed away the permanent sand hummocks that had large full grown trees on them. The present big trees on the sand hummocks show where the channel was then. Although the channel has come back to a point nearly opposite Captain's Point, it has refused to return to its normal position at the high rocky bank.

A big solid rock was situated in this old channel about sixty yards out off the mouth of Devlin's Gulch. The present set up of the entrance and bar is not dangerous except for breakers on the bar; the old channel had rocks all along the left (when entering) and this rock in the middle. It was this rock that sank Hegarty's "Gipsy", about 1915, with hundreds of boxes of fish, (mainly bream) aboard.

Last January Dave Casement's "K.C." capsized on the bar, damaging the superstructure but not the hull. Had this happened on the old bar, I dare not think what would have happened to her.

Entrances with high rocky shore on the east side and sand hummocks on the west, are generally found to be better than where the east and west sides are reversed. When crossing a bad bar and port entrance, experienced boatmen will cross it with a run-in tide and, if possible, when the tide is near its top. This gives more depth of water, and if the boat gets into difficulties it is washed in, instead of out to sea. Thirdly, a run-in tide helps to flatten the waves and breakers on the bar. The bar is that portion crossed immediately on leaving the sea, usually covered with some breakers, and is therefore the most dangerous area. The entrance is the channel area immediately past the bar; it is usually safe but shallow. The channel consists of the narrow and deep waters that must be followed until they enter the lake or inlet or river areas. Beacons or pegs are usually erected on the channel as guides to boatmen, but there are more at the bar and entrance because their locations vary from time to time.





In 1910, after two or three wrecks on and near the bar, the government stationed a lifeboat at Boat harbour by building a boat shed on the shore housing a boat. It was never used, and after about ten to twelve years boat and shed were in rather bad condition. Shortly afterwards boat and shed were totally burned. Boat Harbour was exceptionally well sheltered and no breakers came onto this beach; a small rowing boat could always be launched there.

Although the entrance was much better in the earliest days, some people got the wrong impression and thought that because steamers entered, it was a very deep entrance. In those days a boat was either a sailer or a steamer, but these steamers were small ones. The last steamer running to Mallacoota was the “Stormbird”. After the “Henry Leonard” was wrecked just past Captain’s Point the entrance sanded up considerably until the boat was covered with sand. She was never raised, and the entrance was never recovered.

The entrance was closed twice in Mallacoota in living memory. The first occasion was in about 1914 when it was closed for nearly a year. It broke when water from the rivers piled up against it. In about 1943 the entrance closed again, and was opened some time later by horses and scoops that had been used in forming local roads. Some of the larger local fishing boats that were relying on catching fish in the sea stayed outside and anchored in Boat Harbour. A little later the government put in a slipway trolley line on cement piles. Boats were pulled up on these in stormy weather. A very prolonged period of dry weather is the cause of the entrance closing.

*NB. The foregoing is an abridged extract from Victor Dorron’s memoirs. The full manuscript is held in the archives of the Mallacoota and District Historical Society*



*Hugh Brady at wreck of SS Riverina. Photo courtesy of the Mallacoota Historical Society.*



## THE BAR

*Henry Lawson, May 1910*

We tried to get over the Bar today,  
Today on the morning tide;  
And whether I go, or whether I stay  
Let fate and the Bar decide;  
But my Love . . New Love . . with your eyes of grey,  
The weary world is wide!

We kedged her back and we poled her back  
In time for the ebbing tide,  
For the sky was grey and the rocks were black  
And the rollers broke outside,  
And its O My Love but the lines are slack,  
And the weary world is wide.

We'd try to get over the Bar tonight,  
Tonight on the highest tide;  
But the moon is dull that last night was bright  
And the world is dark outside,  
O Love . . New Love! . . is your face so white,  
And the weary world so wide?

We tried to get over the bar today,  
Tomorrow we'll try again . .  
Oh Love! . . New Love of the grey eyes, say  
Is the strife of man in vain?  
The glass might lie, and the needle stray,  
But the path of love is plain!

When over the Bar, there is no return  
In the time of the Autumn gales . .  
But whether the sea or the Bush it be,  
The heart of a man prevails . .  
O Love! New Love, you may  
watch the sea  
Where the Bushman sailor sails!

*Kedged : Move ship by means of a small anchor*



*Casements team clearing the bar with horses, 1930's.  
Photo courtesy of Mallaacoota Historical Society*



## MALLACOOTA BAR

*Extract of poem reprinted with permission from Henry Lawson collected Verse Vol 3 1910-22  
by Prof C. Roderick Angus & Robertson 1969*

Curves of beaches like a horseshoe, with a glimpse of grazing stock  
To the left the Gabo lighthouse, to the right the Bastion Rock;  
Upper Lake where no one dwelleth - scenery like Italy  
Lower Lake of seven islets and six houses near the sea;  
'Twixt the lake and sea a sandbank, where the shifting channels are,  
And a break where white-capped rollers bow to Mallacoota Bar.

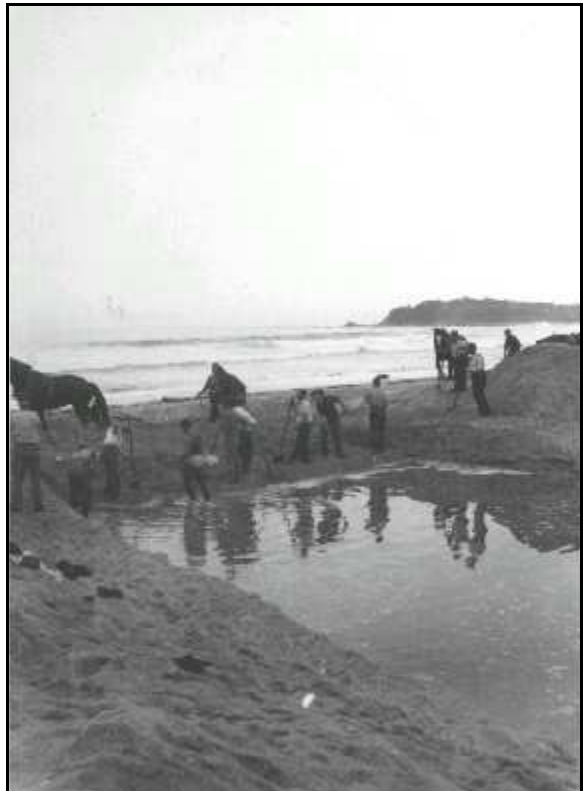
Gabo, of the reddest granite, cut off from the mainland now -  
"Gabo", nearest that the black tongue ever could get round "Cape Howe";  
Gabo Island, name suggestive of a wild cape far away,  
And a morning gale by sunlight, or a sea and sky of grey;  
Gabo, where cold chiselled letters on the obelisk record  
How the Monumental City sank with forty souls on board.

To the west the lonely forests, on the levels dense and dark  
Native appletree and bloodwood, wattle, box and stringybark;  
Land of tree-marked tracks and hunters - to their glory or their shame -  
For a law makes Mallacoota sanctuary for native game;  
To the east the rugged Howe Range, running down without a scar  
To the mighty moving sandhills - close to Mallacoota Bar.

And the folk are like their fathers - Bushmen - sailors, fishermen -  
And they live on fish and tan-bark, with a tourist now and then;  
And on hunting? Well, I know not - and what matter if we know  
That they did a bit o'smugglin' or o'wreckin' years ago?  
For I love these kindly people, and 'twill give my heart a jar  
When I see the figures fading on the sandbank by the Bar.

There's the old grey house of hardwood that seems built for mighty floods.  
With the broad thick slabs laid lengthwise 'twixt the great round tree-trunk studs  
That are slotted to receive them - and with shingles  
six foot long!  
There's the house of hand  
-dressed timber that is nearly half as strong,  
There's the rather modern cottage  
- but, as far as one can see  
Everything in Mallacoota  
is as clean as it can be.

All is blue and gold this morning  
- green and gold and "Bar all right".  
And three blurred sticks under Gabo to the  
sunlight show the white,  
Bringing groceries from Eden,  
bringing all that we require -  
Bringing flour and tea and sugar,  
roofing iron, and barbed wire,  
Copper nails, and small inventions  
in machinery from afar,  
And the little fleet of cutters race  
for Mallacoota Bar.



*Casements team clearing the bar with horses, 1930's.*



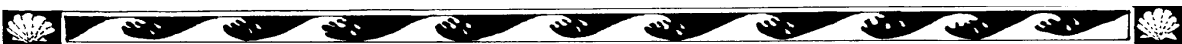
Waiting with two oars stuck upright on the sand "to give them line",  
We can see the green, transparent light show through the heaving brine -  
Comes the S.E.A. and rising, pauses, swan-like, half in doubt,  
While her skipper from the ratlines spies the bar and goes about;  
"Now she comes!" and "Now she's coming!" and, ere we know where we are,  
She is snug beside the sandbank inside Mallacoota Bar.

Warren brings the water with him on the cutter Clara next  
(When he doesn't, then his language speaks a sinful spirit vext);  
Next the little lugger Lightning darts and misses, grounds and floats,  
Finds the channel with flutter of her draggled petticoats,  
Snuggles up beside the Clara, clattering down her little spar  
Like a naughty drab that scrambles over Mallacoota Bar.

But the days are not all sunny - there are anxious times on decks,  
Where the cutters run for shelter to the graves of ancient wrecks,  
Round the Cape, or under Gabo, Tamboon, or Disaster Bay,  
For they won't insure the hulls that cross the 'Coota bar to-day.



*Another Bar: Mallacoota Hotel, 1933. Photo courtesy of the Mallacoota Historical Society.*



## MALLACOOTA BAR

*E.J. Brady, Victoria, For The Bulletin 1/6/1922*

On Gabo - standing high and lone  
To make Australia's corner-stone-  
A tall red-granite pillar lamp  
The Lotheward-turning of the tramps,  
We watch it, flashing in the nights,  
Its message to some steamer's lights,  
And wonder what and whence they are,  
Who pass by Mallacoota bar.

Blue daylit hills of Nedgee dream;  
Broad sunbars down their gullies stream;  
And Howe, a solid bastion, stands  
On guard o'er scrub and drifted sands,  
That shoreward winds have mounded up  
And like a willow-patterned cup,  
There lies in sheltered calm below  
A crystal lake the cygnets know.

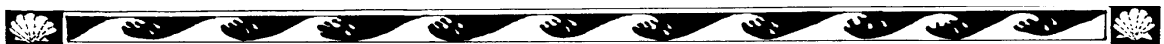
Aglitter through the wooded hills  
Our tidal inlet ebbs and fills;  
Its placid coves, unruffled bays,  
Through silver nights and golden days,  
From Bogong to Ginon Range,  
In quiet pass from change to change -  
Each tinted hour a glory, strown  
With special jewels of its own.

When sunlight yields to wind and cloud  
That flat and hilltop fast enshroud,  
One loves to hearken once again  
The cool oncoming of the rain;  
To see the wind-whipped water rise  
In futile protest to the skies;  
Then, lashed and driven, turn, to smite  
The stolid shores in ancient spite.

And, oh! when misty evenings fall,  
'Tis good to hear shrill spurwings call,  
Brown whimbrel on the saltpans cry  
And seagulls in the dusk go by;  
'Tis good to breathe a mingled scent  
Of sea and forest, subtly blent,  
When tumbled surge throws far, and wide  
Its restless gleanings on the tide.

And when in Hunnish anger roll  
Those grey battalions from the Pole,  
At Otway and "The Prom", we know,  
Fierce furnace fires in answer glow,  
And gloomy Macs 'midst crank and rod,  
Invoke a Caledonian god,  
That he may bring them, 'spite the shame  
Of sin remembered, safely hame.

When froth and fungus tell a tale,  
and river branches track the gale;  
when yellow creeks in echo roar -  
Though blue skies arch the land once more.



A rain-wet forest to the sun  
Sings low a song of Youth re-won,  
And through the sweetness of its rhyme  
There runs no hint of Death or Time!

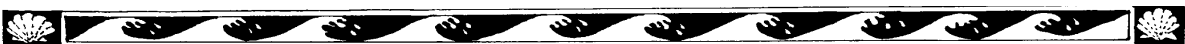
But shining kelp and seaweed write  
Another story of the fight;  
And curling combers, on a shore  
With flotsam littered, sullen roar,  
while cloud-banks, in the distance set  
O'er tumbled waters, threaten yet,  
And o'er their massive ramparts play  
Red lightnings at the close of day.

Beyond that cloud-rim - low and high -  
The coasts of foreign countries lie;  
Yea! Coasts of Dream and Isles of Gold,  
Whence came the seaworn ships of old:  
Whence sailed De Quiros, Torres grey,  
And Able Tasman in his day,  
Or some seawolf who nevermore  
Unto his homeland grimly word.  
But oft, at night, one strangely seems  
To vision through one's waking dream;  
Those tall old ships: and ringing clear  
A voice, that thrills the heart to hear.  
Where from a high poop proudly set  
Roscawen hails to Carteret.  
Or Cook or Cavendish or Drake  
Go past with swirling surge awake.

Their topsails bellied with the breeze,  
They come to dare uncharted seas -  
Great Hearts of oak! who knew no fears,  
But led the Vanguards of the years,  
One sees them when the moon sets low,  
Across this wide Pacific go.  
And hears their ship-bells faintly call  
The lonely watches through it all.

And, though great steamers outward  
bound  
At Gabo now swing proudly round;  
Though dingy tramp and liner neat  
Go by with rhythmic roll and beat,  
My heart is with those captains still,  
Who, stout of sinew, strong of will,  
Subdued these seas that trumpet far  
Their fame from Mallacoota bar.

From Mallacoota bar to-day  
Still spreads the same blue plain away;  
From Hobart by the Hebrides  
Still runs the Highway of the Seas;  
With all its splendid story brave  
The shipman's roadway or his grave,  
It runs to Reikinvik afar,  
And home - to Mallacoota bar.





## KARL RASMUS

Karl Rasmus was one of the very earliest settlers at Mallacoota (about 1884). He and his brother Axel came in Dahl's wattle bark fleet in the "Gipsy". He selected land (portions 4 and 9, Parish of Mallacoota) on the frontage of the Bottom Lake, which had a very large water frontage giving an excellent view of the lakes with hills and ranges opposite.

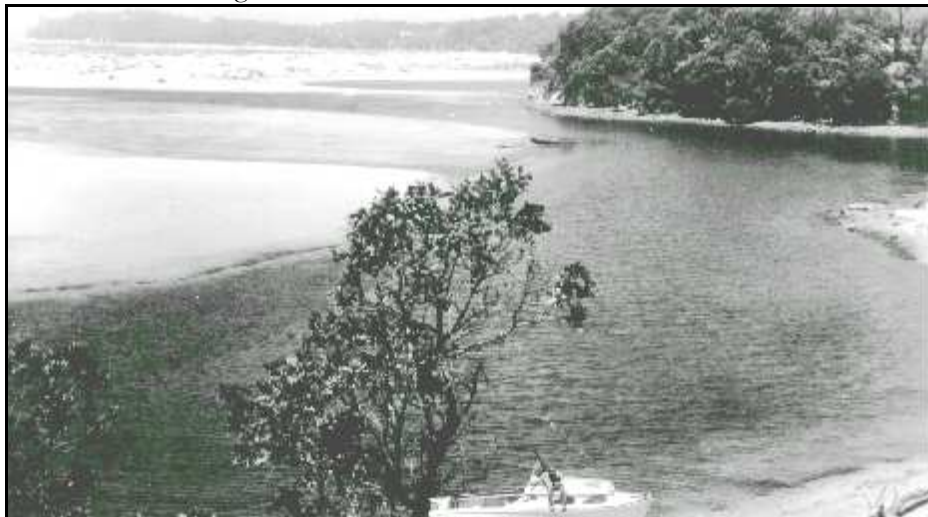
1884 - Those who came to Mallacoota with him were his uncle, Sam Mattsson, (a Swede) and cousin Carl Mattsson (see Gipsy Point), Paddy Kirwan (an Irishman) and Little Peter Pearson. Later came Gus Johansen. Pearson and Johansen were Norwegians. Each had his own special job to do. Paddy Kirwan looked after the cattle; Peter Pearson, who was fond of boats and nick-named "Boaty", attended to the boats; while Sam Mattsson tended the garden. Although Rasmus had all these people around him, he was still the "big boss". He had the brains and business ability to give the orders and see that they were carried out. He made a great success, mainly as a bark stripping boss. Axel died about 1890 and was probably the first person to be buried in the new Mallacoota West cemetery. Kirwan died just afterwards. Sam Mattsson died in the 1920's and is also buried there.

It was well known that Carl Mattsson had selected "Karbeethong" and later sold it to Fred Buckland in 1900.

Little Peter, a bachelor, lived in Rasmus' shed and later bought the "Lightning". His main job was to boat Rasmus' bark out of Mallacoota. Gus Johansen joined them also but died soon after. Peter sailed this yawl with the company of his dog, "Kruger", a big dog with a mass of black curls all over the body. He brought this craft so far (ninety miles) along the coast lone handed and proved he was a very good sailor man. Peter was hailed as a kind of hero in bringing means of water transport to bring stores and take away bags of dried, chopped wattle bark, maize, etc. As the closest store was at Eden - some sixty miles by bridle track, and pack horse was the only means of transport - now Little Peter made regular trips to and from Twofold Bay, the Port of Eden, which linked Sydney by the South Coast Steam Ship Company. Another man had come on the run. He was Ike Warren with a 32ft. cutter, "The Dart". These two loaded between Eden and Gipsy Point for a number of years. Ike Warren always had another man with him, but Little Peter always sailed alone, except for "Kruger", his dog. His method of steering his yawl was by having a curved piece of wood like a half moon which was fastened to the tiller from the rudder head. In this curved piece of wood were a number of holes, and in the end of the tiller he used to drop a "pin" through the tiller into the holes in the half-moon piece. This would keep the rudder in position and keep the yawl on course while he attended to the sails - quite an ingenious method of steering.

As years went on, Peter started to drink a fair amount. On one occasion he had as cargo bottled beer for Alexander of the hotel at Genoa. When nearing Mallacoota he decided to have more to drink and fell asleep. However the "Lightning" went high and dry on a flat rock. Luckily Paddy Kirwan noticed the yawl high and dry and told Rasmus that Peter must have drowned, but to their great surprise, Peter was there sound asleep with several bottles of beer and rum around.

Little Peter continued trading between Eden and Mallacoota but got too fond of the drink when in port and he used to neglect his run.



*The backwater near Bar. Photo courtesy of Mallacoota Historical Society.*

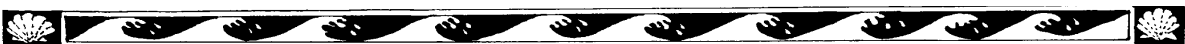
By this time Syd Allan had a 38 feet auxiliary cutter fitted with a standard marine engine for fishing and also in competition with Ike Warren and Little Peter. Karl Rasmus was getting anxious over Little Peter not attending the trading as he should. Following Peter's failure to fetch bags from Eden which were urgently needed for shipment of wattle bark, Rasmus decided to ring the Pilot and Syd Allan was commissioned to tow Peter and his craft to Mallacoota. Allan got Peter and "Lightning" around without mishap or any trouble from Peter. He had slept the drink off by the time he had arrived at Rasmus' wharf. Allan proceeded on up the Top Lake and Genoa River to unload inward cargo and load outward cargo of wattle bark and cow hides and wallaby skins. On returning the next day, Allan's attention was drawn to several people on Rasmus' jetty waving him in. Allan noticed quite a few local residents in an air of gloom. Allan was told that poor Peter had accidentally shot himself dead, which came as a terrible shock. What happened was that he carried an old muzzle-loading gun in the f'castle to shoot rabbits, ducks, etc. It was loaded and ready to fire. He was pulling it out by the muzzle when the hammer caught in a coil of rope and set the gun off, shooting Little Peter through the neck. He died instantly. Poor Little Peter was gone and a gloom was cast over Mallacoota and district. As the cemetery was across the lake near the Spotted Dog gold mine, it was fitting that Karl Rasmus arranged for Allan to tow the casket across the lake in the boat that Karl had built himself - a sixteen feet double-ender, "Empress". "Kruger", the dog, was around for some time.

Karl Rasmus made available an area of land near Stingray Point on which the school was erected after World War 1. In 1932 he sold out to Robertson for seventeen hundred pounds. Robertson pulled the old house down when he built "Mirrabooka" and the old school building was relocated in Mallacoota township. Karl Rasmus continued to live in the town until his death in 1936.

*(The foregoing is an abridged version of Victor Dorron's memoirs, with contributions from Mrs Albert Greer and the late Frank Buckland, for which we are grateful.)*



*Site of E.J. Brady's camp. Captain Stevenson's Point, 1958. Photo courtesy of Mallacoota Historical Society*





## LITTLE PETER

*E.J. Brady, The Bulletin, March 13th 1924*

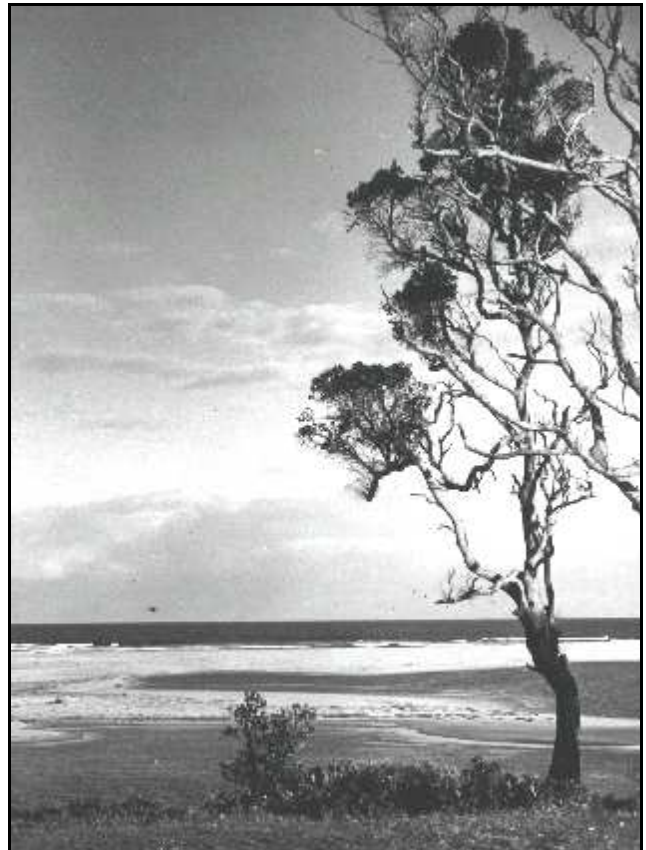
Twas somewhere north of Daneland,  
A colder coast and lorn,  
That little Peter Petersen,  
The freckled Swede, was born.  
Aye, somewhere by the waterside  
One unremembered morn.

He sailed the Seven Seas betimes  
With other freckled folk,  
Whose red ancestors heard the songs  
That savage throats awoke  
When dripping oars swept out in line  
From sea-bound hulls of oak.

But when at last the deep sad seas  
Grew less importunate,  
He turned his thought to coastal ways  
And bought his small estate;  
With homely things the landward folk  
Their little world create.

There Peter in his garden plot  
You'd find with spade and hoe;  
Those hand that hauled on tarry sheets  
Across the Lowland Low  
Now toiled with wonderous tenderness  
To make a cabbage grow.

Then fell his death, by accident -  
A faulty lock, they say -  
So little Peter took the count  
And softly went his way;  
He lies beneath the bloodwoods tall  
By Malagoutha Bay.



*The Bar, 1958.*

*Photo courtesy of Mallacoota Historical Society.*

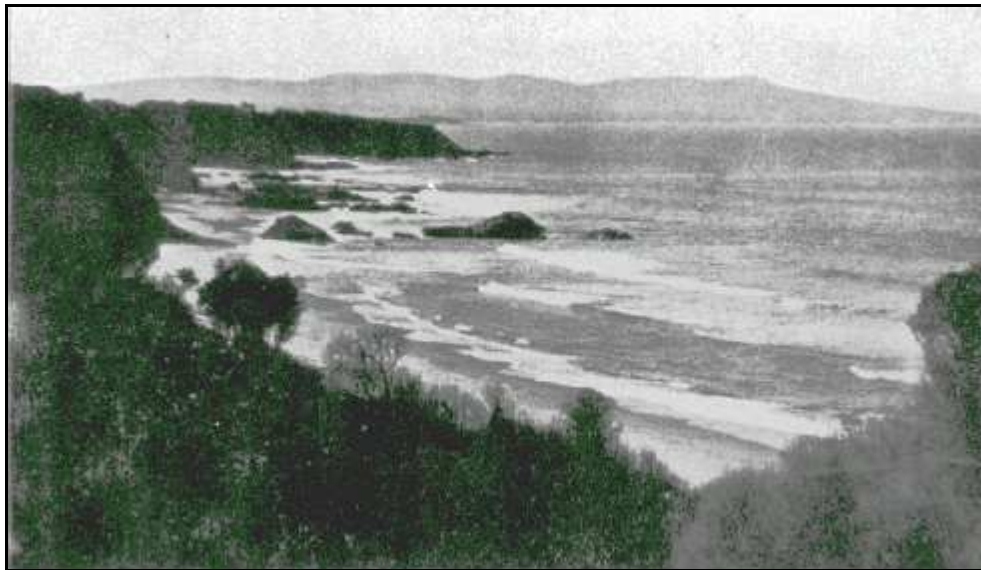


And when I pass by Peter's place  
I touch my hat to him,  
And wonder if in death's sweet sleep  
From out his nor'land grim  
He hears an echo of the seas  
On forelands far and dim.

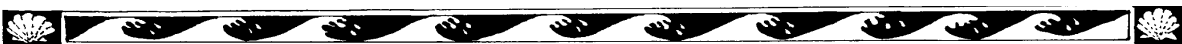
I wonder if the night tides bring  
O'er Malagoutha bar  
The sighing of the cordage and  
The creaking of the spar.  
A bos'n's whistle, faintly blown,  
A far-off smell of tar.

And when the Springtime gladly calls  
Green glories from the ground,  
I wonder if there comes to him  
The old familiar sound  
*Of Heave and go, my Nancy O!*  
*Or haply Homeward Bound.'*

He loved the things that I have loved -  
A garden and the sea -  
So, little Peter Petersen,  
Where'er your soul may be  
I wish it peace and pleasant dreams  
Throughout Eternity.



*On the Airport Cliffs. Photo courtesy of Mallaacoota Historical Society.*



## CROSSING IN

*E.J. Brady*

“Nor’-east by Nord,” the old man told  
His lean Norwegian mate,  
What time the sun in robes of gold  
Went out the Western gate.

Stand ready in your places now,  
Rough minions as ye be!  
The sun is at the Eastern gate,  
On watch, like you and me!

Go forrard, leadsman, with your lead  
And let your sight be keen!  
See! where the channel winds ahead  
’Tis sloppy and ’tis green!

We trust the stokehold’s fit to die,  
The Cabin’s sine be shriven -  
A game of Chance - and you and I  
May shortly meet - in Heaven.

The skipper’s on the bridge, and near  
His quartermaster stands.  
Now let us hope his sight is clear  
And steady are his hands.

He’s brought her out and in and out,  
These seven years and more:  
He’s brought her in and out and in  
And brought her not ashore.

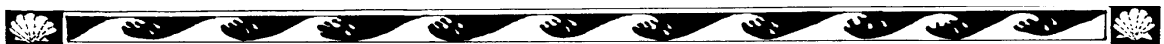
But God He made bar-harbours, and  
God only kens their make -  
There’s just a hint of stirred-up sand  
Already in her wake.

The rocks to port loom sharp and high,  
The tide’s outsetting strong:  
And when a ship’s marked down to die,  
It does not take her long.

\* \* \* \*

“Half speed” - the buoy’s line ahead;  
“Slow down” - the trough’s between;  
’Twas “fourteen half,” the leadsman said -  
She’s drawing just thirteen!

No loving mother holds her babe  
More soft, more tenderly,  
Than holds his ship, this little man,  
To coax her through the sea.



He slews her with a skilful twist  
To meet the coming wave;  
He dodges with a single spoke  
A well-appointed grave!

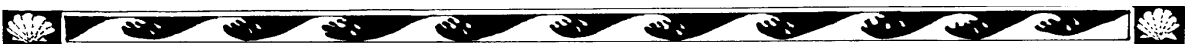
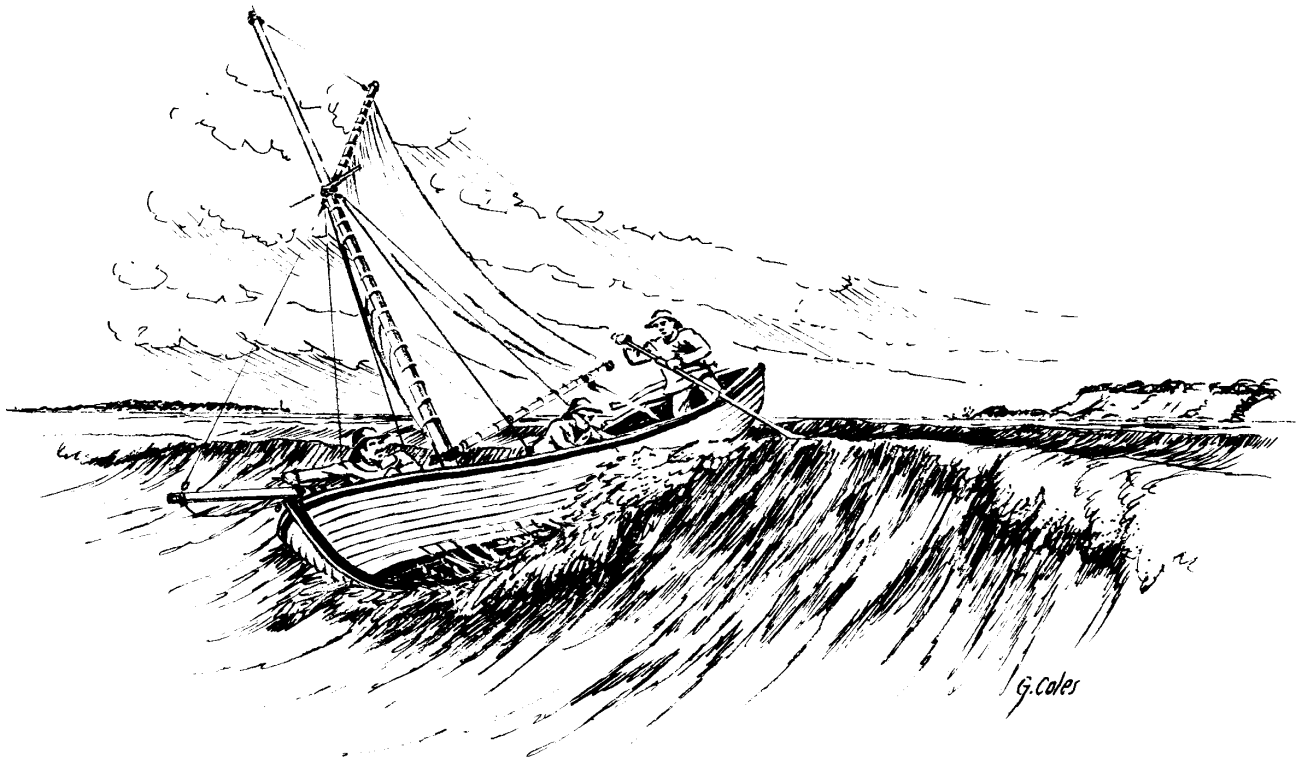
He lifts her up - nice little man -  
His child of Steel and Wood;  
He lays her down so kind and mild,  
So gentle and so good.

Between his soul - like yours and mine -  
And all Eternity;  
Full well he knows there lies just now  
A foot and half of sea.

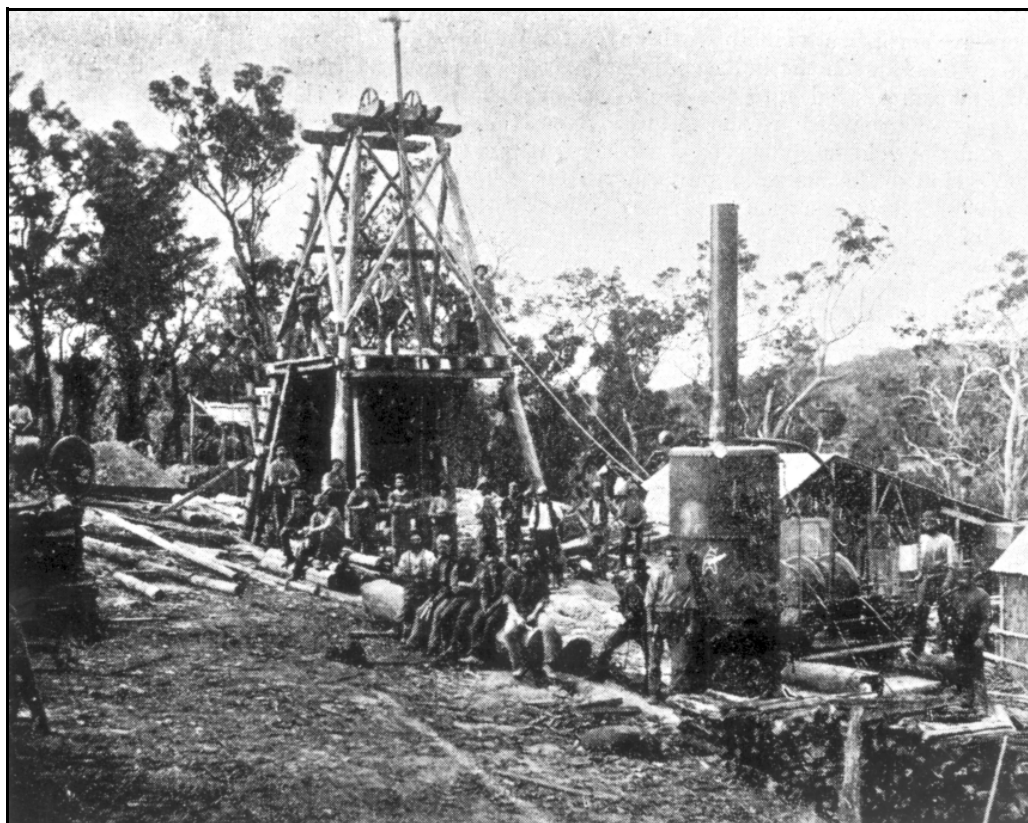
You will not, please, address him then,  
Sir passenger, I trow,  
For should you venture one remark  
In irons you might go.

He softly swears, his teeth between  
('Twas fourteen bar," they cried):  
The hungry waves in white and green  
Are snarling overside.

The old New England struck just here -  
"Stand by!" "Stand by!" "Stand by!!!"  
She's on the reef! - By God, she's clear!  
Some other day we'll die!



**PHOTO OF MALLACOOTA MINE the “SPOTTED DOG”**



*Photo Courtesy Ron Jones*



*Hugh Brady's T Model Ford outside Genoa Store, 1920's. Photo courtesy of Malla-coota Historical Society.*



## MALLACOOTA WEST A SONG OF THE TELEPHONE

*H.Lawson May 1910*

It is one long ring for Kiah; it is two rings for Green Cape;  
It is three for Gabo Island; and to have it all ship shape,  
One for Eden. Four rings quicken Mallacoota's interest;  
And a long ring and a short one gives you Mallacoota West.

O the folk are never lonely that the telephone can read!  
There are three undreamed of places with a telephone at each,  
'Twixt the bedroom and the kitchen, to be handy night or day,  
For the women mostly tend it while the men folk are away.

Stripping wattle bark, or fishing, sleeper cutting .. game;  
Trading in the little cutters to "the Bay" or Cunninghame,  
Loaded deep with bags of tan bark .. bags of wattle bark to tan  
Leather to make ladies's shoes or bluchers for a labouring man.

It was show time up at Eden, and a gala time for all ..  
Some were in the pubs, the others at a Cinderella Ball.  
On the lakes the fish were barrelled, and the fishermen at rest ..  
Slumber fell on Mallacoota, and on Mallacoota West.

In the west of Mallacoota, where the night was dark and deep,  
In her room behind the office, Mrs Allan lay asleep  
Until wakened by a ringing .. someone ringing up in vain:  
Eden! .. Green Cape! .. Eden! ..Green Cape! .. and again, and yet again.

Someone ringing for a doctor. And a flash came of the days  
When they had to ride for doctors on those lonely tree marked ways.  
And at last she rose and answered, and she must have thought it odd  
When a woman's voice in anguish sent the message through: "Thank God!"

Voice of one who seemed with terror to be more dead than alive,  
And she said she was at Kiah with a little girl of five;  
All the folk away in Eden, and the awful bush seemed black,  
And the girl who had been with her had gone home and not come back.

She was lonely, she was frightened, she'd been very ill indeed,  
And the haunting fear was on her that the bush at night can breed.  
She was nearing her confinement and had thought that she would die;  
And the terror grew upon her when she could get no reply.

And she had the little girl dressed, and would send her in her fright  
To the nearest lonely neighbour, three bush miles off through the night.  
There could be no help till sunrise, when the neighbour's wife might come,  
Or till later in the forenoon, when her husband would be home.

And so Mrs Allan held her while the small hours chilled the room ..  
Tired, hard working woman standing in her night dress in the gloom,  
Till the other one grew calmer, speaking quiet, even low,  
And they talked of other children they had each borne years ago.

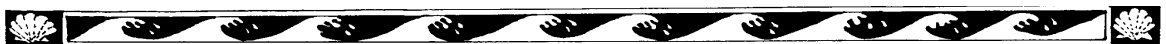
"Ring again," said Mrs Allan "if you feel too much alone.  
I will ring again at daybreak;" and advised her to lie down.  
And the other woman lay down, and she slept till break of day,  
Just through talking to a woman more than forty miles away.







*Sketch by M. Howden, Courtesy Mallaquito Historical Society.*



## THE CUTTER WONGRABELLE

*A Ballad of the Australian Coast by E.J. Brady*

She lay at anchor when they brought the  
news that Ned Malone  
Had broken, out on 'Spotted Dog' his ribs  
and collar-bone;  
That, on a cornsack stretcher now his mates  
were bearing slow  
Their sheltered comrade from the claim, ten  
mountain miles or so.

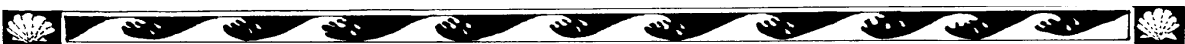
The summer' failing heart-blood stained each  
withered orchard leaf,  
And winter through the umber bush bewailed  
his ancient grief;  
A wolfish south wind, snarling hate, bit angrily  
the flanks  
Of hunted seas that sought the shores in long,  
close-crowded ranks.

The bar had shallowed with the neap; at each  
outgoing tide  
Swift liberated waters poured to meet the surge  
outside;  
And where the tide and current met, a seethe  
of froth and sand  
In wild, witch cauldrons, hissing boiled,  
Be-stireed by some drowned hand.

John Newcombe owned the Wongrabelle; and  
Newcombe's daughter May  
Looked seaward from the window-pane with  
strange set eyes that day ...  
A rosy lass with laughing lips, brown-armed,  
and blithe, and strong,  
As any girl of twenty-year, that iron coast along.

The foam below Cape Everard was not more  
light and free;  
Nor might the black swan on the lake as wildly  
graceful be;  
But to the lads who paid her court, and  
dreamed she might be won,  
She shone as distant as the hills of Nadji in  
the sun.

Yet he was tall and he was young, broad-  
shouldered, brave and high,  
Full dowered with the manly gifts that glad a  
woman's eye;  
And, but a week ago, he'd come with Love's  
old tale to tell ..  
Lloyd Fletcher, out of Twofold Bay, who ran  
the Wongrabelle.





The moon that evening like a globe of amber  
o'er the floor  
Of level waters slowly rose to light from shore  
to shore  
A mermaid's dance. Inverted, as by giant  
hands at play,  
The star-crowned shadows of the hills, deep-  
sunken, dreaming, lay.  
And all the inlet seemed to thrill ... warm, still,  
and passionate ...  
With soft glad echoes of the song that bids  
life love and mate;  
Thus had he told his tender tale, and she, in  
wilful way,  
Not knowing yet her heart mayhap, pronounced  
a school-girl "Nay".

He turned his heel; and down the track that  
found a grassy shore  
She watched a form whose shadow strode in  
seeming grief before;  
And once she whispered, half aloud, "Come  
back", and once again  
Her breath had seemed to stab her side in  
quick, half pleasant pain.  
But woman's whim and woman's way are like  
the tracks of God,  
That lie beyond the outer starts, unknown and  
o'er untrod,  
What secret springs gush through her soul  
.. all mud, or fresh and clear,  
The minds of men at most surmise to either  
bless or fear.

And now on beaches spray-obscured the hollow  
rollers tolled  
A Dead march in the scudded morn; a falling glass  
foretold  
Worse weathers hatching in the south, but  
level seas or high,  
A wounded man must gain relief, or else the  
man must die.

For fifty miles of bridle track thro' forest and  
divide,  
With ranges piled in broken lines, no injured  
man might ride;  
By fifty miles of stormy coast, the port of Eden  
lay,  
As well they knew, who bare him down, that  
winter morning grey.



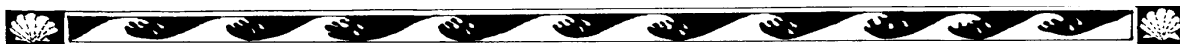
John Newcombe shook his hoary head and  
cleared his husky throat ..  
“God knows I’m willing men, to risk, and  
double risk, the boat;  
But human life’s a different thing; there’s no  
man near or far  
Would dare to take a craft today to yonder  
cruel bar.  
The wind is blowing half a gale and fresh’ning  
from the south,  
And if she chanced to cross the reef she’d  
barely live it out;  
I’d risk my ship but not the rest; God help  
your injured man,  
But he must bide and take his chance; we’ll  
nurse him best we can.”

Cold silence fell upon the crowd. Then self-  
contained and slow  
Lloyd Fletcher spoke, “I’ll face her out if any  
chap will go  
With me to tend this wounded man; but, let  
him understand,  
Who puts his feet on yonder deck his life takes  
in his hand.”

Before the words had left his mouth, bull-roaring  
through his beard  
His prior claim and privilege, Tom Shannon  
volunteered.  
Nor did they cross his Celtic will, for well those  
miners knew  
That kinship’s tie and mateship, too, long years  
had bound the two.

“Now fifty sovereigns from the boys”, cried  
swarthy ‘Four-ounce Jim’,  
“Yon skipper lad shall have for this. Aye,  
either sink or swim’ . . .  
Lloyd Fletcher stayed him at the word . . “My  
lads, by God above,  
I take no payment from your hands, this trip  
I do for love.”

His eyes were on May Newcombe’s face, and  
as the words outran  
She bent to hide her tell-tale cheeks above the  
stricken man,  
And deftly smoothed his pillow down, and bid  
his heart be brave;  
But other sign of what she felt, if feel she  
might, ne’er gave.



They grouped upon the shore to watch, with  
anxious eyes, afar  
the Wongrabelle, of twenty tons, face bravely  
to the bar.  
“God keep her engine going good, her quick  
ignition sure;  
God aid the dynamo,” they prayed, “and hold  
the shaft secure”.

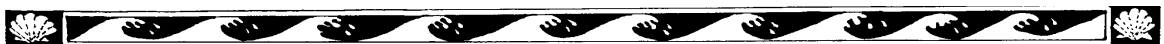
Great combers thundered down the beach, and  
at the entrance threw  
Their curling weight of waters green, as further  
out she drew.  
She passed the channel points at last, and then,  
with sickened soul,  
May saw her meet, with pouring decks the high  
incoming roll.

“She’s on the bar”, John Newcombe cried,  
and wrung his wrinkled hands.  
“She’s gone!” they sobbed. “She’s not! She  
lifts! Oh, God, he’s struck the sands!”  
May Newcombe’s fingers bruised her palms;  
the sky grew darkened then;  
And women sobbed and curses rose from  
mouths of anguished men.

They saw her rally in the spume. She  
staggered, shook, uprose,  
Like some game bantam pugilist from quick  
and heavy blows. One mighty roller rose ahead; then, slowly  
lifting, curled,  
And breaking with a roar of doom its full  
weight on her hurled.

The women turned their heads away. The  
seconds lagged like years;  
Then, like a wounded duck, that dives and  
lamely reappears,  
Dismasted, swept, but floating still and on a  
moving keel,  
The Wongrabelle came gamely up, with  
Fletcher at her wheel.

She dived a hollow trough adown, and, on a  
rising wave,  
Went out across that awful bar, the little cutter  
brave;  
And had the echoes not been lost amid the  
hiss and roar  
The gallant Fletcher might have heard them  
cheering from the shore.

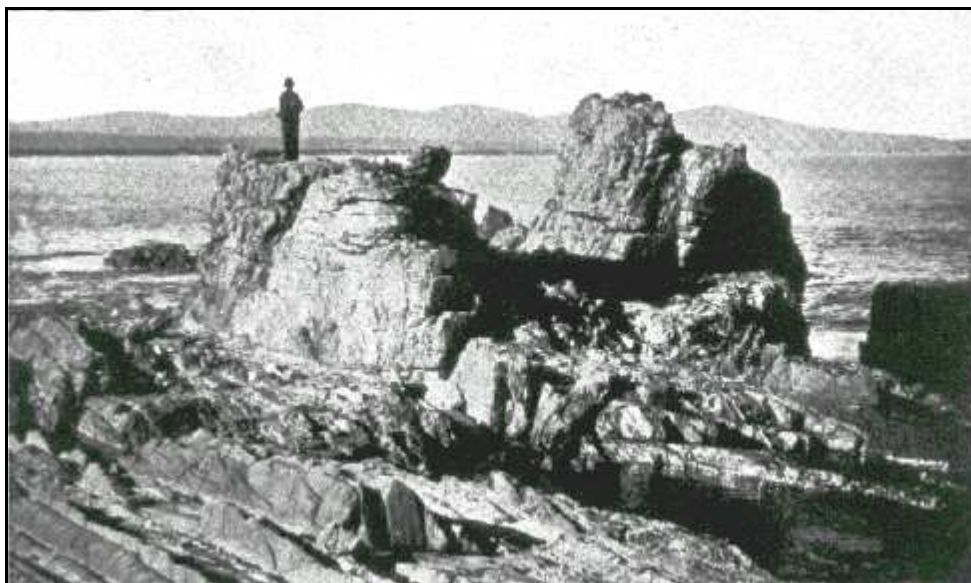


May Newcombe tore with joyous laugh, and  
flung its fragments high Towards Eden town,  
the pencilled scrawl that  
bore on his curt 'Goodbye'.  
Then on she passed, and down she passed,  
and through the paddock gate  
Went out and called like bells a-ring her black  
mare, Bonny Kate.

The saddle to her silken side was e'er so  
quickly flung;  
The bridle on her glossy neck by deft hands  
gently hung;  
Then straight she rode and fast she rode the  
hills and gullies o'er  
Her house frock flying in the wind, and ne'er  
a hood she wore.

She found her journey's end ere noon . . then  
wrote and note and turned  
Her homeward way with eyes alight and  
cheeks that redly burned,  
For down the line to Twofold Bay the Morse was clicking free . . .  
"God bless the Wongrabelle, and you . . come  
back and marry me."

He wed her at the Christmastide, and Ned  
Malone was gay  
Enough to stumble through a dance, the good  
bush gossips say;  
But down the coast and round the coast the  
mates and captains tell  
How Fletcher brought across the bar his cutter  
Wongrabelle.



*Bastion Rocks. Photo courtesy of Mallaacoota Historical Society.*



## SOUTH OF GABO

*E.J. Brady*

Then South of Gabo watch and ware  
The shipmen as they go;  
For o'er the hummocks, whitely bare,  
The cutting sand drifts blow;

And cruel rock knives, hidden, wait  
With edges sharp as steel,  
Along the evil coast of fate,  
Each doomed shore driven keel.

Here lie the dead ships one by one;  
Out here the surges croon  
The Federal to her rest place gone  
The sunken Ly-ee-moon.

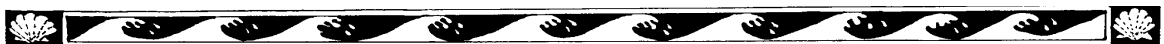
Long kelp and seaweed, through the curl  
Of combers all agleam,  
The floating hair of some drowned girl  
In waving tresses seem.

Here, graved beneath the golden sands  
And iridescent shell,  
Lost sailors out of distant lands,  
Unsought, are sleeping well.

But South of Gabo, when those strong  
And wayward winds are done,  
'Tis all a deep, harmonious song  
Of Sea and Land and Sun.



*Cargo salvaged from the "Riverina" 1927. Photo courtesy of Mallaacoota Historical Society.*



## THE GALE

*E.J. Brady, NSW*

Her robes of blue and gold the Day  
Has laid aside, and now  
She walks in gown of sombre grey  
Along the hills of Howe.

In savage sport, in slimy greed,  
A snarling surge since morn  
The kelp and sponge and colored weed  
From rock and reef has torn,

And strown it on the sands, whose white  
Hands sweep it in disdain.  
Upon receding tides at night  
Back to the seas again.

The east wind, racing o'er the Strait,  
Shouting his battle call,  
Strips long brown ribbons from the straight,  
Autumnal trunks of tall,

High-crested eucalypts that sway  
Their troubled boughs in grief  
For riven limbs torn swift away  
And scattered branch and leaf.

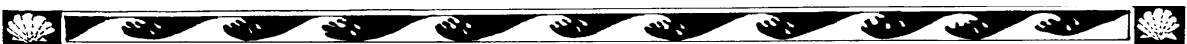
Some, shallow-rooted, luckless, crash,  
A pressure fierce beneath;  
These, stringy-bark and mountain-ash,  
Plucked from their earthy sheath,

Fall stiffly down like dead men slain  
In battle by the spears  
Of foemen, careless of their pain  
And heedless of their tears.

From torrents new is heard a roar  
Of churned flood-waters white  
With froth. They tumble o'er and o'er  
Such victims as their spite

Can sweep to turgid doom afar,  
Where, lion-mouthed, the waves  
Leap hungrily across the bar  
And drag them to their graves.

Stark things of fur and feather, caught  
In forest nest or lair,  
Are thus from their dominions brought  
As offerings unaware



But these, or black duck by the shore,  
Or teal the sedge behind,  
We may not bear above the roar  
Of forest, sea and sand.

Tonight the clumsy wombat jogs  
Not far afield, nor roots  
For wonted yams; nor from their logs  
Creep timid bandicoots.

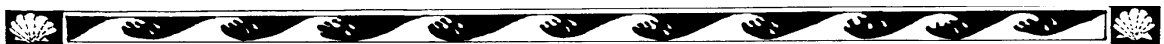
All Bushland nature, crouching, hides  
In burrow, nest or lair,  
And in its Bushland fashion bides  
A season calm and fair.

When once again in robes of blue  
And gold and green, the Day  
Will tread our bush and jungle through;  
And round the lake and bay

The genii of the Storm, in thrall,  
With wicked shares will plough  
No more the halcyon lands that call  
Around the hills of Howe.



*Photo courtesy of Mallaacoota Historical Society.*



## FROM THE BEACH

*Bells & Hobbles*

*E.J. Brady*

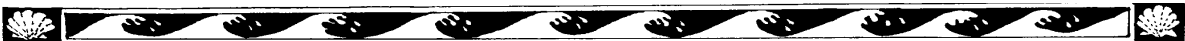
But when the east, attendant, waits  
Her mansions to adorn,  
And with the skilled magic decorates  
The bridal couch of morn;

With royal purple drapes each plinth  
of frowning rock, and fills  
With topaz and with hyacinth  
The hollows of the hills.  
When low the inlet and its isles,  
In Asiatic guise,  
Salaam with soft and pliant smiles  
The sultan of the skies;  
As from the lakes a silver veil  
Of mist is deftly drawn,  
An Amazon in golden mail  
The beach salutes the dawn.

White lace of foam around her knees,  
She flutters like a girl;  
And threads her blue embroideries  
With seaweed and with pearl.  
The spotted cowrie and the fair  
Frail nautilus are hers,  
Rose spirals and the shining rare,  
Sea shells and mariners.

The jewel casket of the deeps  
Lie ready to her hand,  
In every gleaming wave that leaps  
Foam laded to the sand.  
And, lo, in cadence, measured, slow,  
From minstrels submarine  
Sweet rhymes and ballads gaily flow  
Across this sunlit scene.

Of life and now these minstrels chant ..  
A pagan song of old,  
The song dark lovers of Levant  
Ousang in hours of gold ...  
A radiance now, a rare delight,  
A dream of love and wine,  
She lieth in the morning light  
This Austral beach of mine.





## NOCTURNE

*E.J. Brady, Victoria*

By dusk invalid, a bride-elect,  
The warm lake palpitates;  
A tidal sea, her lover chafes  
Impatient at her gates;  
And as he pours his passioned flood  
Across the yielding bars,  
Upon an altar tall is lit  
The tapers of the stars.

An oval moon glides slowly o'er  
The quiet hills of Howe -  
A sorceress with ancient art  
She touches leaf and bough  
With silver magic and transforms  
All things with adept hand,  
Bewitching forest, range and shore,  
To dreaming fairyland.

While-minstrels called to mystic rites-  
Black swans flute to and fro;  
Wild whimprels on the salty sand  
Pipe plaintively and low,  
And haunting from dim flats afar  
Where sedge grows darkly green,  
In long lament their eerie grief  
The wailing curlews keen.

But when the moon's high spell is wrought,  
And dappled shadows lie  
In deep, untrodden bushland glades,  
No more these mourners cry.  
Then chuckling by his homely mate  
A kookaburra bright  
Remembers in a waking dream  
His joke pre-Adamite!

His mirth untimely gives a world  
Nocturnal to unease;  
The nervous wombat grunts alarm,  
The ringtails in their trees,  
With ears alert, their wooings pause,  
And scared phalangers gain  
The shelter of a fur-lined nest  
Till silence falls again.



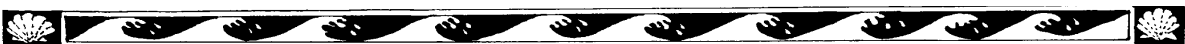
Now to forbidden tryst with Jill,  
The settler's saucy maid,  
Rides Jack Macann from Seven-Mile,  
Of magic nought afraid,  
His stirrups glimmer as he goes,  
And now and then the bright  
Steel buckles of his bridle glint  
With aye a wanton light.

Bemused all nature by that pale  
Old sorceress that now  
Her mischief weaves with practised hands  
Above the hills of Howe;  
The warnings of those minstrels sad  
What doth she heed or care  
Who seeks the tea-tree shadows with  
A red rose in her hair?

She sings within her heart a song  
That sky-witch knew of eld,  
Ere Sheba fell to Solomon  
Or Boaz Ruth beheld.  
He whistles softly as he treads  
The path that leads to bliss....  
And, oh! I would that I were young  
On such a night as this!



*Moonlight on the Lake. Photo courtesy of Mallaquito Historical Society.*



## TWILIGHT

*E.J. Brady, N.S.W.  
Bulletin 31st May, 1908*

[FOR THE BULLETIN]

When a heavy surf is droning  
In the twilight on the bar;  
When our Mother Sea is crooning  
Her quaint cradle-song afar;

When the wild black swans are lining  
Towards some still, remote lagoon,  
And above the headland, shining,  
Hangs a quiet, crescent moon;

When the panoply, the splendor  
Of the tropic sunset dies,  
Then my Fancy turns to tender  
Dreams beneath the queenly skies.

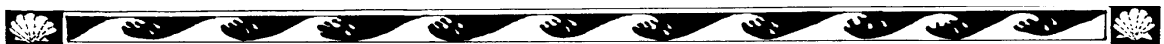
Dear-loved Loadstone of my longing,  
Fair, fond Woman of my heart!  
When the twilight thoughts are thronging,  
Art thou dreaming, too, apart?

Yes, my Spirit echoes truly;  
Circling seas shall, with the tide,  
Pulse on either shore of Thule,  
In the Dream Beatified.

Surely as the mystic Crescent  
Sillvers now a garden fair,  
Will the shining, white, luquescent  
Light of Love burns also there!

So I mourn not that the splendor  
Of the dead Day lies in pall,  
When the Night her brooding, tender  
Wings of fantasy lets fall.

In the dusk I'm sitting, building  
Tall cloud-castles by the sea;  
In the dusk my Love is gilding  
Castles fair for her and me.



## SEA THOUGHT

*E.J. Brady*

*Wardens of the Sea, Endeavour Press Sydney, 1933*

My dear, I know not whence we came, nor where from hence we go;  
E'en that I know I nothing know, that, too, I cannot know.  
Their tribal gods men still placate with sacrifice and vow,  
To legend and to fable yet in mental darkness bow.  
Close then this book that tells thee nought in all its sounding words,  
And let thy thoughts be onward borne, like roving white-winged birds!

Near was the moon in aeons gone, and greater tides she drew  
When slimy creatures swam hereby and scaly monsters flew  
From yon eroded hills (which now the ploughshare turneth o'er)  
With sharp serrated teeth to tear a quarry by the shore:  
Then, seeking saurian prey to seize, the huge fish-lizard sank  
Its living length of flesh and bone on this Liassic bank,

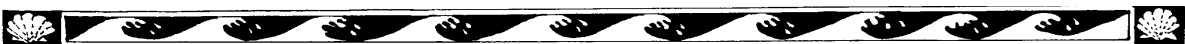
By swift volcanic chance o'erwhelmed and so inert to stay  
Embedded in a tomb of stone since that primeval day;  
A day mayhap when Nature, filled with planetary glow  
Of youth, her early efforts spurned, her mountain chains laid low,  
Re-bedded streams on sunken hills, a continent submerged  
Beneath the sea, and from a the sea a continent emerged.

Aye, Nature holds of small account the clay she slowly kneads,  
But finds, 'twould seem, a value strange in varied forms it breeds:  
'Tis we who deem a gift divine the fleeting life we grasp;  
'Tis she who pads the tiger's claw, gives venom to the asp;  
If we admire the humming bird, she gives the hawk its wings,  
And writes her law, the will-to-live, alike for living things.

All life that was, all life that is, all life that yet may be,  
So runs the tale, in zoophyte cell was cradled by the sea;  
Through varied form and function new and constant impetus  
It finds at length, we fondly think, a Godlike note in us  
Who gorge and swill, make carnal love, and justify the law  
That spells survival to the strong - the Code of Tooth and Claw.

Man-slaying man, whose reddened hands still take and rend and tear,  
Who dreamt and sought since Daedalus the mastery of air;  
Who soared at last, triumphant, o'er his planet's clouds - and hurled  
Red death upon the homes of men, proud master of the world!  
Well might the grim Cohuna skull sardonic mirth display!  
Well might the caged chimpanzee howl in horrified dismay!

Meek servants of that Prince of Peace who taught a creed of Love!  
Oh, Slain of Men, behold again from Thy high throne above ,  
Proud prelates pass in motor-cars through devil-haunted slums  
(Where wind-swept breath of flow'rs abloom in ne'er a springtime comes  
for little children, loved by Thee, enhungered and in rags)  
To courage Christian men-at-arms and bless their battle-flags!



But let us turn, oh, Tender Heart, from these ill thoughts away,  
In fond resolve to find no clouds in God's clear skies to-day;  
And, for one golden hour of life, lay cross and care aside,  
To think and dream in sweet accord by this incoming tide,  
This besom of a world distraught, whose cleansing waters sweep  
Around the continents and isles in constant spring and neap.

Here finds the nautilus a port, outsailing nevermore;  
Here dart swift, silvered fishes through a branching madreport;  
Her quaint crustaceans sidling seek, of greedy appetite,  
To ope in vain with vyce-like claws the armored trilobite;  
Survivor of a fossil age, when Nature, more intense,  
Evolved new method of attack, but strengthened, too, defence!

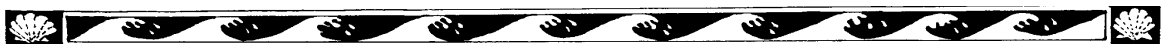
Who knows? Some coiling kraken still in lone defiance strives -  
The great sea-serpent of the tale which unto now survives -  
In deeper deeps, where silence reigns, and weird abysses dark  
Know not the flash of flying fin or fury of the shark;  
Those lightless, soundless ocean depths unfathomable, where  
Within an inky cavern dread the creature has its lair?

More charm for us have lesser seas where adds the polyp small  
Its atom to the building of an island; as the tall  
White coral grows and grows and grows, 'mid bright anemones;  
In pastures submarine a-flow'r, browse cow-like manatees;  
And giant clams their victims grasp, and, in sea gardens fair,  
Pearl-oysters wait the diver's search with sponge and beche-de-mer.

Now to your car, beloved, hold this drifted abalone  
Which shoreward brings irradiate, in magic of its own,  
The rose of dawn, the glow of ever, all paletted on pearl;  
With softer shades of ocean's blue, white foam from waves a-curl,  
A thousand greens, all tones and lights the Artist great achieves  
Who gives rich colors to the growths which never shed their leaves.

The abalone hath captured, too, and soft will sing to thee  
In echoes murmured, notes subdued, a music of the sea -  
That sweet soprano which the winds to Southern Isles outpour;  
The thrilling tenor of the Trades, the bass of Labrador;  
A rich contralto Indian seas on spicy coasts intone,  
A gallant song the Monsoon trolls in buoyant baritone.

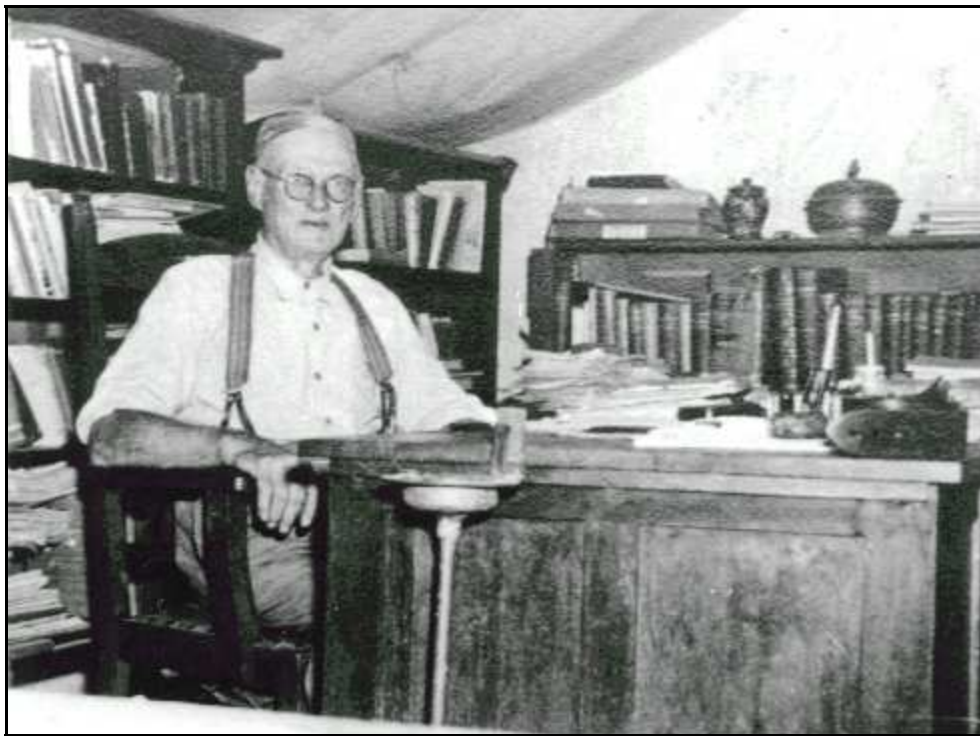
Slow dirges for their countless dead chant now orchestral waves,  
The pale, uncoffined dead who sleep in ever unmarked graves;  
And then heroic paeans pour, through which, profundo, runs,  
As o'er a smoky seascape heard, the roll of distant guns -  
A theme of triumph and defeat, in which one faintly hears  
The orders pass from quarter-decks; a crew's responding cheers.



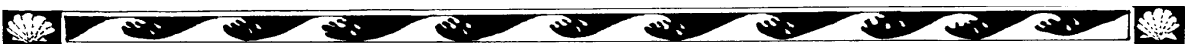
A glad cantata of the ships next falls in rhythms gay  
That rise and dip with movement soft as swift bow-driven spray.  
All sounds of wind and wave within this shell imprisoned life -  
The angry barking of the seals, the gulls' contentious cry.  
The penguin's grunt of coarse distrust - such sounds the sailor fears -  
Those spirit voices of the Deep, a trembling night-watch hears.  
And, listing to this mystic shell, old odors rise once more

Of dripping seaweed, newly washed along a salty shore;  
A chemic smell of crusted kelp, a pungence of ozone  
From spray-wet rocks and tide-bared sands, with drifted flotsam strown.  
A faint warm breath of mangrove buds and, subtly blent with this,  
That mingled tang of teak and tar, bamboo and ambergris!

The World of Men goes on its way, nor cares for you or me,  
And here beside our halcyon shore, so dreaming, naught care we!  
The Tides of Time will bear away our fairest hopes and dreams;  
Our lives at last will find the Sea, though dim and far it seems;  
But Life methinks it still worth while, despite its loss, its pain,  
With even Silence in the end, if Love and Truth remain.



*E.J. Brady. Author in study. Courtesy National Library.*



## COLONIAL FLEETS

*From Wardens of the Sea. E.J. Brady 1933*

Beating up by Ottway,  
Rolling round the Prom.,  
Swinging in from Gabo,  
See the old ships come!

Trim colonial traders,  
Half a score of rigs,  
Barques and brave three-masters,  
Barquentines and brigs.

Traders mean and humble,  
Liners proud and sleek,  
Hulls of native hardwood,  
Hulls of oak or teak.

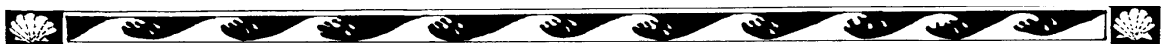
Clippers out of Plymouth,  
Bringing cargoes full,  
Racing back to Europe  
With Australian wool.

Ancient tubs from Boston,  
Owned by Sven and Co.,  
Taking coal with curses  
Down to Callao.

Timid island schooners,  
By Kanakas manned,  
Beating, copra-laden,  
On and off the land.



*The Narrows. Courtesy of Mallacoota Historical Society.*



Tea ships from Colombo,  
Jute tubs from Bombay,  
Ships from Valparaiso,  
Ships from Mandalay.

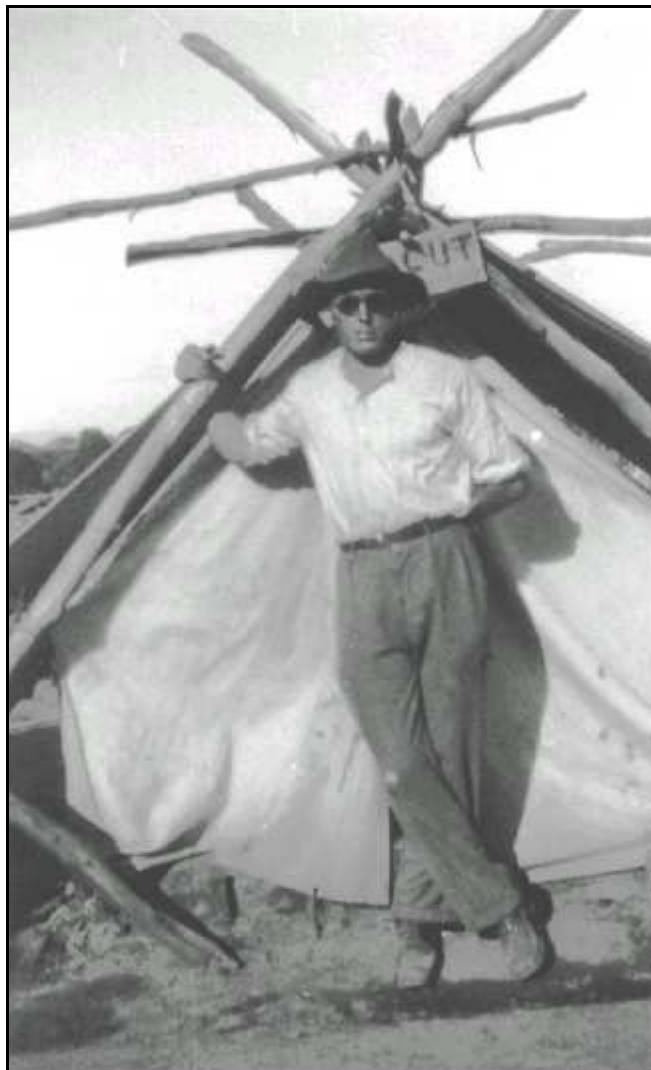
Rising o'er the sealine,  
Sinking slowly down,  
Canvas white and dainty,  
Canvas patched and brown.

Come and go the vessels  
On their seaward ways:  
Go and come the cargoes  
Of Colonial Days.

As I watch the waters  
Curving round Cape Howe,  
Seldom o'er the picture  
Glides a white sail now!

Smoke of haughty liners,  
Smoke of humble tramps,  
And at night the glitter  
Of electric lamps

Fill me with longing  
Like remembered rhyme  
Sad with recollection  
Of a younger time.



*The commune manager Lesley Birch.  
Courtesy Hannaford.*





## DESCRIPTION BOYDTOWN AND EDEN AREAS

To the north of Mallacoota, some 60 km away and across the N.S.W. Victorian border lies the busy port of Eden and one of Australia's deepest natural harbours: Twofold Bay.

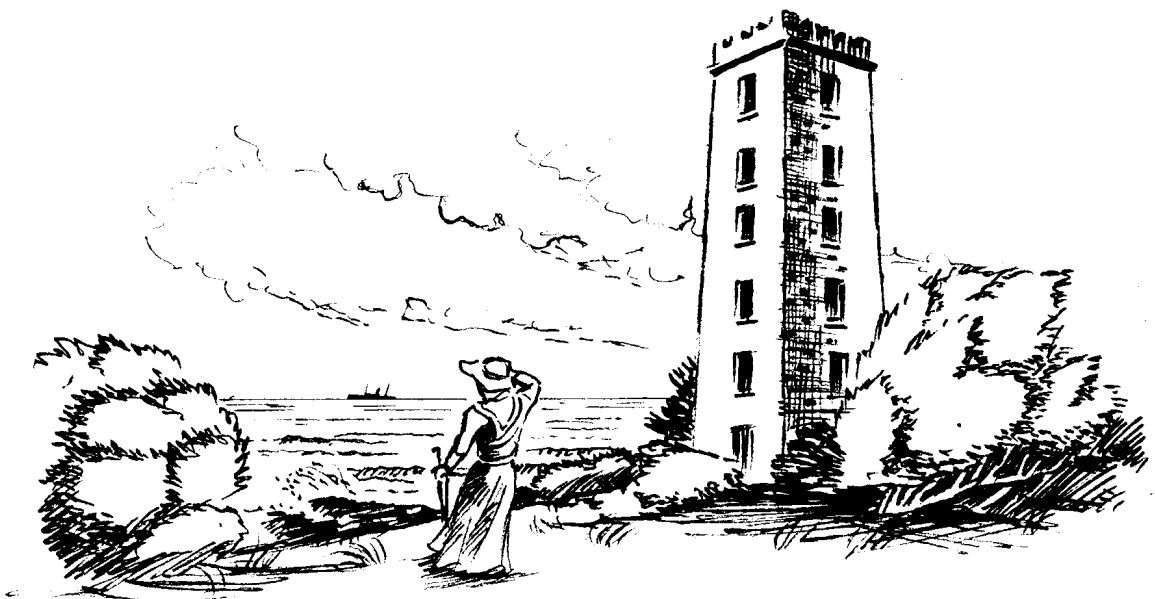
This area was settled by the time Lawson came to Mallacoota, with commodities obtainable from the large whaling fleet, and with tallow, hides, fish and timber being sent to Sydney from here in considerable quantities. There was also a lucrative ship building industry. In June 1842, Benjamin Boyd settled the area and established "Boyd Town" with the still standing and very picturesque "Seahorse Inn" and other buildings to support his operations here.

Henry Lawson met Margaret Midson at the Commercial Hotel, Eden en route to Mallacoota. He was immediately taken by this 30 year old school teacher and wrote "*Ben Boyd's Tower, Did you See Us Sailing Past and The Bar*" with her in mind.

### BEN BOYD'S TOWER

*Henry Lawson*

Ben Boyd's tower is watching,  
Watching o'er the sea;  
Ben Boyd's Tower is waiting  
Still for her and me.  
We do not know the day;  
We do not know the hour;  
But we know that we shall meet again  
By Ben Boyd's Tower.



## DID YOU SEE US SAILING PAST?

Henry Lawson: *Sydney Mail*, 7 December 1910 (written May 1910).

Did you see us sailing past, past, past?  
Did you see us sailing past?  
Sid Allan sat by the little toy wheel  
And your lover by the mast.

*refrain:* We'd race the glass from Gabo  
To save an Autumn day;  
We dared not run for Disaster Bay,  
So we ran for Twofold Bay.

Did you see us flying past, past, past  
By the rocks of black'ning brown?  
With the hoods slipped up, and the doors made fast,  
And the motor broken down?

*refrain*

Did a face grow white or a heart grow sick  
And the Lighthouse seem to reel?  
Your lover stood by the foremast stick  
And Allan by the wheel.

*refrain*

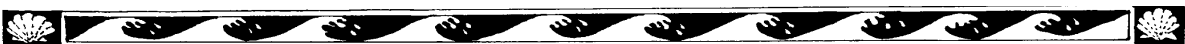
Did you see us plunging past, past, past,  
On a Friday afternoon?  
Did we seem flying all too fast  
From the grave of the Lyeemon?<sup>1</sup>

*refrain*

We dared not think of Batangabee;  
But darling do not fret,  
For the Love Trail runs by land and sea,  
And we'll meet in Eden yet.

*refrain*

1. wreck of sailing ship



## TWOFOLD BAY

*By E.J. Brady, taken from Wardens of the Seas, 1933*

From Imlay proudly rearing his tall compelling crown,  
The white clouds coming seaward cast flying shadows down;  
By blue sky-captains marshalled, in regiments they pass,  
To silent marching orders above the waving grass.

Rude hands on trembling tree-tops the west winds fiercely lay;  
They whip protesting water o'er troubled Twofold Bay,  
And drive, like drunken shepherds, their helpless flocks  
Of white-capped waves in anger on hungry shoreward rocks.

'Neath fleeting flecks of sunlight the litten lines unfold  
Of ranges briefly reigning in pale dim robes of gold;  
Their short-lived glories vanish as spreads returning cloud  
Along that distant skyline its cold, encircling shroud.

From chimneys in the village a scattered smoke outpours,  
Caught up by gusty breezes and wafted round the shores;  
Beside his hearthstone smoking a village greybeard dreams  
Of years that lie behind him, when heavy bullock-teams

Brought down from high Monaro the early squatter's bales,  
And 'neath the hills at anchor rode ships with waiting sails;  
Or tales his father told him of still an older day  
When blacks were bad in Bega, ere Boyd came in the bay.

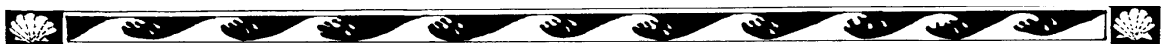
All bound for cold Kiandra, he sees again a band  
In wide slouch hats and moleskins from some small coaster land,  
Equipped with picks and blankets, tin-dish and swag and tent,  
The rough-and-ready vanguard on buried riches bent.

Anon, by Fortune favoured, some came to Eden town  
To take a passage elsewhere, or knock their winnings down;  
Then Sally at the Sea Horse, while concertinas played,  
Drew bearded lovers to her and did a roaring trade.

Until a lucky digger - or so the story ran -  
Was robbed in Sally's parlour and shot her fancy man;  
But when a jury freed him, those early legends say,  
She wed that lucky digger, sold out and sailed away!

The grey beard by his fireside upon the west wind hears  
The well-remembered voices of dead colonial years;  
He sees, in red coals pictured, fond faces that he knew,  
When down yon rugged ranges a gold escort came through

In times of slower travel, in days of horsemen bold,  
Who rode by painted coaches that carried girls and gold.  
Aye, days of beef and damper and long percussion guns,  
When hardy stockmen guarded the lonely cattle runs.  
Dark hulls of greasy whalers no more at Boydtown ride,  
Nor trading schooners tarry for change of wind and tide;  
No more will hoof-beats echo as ranging riders go,  
Nor rattle o'er rough roadways the wheels of Cobb and co.



Now gallant youths of Eden drink beer in Rudd's hotel,  
Whose grandsires in the graveyard drank rum, the gossips tell;  
Now shades of grandmas shudder and shake their ghostly curls  
When round the links of Eden trudge short-frocksed golfing girls!

Where wheezed a concertina in lamp-lit nights of yore  
Canned music calls the couple to jazz on dance-room floor;  
Where woke a coachman's bugle the echoes of the dale,  
A motor-horn announces the coming daily mail.

So Changes, with iron fingers upon his flying pen,  
Doth ever write new chapters within the Book of Men;  
So wages the world for ever; so alter human ways . . .  
But they were brave and bonny, those old Colonial days.

And still unchanged from Imlay the west wind hurries down  
As when Ben Boyd went sailing away from Eden town;  
And still the white clouds, sweeping, in marching order pass  
Above the bending forest and o'er the waving grass.

And by his fireside sitting an old man faintly hears  
The voices of his boyhood, the songs of numbered years;  
And to his children's children, as old men fitly may,  
He tells on winter evenings his tales of Twofold Bay.



*E.J. Brady at Mallacoota House.  
Courtesy Mallacoota Historical Society.*



## PART OF POEM: COASTS OF DREAM

*From Bells & Hobbles: date unknown*

*E.J. Brady*

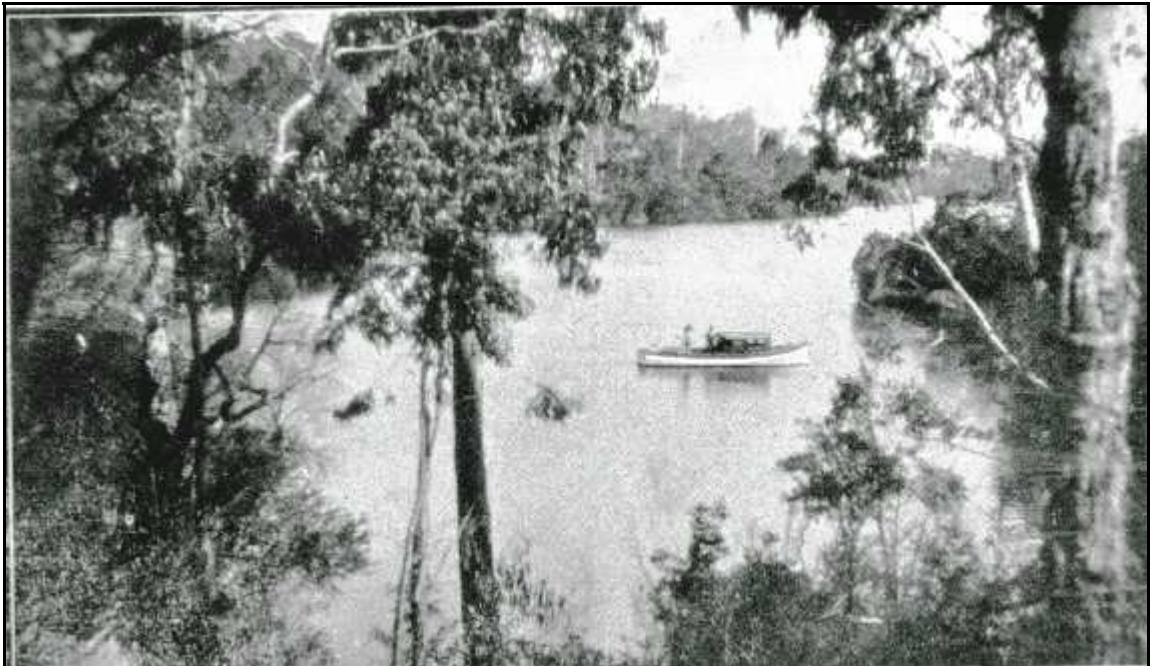
My memory ship is sailing slow . .  
A magic coast it seems,  
Where I have idled to and fro,  
And dreamed my idle dreams . .  
Good, fighting, red fat schnapper strain  
The dripping lines today  
Where lately was the cow whale slain  
And towed to Twofold Bay.

On Mallacoota pipes the swan,  
And calls the mating teal,  
And black finned mullet shoals dart on  
Before the coming keel.

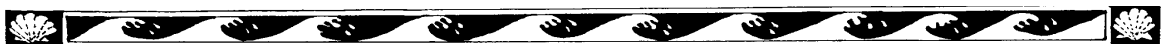
Come South'ard where the lobsters spawn  
In green Cape Conran weed!  
Come South and watch, on seas of Dawn,  
The whale calf play and feed!

The Gippsland Lakes are deep and wide,  
The Gippsland trees are tall'  
And on the long, lone beach the tide  
For ninety miles doth call.

Aye! surely as all flesh is grass,  
The far lands fairer seem,  
So roving hearts for e'er must pass  
Adown the Coasts of Dream.



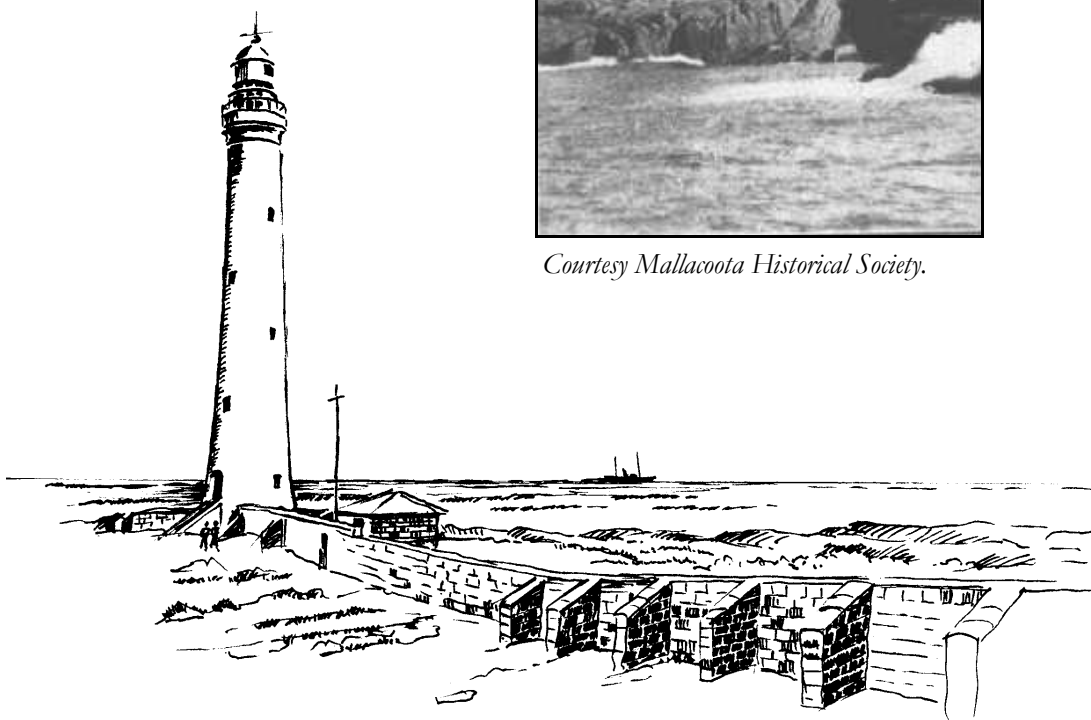
*Wallagarough River. Courtesy Mallacoota Historical Society.*



## GABO ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE



*Courtesy Mallaoota Historical Society.*



*Geoff Coles*

Gabo Island is visible from the local beaches.

It is no longer manually manned and is now open for accommodation.

Details can be obtained by telephoning the caretakers direct. Refer local phone book.



## MEMORIES OF A HAPPY CHILDHOOD

1862-1865 Gabo Island

Reprinted from a 1965 issue of the Gap magazine

*One hundred years ago the writer of this article was living as child at the Gabo Lighthouse. He recalls with pride the hardships and the happiness of his pioneer life - a life that brings memories of our own childhood days which are lost forever to an age of progress.*

*Gabo is said to have derived its name from the attempt of an aborigine to say "Cape Howe". His pronunciation was given to the granite island on the Victorian side of the cape. A specimen of its granite may be seen in the pillars fronting a building at the western end of Collins Street.*

*The present lighthouse is not the first placed on the island. The first stood on a hill above the landing place, but after the wreck, with great loss of life, of the "Monumental City" on the island of Tallaberga, the light was removed to the southern cliffs, facing the route between Melbourne and Sydney. The keepers, and more especially their wives, must have been sorry to leave their quarters on the shores of the little bay with its stream of ever-flowing water and remove to the exposed new site, though it had compensations in being in view of all passing vessels.*

## A NARROW ESCAPE

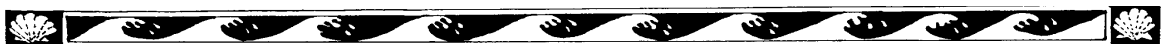
It was said that shortly after the change had been made the little company was startled one foggy morning by hearing voices from the sea evidently close inshore. The iron water tanks were beaten, a gun was fired, and all means were used to attract the attention of the unseen ship, and they were relieved to hear orders given that carried the vessel seaward. In recognition of this, the main tender running between the two capitals afterwards "dipped its flag" in passing acknowledgement of having been saved from disaster.

My father went down to relieve one who had been induced by his friends to try the life, for six months, remote from the haunts of man, and eagerly he was waiting his release to join his brother, a Ceylon tea planter. The men who had been left behind to finish the lesser details of the building were also waiting to return to Melbourne, though the light had been burning for some time. I recall one incident of the landing - my mother's exclamation of pleasure caused by the sight of the beautiful stream of water falling into the sea. Her water supply had been restricted in a Melbourne suburb to rain water, or to a load bought from some water carter, too often largely lost through the gaping seams of the sun-dried casks.

Gabo had two springs, one coming from a lakelet behind the hills and draining beneath them; the smaller one to which we went for drinking water when the spray had made the tank water brackish. Fresh water and vegetables had been sadly lacking, but energy soon overcame that. My people selected a piece of ground, deep drains were cut and vegetables were planted. The wind swept down from the hills, blasting the taller growing things, so small trees were cut and we small children helped to pull them down to form a break-wind. All went well. We had variety for our table and abundance for the goats.

## THE INVALUABLE GOATS

Six months after we landed there - for the supply vessel came but twice a year - the first of our goats arrived and with care grew into a fair-sized flock in the five years we were there. What goats add to the comfort of those who dwell in such places only those who have lived in them know. Milk, butter, fresh meat - all these they gave. They wandered wild with their kids, but the encouragement of the feed of garden stuff at their home-coming brought them back at night without trouble. Their kids were shut up at night and let out after their mothers had been milked in the morning. We children had to sweep out the boxes each day. The manure was bagged and then carted over periods to the garden. Poultry also helped to change the menu. For fish, the large whaleboat would go out and often the horses had to be caught to carry the catch home. Then came the cleaning, the light salting and piling in tubs for the night. Next day lines were filled with drying fish to packed away for winter use and sent to Melbourne friends. Who that has tasted a perch so cured, spread with butter and slipped into the oven while tea is "masked" can forget it? A smoke-house was built for the smoking of flathead and other fish.





## A SMOKER'S ORDEAL

*Written by A.W. Hutton for the Melbourne Argus 21/6/30*

The store ship twice a year brought supplies. Once she failed to bring tobacco for the one smoker on the island. He had been on short allowance for some weeks waiting for her. Six more months without a smoke he felt to be impossible, so his friends agreed to let him go back with the steamer. On his return he reached a spot on the beach opposite the island, where by chance he was seen and picked up as he was preparing to swim the narrow stretch of water, an act which might have cost him his life.

Gabo has comforts now that were not there in the "sixties". Our parents had to educate us. They brought down at their own expense a teacher, but she remained only six months, yet when we went to town schools we were soon able to take creditable places in the class.

When I read of the kindly women preparing parcels of toys for the Mallee children my thoughts fly to our childish days. Toys - with the bush and rocks, shells, seaweed after storms. Toys may pass a spare hour now and again, but the open spaces were for us. What though our bare feet - boots were such a nuisance - were often bleeding, and we fell into the rocky pools as we chased shrimps. We were well and happy. Once it was said in my hearing, "Wherever you go in life you will never forget your life here." I looked round. We were entering the "happy valley." The sun was shining brightly. A bush of some honey-bearing shrub was growing by the side of the path and large cream and gold beetles were humming and fluttering over it. So the words and the place stand clear in my memory after more than sixty years.

## MEMORIES OF GABO

*by Eileen McKee*

Eileen McKee's grandfather was head keeper on Gabo Island for fifteen years. Here she tells of Gabo's history and argues strongly for public control of our Lighthouse heritage.

Lighthouses have helped to establish Australia; our settlers came by ship and in most cases their safe arrival was facilitated by the presence of lighthouses.

### ***Sam Benson, Master Mariner***

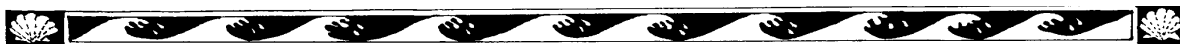
#### ***Foreword to The Lighthouses of Victoria***

The history of the Gabo Island lighthouse is fascinating. In 1845 the legislative Council of NSW recommended the erection of a light 'at the extreme point of Cape Howe (Gabo Island) to mark the eastern entrance to Bass Strait'. Work did commence in 1847, but at a site in the centre of the island. It proved too expensive and work was abandoned. On 17 May 1853 the brand new barque-rigged screw steamship *Monumental City* was wrecked at Tallaberga Island near Gabo, with a loss of thirty-three lives. She had defied superstition by leaving Melbourne on Friday 13 May and she defied custom too - with women and children left aboard the sinking ship while the men hauled themselves to safety on a hawser secured to the shore.

It had been the first steamer to cross the Pacific (a record sixty-five days from California to Sydney) and was hailed as a forerunner of a new era. When she reached Melbourne, however, crew members deserted to join the gold-rush. She sailed Melbourne bound for Sydney with fifty-nine crew and thirty-six passengers. Four days later she was wrecked in a storm. A seaman managed to get ashore and secure a hawser. Those who were strong enough hauled themselves hand over hand to the beach, but the women and children were left to perish when the ship sank. Some of the party walked to Twofold Bay to get help for those who were left. (The captain was later cleared of allegations of cowardice.)

Immediately this tragedy became known, a timber tower was erected with a fixed white light on top. This burned down in 1862 and the permanent lighthouse was built. It is a beautiful structure, built of red granite quarried on the island, and left unpainted (unlike many of the lighthouses which are painted white). Red granite from Gabo was also used in the Melbourne GPO and Australia House in London. Visitors can marvel 130 years later at the skill of the masons who executed the interlocking and dovetailing. Forty-eight metres in height, it is the tallest in Victoria, and the second tallest in Australia.

Gabo's flora and fauna are equally as interesting as its history. There are no eucalypts, macropods or snakes; feral cats and goats have been eliminated and there are no rabbits. The island has interesting algae, ferns and greenhood orchids. It is, however, the bird life which gives Gabo its best





Phillip Island, and at last count there were 7000 mutton bird burrows. There is a large number of raptors - white-bellied sea eagles, whistling kites, marsh harriers and brown falcons - and the island is a major hunting area for these birds.

My mother was born in 1881 in New Zealand and the family came to Australia in 1885. My grandfather, John Macdonald, a Scot and a noted bag-pipe player, was headkeeper at Gabo from 1900 to 1915. Previously he had served on a Queenscliff, South Channel Light near Dromana and at Cape Nelson. It was a hard life, especially before electricity when the lamps had to be cleaned daily. The wives and children had to be strong and fit, as medical help was a long way off. At Gabo the children of the three keepers had a governess, but usually they were taught by their parents. Mum used to tell us tales of her childhood, but we didn't record them. One story was about Grandad's pigs. Apparently he allowed them to feed on a beached whale which gave the bacon an odd taste and an oily texture, and brought a reprimand from the factory at Eden.

Mum married from Gabo on 8 November 1904. Grandad retired from Gabo in 1915 and bought a property, Inverness Farm, at Gypsy Point.

Our lighthouses have played an important role in our history. The buildings combine utility with great beauty, and were manned by sturdy people who were dedicated to their duties. They are among the unsung heroes of Australia. It could be argued that the lighthouses already 'belong' to the people, as they were paid for and maintained at taxpayer's expense. Why should Victorian taxpayers have to pay for them again? How could AMSA even think of selling them to the highest bidder for the use of a few?

No. They must be transferred free of charge to Victoria and managed by DCE. Gabo Island, like Point Hicks, adjoins Croajingolong National Park and could easily be added to it. The lighthouses and their reserves could be used by scientists and students to study flora, fauna and marine life, but their historic and conservation values must be protected for future generations.

*Further reading: The Lighthouses of Victoria, Dacre Smyth, self-published, 1980.  
Romance of Australian Lighthouses, Valmai Phillips, Rigby, 1977.*

## MEMORIES OF GABO.

*Extracts from Eileen McKee's mother's diary*

In March 1900 Dad was ordered to go to Gabo on the Lady Loch. We were a good while at the Promontory as we had to do Clifly Light on the way. It seemed a long trip from Portland as I was seasick at first.

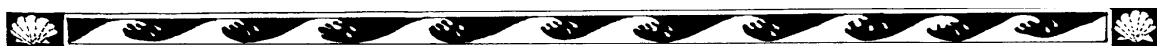
We all loved Gabo and the shipping. One thing was a nuisance - if you didn't turn the water off the tanks when it started to rain, the water was a bit salty, but once was enough... There were three families, we were all happy in a valley on the island where Mum used to grow vegies ... The island is a lovely place, the climate is good till it is a gale. Everyone likes Gabo.

I loved the sailing ships in those days. I remember one started to go between the island and the mainland. We found the signal, "You are running into danger". He came out. Mostly they kept a long way out and it was hard to read their numbers, which were four flags. You had to wait for a breeze to shift them. All shipping has a number. The weather and shipping reports were sent to Eden.

One Sunday as we were having dinner a big P&O boat blew her horn just under the light. There was a scramble. She was so close they could enjoy the joke.

One Melbourne Cup day steamer was just abreast when she asked for the name of the cup winner. We put up flags that spelt her name. She was well past but got it.

*Reprinted with permission from the V.P.N.A. and Eileen McKee. Article contributed by Bob Semmens.*



## THE WIND THAT BLOWS BY GABO

*From Wardens of the Sea*

*by E.J. Brady*

The wind that blows by Gabo  
Is ever kind to me;  
It brings me songs and stories  
Across the Tasman Sea.

When in a mystic starlight  
The darkened surges break,  
It tells me of Pizarro  
And Cavendish and Drake.

I hear their drums a-beating,  
And once, dear lads, again  
Gay Youth and Glad Adventure  
Go down the Spanish Main.

A cloud from distant canon  
Hangs low along the blue;  
I see the cutlass flashing  
In days of derring-do.

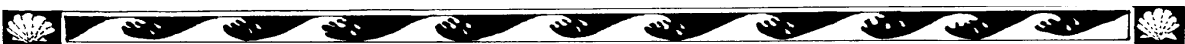
The wind that blows by Gabo,  
It sings a gallant song  
Of proud Castilian captains  
And ruffians rude and strong

Who sailed from Cartagena,  
And out of Callao,  
Across our Southern Ocean  
Three hundred years ago.

The wind that blows by Gabo,  
So cool in summer-time,  
It croons a seaward fancy  
That sadly falls in rhyme

Of one dear Spanish lady,  
In silk and lace ashine,  
Who waited for a lover  
Gone south across the Line.

And sobbing in the tea-trees,  
Despite three hundred years,  
It sings her life-long sorrow,  
It whispers of her tears!



But when the moon is shining,  
And spring-tides leap the bars,  
I see a Rover's topmasts  
All shattered 'neath the start;

I see his oaken bulwarks  
Still ragged from the fray,  
His torn, red flag triumphant -  
A victor grimly gay.

The wind that blows by Gabo  
On one historic day,  
It brought the old Endeavour  
To Mallacoota Bay.

(Ho, Ho! my Lords of England,  
This 'prentice lad from Deal  
Has marked a mighty roadway  
With her immortal keel!)

The warships and the trade-ships  
They followed, one by one;  
The wind that blows by Gabo,  
It bore them bravely on.

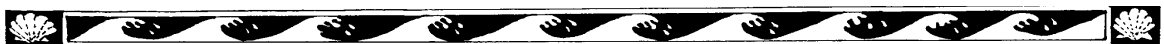
And oh! the dandy captains,  
And oh! the dowdy crews  
That beat around the corner  
When Waterloo was news!

And hey! the glossy clippers,  
With British cargoes full,  
That swung around the corner  
To load Australian wool!

And old Colonial packets  
In early days of steam -  
The Gabo wind doth paint them  
In pictures of a dream!

The wind that blows by Gabo,  
When I am dead and gone,  
To some Australian poet  
This tale will carry on.

And he with broader vision  
In wider ways, perchance,  
Will write the splendid story  
Of our great Sea Romance.



E.J. Brady married my mother Florence Jane in 1942. She was 36 and he was 72. During the years of my early childhood I remember him as an active and enthusiastic story teller and friend. I was six when he died at the aged of 82, after about a years illness. He left me a legacy: a deep and abiding love for this beautiful area which I hope I have shared with you during your reading of this collection.

My mother never married again, but spent most of the remaining years of her life painting and designing shell figurines here in Mallacoota. Both my parents are buried in the Mallacoota Cemetery.



*Allan Quale, E.J. Brady, Florence Jane Brady, and Edna Brady at age 5.  
Courtesy National Library*



## BRADY

*Edward Harrington, The Bulletin, 13 August 1952*

A bitter wind blew out of the north and the skies were dull and grey  
When, spreading swiftly, the news went forth that Brady had passed away.  
And in many a hut and miner's shack and in many a shearing shed  
The men who toil in the great outback mourned for an old mate dead.

For Brady was a restless soul, a rover by land and sea,  
He saw life clearly and saw it whole, and a minstrel born was he.  
He loved the bush and the open plains, the light of the western stars,  
The clink, clink, clink of the hobble chains and the wind in the green belars.<sup>1-</sup>

He sang of the woods and wilderness, he sang of the Spanish Main,  
Of the gallant sailors of Good Queen Bess, who harried the ships of Spain,  
Of the clipper ships of the Indian trade running the Easters down  
With every inch of canvas spread, hell bent for London town.

Back in the long departed years a spirit of vague unrest  
Stirred in the hears of the pioneers from east to the farthest west.  
The first faint flicker of nationhood, a vision of things to be,  
A mighty nation . . . one faith, one blood . . . united from sea to sea.

Then Lawson, Brady and Quinn betimes, united to wield the pen  
To tell the tale in their stirring thymes of the hopes and the fears of men.  
Quinn and Lawson have long since passed with the tasks of their lives fulfilled;  
Now Brady follows with faith held fast in the nation he helped to build.

He has launched his barque on a timeless sea, to follow a guiding star,  
He has heard from the bourne of eternity the call of his mates afar:  
When he comes to the end of his last long quest may the beacons brightly burn  
And his roving spirit at last find rest in the port of No Return.

Brady died in hospital, at Pambula, New South Wales on 22nd July, 1952 and was buried with Anglican rites in Mallacoota. He was survived by three sons and daughters, his third wife, Florence Jane, née Bourke, an artist, whom he married on 10th June, 1942 at St. Augustine Church of England, Mentone, Victoria, and their daughter Edna.

*1- belars or belahs: a native casuarina (Aboriginal)*



*Lakeview Hotel. Since burnt down. Courtesy Mallacoota Historical Society.*

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