



Editor - Peter Ludlow

## Horseshoe Bay's Mystery Grave

There was one grave on Peel Island, which caused quite a deal of comment. This was situated at Horseshoe Bay just above the high water mark. Inscribed simply with the initials T.J. and bearing the date 1802, the markings on the wooden cross seemed to indicate that the grave could only have been that of a crewmember of one of Matthew Flinders' exploring trips of that year. However, Tom Welsby was later to hear from one of the elderly residents at Amity Point that the real date had been 1892 and that one of the Amity locals had changed the date by chiselling out part of the 9, thus making it a 0. In actual fact, the grave was that of T.J. Ives, a comedian and actor from Islington in London. He had travelled in the *Oroya* from London to Sydney, and thence in the *Buninyong* for Brisbane to fulfil an engagement there. Before reaching his destination, however, he and the 120 other passengers on the *Buninyong* were quarantined at Peel after a smallpox suspect had been reported from the *Oroya*. Ives developed the disease and died aged 32 after being in Queensland only a fortnight. He was buried at Peel in the grave that was later to be the subject of a local's sense of humour. Perhaps he would have appreciated the joke that fooled everyone for so long.

Source: Tom Welsby, Brisbane Courier 1923.



In the early 1990s, on one of my visits at Peel to stay with Ray Cowie, the Redland Shire Council's Ranger there, I was surprised when he produced a large metal hoop that he had found hanging on a tree branch just behind the sand dunes to the eastern end of Horseshoe Bay. I immediately recognised it as the ship's fitting that had been attached to the grave of T.J. Ives, whom I had written about in 1988 for my book *"Peel Island, Paradise or Prison"*. We surmised that a bushfire had destroyed the wooden cross, causing the metal hoop to fall to the ground, where it would have lain for many years until a boatie picked it up and hung it off a nearby tree. Ray showed me where he had found the metal hoop. We searched around on the ground beneath the tree on which it had been hung, hoping to find some evidence of the grave, (e.g. a coral border) but to no avail. The grave site still remains a mystery.

Peter Ludlow

Ives' Grave at Horseshoe Bay  
Image courtesy of Harold "Sandy" Cowell