

Speech Topics

- The Great Gold Scam
- Very Dangerous Members of Society
- The Ghost Upon the Rail
- Gold Fever
- The Heroes of Rimau
- Krait - The Fishing Boat that went to War
- Sandakan: A Conspiracy of Silence
- Scapegoats for the Bloody Empire
- Bodywork
- The Bridge at Parit Sulong
- Marcel Caux: A Life Unravelling
- Deadly Secrets
- Blood Brothers

The Great Gold Scam

In May 1851, Edward Hammond Hargraves pulled off the greatest confidence trick in Australian colonial history. In a carefully orchestrated series of events, he convinced the authorities that he had discovered a gold field of fabulous wealth near Bathurst. It is an amazing tale of subterfuge, double dealing and brilliant public relations by an extraordinary showman. However the scam does not end with Hargraves. Lynette Silver, using documents located at the Mitchell Library, reveals that gold is not always what it appears to be.

Very Dangerous Members of Society

On the night of 4 March 1804, Irish patriots exiled to Australia rose in rebellion with the cry 'Death or Liberty'. Poorly armed, they failed miserably in their bid for freedom, put down ruthlessly by a far superior force. Their ill-fated battle, the result of years of failed mini-rebellions, botched escape attempts, mutiny, wild rumours, betrayals, conspiracies and personal tragedy is brought vividly to life by Lynette Silver, author of *The Battle of Vinegar Hill, Australia's Irish Rebellion*.
[Back To Top](#)

The Ghost Upon the Rail

Late one winter's night in 1826 a terrified farmer, John Farley, burst into a Campbelltown inn, stammering that he had seen the ghost of Frederick Fisher, who had mysteriously disappeared. Subsequent investigation revealed the body of the missing man, and the conviction of his murderer. The story of the ghostly apparition which appeared so fortuitously caught the imagination of the public, so much so that Fisher's Ghost festival is a highlight of the local calendar. But there is more to this story than meets the eye. Was there a ghost? Did something supernatural really happen? Find out when you join Lynette Silver in a reconstruction of the events which led to John Farley seeing the ghost upon the rail.
[Back To Top](#)

Gold Fever

For over 70 years, adventurers and dreamers have ridden across the sandy wastes to the west of Alice Springs in search of untold riches - a gold reef discovered, and then lost, by Harold Lasseter. The story, which inspired Australian writer Ion Idress to pen Lasseter's Last Ride, has stirred, and continues to stir, the imaginations of many. Yet despite many attempts, the fabled reef has never been located. Find out why, when Lynette Silver discloses a tale of intrigue as Lasseter leads his followers on a merry chase across the Australian desert.

Back To Top

The Heroes of Rimau

In 1943, a group of Allied commandos, all members of Operation Rimau, left Australia to attack Japanese shipping in Singapore harbour. Confident of success, they farewelled the submarine which had taken them into enemy waters. They were never seen again. Lynette Silver takes you into the shadowy world of secret operations and, in so doing, reveals the fate of every member of the party and the appalling sequence of events which led ultimately to disaster.

Back To Top

Krait: The Fishing Boat That Went to War

It was 1942 and the Japanese were on Australia's very doorstep. Determined to restore the reputation of the mighty British Empire, a small commando team, composed mainly of Australian naval personnel, carried out a daring raid against enemy shipping in Singapore. The mission, Operation Jaywick, is fairly well known. Not so well known, however, is the story of Krait, the ship which took them to their destination. Join Lynette Silver as she takes you on a rollicking voyage of discovery to learn the story behind one of Australia's best known wartime icons.

Back To Top

Sandakan: A Conspiracy of Silence

In 1942-43, over 2,500 Allied prisoners of war were transferred from Singapore to Sandakan, Borneo, to provide slave labour for an airstrip. Three years later, at war's end, only six were left alive. The fate of the others remained shrouded in uncertainty and mystery until 1998, when Lynette Silver broke the conspiracy of silence which had lasted 53 years. Join her as she unravels the story behind Sandakan's tragedy - one of world War II's most deadly secrets.

Back To Top

Scapegoats for the Bloody Empire

In 1993, the nation was stunned to learn that Australian cowardice was to blame for Singapore's fall. According to allegations which circled the globe, General Wavell, Allied commander in the Far East, also accused Australian diggers of mass desertion under fire, wholesale looting, rape and cold blooded murder. Were the allegations justified? Find out for yourself when you join Lynette Silver, Historian to the 8th Australian Division Association for seven years, on her investigation into the validity of 'The Wavell Report'.

Back To Top

Bodywork

Every day hundreds of Australians visit Commonwealth War Graves Cemeteries, large and small, scattered around the globe. For the visitor, the row upon row of headstones, set in immaculately tended gardens, are a very sobering sight. However, while many may pause to reflect on the futility of war, few will question how the nation's dead made the transition from bloody battlefield to cemetery, or have any idea that the work of identifying them continues to the present day. Find out how Lynette Silver, using information, placed in archives and long-forgotten, locates and identifies the graves of soldiers buried as 'unknown'.

Back To Top

The Bridge at Parit Sulong

In January 1942, as the Japanese pushed the main Allied army down the Malay peninsula, two under-strength Australian infantry battalions, a handful of gunners and a depleted Indian contingent held back a vastly superior enemy force. The battle was one of the most desperate fighting retreats of WW2. After four days of desperate fighting they reached the village of Parit Sulong, only to find it in enemy hands. Unable to break through, the troops were forced to leave behind their badly wounded, over 100 Australians and 35 Indians, expecting red cross protection. What followed was one of the most infamous massacres of the war. Find out how Lynette traced the fate of every Australian involved in this battle and discovered how the guilty were brought to justice.

Back To Top

Marcel Caux: A Life Unravelling

When he died in 2004, Marcel Caux had spent the last few years of his life feted as Australia's last combat soldier of World War 1. However, while he enjoyed a high media and public profile, was he who he claimed to be? Join Lynette Silver to learn who Marcel Caux really was, and how he managed to hoodwink everyone who knew him, including his family, for eighty-five years. This is historical sleuthing at its intriguing best.

Back To Top

Deadly Secrets: The Singapore Raids 1942-45

When Lynette Silver met Denis Emerson-Elliott, a member of the British Secret Service on Central Railway station in Sydney one wet windy winter day in 1996, she had no idea that what he had to tell her over sandwiches and tea would shed new light on two commando raids carried out by an Allied team against enemy shipping in Singapore Harbour in 1943 and 1944. His insight into the world of covert missions, coupled with an eyewitness to wartime action discovered on a remote Indonesian island and supreme story telling by Lynette, described by Emerson-Elliott as 'the girl who knows too much', has lifted the lid on some very deadly wartime secrets.

Back To Top

Blood Brothers: Sabah and Australia 1942-1945

In 1942, hundreds of Australian POWs were sent from Singapore to British North Borneo (Sabah) to build an airstrip for the Japanese. Disregarding the terrible consequences if caught, the local civilians established an underground movement, risking and giving their lives to extend the hand of friendship to total strangers in their hour of need. The story of these courageous and resilient people, virtually ignored by Australians for over sixty years, has been brought to life by Lynette Silver in Blood Brothers - a tribute to those who demonstrated courage of the highest and rarest order, in the face of appalling odds.

