

## EDMOND WILLIAM TIPPING (1915-1970)

### Journalist and disability advocate

Australian journalist Edmond William (Bill) Tipping (1915-1970) was one of Melbourne's most famous journalists known as "Mr Melbourne" for many years and not only because of the wide variety of topics he covered in his column, 'In Black and White', which featured in The Herald.

Tipping won a Walkley Award for his coverage of the Sharpeville Massacres in South Africa in 1960, and he also covered the first moon landing and the Olympic Games in Melbourne and Rome. He was known worldwide for his insightful reports.

But Tipping also had a strong social conscience, which informed both his reporting and his personal life.

Brought up in the Catholic tradition, he was of radical outlook and capable of challenging the old style Catholic model. One of his three sons, Peter, was born with a disability and lived at the old Kew Cottages for a while. Tipping was very involved with the Cottages, but also used his writings to point out the difficulties with the way such homes limited the life outcomes for those with disabilities.

He had a clear and individual way of writing, which demonstrated his ability to notice and bring forward the smallest of details to illuminate his opinion or lift his prose. He honed his skills during service in WWII when, after he was brought back from New Guinea with suspected Tuberculosis, he joined the Air Force as public relations officer, covering the war events for their magazine Wings.

He then rejoined The Herald where he became interested in the more informal American method of reporting. He studied at Harvard and wrote for American newspapers until he was recalled to Melbourne in 1952. Here he began his new column and he used it widely to bring changes in the treatment of those with mental illness or a disability.



His wide social network was useful and his writing style was carefully aimed at the man in the street. He made difficult subjects easily acceptable.

His lifestyle of writing, socialising, radio broadcasting and TV work, as well as correspondence work for a string of overseas publications and teaching began to take its toll. He moved back to America for a new start. When he became ill in 1969 he returned to Melbourne, where he died of cancer on 29 April 1970.

In his memory, his influential friends launched the E.W. Tipping Foundation, an organisation which assists children with disabilities and continues to operate to this day.

#### Find out more

Manning, C. Bye Bye Charlie: Stories from the Vanishing World of Kew Cottages (2008)

Tipping, J. Bush Teachers of Victoria, (1991)

In Black and White, Columns from the Herald, TROVE



#### DR JAN PENNEY BA, DIP ED, PHD

Jan is a professional historian who has worked across the fields of heritage, education and tourism. She has taught at several universities, including Monash University where she delivered the master of public history course. She is also a former Chair of the Heritage Council of Victoria. Jan was appointed to The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust in 2010.



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