

DONNA DAVIES

Fatal Fall off a Cliff

The tragic end to Nellie Dunn's sad young life seemed such a terrible misfortune... Nellie and her family left England to come to Australia when Nellie and her younger brother were children. They came in search of a dream, a better life and a future. Nellie's father quickly found work in a factory and settled his little family in the working class area of Richmond in Victoria. Nellie and Patrick, her younger brother, were enrolled in school, and Nellie's mother took in laundry to help support the dream of a better life for Nellie and Patrick.

Nellie was happy, she loved school and learning, and she found she could do the work with ease and great accomplishment. However what was even more alluring for Nellie was the love she felt for the sea! Patrick and Nellie would visit the seaside at every opportunity, and Nellie filled her free time reading stories and poems and newspaper articles about the sea and deep sea diving.

When Nellie turned fourteen the family decided they could no longer support their two children at school. Mrs Dunn's home laundry service was becoming far too much for her to manage alone. So Nellie was forced to leave the school she loved so much and stay at home to help her mother.

Nellie watched Patrick continue his studies, and with Nellie's help he did exceedingly well. The day finally came when Patrick finished school and was accepted to join a deep sea diving project which took him on many fabulous voyages and adventures.

While Nellie was bursting with pride for her brother, part of her soul began to fade. Still working so hard alongside her mother every day, she continued to read articles in the newspapers about the sea and all its magic.

Nellie reached the decision she was going to leave her safe family home in Richmond and travel to Sydney, where she believed opportunities for a young woman would be far more advantageous.

She quickly found a position as a domestic servant in a beautiful home along Sydney's wonderful beaches. With every moment of free time Nellie had, she would

find herself strolling along the cliffs, or simply sitting and looking out to sea dreaming of the life it could give her.

During this time Nellie wrote countless letters to apply for positions of acceptance in the many shipping companies in New South Wales, with the hope of one day being able to join Patrick in the world of deep sea diving and voyaging. However, with every letter of expectation she posted, a letter of rejection was returned.

Nellie's heart was beginning to grow heavy from all the rebuffing she received and she went walking along her beloved cliffs at Waverly to hold her heavy heart gently, and allow her eyes to fill with tears of deep sadness blurring her vision – when she stumbled and fell to her death.

And there Nellie became one with the place of her heart's greatest desire in her demise.

On that very day yet another letter had arrived for Nellie announcing her acceptance into the world of deep sea diving, she was to become Sydney's first woman invited into this exciting new world.....