

MARITIME HERITAGE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

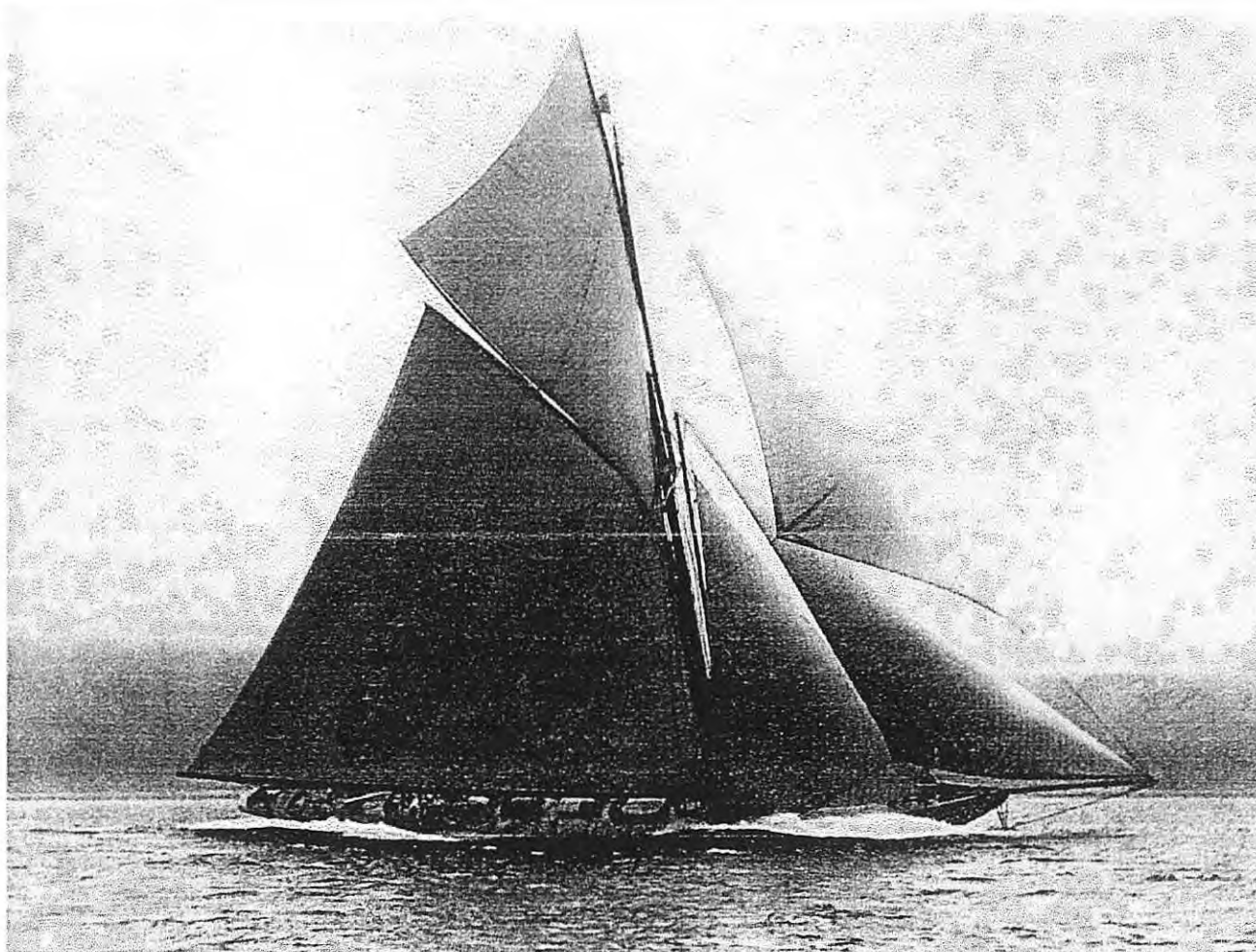
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***Satanita* reaching at full speed**
See article on page 13



The Maritime Heritage Association Journal is the official newsletter of the Maritime Heritage Association of Western Australia, Incorporated.

All of the Association's incoming journals, newsletters, etc. are now archived with *Ray Miller* who may be contacted on 9337 2614, and are available to members on loan. Please note that to access the videos, journals, library books, etc it is necessary to phone ahead on that number.

(If you have an unwanted collection of magazines of a maritime nature, then perhaps its time to let others enjoy reading it. Contact the Association; we may be interested in archiving the collection.)

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EDITORIAL

Jill and I have just returned from a few weeks in NSW. This was a trip to visit relatives and friends with a little sight-seeing thrown in. We got as far as Charlotte Pass, which is as high as you can drive a car up Mount Kosciuszko. As can be seen in the photo of Jill, there was quite a lot of snow on the ground even in mid-November. It did not snow while we were there but the sleet was very cold and wet.



Can anyone explain how a nameplate from the *Krait* came to be on display at a small country museum in Victoria? (Corryong - miles from the sea) The only information given is that the nameplate was presented by the late Tom Mitchell, MLA, soon after World War II.



**Merry Christmas
and
a Happy and Safe New Year**



Presidential Tidings

Tidings: from the Old English Tidung meaning news and information. (Ed.)

Since giving the sea away I have been fully occupied in researching the whaling industry off the South Coast of New Holland and haven't had much time for anything else. Nor have I missed the sea. Not one little bit !!

I keep in contact through emails with a couple of the lads that are still serving aboard my last ship and I hear of the typhoons and storms that they are being battered by and all it does is raise a smile. Been there and done that !!

I don't often get down to Fremantle but when I do I always seem to be able to make the time to have a quick look at the harbour and the ships therein. But on my later forays in that direction it is becoming more and more noticeable that there is a distinct lack of shipping using this port.

I well remember the 1960's when the harbour was full and ships anchored in the roads, sometimes for weeks, depending on the nature of the cargoes. Every day saw the famous funnel colours occupying the wharves, Blue Flue, Blue Star, The City Boats, Bakke's, State Ships,

Wilhelmsons, etc.

The odd B.P. Tanker tied up at North Wharf to discharge near the grain berths and on the opposite side, at the Passenger Terminal, the liners and migrant ships disgorged their human cargoes almost on a daily basis.

Just north of the Fremantle Railway station and long the side of the road were huge piles of sandalwood logs awaiting export to Asia and in the late summer great lines of grain wagons pulled by steam and diesel engines pulled into the Silos on the north side to unload the bulk grain, while on the Vic Quay side the wagons were loaded with bagged grains.

Today it seems a great void, an empty stretch of water, with only the odd very smelly livestock vessel loading live animals and the weird shaped floating boxes called car carriers and the equally horribly shaped box boats.

What a difference 40 years has made in the shape of shipping and port usage !!!

Are Some Ship Names Unlucky?

The German armoured cruiser *Blücher* was so badly shelled by the British battle cruisers at the battle of the Dogger Bank during World War I that on 23 January 1915 it rolled over and sank, with the loss of over 900 crew.

During World War II the German heavy cruiser *Blücher* rolled over and sank on 9 April 1940, with the loss of over 1,000 crew. This time the foe was a Norwegian fort (the Oscarsborg fort) at Oslofjord, which sent two 11 inch shells and two torpedoes at almost point blank range into the *Blücher* during the German invasion of Norway.

I can't find any reference to this name being used again.

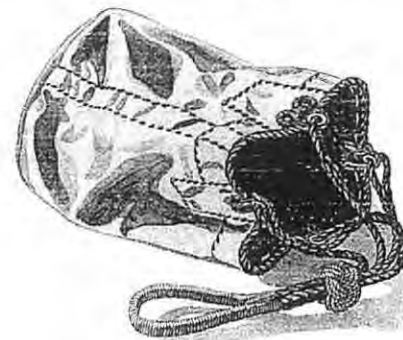
(During the battle of Waterloo in 1815 Marshall Blücher and his Prussian army fought alongside Wellington and assisted in the defeat of Napoleon)



The Ditty Bag

An occasional collection of nautical trivia to inform, astound, amuse and inspire.

(The inspiration could take the form of contributions to this page!)



In 1903 the Admiralty purchased a new survey ship. It was the 270 ton, 185.5 feet long 3-masted schooner, *Consuelo*, and had been the luxury yacht of millionaire tycoon W.K. Vanderbilt. After conversion at Portsmouth it was commissioned HMS Sealark, and after various duties in both the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean, arrived in Australia in 1907. Sealark spent eleven years surveying off north east Australia before being sold out of service to Patrick Steamship Company, Sydney, in 1919. It was used in the coastal trade up until at least the Second World War. The original figurehead of *Consuelo* Vanderbilt is preserved at the Garden Island Naval Dockyard, NSW.

The Australian Station was established by the Admiralty as a separate command in 1859. The boundaries were:

On the north by the 10 degree parallel of south latitude, on the east by the 170 degree meridian of west longitude, on the south by the Antarctic Circle and on the west by the 75 degree meridian of east longitude.

The granite stone for the Sydney Harbour Bridge all came from Moruya, a small port on the south coast of New South Wales. Because the thousands of tons of stone were taken to Sydney by ships a reasonably substantial port had to be built at Moruya, and this is now the centre of a thriving fishing industry.

Some idea of the hard work involved in being a crew member on one of the barges on the east coast of England can be judged from the following story.

Nelson Keeble, with four young children and his rent in arrears, undertook to unload the cargo from the barge *Memory* to supplement his meagre income from wages of about twenty to twenty five shillings a week. He off-loaded two thousand 140

pound bags of flour in a single day. Working entirely alone he shifted 125 tons, for which he was paid the sum of 15 shillings and ninepence. This calculates to 1½ pence per ton of flour landed. When he finally staggered home his pretty wife asked, "What do you want to do tonight?" "Go to bed."

"That," she replied tartly, "is all you think about."

Drabler. An additional part of a sail sometimes laced to the bottom of the bonnet on a square sail to further increase the sail area. Found on very old craft only.

The State Ship *Kangaroo* was the first Australian owned diesel motor ship. The Western Australian Government bought her in late 1915.

Put through the hoop. To go through the hoop is to undergo an ordeal, usually not a pleasant one. In the days when the hammocks were stowed in a ship's netting to increase the protection of the men working on the upper deck in battle, it was vital that all hammocks should be lashed into uniform size. This was effected in the "wooden walls" by making all hammocks pass through a hooped gauge. A careless lash-up meant going through the inevitable ordeal.

Blazers. The gaily striped, coloured and crested jackets did not originate in a rowing club as is often maintained. In 1845, when there was no uniform for the lower deck, captains vied with each other in inventing rigs for the members of their own boat's crew. Wealthy captains sometimes did this for the entire ship's company. Captain J.W. Washington, RN, commanding *HMS Blazer* outfitted his boat's crew in blue and white striped jackets. They so took the fancy of the fleet that the gaily coloured jackets were widely adopted, becoming known by the name of the ship.



Little Dirk Uplift

Ross Shardlow informs us of the latest situation regarding *Little Dirk*.

Mr Ray Fidock from the Carnarvon Beach Holiday Resort, reports that "*Little Dirk* has at last been picked up and taken for restoration."

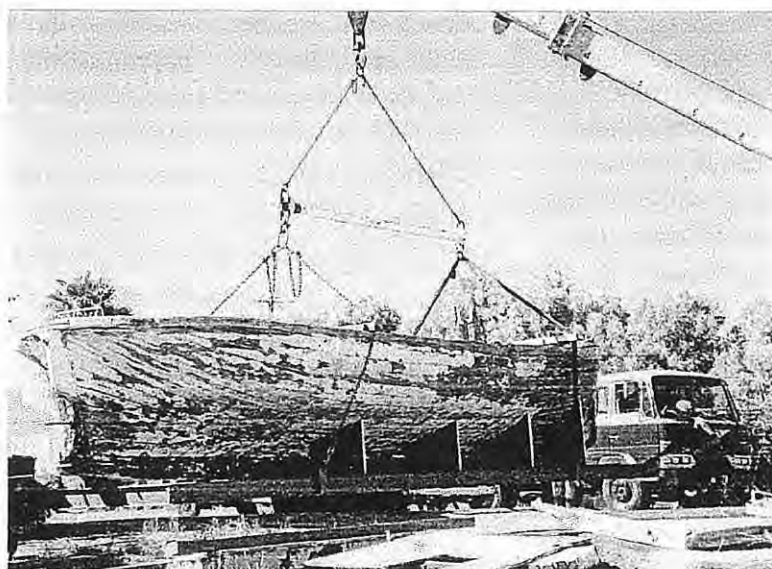
When *Little Dirk* arrived at Carnarvon from Sharks Bay, some years ago, she was used as a tender to a harbour dredge that was engaged with developing a new yacht marina. At that time *Little Dirk* was fitted with an unsightly and makeshift cabin with an oversize engine that severely affected her trim aft. She only worked in that role for a year or so before being stripped of her cumbersome engine and abandoned in a creek at Pelican Point, adjacent to Ray Fidock's Holiday Resort.

Several attempts by Mr Fidock to locate and alert her owners to the neglect and imminent demise of *Little Dirk* proved fruitless and she eventually foundered in the tidal creek as much from the accumulation of rain water as to her seams opening up. As the owners made no claim to her, Ray Fidock, an ex-Navy man "with a good eye for a boat," and one time repairer of luggers, salvaged *Little Dirk* using tractor tyres and drums to refloat her. She was then lifted from the creek and placed on the hard standing next to the resort. This is where Ross and Barbara Shardlow saw the thirty-foot Shark Bay cutter built by Robin Gourley in the 1920s. Through Mr Fidock's persuasion, Ross and Barb alerted various parties with the hope of recording, if not preserving, the cartwheel-stern boat.

In March 2001, four members of the MHA, with

the assistance of Ray Fidock, lifted the lines from *Little Dirk*, surveyed her timbers and assessed her condition (Vol. 12, No. 2). Her plight was brought to the attention of the WA Maritime Museum and the Shire of Shark Bay, but it was the Carnarvon Heritage Group that responded with active interest: furthermore, their heritage precinct was only a couple of kilometres down the road. The precinct includes the mile long Carnarvon Jetty (1904), now restored and open to the public; the Ocean Tramway and operational *Kimberley* steam train; the *Kormoran* lifeboat, lighthouse keeper's cottage and heritage museum.

Ray Miller designed a purpose built cradle that enabled the whole structure to be lifted onto a transport jinker without disturbing *Little Dirk's* fragile condition. The Carnarvon Heritage Group, with assistance from Lottery Commission grants and country town community support, built the cradle and successfully relocated *Little Dirk* to the heritage precinct. Following Ray Miller's recommendations, the next phase of the operation is to harden and increase the density of her timbers; to encapsulate the dry rot, and prevent further deterioration. *Little Dirk* will be temporarily placed under existing shelter on the site but a new shed planned for the expansion of the precinct will give her a permanent home. Once the timbers have been treated, a reconstruction programme will be undertaken to replace severely damaged or missing structures including her mast, spars and rigging; and although *Little Dirk* may never go to sea again, we can at least give her the appearance of dignity.



Photograph courtesy
Ray Fidock
Carnarvon Beach Holiday Resort.



Thames Barges

The fourth part of Jack Gardiner's articles on these famous craft.

The sails were what made the barges unique, they were all rigged exactly alike. The top's'l sheet for example was always on the bottom of the sprit and the vang falls on the chocks of the main horse. The river barges never had a bowsprit and some of them that worked above bridges a lot, never had topmasts either. They were called stumpies and were not all slow sailors either. The jib was stowed by lashing it to the bowsprit that was made to pull up and stand like another mast. The jib halyards were unhooked and hooked into an eye bolt on the bowsprit end. The bobstay worked on a tackle through a sheave low down the stem. There was a spare chain in the middle of the span so that it could be pulled up to lay against the stem so that the anchor cable did not ride against it.

The jib itself was not tanned like the rest of the sails. The tanning was a mixture of cutch (whatever that is) red ochre, linseed, fish oil and salt water. This mixture never completely dried so your working overalls became the same colour, and waterproof, down the front. The big forestaysail was permanently sheeted to the fore horse which was a steel pipe just the right height to cop you shins in the dark. On the leach of the sail at about eye height was a large cringle, and on the forward shroud opposite it was a cleat wired to the shroud. Spliced round the shroud was a length of rope which in use was passed through the cringle from outside to inside and made fast onto the cleat when tacking ('turning' to a bargeman). The mate stood by this bow-line and when she was head to the wind held on to it so that it blew the head round. The trick was to time it so the head did not get too far before letting it go. It went over with an almighty crash and the skipper was already checking her from going round too far. She would have gone two or three of her own lengths to windward while head to wind. A barge, specially loaded, had a lot of inertia. The little mizzen was sheeted to the rudder so when the helm was put over to tack the sail went over with it, and with the bowline and the mizzen both turning her, tacking was a very positive operation. When close tacking both leeboards were left down. They were suspended by a J shaped pin

into a link, and the weather one just trailed away from the side like a broken wing, without any strain on anything.

The topsail was the working sail, usually the first one set. It was fitted with a clewline, which gather all three corners together, and was hooped permanently to the topmast. When clewed it hung in a bag shaped lump on the port side shrouds and had a spare length of rope to lash it to the shroud to keep it quiet. The halyard came down to a three barrellled winch; one for the top's'l, one for the jib and the other for the big forestays'l. Lowering any of these was done by shipping the handle and turning enough to lift the pawl then holding the brake and lowering slowly. The brake (very ingenious) was a short length of hemp rope with three turns round the drive shaft and a short tail to hold on to. There was enough friction to hold a heavy sail easily. There was one thing to watch with the tops'l, when it had been raining the bag shape with open end upward collected quite a lot of water. So when setting the sail the sheet was pulled out first as it was on the other side of the mast and the winch was right under the sail (one was only caught once). The tops'l always seemed to find any wind there was over the buildings on the river banks and would be pulling when the main was hanging limp. The mains'l itself was the biggest of the lot and was controlled by a wire main brail and two peak brails of rope and two lowers, the wire went direct to a winch and to set it the rope brails let go off the cleats on the shrouds. Then the sail was half lowered on the brail winch, then the mainsheet block carried aft and hooked onto the traveller on the mainhorse, then it was lowered the rest of the way while the sheet was pulled in. The pin of the block (a large two sheave) extended out of each side so that the fall was belayed on the block itself, and the spare of the fall just left loose at the aft end of the main hatch. The last jobs were to adjust the vang falls and to tighten down the little tackle at the tack of the sail. This setting the mains'l was a two handed job in anything of a breeze. The little mizzen only had one brail and a sheet. In the days when barges were steered with a long tiller they used to carry a little jib on the tiller too, and the mizzen mast was



set on the rudder itself. All in all the work on board was not hard although the hours could be long sometimes. The pay was comparable with work ashore but living aboard a coaster had the disadvantage of seldom being in the same place for more than a few days. I suppose that if you thought it was a disadvantage you would not be there anyway. Sometimes you were at your home port and got to see your girl friend, and often you were only an hours journey on a train away from home if you could get the day or two off. The barge crews never worked cargo, except the sandies, which were owned by the skippers. I don't know how they kept their mates at that job. They usually worked down on the lower reaches of the river and occasionally a sheep went missing off the adjacent paddocks, so it was the thing to do to shout 'Baa' as you sailed past them just to hear the language in reply. A conversation could be carried on between two barges at quite a distance because there were no engines running and for all her size a sailorman was very silent in motion. In fact down in the foc'sle there was very little difference in noise between sailing and laying at anchor in a tideway, and there was no need to shout from forward to aft on deck. You forget how quiet a big sailing craft is; the noisiest thing is the swish of water at the bow. In bad weather of course there is noise from the weather but apart from the 'thunk' of the steering gear moving with the waves the ship does not make much of her own. Deep loaded (one foot of freeboard) the seas wash across the lee deck. To get aft you go across the fore hatch then onto the main hatch as quick as possible and so to aft. The mooring ropes and spare gear on the main hatch never got disturbed except once we had to lash it down. We had porridge, toast and tea for dinner that day, cooked on the little coal fire in the cabin. Getting into the foc'sle was almost impossible without getting soaked and it was cold. We had several birds land on the ship exhausted, I suppose they had been blown across from France. We sat them on the brass rail of the mantle in the cabin and they just sat there looking miserable. They all recovered and we opened the skylight and let them fly when the gale eased. The water on deck was still ankle deep by the time it got back to the wheelhouse. The cabin scuttle hatch had deep coamings, the builders must have known what they were doing. There was no need to scrub the decks when that

lot had passed over. We could not carry the navigation lights and the skipper had a big electric torch and couple of white flares handy in the wheelhouse. I don't know what would have happened if the other ship never had any lights either, cos it was very dark that night. We got round the corner at Dover and anchored off Deal, with all the chain out and a rope spring on it. That was the only time we took turns to stand an anchor watch. Any other time we hoisted the riding light and all turned in till tide time. If the barge was aground the mate rigged the alarm clock which was the lead line and a bucket arranged so that as the barge floated ('flet' to a bargeman) the lead line pulled the bucket off the hatch; simple things are always best. The skipper did not need a clock, he always seemed to be around when a waypoint was coming up. We did not call them waypoints, back then, we just named the light or buoy or whatever. Back then the skipper had to serve a seven year apprenticeship to the river. Generally on a barge but after that he was free to work at anything as barge skipper, tugman, lighterman, wherryman, ferryman or anything else. He was known as a 'Freeman of the river'. I think just before the war the apprenticeship was reduced to five years to match the other trades, as a lot of boys stayed at school till aged 16, instead of leaving at 14.

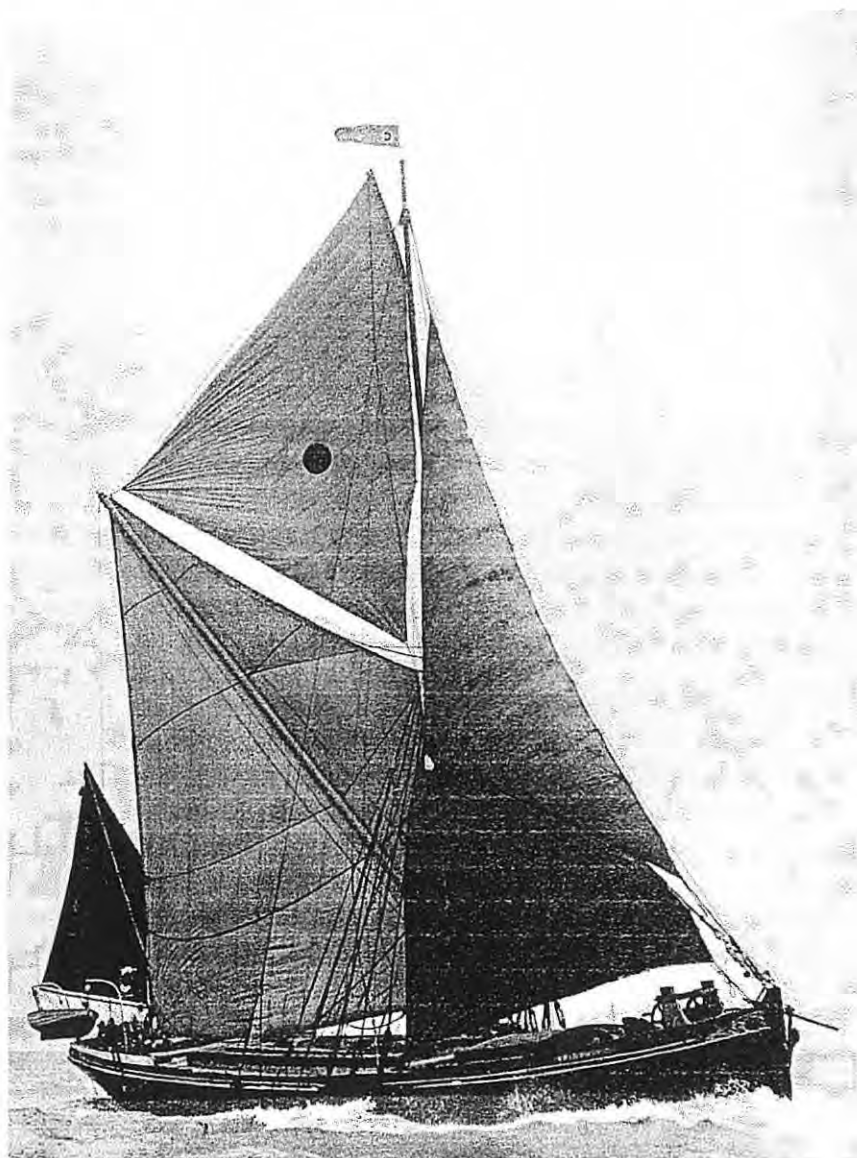
The only things moving on the river nowadays are the tourist launches and an occasional lighter built to take containers, and another built for bulk cement, but this would only be one or two in a tide. The little police launches are still around. The barge crews all seemed to have a good relationship with the police who would always give a pull or push if a barge was in difficulty. If a dinghy went adrift and was picked up by the police they would return it to the barge, or the bargeyard where it belonged. I think I have mentioned this before in this screed.

The steering gear was a heavy, approximately two inch, shaft with two opposed threads. The rudder pintle was a long bolt and the rudder could lift up and down about one foot. The shaft bearings were open topped to allow this. It was so that if the rudder sat on a rock or anything it could lift as the barge sat down in her berth. The little wheel behind the steering one was the brake. A band



brake working on a square thread. The steering wheel on the coasters was always wooden, but a lot of the river barges had cast iron ones. They had four spokes curved like a letter 's' and a heavy rim and were known as chaffcutters. They had a row of wooden handles set in holes round the rim. A lot of the skippers preferred them because they could spin them like a flywheel when tacking. Some of the older barges had drum and chain onto a short tiller steering gear. Not all of the barges were smart and well painted, some had advertisements painted on their sails, and a lot of firms had their logo on the topsails. Some were stripped and used as lighters in quiet places, especially on the Medway where they had to be steered behind the tug. Some of the lighters were fitted with rudders. There were two or three barges in the ragstone trade from Maidstone way up the Medway above Rochester. They loaded at a quarry where the chalk had changed to

limestone. It was just tipped on board and must have played havoc with the ceilings and keelsons. Then they drifted down with the tide, and I expect with a bit of rowing and poling, till they had shot Rochester bridges. There were two side by side rail and road bridges, then they heaved the gear up and took off for the Essex coastal sea walls. The place to unload was marked with two flags and the barge left a kedge anchor a long way off shore and went right in alongside the wall. Leese or not made no difference. The river conservancy had a gang of men come down as soon as she had dried, and they simply threw the stones (about the size of a football or bigger) overboard. It had to be done in one tide, the barge would not lay in the berth light. She would kedge off to the anchor they had left out and set off back to get another lot. A real interesting job, especially trying to get off a lee shore in a strong wind.





WHALING IN THE NORTH-WEST

Rod Dickson is currently doing a great deal of research on the early whaling in Western Australia, particularly the south coast. But as this article shows, he has obtained a lot of information on other areas.

What is not generally known is that the American Whalers were among the first to have regular contact with the Aborigines of the north west coast during their whaling cruises along the coast and amongst the islands offshore. Following are excerpts from the log books of the *Young Phoenix* of New Bedford, Captain Sherman, and of the *South America* of New Bedford, Captain Washington T. Walker.

These men had an intimate knowledge of the islands, reefs and rocks along the northern coastline and more importantly knew the tides and currents. Consequently they were able to sail blithely in between and behind islands and reefs in shallow water with confidence knowing just where the whales were to be found.

[The spelling in these logs is as written.]

YOUNG PHOENIX American whaling ship of 377 t. of New Bedford Capt. Sherman.

The *Young Phoenix* sailed from New Bedford on the 11th of December 1840 bound for the Indian and Pacific Ocean whaling grounds. In July 1841 the ship was whaling off the northwest coast and amongst the islands offshore. At the end of her cruise, on the 4th of August 1844 she had taken 2,750 barrels of whale oil.

July 16th, 1841; Light airs from the east. Ship heading to the north. Saw a large reef bearing NW from Trimouille Island, 15 miles distant. Mid part, light airs, steering E by N. At 6am the island to SSW, 20 miles.

Wed, July 18th; Gentle breezes from the east and pleasant weather. The Rosemary Islands in sight to the SSE. At 6am strong breezes from the east. Steered the ship in the bay betwixt Rosemary and Legendre Islands, went

up in 7 fathoms, nothing. 3 miles off the mainland saw no humpbacks in the bay. Veered ship to the north and came out again. Saw several whales of the entrance to the bay. Latter part fresh breezes from the east. Ship running out of the bay. So ends. Lat by obs. 20. 26 South; Long. 116. 15 East.

Fri, July 20th; Light winds from the N W and pleasant. At 11am steered the ship up in Mermaid Straits. Latter part, ship to the west of Legendre Island, 5 miles distant. So ends.

Sat, July 21st; First part of these 24 hours gentle breezes from the east. At 3pm came to anchor in Mermaid Straits in 9 fathoms of water. At daylight lowered the boats to cruise for humpbacks. So ends.

Sun, July 22nd; Gentle breezes and pleasant weather. At 6am took the anchor and ran up to the east side of Rosemary Island and at 11am came to anchor in 7 fathoms of water. So it ends.

[For the next three weeks the ship lay at anchor off Rosemary Island and each day the four boats set off to hunt for passing whales, which once killed were towed back to the ship, sometimes up to ten miles by rowing. It was common for two or three boats to lash themselves bow to stern for the towing. After these three weeks had passed the ship took her anchor again and cruised through the islands before heading towards Timor]

SOUTH AMERICA American whaling ship of 606 t. of New Bedford Capt. W. T. Walker.

This ship sailed from New Bedford on the 3rd of October 1855 bound for, supposedly the North Pacific, but, as was so often the case, the ship went elsewhere as the captain thought fit and where he expected to find his whales at



a given time of the year. The captains of these ships were well aware of the migration patterns of the whales and knew where and at what time of the year the whales would congregate to mate or calve. In the case of this ship Captain Washington began his cruise around the Crozet Islands and then later sailed across to the Desolation Islands, (known today as the Kerguelen Islands). Leaving there he went to St. Paul and Amsterdam Islands where the ship did really well and caught quite a number of whales.

The ship then came to the North West Coast of New Holland where they stayed from the end of March 1857 until the end of August 1857. The end of her cruise came on the 5th of May 1859 when she arrived at her home port with a catch of 2,200 barrels of right whale oil and 1,500Ibs of whalebone. As well as this quantity the captain "sent home" by another vessel, 138 barrels of sperm whale oil, 800 barrels of right whale oil and 37,535lbs of whalebone, making a very successful and profitable voyage. Captain Walker fell ill during the voyage and was relieved by the Mate during 1858. This was this ships final whaling voyage as she was sold in 1860. She then became the first vessel in the "STONE FLEET".

Sat, April 1st, 1857; Manned the lookouts at first light. Hands at work about the riging. The slopchest opened to supply the crew with clothing.

Sun, April 2nd; WASHINGTON T. WALKERS birth day. The crew spend their time in their way, writing to themselves, except keeping the ship on her course.

Fri April 17th; Sent down the foresail and commenced repairing it. Overhauled the fastening of the larbord boat, painted it inside and put it on the crains again and took in the bow boat and took out the sheathing. Pleasant weather, steering Eby N ½ N.

Tues, April 21st; The winds morderate, painting the bow boat. Had a gam with the *Twilight*, Captain Thompkins, of New Bedford. [This ship was on her maiden voyage

having just been built at Fairhaven.]

Wed, April 22nd; Pleasant weather. Ships *Twilight* and *John & Edward*, Capt. Cathcart insight.

Fri, April 24th; Brokeout for sand and water and commenced washing the ship inside and outside. The Bark, *Elisha Dunbar*, Captain Ellis, and 2 ships in sight.

Sat, April 25th; Strong breaze from the SE. Employed in varyous ways on bord the ship.

Wed, April 29th; Broke out the sailpen and overhauled the sails. Ripped up an old sail and varyous other jobs. Spoke the Bark *Montgomery*, [*Montgomery*] Capt. William Cushing, of New Bedford

Fri, May 1st; Fine and pleasant weather today. Nothing in sight of the whale kind. In the afternoon spoke the *Mary* of New Bedford, Captain William Slocum, 10 months out. Employed in setting up rigging, drawing and knotting ropeyarns and varyous other work too numerous to mention.

Tues, May 5th; Pleasant weather, employed at ships duty. Had a gamin with the *Congress*, *Europa* and *Twilight*.

Wed, May 6th; Pleasant breeze from the SE. Broke out for water and engaged in varyous ways at ships duty. About 11am saw whales and lowered all the boats. The larboard boat struck and they killed it and took it alongside and got everything ready for cutting. [The whale made 55 barrels of oil.]

Sun, May 17th; At 7am raised whales. Got breakfast and lowered three boats in pursuit of them. The larboard boat struck and killed a whale and the starboard boat struck but the iron drew. Got the whale alongside and got ready to cut in. [This whale made 48 barrels.]

Tues, May 26th; Fitted headropes to carry in the boats and put on a new wheelrope. In company with the *Lapwing*, the *John & Edward* and the *Minerva Smyth*, all of New Bedford. At work in the rigging



and commenced to make a new scuttlebut.

Mon, June 1st; Brokeout and put the new scuttlebut between decks and drove the hoops on the bread cask. At work in the rigging and making rovings. The carpenter making a new bench and a hen coop. Spoke the *Martha* of Fairhaven.

Sat, June 20th; Made the land of New Holland and ran down to the North West Cape.

Sun, June 21st; Two boats went ashore to the Murion Islands to collect turtles but caught none. At 5pm got away for the Rosemary Island.

Mon, June 22nd; Strong breeze from the SE, the ship steering to the NE. Saw a school of blackfish. The Blacksmith at work making turtle gear and shark hooks.

Tuesday June 23rd 1857; Saw the Rosemary Island at 3am. Ran in and came to anchor. At 2pm lowered the boats and went inshore in pursuit of turtles and caught none.

Saw two negroes on logs in the water and using their hands or padles or oars and saw another on shore. They were intirely naked. They came to the boats and got some bread and water and caught two craw fish and gave them to us.

We came on board again and lay there that knight.

At 5am next morning called all hands and got under way and stood off shore on the wind.

Sat, June 27th; Light pleasant breezes. Nothing about. At sunset came to anchor off Turtle Island.

Sun, June 28th; Lowered 2 boats and went on shore after turtles. Got a full supply, came on board, got dinner and lowered for a whale without success. Caught 2 sharks.

Mon, June 29th; Employed in varyous ways to numerous to mention such as whaling, sharking, carpentering and sailorizing. The captain with a boats crew went about 15 miles for a gam.

Tues, June 30th; Strong breeze from SE. Sent down the main tegan, [topgallant] mast and royal. Spliced on a skysail mast and sent them up again and set up the rigging.

Wed, July 1st; A.M. Wayed the anchor and made sail and stood along shore to the west. At 9am lowered for whales and came on board again without success. At 3pm let go anchor, clewed up the sails and lowered again. The waist boat struck a whale and held on for about half an hour when the iron drew.

Toes, July 7th; Took the anchor and made sail. Cruised off the island, [Bedout Island]. About 2pm let go the anchor and lowered 4 boats and went on shore for the purpose of examining a reck. Nothing of much account and came on board again arriving about 8pm. [this wreckage was from the American whaler *North Star* which was wrecked in 1856.]

Wed, July 8th; Took the anchor and stood in towards Turtle Island and lowered two boats. The waist boat struck the whale and the larboard boat assisted in killing it. The other 2 boats helped tow the whale to the ship. Let go he anchor near Big Turtle Island. [This was a 60 barrel whale.]

Thurs, July 9th; Cut in the whale. Starboard boat went on shore and caught three turtles.

Sat, July 11th; Took the anchor in the morning and made sail, whaleing all about. Lowered 2 boats, the starboard boat struck, lowered two more boats and they helped in kiling the whale. Anchored the whale until the tide made fair and then took the anchor of the whale and let gothe anchor at the ship and the four boats towed it alongside and got it made fast about 10pm. [A 60 barrel whale and another the same size was caught on the 14th.]

Tues, July 21st; Lowered and struck a whale and towed it to the ship and began cutting in. The



Iowa, of Fairhaven, Captain Mooers in company.

Sun, July 26th; Boiling the whale we got yesterday, [48 barrels], the wind blowing strong. At 9am the cable parted so we double reefed the topsails and stood off shore.

Mon, July 27th; The Rosemary Islands being in sight and plenty of whales but so rough we could not lower to go awhaling so we stood to the eastwards.

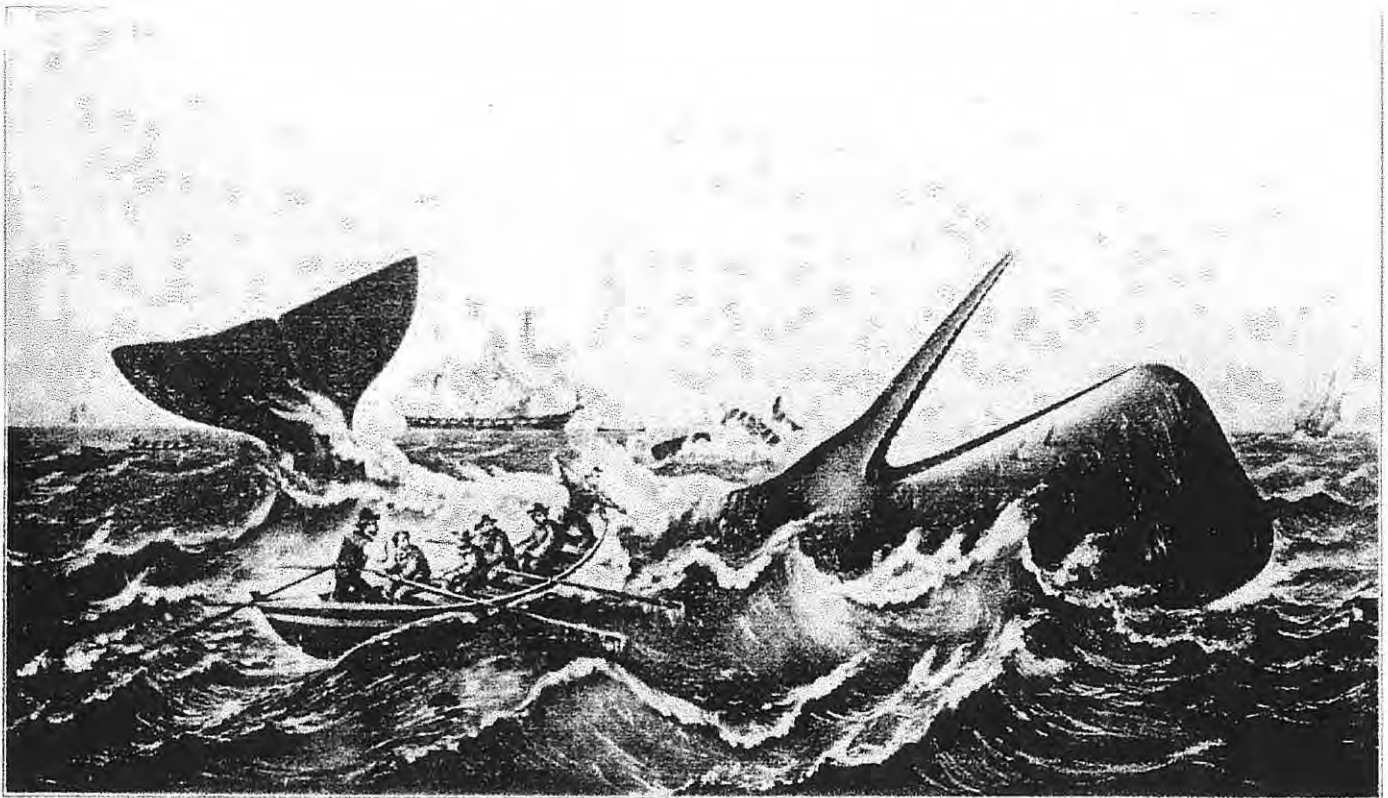
[During the next six days the crew struck and killed a further five humpback whales giving 215 barrels of oil. The *Iowa* was in sight and was catching as well.]

Fri, August 21st; Took the anchor and stood in between the two Turtle Islands. Saw a whale near

the main land, the larboard boat struck the whale and the waist boat lowered and assisted in killing. Took it alongside and cut it in. [A 65 barrel whale. On Sunday 23rd they got 2 whales giving 75 barrels of oil.]

Tues, September 1st; Took our anchor and stood to the westward. The Bark, *Columbus* of New London in company, Captain Ward. Lowered the boats for whales. The larboard boat got one and took it to the ship and we cut it in by eyelight. [23 barrels]

There are many more logbooks in the P.M.B. Series which show the American whaling ships operating along our northern coasts well before history tells us that "white man" moved north to conquer the vast empty spaces.



A whaling scene from an 1862 lithograph showing the capture of a sperm whale.



Loss of *Valkyrie*

The following is from the *Yachting World* magazine of 13 July 1894 and reports the sinking of the large racing yacht *Valkyrie*.

Loss of *Valkyrie*

Narrative By An Eye Witness

All eyes were centred on *Britannia* breaking the line first. She was followed a minute later by *Vigilant*. *Britannia* immediately broke tack, and took a small board in shore to get on the weather of *Vigilant*. Both then bore away on the starboard tack for the Cloch. Meantime *Valkyrie*, which had been reaching for the starting line and had attained a capital position, had her progress arrested by the extraordinary movement of *Satanita*.

This boat was bearing down on the port tack but as *Valkyrie* had the right of the road she was kept straight, but it was evident *Satanita* was being closely hauled to luff round. However, one of the cruisers seemed to be in the way, and *Satanita*'s helm was put about strongly to clear her. This she managed, but there was no room left for her to get round the stern of *Valkyrie*, and loud shouts came from the surrounding boats as a collision was inevitable. The helmsman shouted to *Valkyrie* to abandon all rules and save a smash. This cry, however, came too late, as in a moment *Satanita* crashed into *Valkyrie* amidships, striking her with tremendous force slightly abaft the main mast. *Satanita*, which was closely hauled, appeared to be running at a speed of 12 knots. This was evinced by the fact that she was sailing deep into the rail.

Both vessels locked together, their riggings getting completely mixed up. They hugged each other for a couple of minutes and matters were made worse by *Valkyrie*'s main boom gibing. This almost tore the topmast out of Lord Dunraven's cutter, and all was now a scene of disorder, and the rigging of *Valkyrie* seemed to be falling down upon the decks. Ultimately *Valkyrie* got clear of *Satanita*, but, being a helpless wreck, she bore right down on the starboard quarter of the s.s. *Vanduaara*. Besides carrying away several yards of that steam yacht's rails, and completely smashing her small steam launch, she cut up her plank deck with as much apparent ease as a knife goes through new cheese.

Valkyrie appeared now to be settling down, as much water continued to rush into her main cabin. Some of the men scrambled on board *Vanduaara* and the s.s. *Hebe*, while others took to the water, but were speedily picked up by boats put off from the surrounding yachts. Lord Dunraven, who had been at the tiller of *Valkyrie*, was picked up and taken aboard the s.s. *Hebe*. Lord and Lady Lennox were also saved but I don't think they were ever in the water. Her ladyship in the panic on board, of course, had to stand some knocking about, but, so far as I could learn, she had behaved calmly, and was saved by a *Vanduaara* boat, which came alongside.

As *Valkyrie* went down there was a loud "Oh" from all on shore, ladies, gentlemen and staid old sailors becoming momentarily as pale as death. The cry of all was "Oh, have any gone down with the yacht?" but, soon the intelligence spread that every soul was saved. *Valkyrie*, on which Britain had pinned her faith, had now sunk, and was lying in 20 fathoms of water.

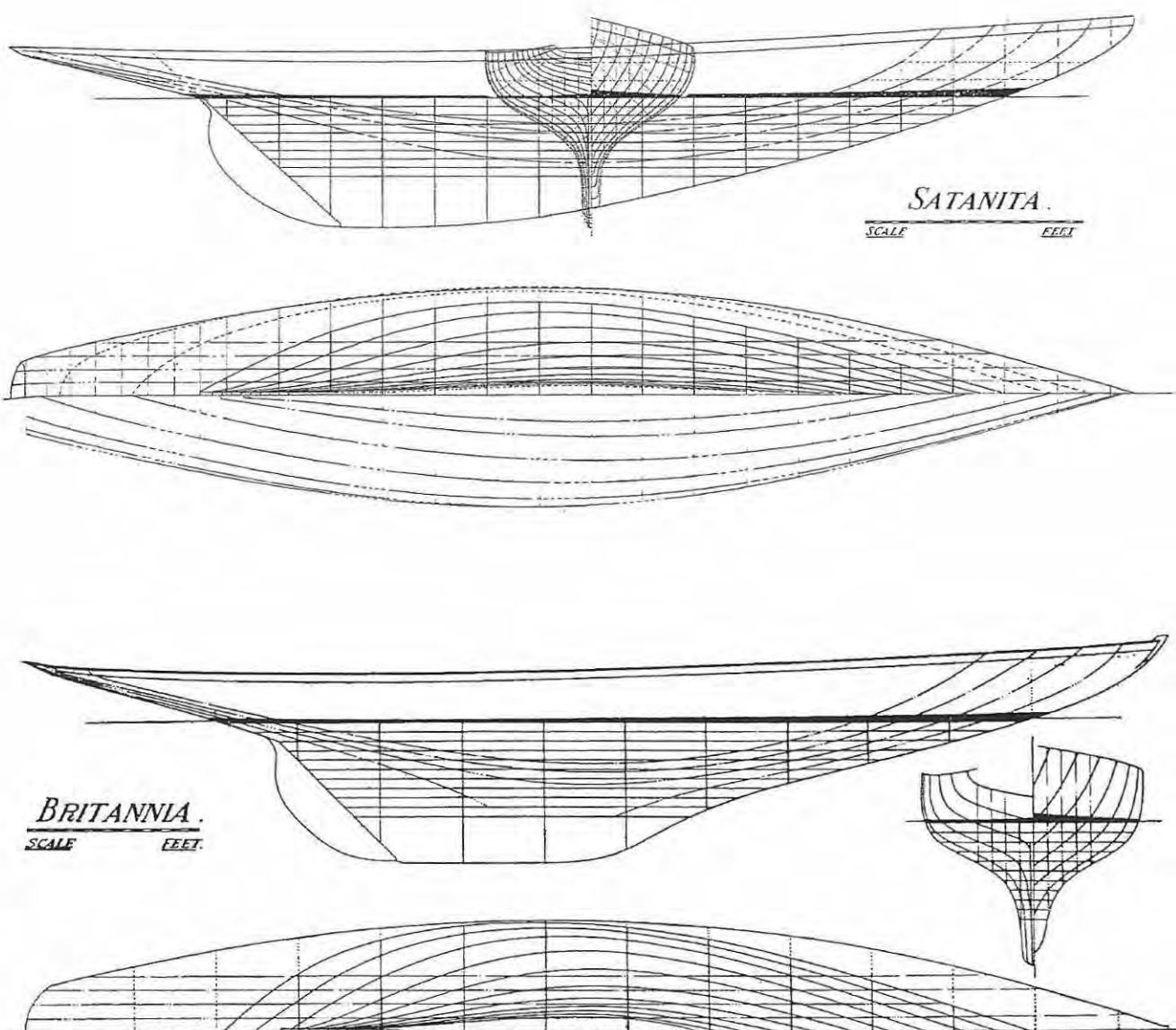
Editor's Note:

The above report is not correct in stating that every soul was saved because when *Valkyrie* fouled the s.s. *Vanduaara*, one of the *Valkyrie*'s crew, William Brown of Rowhedge, was crushed between the two vessels and later died. Some particulars of the two vessels that collided are shown below. *Valkyrie* was actually the second yacht of that name. A third was built in 1895.

<i>Satanita</i>:	
Designer	Joseph Soper, Southampton
Builder	J & G Fay & Co, Southampton
Rig	Cutter (the fastest cutter on a reach ever built – 16 knots)
LOA	131' 6"
LWL	93' 6"
Beam	24' 6"
Draft	14' 6"



Displacement	126 tons.	Beam	23' 8"
Sail area	10,094 sq ft	Draft	15' 1½"
<i>Valkyrie II:</i>		Displacement	154 tons
Designer	George Watson, Glasgow	Sail area	10,327 sq ft
Builder	D & W Henderson & Co, Glasgow	As I have not been able to find the specifications for <i>Valkyrie II</i> the figures given above are for her sister ship, the very famous <i>Britannia</i> .	
Rig	Cutter		
LOA	121' 6"		
LWL	86' 10"		



The lines of *Satanita* and *Valkyrie*'s sister ship *Britannia* clearly showing not only the technical perfection but also the artistic brilliance of the naval architects of the late 19th century.



Phoebe Dunbar

Ross Shardlow writes about the last ship to carry convicts from Ireland.

Of the thirty-three ships that brought convicts to Western Australia between 1850-1868, renowned British shipping magnate, Duncan Dunbar, owned twelve.

One of these ships, the *Phoebe Dunbar*, was built in 1850 to replace one of Dunbar's earlier vessels, the 578 ton *Phoebe*, built at Sunderland by James Laing in 1842. Laing also built the replacement full-rigged *Phoebe Dunbar* - in fact, he built one or more ships for Dunbar every year for twelve years. At 704 tons, the new *Phoebe Dunbar* was a little larger than her predecessor and measured 131.1 feet by 29.4 feet; about the same as the *Leeuwin*, but considerably deeper with a depth of hold of 21 feet. A square stern, quarter galleries and a guiding figurehead of Phoebe herself, made for a perfect model. Phoebe Duncan Dunbar was the daughter of Duncan Dunbar the elder, sister to Duncan Dunbar the younger, wife to Edward Dunbar-Dunbar, the regimental captain, and heir to the Dunbar estate of "Sea Park". *Sea Park*, coincidentally, was the name given to another of Dunbar's ships - he had seventy-five ships all told, and all sailing ships. *Sea Park* was built in 1845, also by James Laing, and transported convicts to Western Australia in 1854.

Phoebe Dunbar (lovingly referred to simply as *Phoebe* by the Dunbars), left Dunbar Docks in London on 4 July 1850 on her maiden voyage, bound to New Zealand with emigrants. Her next run to the Antipodes was to Port Adelaide arriving 7 June 1852. It was in 1853, however, that she earned the title of being the last ship to carry convicts directly from Ireland. Leaving Kingstown (now Dun Laoghaire) near Dublin, on 2 June 1853, Captain Forbes Michie made a fine run of 89 days direct to Fremantle, arriving at Gages Roads 30 August 1853. *Phoebe* had on board 93 passengers (all Pensioner Guards and their families) and 286 male convicts - including the nefarious malefactor, John Lahiffe, transported for seven years for robbery and larceny. Of the thirty-seven shipments of convicts to Western Australia, it appears *Phoebe Dunbar* had the highest death toll. Sixteen deaths

were recorded on board during the voyage with another three more dying soon after arrival. Typhus, cholera and a fractured skull were given as causes, and not all the deaths were confined to the convicts, as attested by the passing of Phoebe Dunbar McKay, born at sea to Margaret and John McKay of the 26th Regiment, and buried on arrival at Fremantle.

Run-in with Pilot

When Rottneest Island pilot Edward Back was suspended for a month for "inattention", Henry Goss was examined and assigned Second Pilot to stand in for him. Having to use the Fremantle Harbour Master's large sailing boat (Back had recently capsized and "very much damaged" the Rottneest whaleboat - with the loss of two men), Pilot Goss soon found himself in difficulties, collided with the *Phoebe* and carried away the bowsprit of the Harbour Master's boat. When Mr Goss grounded the barque *John Panter* on Scotts Ledge a few weeks later, the Harbour Master felt it prudent to discharge Goss from service as a pilot. The *Phoebe* wasn't doing a whole lot better; she ran onto the Success Bank but managed to get off without too much concern.

Phoebe Dunbar's next run was from Plymouth to Melbourne with 270 Government Emigrants and a cargo of spirits, arriving Christmas Day 1854. In 1856, she made her next emigrant run, again from Plymouth with 268 emigrants and four passengers, but this time to the Moreton Bay Settlement in Queensland (Brisbane), where she arrived 23 May 1856. Happily, Phoebe Dunbar Marshall, born at sea on this voyage lived until 1941. Not so lucky was the *Phoebe Dunbar*: coming into Moreton Bay in hazy weather, the captain mistook Point Lookout for Cape Moreton and was obliged to attempt the hazardous South Passage, inevitably running ashore before making Amity Point. Local steamers *Breadalbane* and *Sampson* refloated the *Phoebe* and transferred the passengers to Brisbane; but *Phoebe* was so badly damaged, including the loss of her rudder and two anchors, that her pumps could not sustain her and she was deliberately run ashore inside the Bay



near Dunwich. In the attempt to refloat her, one seaman was drowned and another had his arm broken. Patch-up repairs eventually allowed her to be refloated enabling her to make her way down the coast to Sydney where thorough repairs could be effected.

On the 7 March 1864, *Phoebe* was lying in Newcastle harbour (NSW) when the awful call of "fire on board" was reported. Desperate efforts by the fire brigade to stem the blaze proved futile and the steam tug *Tamar* was brought in to tow her out towards Scotts Point with the hope of scuttling her: but so ferociously was her wooden hull consumed, she was soon razed to the waterline. Several injuries were sustained in the determination to save her but no lives were lost. Her remains were sold off for £97.15.0 shortly after - so ended the *Phoebe Dunbar*. Not so Mrs Phoebe Duncan Dunbar-Dunbar nee Dunbar - she lived to 9 May 1899.

The Illustration

The line illustration of *Phoebe Dunbar* was inspired following a conversation with Pauline Millar from the Convicts Research Group, a sub group of WAGS (WA Genealogical Society), who do so much to record and promote this important field of our history. The original illustration was exhibited, and sold, at the "Maritime Horizons" marine art exhibition held by the Australian Society of Marine Artists at Port Adelaide in February 2004. The drawing depicts the *Phoebe*

Dunbar in Gages Roads hove-to to receive the pilot - the luckless Henry Goss commanding the Harbour Master's reefed down yawl; with the Union Flag at the main and the white-over-red pilot flag at the peak. The *Phoebe* has her pilot jack at the fore to call a pilot, the Dunbar house flag at the main (though she was under charter to the Admiralty at the time) and from the mizzen she is flying the code flags 6-8-4-2 over a second distinguishing pendant - Marryat's code for *Phoebe Dunbar*.

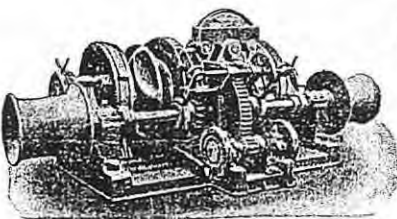
R. Dunbar Shardlow FASMA

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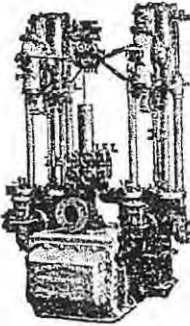
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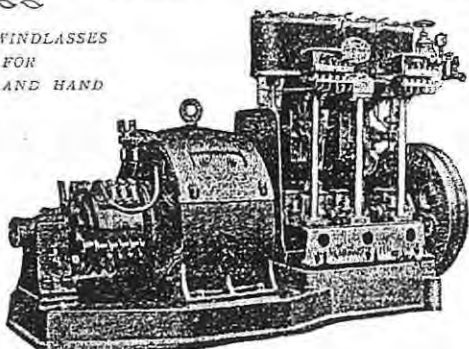

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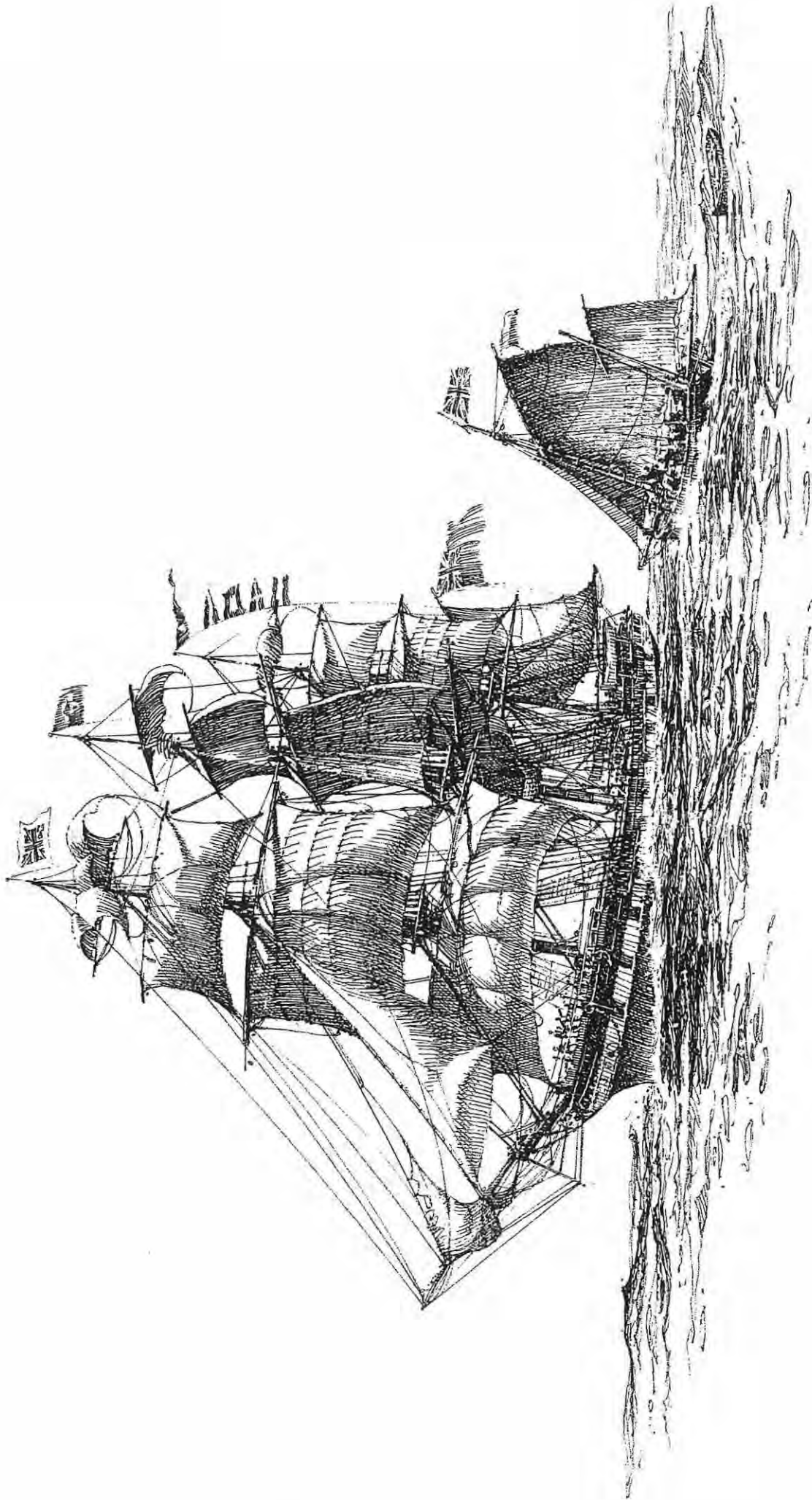
Woodeson Patent Slow Speed Feed Pump.

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Advertisement
from
The Yachtsman
19 March 1903



W. & A. GILBEY, LONDON.

The ship PHOEBE DUNBAR - 704 tons



A Coil of Old Rope?

The fifth in our series of profiles of MHA members features Ray Miller. He was most reluctant to put pen to paper, but I am sure you will agree that the early years of his most interesting life add sparkle to our journal. Having started to give us a short version of his activities, it now emerges that his story will need to be told over a number of issues. I am sure that we will all look forward to a continuation of his story in future journals.

Looking back over my life, it is a bit like a long, rather worn, length of old rope of which I cannot see (or remember) the beginning; nor do I as yet see the end! However, it certainly has been at times exciting, always interesting, often challenging, extremely absorbing and very enjoyable; with a lot of hard work and good friendships woven into it – or should I say long-spliced into it, since these strands have become so much part of the fabric and continuity of the whole.

Somewhere way back near the beginning of it all, I can distinctly recall in fifth standard, as it was then called, being asked by my teacher, Miss Emily Ware, to add an extra shelf in her teacher's cupboard. Afterwards, I remember her showing Miss Coop, another teacher, what I had done, and before long I was almost in the business of making alterations, and repairs in some cases, to teacher's furniture around the school! (Nedlands Primary 1940) The war broke out in September of the previous year when I was in Miss Murphy's class – but that did not have any effect on international events! It was not long before Miss Ware had me making a 9-foot Flag Pole for our class-room so that we could commence each day's work with a flag-raising ceremony and the singing of the National Anthem "God Save the King".

These jobs set the trend of my life's work: making things out of wood or metal, whatever came to hand, with the great encouragement of my grandmother, who gave me my first brand new German Jack Plane and Hacksaw, both of which I still have and use. (By the way, my Gran, my Mother's Mother, was the Mother of my Uncle Jim Hall, the boat builder who built *Mele Bilo*, Australian Champion 18ft Skiff in 1921.) I was also in the Sea Scouts at Pelican Point at this time under the leadership of our "Skipper", Science Master at Perth Boys' School, Hal McKail, whose



class I was to join two years later in 1942-44.

At Scouts, besides passing our various Badges, we had extra-curricular activities such as boat building, repair and maintenance, wood and metal work, boat handling and seamanship, which also included learning to swim. We also had senior (Rover) scouts in the troop who were doing either apprenticeships or Army or Navy training of some sort, who would give us some of these extra-curricular activities. For example, Stewart (Stewie) Ward was apprenticed to Albert Lawrence, in the long succession of W. and S. Lawrence, Boat Builders of Perth. Stewie used to teach us about boat design and drawing up their lines and making half-models from them and so on. I was enthralled with all this and all I wanted to be was a boat builder like Stewie and my Uncle Jim. But it was still a bit early, I was only 11 or 12 at this time.

Because it was war time, the Sea Scouts with their



“Skipper” Hal McKail, were heavily involved in the war effort. Stationed at “Camp Cornwall” in the Lookout Tower among the scout buildings, was an Observation Post of the Volunteer Air Observer Corps. Their job was to mount a 24-hour surveillance of the activities of all aircraft within visual range of the Lookout. We had to report the type and nationality of the aircraft, compass bearing and direction of flight, by direct phone line to Head Quarters. We had to give our Post’s code name, “Love Tare Four” (LT4) followed by our report. A number of our scouts were on this roster during the war years. It was a demanding job reporting and recording in our Log Book all this information.

Because our Post was right next door to the American Navy’s Catalina base in Crawley Bay, my two-hour shift was in the thick of it – 0600 to 0800 hours in all seasons. In winter, at first light, when so many Catalina Flying Boats were heading out on their dawn patrols along our north-west coast, was the busiest time. Half a dozen or more might take off in quick succession in the space of twenty minutes to half an hour, and each had to be reported and logged immediately – and there were other aircraft of all sorts buzzing about in all directions as well – we were not that far from “Dunreath” Air Base, code name for South Guildford, the site of our present Domestic Airport.

These rapid-fire take-offs occurred just after the bombing of Darwin, Wyndham and Broome and it was a very busy time. Fortunately, we had training sessions that helped us to identify all aircraft likely to be found in the South West Pacific Area (SWPA) but we had to know all the Allied and Australian aircraft as well. Actually, at these training sessions we had competitions to test our competency in aircraft identification. Flights of up to about twenty aircraft, all of one type or mixed, were projected onto the screen for decreasing lengths of exposure time. Those who correctly identified all the aircraft flashed onto the screen in the shortest exposure, one twenty-fifth of a second, were awarded a prize. These training sessions were considered almost standard requirements for all volunteers of the VAOC. At the end of 1942, my first year at Perth Boys’ School, I won the prize at State level, which

consisted of a chrome-plated, emptied-out and de-fused incendiary bomb – very impressive sitting there on the mantel.

Concurrently, with all that was happening with Sea Scouts and the VAOC, my brother Doug (18 months younger) and I were members of the Claremont Congregational Young Men’s Gymnasium. Our Dad was also a member of long association with this club from his youth, and he and two others of his contemporaries were our instructors – two very good gymnasts, brothers Albert and Dick Rogers. We boys could all perform fairly well on Vaulting Horse, Horizontal and Parallel Bars and to a lesser extent, the Roman Rings, also with all sorts of activities with Medicine Balls. From this humble beginning I graduated to leadership at the “National Fitness” level with camps at Point Peron “Nat. Fit.” Campsite and at Araluen, teaching boys gymnastics, basketball and other drill activities. Before long, with a close friend of mine who was also a “Nat. Fit” leader, Norm Lushey, we commenced the running of the Nedlands Presbyterian Junior Boys’ Club for 10 to 14 year olds. We had a programme of gymnastics, ball games, meetings, debates and annual camps in school holidays, with inter-club sports days a couple of times a year.

In 1944, my final year at Perth Boys’, my Junior Certificate year, we at school and Scouts, were devastated to be told one morning that our highly regarded Science Master and “Skipper”, Hal McKail, had passed away during the night, from what cause we were never told. I was still recovering from the shock, in the previous year, of the death of my beloved Gran, but to lose “Skip” as well so soon, let alone at all, was almost too much: my first realization that some of the best people on earth were not immortal – a fact I had never had to confront before! It rather changed the course of events for me. I somehow realised I just had to change tack. I wanted to leave school, but still obtain my Junior Certificate and get a job and get to work. The result was that I made some poor choices from here on.

Thankfully, the “poor choices” did not cast the rest of Ray’s life into disorder – more next issue. Ed.



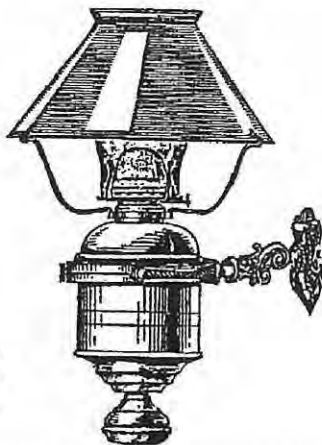
QUIZ

Answers to September 2004

1. A froe is a tool used for riving or splitting timber. It consists of a blade with a vertical handle. The blade is placed on the timber to be split and then the back of the blade is hit with a large mallet or bittle.
2. The *Mayhill* was carrying 2,947 tons of railway line for the Mullewa to Cue railway when it was wrecked in 1895.
3. Frederick Houtman sighted and named the Abrolhos Islands on 29 July 1619.

Questions

1. Who named King George Sound, Princess Royal Harbour and Oyster Harbour, the bays at present day Albany, and when?
2. What is a cock-a-bendy?
3. Where on the Western Australian coast are Hopeless Reach, Disappointment Reach, Useless Inlet and Disaster Cove? (They are all in the same general area)



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