

# MARITIME HERITAGE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

Volume 19, No. 4. December 2008

Website: [www.maritimeheritage.org.au](http://www.maritimeheritage.org.au)

*A quarterly publication of the  
Maritime Heritage Association, Inc.*

**C/o: The Secretary (Nick Burningham),  
78 Forrest Street,  
Fremantle, W.A. 6160.**



**Editor: Peter Worsley. 12 Cleopatra Drive, Mandurah, W.A. 6210**



***The steam ship Gertie in Wellington Harbour.***  
*John Dickie Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z., G-14495-1/2*  
*See page 12 for article on this vessel*



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 Ross Shardlow who may be contacted on 9361 0170, and are available to members on loan. Please note that to access the videos, journals, library books, etc it is necessary to phone ahead.

(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.)

Material for publishing or advertising should be directed, preferably typed or on disk, to:  
The Editor, 12 Cleopatra Drive, MANDURAH, Western Australia, 6210.

Except where shown to be copyright, material published in this Journal may be freely reprinted for non-profit purposes provided suitable acknowledgment is made of its source.

[www.maritmeheritage.org.au](http://www.maritmeheritage.org.au)

# MHA Christmas Function

Hicks' Maritime Museum  
49 Lacey St, East Cannington

10 am, Sunday 7 December 2008

All Members Welcome  
(especially if we haven't seen anything of you during the year!)

**Stop Press:-** A replica of the *Mystery* (see MHA journal 18/2 for an article on this vessel by Mike Reveley) has been launched in Cornwall and is to be sailed to Australia by the well-known yachtsman, Pete Goss. *Mystery's* construction includes teak from *Cutty Sark*, oak from *Victory* and rigging from *s.s Great Britain*.

## Things They Would Rather Have Not Said

"First, the mould is altogether unperfect, she hath too much floor...her breadth lieth too high, and she will draw too much water". The work was "very ill done". The timber "cross-grained and overgrown". The frame "unfit for any use but a dung boat".

Various critics of the design of the *Royal Prince*, 1610

The *Royal Prince* or *Prince Royal*, designed by Phineas Pett (1570-1647), was launched in 1610, the first 3-decker in the English navy. Carrying 56 guns she proved a great success and underwent two rebuilds, ending after many years' service carrying 90 guns.



# Ships of the State Shipping Service

by Jeff Thompson

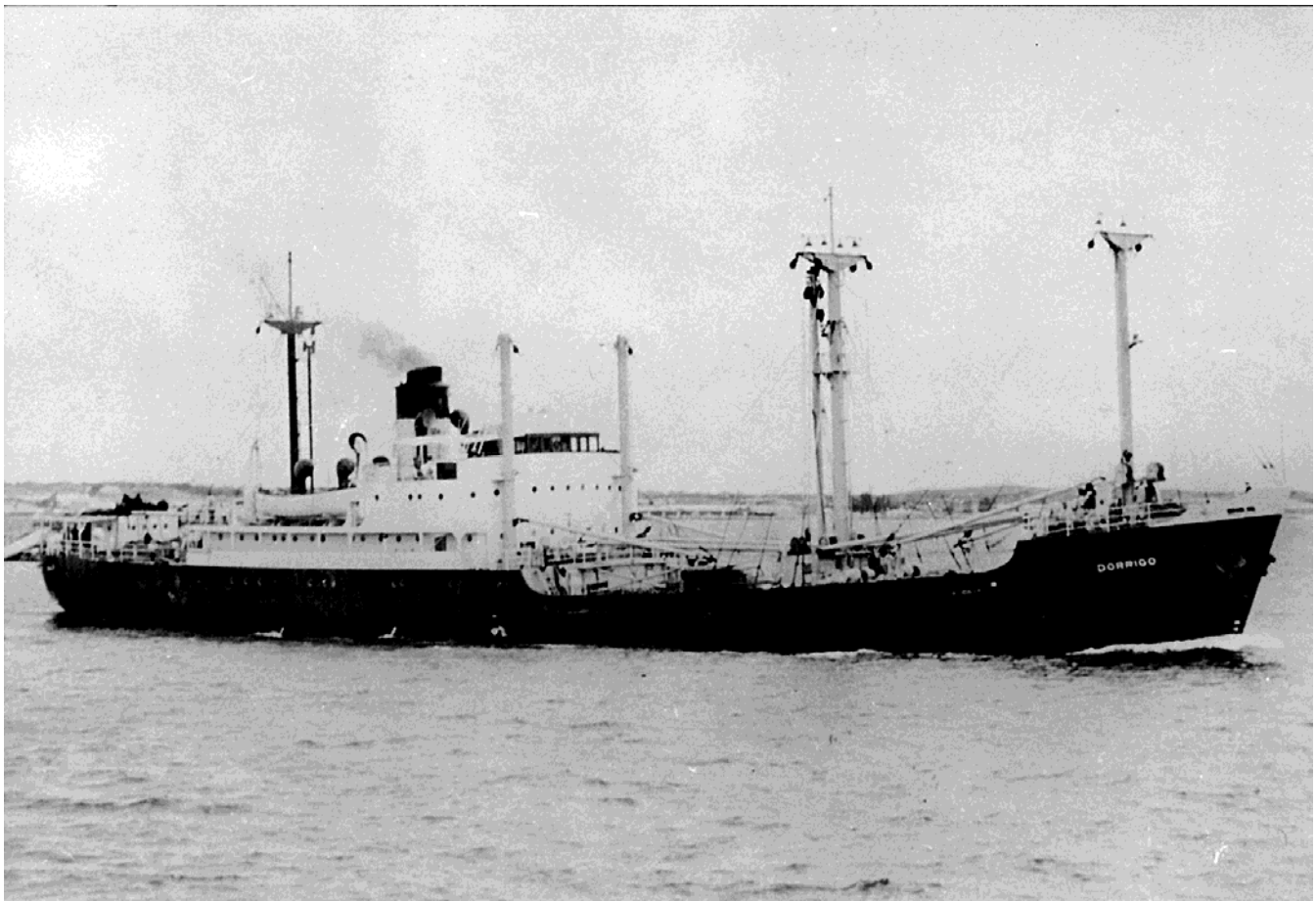
## No. 14 *Dorrigo* Official Number 156154

Built under a wartime shipbuilding programme the *Dorrigo* was completed in May 1946, the first of 10 similar "D" class coastal cargo vessels with a limited refrigerated cargo space. Upon handover from the builders, State Dockyard, Newcastle, N. S. W. (Yard No 24) to the Australian Shipping Board the *Dorrigo* was chartered by the State Shipping Service for service to the North West to replace the *Chungking*, on being returned to her owners after the war. Having been ordered in March 1944 and launched on 27th October 1945. She was 2,321 gross registered tons, 2,920 deadweight tons, 110.3 metres overall, 16.4 metres breadth, with a 4 cylinder Cockatoo-Lentz compound steam engine of 1,800 indicated horse power, fitted for burning fuel oil and having a single screw.

In July 1954 the vessel was sold to the State Shipping Service, the first post war built ship to enter service and be purchased by the organization. Be-

tween February and June 1965 extensive alterations were carried out at Fremantle including the fitting of a shelter deck forward, new electric winches and generators. The gross tonnage being increased to 2,898 tons. The *Dorrigo* remained on the North West coastal service, though one voyage was made to New Guinea with a cargo of rice from Camballin in the Kimberleys.

In November 1969 *Dorrigo* was sold to Century Shipping Lines S.A., Panama, and renamed *Adelante*. On the 19<sup>th</sup> November 1969 the ship was arrested at Fremantle for monies owing on work carried out at Fremantle, being released on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and departing Fremantle on the 24<sup>th</sup> November 1969. During 1970 the vessel was transferred to Adelante Steamship Co S.A., Panama, and renamed *Evergin*. In 1971 the ship was transferred to Century Shipping Lines S.A., Panama. In March 1976 the vessel arrived at Kaohsiung, Taiwan, to be scrapped by Dong Yung Steel & Iron Works.





# 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 the pre-World War I days of the great Trans-Atlantic liners the Germans built the *Vaterland*. When America entered that war the *Vaterland*, about to sail from New York, was seized and re-named *Leviathan*. The Americans used the ship as a troop carrier, but it had a tendency to roll and pitch alarmingly, causing sea-sickness in the majority of those aboard. The standard joke was:

“Here comes a torpedo.”

“Thank God!”

Peter Heywood (1773-1831) as a young midshipman was a mutineer on the *Bounty*. He was lucky to escape when the *Pandora* went down, and was convicted at his trial but later pardoned. He atoned for his youthful indiscretion by becoming a fine naval officer and a noted surveyor. He was even offered the position of Hydrographer to the Royal Navy, but declined the honour. His step-daughter married Captain Sir Edward Belcher, RN, also a well-known naval surveyor and “the author of several books of voyages and surveying, which contain as much humbug as merit...” Apparently the humbug was too much for Lady Belcher, for after spending six weeks together Sir Edward devoted himself to his ship and the joys of surveying, and Lady Belcher returned to her religion and to her obsession, which was defaming William Bligh.

The Hydrographic Department of the Royal Australian Navy was established on 1 October 1920.

On 22 September 1914 the German submarine *U-9*, commanded by Kapitän Leutnant Otto Weddigen sank three 12,000 ton British cruisers, *Aboukir*, *Hogue* and *Cressy*, within an hour. A total of 62 officers and 1,397 men were lost. The amazing fact is that after sinking the *Aboukir*, the other two cruisers in turn stopped dead in the water, allowing the *U-9* to take careful aim so that all torpedoes hit their targets.

The highest wave ever reliably reported was 112 feet observed from the USS *Ramapo* in 1933.

James Bell deserted from HMS *Driver*, the first steam driven vessel to visit Western Australia, on 4 December 1845. He later married and settled in Mandurah where he became ferryman. As an adjunct to ferrying, he built dinghies and other small craft at Jim Jam on the Murray River near Ravenswood. He later moved to Rockingham where he built the Rockingham hall and school. In 1876 he was the person who alerted the authorities to the Fenians making their escape to the *Catalpa*.

**Tierce**—a regular measurement of maritime victuals in the old days of salt beef and pork in casks. A tierce of salt beef was 280 lb, a tierce of pork only 260 lb. In the early 19th century, when casks were made larger, the beef tierce was raised to 336 lb and the pork tierce to 300lb. A tierce of port was one-third of a pipe or 42 gallons.

The original limit to territorial waters was 3 miles. This was later extended to 12 miles, and more recently to, it seems, “anything you want to claim and can hold on to by right of might”. However the original 3 miles was accepted under the dictum *terrae dominium finitur ubi finites armorum vis*, meaning the utmost range of a cannon-shot. High seas are all those waters beyond territorial waters.

Sam Isaacs, hero of the rescue of the survivors from the wreck of the *Georgette*, is reputed to have arrived at the Vasse as a small boy, walking overland from Augusta and driving a pig for Captain John Molloy. He is said to have lost the pig in the bush during the trip!

There were originally five Royal Naval Dockyards—Deptford, Woolwich, Chatham, Portsmouth and Plymouth. Later, as Britain expanded her empire, further yards were established at Sheerness, Haulbowline and Rosyth, while overseas there were yards constructed at Gibraltar, Malta, Halifax, Bermuda, Simonstown, Trincomalee, Singapore and Hong Kong.



## INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA

### Messing about while waiting for a boat to be built: part nine of Nick Burningham's memoirs

HAVING ORDERED A new perahu at Bonerate we had an easy run down to Bali on BINTANG MAS. But things were not so easy in Bali. We went to get our visas extended, expecting it to be the usual formality and found that the rules had changed. I can't remember precisely what the new rules were, but they weren't going to allow us to go to a remote island like Jinato. At some stage we decided that we would have to go to Singapore or Malaysia and try to get a different type of visa, but that wasn't guaranteed to solve the problem and it would be a considerable inconvenience and expense. I suppose I got depressed. I certainly got ill. I was staying on board BINTANG MAS looking after her while Peter and Ron went touring, but when I was obviously ill Jerry Williams very kindly took me on board BURONG BAHRI, most of whose crew were also away playing tourist.

That night I was delirious and seriously unwell. Some time before midnight I still had the strength to crawl out on deck to spew and shit over the side. I remember coming out on deck feeling somewhat as if I'd taken LSD. The wind sounded strange and I seemed to be seeing it as colours flaring across the sky rather than hearing it. Later in the night I wasn't even able to sit up and Jerry had to lift me on to a bucket when I needed a shit. I was fairly sure I was dying, indeed I would have been if the diarrhea and very high temperature continued unabated. I hoped that when dawn came I could get myself transported to the Seventh Day Adventist hospital at Tabanan in the back of a bemo rather than go to the public hospital in Denpasar which did not have a good reputation. Fortunately the fever broke or remitted during the early hours of the morning and I was left very weak but not terminally ill. It was probably a recurrence of the malaria I'd contracted in 1975. I took handfuls of malaria prophylactics, as I'd done on back in '75, which seemed to help.

For at least two weeks I staggered around looking like a newly released POW from Changi, all gaunt and haggard. Meanwhile Dan had been getting on with things. He had met a very helpful, high-caste, Balinese man who had offered to help with the letters of sponsorship that we would need if we were to get Visitors Visas from friends of his friends at the Indonesian consulate in Kuala Lumpur. That involved Dan and his partner Vicki travelling to Jakarta with him. Meanwhile I convalesced. We sent a letter to Haji Syukri explaining that we might not be able to go

ahead with the project and giro-ed some cash as compensation for breach of a contract that didn't exist on paper. Then we flew up to Kuala Lumpur where getting the Visitors Visas was not as simple as we had hoped.

We began to think that it was just not possible to build our perahu in Indonesia, so we went to Kuala Trengganu on the east coast of Malaysia (where Jerry had BURONG BAHRI built) to see whether we could get something we wanted built there.

We went to Duyong island and soon learned that we couldn't afford a new vessel of the size we wanted. We looked at some potential second-hand purchases. By 1979 only a few Trengganu junk-rigged perahu tenpinas and perahu bedar were still operating in the salt trade from Thailand; it was scarcely profitable, so they were all for sale. But the ones we looked at were old and in horrible condition. We did go on board one of the really big old bedar lying at Seberang Takir. She had pandanus mat sails, two layers thick and so heavy that when soaked by rain that they had to be partially lowered to avoid capsize, the mate told us.



*The bedar Dapat at Seberang Takir*

It was Ramadan, the Muslim fasting month. Trengganu being a devout province, we had trouble getting anything to eat or drink during the hours of daylight.

Back in KL we eventually got our Visitors Visas and flew off back to Bali and then on to Ujung Pandang (Macassar) in South Sulawesi. Perhaps we went straight to Ujung Pandang. Anyway, once we were there, we went down to the old perahu harbour at Pao Tere to look for a perahu that might take us to Jinato. Haji Pehiring had told us to go to the shipping agency he had a share in: P.T. Ujung Tanah. We went to their offices and learned that Haji Pehiring and JINATO JAYA were in Ujung Pandang, in the crowded harbour



of Pao Tere. It would be a few days before JINATO JAYA was ready to sail. Accommodation in the city of Ujung Pandang was not as cheap as we were used to in Bali. We stayed in the cheapest hotel, the Nusantara, in some unknown backstreet near the old Dutch harbour. The rooms were tiny cubicles partitioned with 5mm ply. The stairs were nearly vertical and only the Florenese mountaineer on the staff could climb them while carrying baggage.

Ujung Pandang (Macassar) was a malodorous but romantic dump in those days. The streets were paved with flattened dead rats. It was probably the last city of the archipelago that Conrad would have recognised.

When JINATO JAYA was ready to sail, Haji Pehiring decided it would be prudent if we took the bus down the coast and boarded near Bulukumba rather than try to sort things with the harbourmaster's office in Ujung Pandang.

So, the day after JINATO JAYA sailed, Dan, Vicki and I, with Haji Pehiring caught a horribly crowded and recklessly driven mini-bus to Bulukumba. We got out of that minibus a mile or two before reaching the town, at a solitary house beside the sea. And there we waited for a few hours until JINATO JAYA came in and anchored. Then, as night came down, we embarked along with another Haji who had suddenly appeared as we went down the beach to the waiting dugout canoe.

JINATO JAYA didn't sail that night. I think we waited for some more Hajis to find their way to the beach. It must have been the next day when we set out because it was the next evening when we reached Benteng, the main town/village of Salayar, the large island to the south of South Sulawesi. (JINATO JAYA had an auxiliary engine, so I can be sure that the passage from Bulukumba to Benteng took about twelve hours.) As we came into anchor between Benteng and the Bajo village to the south, there were large canoes with no outriggers sailing out from Benteng. Some of them were equipped with trapezes like racing dinghies although unlike racing dinghies (which have more stability) they were carrying granny and grandpa, and infants, and goats, and everyone else.

We went ashore at Benteng in the evening and took dinner at the only restaurant. There we met the local English teacher. He was not very confident of his English, so he spoke it very quietly, with his hand covering his mouth, and some of his sentences were certainly not right. The one I remember is "The rud is very funffy" which turned out to mean "The road is very bumpy". But he spoke English much better than he understood it when we attempted conversation.

He really just wanted to speak his stock of sentences to us.

Having spent some time in Indonesia, I thought I was used to being stared at and creating excitement in out of the way places, but in Benteng we were followed and caused more commotion than anywhere I had been to before. It was somewhat unnerving and Vicki hated it.

After dinner we went back on board, business had been done by the Hajis, and, I think we sailed during the night, on down to the southern tip of Salayar to anchor for a few hours. During the next day we continued south to Kayuadi and anchored off the western side of that island. It must have been a Sunday — big outrigger canoes with huge lete sails were racing around the northern part of the anchorage. We didn't go ashore at Kayuadi on that occasion but, after putting a Haji or two ashore, sailed on round the end of the island before turning east to Jinato.

Haji Pehiring had spent the war years at Kayuadi running a fishing operation in collaboration with the Japanese army outpost there. Haji Pehiring was a noted exponent of bomb fishing. In some regions bomb fishing is a highly wasteful and destructive operation. Large charges are detonated on reefs, stunning and killing all the fish with swim bladders. Those that float are collected but about 80% sink and are left to rot. Around Jinato the operation is somewhat less harmful. Much smaller charges are used. They are used as hand grenades, usually with a two-second fuse, and they are lobbed from a dugout canoe right into a school of fish. Bomb fishing is only done in water of between seven and twenty metres depth so that divers can collect all the fish that sink. (In less than about seven metres the concusive effect of the bomb is much reduced.)

The Japanese commander on Kayuadi approved of bomb fishing and had been happy to have his munitions disassembled to provide explosives. Haji Pehiring, with unlimited supply of explosives, had run a hugely successful operation. As we rounded the south of Kayuadi he became very animated telling us about the day when he had killed so many fish in shallow water that when the tide ebbed everybody from Kayuadi had come down to the reef with baskets to collect fish and they had collected them all afternoon and long into the night.

It turned out that bomb fishing was still a very popular occupation at Jinato. When we got there we found the cases of old magnetic mines that had been cut open to get at their contents. Nearly all of the fish caught by bomb fishing were salted and dried, and then sent to the mainland of Sulawesi and sold there. Salt dried fish were the main source of income for





Jinato. The trading vessels owned there sometimes made significant profits but there were years when they made none.

Based on our experience at Benteng, also at Bulukumba and in Ujung Pandang, I expected that we would be constantly followed and shouted at by children and simple-minded adults on Jinato. But it wasn't like that at all. When we arrived, Haji Syukri called all the village children and adults to his house. He introduced us, and explained that we were not to be followed. We could be approached individually but not mobbed. Haji Syukri's instructions were scrupulously observed. The population of Jinato was then about six-hundred. It is a very small island, in fact not much more than a sand bank with some coconut trees on it. In severe storms seas washed almost right over the island. That had happened only a few years previously so very few vegetable and fruit plants could be grown. (By 1984, much of the salt had been washed out of the sandy soil so sweet potato and an increasing number of fruits were growing again. When I last visited in 1991 there had been no inundation for nearly two decades so the island had a good lens of reasonably fresh water.)



*Lunchtime in the kitchen, Jinato*

After a few days on Jinato we went down to Bonerate on JINATO JAYA with Haji Syukri to see how our new boat, which was to be called HATI SENANG, was progressing. It turned out that our letter saying that we might be unable to continue with the perahu for visa reasons had not reached Jinato (it did eventually get there a month or two later) so Haji Syukri had gone ahead with construction. However, he wasn't entirely sure that we would return, so, he had decided to build the vessel of a size that might be useful to him. Our ten metre keel was now ten metres between the inner sternpost and the scarf of the stem. By more normal methods of measurement we had an eleven and a half metre keel. The planking was already out to the turn of the bilge. She looked a touch full in the run to my eye and with a long overhanging counter and a fairly raked stem she was obviously going to be significantly bigger than we had intended.

Djumain, the master shipwright, was working with only one assistant but was getting on well. I tried to observe and record how he worked, but when watched he seemed only to sharpen tools and roll cigarettes. Then when your concentration lapsed he would quietly fit a plank. The planks used at Bonerate are cleft or hewn, not sawn planks, so there is a great deal of work in getting them fitted neatly into the ship's plank-shell, but Djumain could do it almost by sleight of hand.

After a couple of days at Bonerate we returned to Jinato. Staying there was very pleasant. Life was relaxed, Haji Syukri's and Haji Pehiring's huge houses were comfortable and the seafood was outstanding. There was usually a fish soup (pallu mara) flavoured with tamarind and turmeric, there was fried and curried fish, sometimes a crayfish or a giant clam, and on very low tides we collected little sprigs of a seaweed that looked like tiny bunches of grapes, which were served with coconut milk, grated coconut and spices and made a lovely salad. Fruit and vegetables were supplied by market boats, big outrigger canoes, that tacked up from Kayuadi over night. There were also wonderful cakes and biscuits, delicately flavoured with the smoke of the wood fires. To bake cakes, earthenware domes were heated over the fire. One of these was then put over the cake to form an oven, after a few minutes, when it had cooled a little it was replaced with another hot dome, and so on until the cake was baked. The kitchens of both houses were very big and there were always neighbours and servants to help with the cooking.

I went out bomb fishing once. It is the most exciting form of hunting. In a large dugout canoe a bombing team patrols the edge of the reef looking for shoals of fish rising from the deep water. As noted



above, fish are not bombed in more than about 20m of water because free-diving to collect the fish that sink is too difficult; and in less than about 6m of water the concussive effect of the bomb doesn't work properly. The bombs were homemade, using about a quarter of a kilogram of black-market gelignite for each bomb or grenade. The gelignite was tightly wrapped in many layers of newspaper and flat plastic string. Fuses were made using powder from industrial detonation caps tapped into a small cone made from old toothpaste tube and a two-second length of fuse crimped into one end. To fuse a bomb, just before use, a wooden spike was used to punch a small hole that the fuse could be inserted into.

The bomber stood in the bow of the canoe using hand signals to direct the paddling of the canoe, everyone paddling quietly, not letting the paddles knock against the hull. The bomber held a bomb in one hand, and in the other hand, behind his back, a smoldering piece of coir rope. When the canoe had sneaked close enough to a shoal, everyone sitting quiet and motionless, the smoldering rope was brought to the fuse and blown on ... the fuse started fizzing, just two seconds of fuse ... Haji Syukri seemed to hold on to the bomb forever, slowly moving his arm back ready to lob ... after what seemed like far more than two seconds he threw the hissing bomb in a high arc to land right in the middle of the shoal a few nano-seconds before exploding, far louder than one could ever expect. If it was a large shoal, more bombs would be quickly fused and thrown into the slightly stunned shoal. Once the shoal was adequately stunned everyone started collecting fish. About 10–15% float, the rest sink to the bottom. The Jinato men used weights to get swiftly to the bottom where they could wander around for a minute or two putting stunned fish into a hand net. One bomb would usually yield a canoe load of fish which would be salted and dried, and later sold to merchants on the mainland.

On the way back to Jinato, the day I joined the bombers, there were frigate birds flying around.

"Would you like one of those for dinner?" Syukri asked.

He took one of the small fry we'd collected and put a little bicarbonate of soda into it, then threw it up to a frigate bird that was wheeling down towards us. The frigate bird caught and swallowed the fish, flew away, but after a second or two its wings folded and twisted, and it fell into the sea.

Frigate bird is quite tasty. Fairly tough but dark and flavoursome like duck.

After a week or three on Jinato, Haji Syukri suggested that we should go to Surabaya, Java where his large perahu HATI GEMBIRA and his brother Sya-

harir's perahu HATI SANTALIA were headed. There we could buy ropes, anchors, fence-wire for standing rigging and other stuff that was not included in the price of building. We needed to go somewhere that we could extend our visas anyway.

So we went back up to the mainland of Sulawesi which proved an exciting trip.

We sailed on HATI SANTALIA from Jinato to the island of Tanah Jampea whence there were regular ferries to the mainland. It was a very pleasant downwind trip in light to moderate conditions taking only three hours, if I remember correctly. We landed at the main town of Ujung Jampea and went ashore. No where else had we ever attracted quite such a crowd of screaming children and women, plus a few drooling doltish men. It was terrible. I was able to get some relief when Vicki went a different direction and most of the crowd followed her.

It was an interesting place when you could see it through the crowd of people. There was a largish perahu pinis under construction on the beach. There used to be a whole fleet of pinis all named JAMPEA, up to JAMPEA 8. Some were incredibly bluff and capacious, but at least one of them was sharp lined and said to be the fastest of the perahu pinis (none of which were really built for speed). Ujung Jampea was a large and obviously thriving maritime village that probably hadn't changed much in a century or more. After walking around with our howling entourage for a while we were taken to a merchant's house to rest and hide. It's exhausting having an excited crowd following closely your every step. At the house it was a bit like the "Life of Brian" scene — every time one went to the window, the crowd who were still waiting outside burst into cheering.

We went back out to HATI SANTALIA and spent the night on board. The next day we boarded the ferry that went around the coast to the smaller set-



*The perahu pinis Jampea III*





tlement of Benteng Jamepa and then up to the mainland. We were going to be anchored at Benteng Jamepa for a few hours so I decided to go ashore and buy some bananas. I went ashore in a small dugout canoe wearing shirt, shorts and loosely wearing a sarong draped over one shoulder — like everyone else. I walked up the beach and was ushered into a house to have a glass of tea while someone went searching for bananas. While I was sitting there chatting a very unpleasant and obviously unbalanced man arrived. He demanded to see my passport which was with Dan and Vicki back on the ferry. Since he was not wearing any uniform and was dressed as casually as me, I asked what authority he had. He claimed to be the local military commander (the Kommanden Rayon Militer, or Koramil) which seemed unlikely, so I took no notice of his demands. He returned a little later wearing a military shirt over his sarong, and, more deserving of respect, carrying a sub-machine gun. He told me to go and get my passport. I said that when I went back to the ferry I'd probably be staying there, but he could come out to the ferry and inspect passports if he wished.

We walked down the wide beach and eventually hailed a small dugout canoe which couldn't carry all of us. He and a young man I took to be his oafish son went out to the ferry brandishing the gun and apparently took all three of our passports. They then landed further down the beach and were heading up to the village with our passports. I took that badly and started shouting the odds at him which he took amiss. And so it was that I was struck with the butt of the gun, and then propelled with a gun barrel poked in my back a mile or so inland up a hill to where the real Koramil had his office. Thin, bearded and rather biblically clad I felt somewhat like the Jewish prophet known as Nabbi Isa to the people of South Sulawesi, on his march up Calvary.

The Koramil told me I was wrong to come ashore without reporting to him and without my passport. I argued that I could hardly be expected to report to every Koramil whose domain I passed through when travelling in Indonesia, and indeed (not quite correctly) that I had never been required to report to any Koramil before. After a short interview I was let go with the passports while my arrester was kept back, probably for a reprimand. At the time I was concerned that the spat with the authorities might make things difficult in future for us or for Haji Syukri. In fact there were no repercussions. When we got back to Jinato a month or two after the incident everyone seemed very pleased that I had stood up to the man, who was known to be demented and had been transferred from Bonerate because of problems. On Jinato

we were never required to report to anyone and no one ever came to check on us, though the authorities on Rajuni to the north knew we were staying there.

From the mainland of Sulawesi, we flew down to Bali and got one month visa extensions. Stored on Bali, Dan and I both had sea chests, filled mainly with books, plus wet weather gear and navigation equipment. Dan and Vicki planned to holiday in Bali for a while, then fly back to Ujung Pandang. Meanwhile I would take the chests to Surabaya and load them on to one of the Jinato perahu along with the chandlery I was going to buy there.

Travelling with two chests, the larger of which I couldn't carry on my own, proved much less difficult than I expected. Actually it turned out to be easier than travelling with a backpack, though I had one of them as well. To the Indonesians the large chest made me look like an itinerant *dalang* or puppeteer, and dalangs are highly respected. Boys from the homestay in Bali carried the chests to the bus departure point for me. The bus company employees loaded the chests and the rest of my luggage into the baggage hold of the bus, half filling it, so that I traveled in comfort while the rest of the tourists sat grumbling with their baggage under their feet or on their laps. In Surabaya the usually rapacious becak (trishaw) drivers were very helpful and took me straight to the cheap hotel I was looking for, and charged little for doing so. All of which was very gratifying because I was travelling with a girlfriend, Clancy, who was in Asia for the first time and might have been disturbed by the normal banditry of Surabaya becak drivers.

Surabaya, in those days, was not much of a tourist destination. It was mostly horrible. The perahu harbour, still filled with large engineless sailing perahu was a remarkable sight, but Surabaya city was crowded, smelly and sordid. Clancy continued her travels to Jogjakarta after a day or two of Surabaya, but I stayed in that hot fetid city waiting for two sailing perahu, HATI SANTALIA and HATI GEMBIRA, to arrive with their timber cargoes. I spent my days hanging around other perahu and talking to the crews. With not much to do, particularly in the evenings, I started keeping a sporadic diary. After a few days I removed to a hill resort.



## **I am indebted to Barry Hicks and Brian Lemon for the following letter from a ship's master to his head office.**

Dear Sir,

It is with regret and haste that I write this letter to you – regret that such a small misunderstanding could lead to the following circumstances, and haste in order that you will get this report before you form your own pre-conceived opinions from reports in the world press, for I am sure that they will tend to over-dramatise the affair.

We had just picked up the pilot and the apprentice had returned from changing the G flag for the H and, it being his first trip, was having difficulty in rolling the G flag up. I therefore proceeded to show him how. Coming to the last part, I told him to 'let go'. The lad, although willing, is not too bright, necessitating my having to repeat the order in a sharper tone.

At this moment the Chief Officer appeared from the Chart Room, having been plotting the vessel's progress, and, thinking that it was the anchors that were being referred to, repeated the 'let go' to the Third Officer on the forecastle.

The port anchor, having been cleared away but not walked out, was promptly let go. The effect of letting the anchor drop from the 'pipe' while the vessel was proceeding at full harbour speed proved too much for the windlass brake, and the entire length of the port cable was pulled out "by the roots".

I fear the damage to the chain locker may be expensive. The braking effect of the port anchor naturally caused the vessel to sheer in that direction, right towards the swing bridge that spans a tributary to the river up which we were proceeding.

The swing bridge operator showed great presence of mind by opening the bridge for my vessel. Unfortunately, he did not think to stop vehicular traffic, the result being that the bridge partly opened and deposited a Volkswagen, two cyclists, and a cattle truck on the foredeck.

My ship's company are at present rounding up the contents of the latter, from which noise I would say were pigs. In his efforts to stop the

progress of the vessel, the Third Officer dropped the starboard anchor, too late to be of practical use for it fell on the swing bridge operator's control cabin.

After the port anchor was let go and the vessel started to sheer, I gave a double ring Full Astern on the engine room telegraph, and personally rang the Engine room to order maximum astern revolutions. I was informed that the sea temperature was 53+ and asked if there was a film tonight; my reply would not add constructively to this report.

Up to now, I confined my report to the activities at the forward end of the vessel. Down aft they were having their own problems. At the moment the port anchor was let go, the Second Officer was supervising the making fast of the after tug and was lowering the ship's towing spring down on to the tug.

The sudden braking effect on the port anchor caused the tug to "run in under" the stern of my vessel, just at the moment when the propeller was answering my double ring Full Astern. The prompt action of the Second Officer in securing the inboard end of the towing spring delayed the sinking of the tug by some minutes, thereby allowing the safe abandoning of that vessel.

It is strange, but at the very same moment of letting go the port anchor there was a power cut ashore. The fact that we were passing over a cable area at that time might suggest that we may have touched something on the river bed. It is perhaps lucky that the high-tension cables brought down by the foremast were not live, possibly being replaced by the underwater cable, but owing to the shore blackout, it is impossible to say where the pylon fell.

It never fails to amaze me, the actions and behaviours of foreigners during moments of minor crises. The pilot, for instance, is at this moment huddled in the corner of my day cabin, alternately crooning to himself and crying after having consumed a bottle of gin in a time that is worthy of inclusion in the Guinness Book of Records. The tug captain, on the other hand, reacted violently



and had to forcibly be restrained by the Steward, who has him handcuffed in the ship's hospital, where he is telling me to do impossible things with my ship and my crew.

I enclose the names and addresses of the drivers and insurance companies of the vehicles on my foredeck, which the Third Officer collected after his somewhat hurried evacuation of the forecastle. These particulars will enable you to claim for the damage that they did to the railings of the No. 1 hold.

I am enclosing this preliminary report, for I am

finding it difficult to concentrate with the sound of police sirens and their flashing lights. It is sad to think that had the apprentice realised that there is no need to fly pilot flags after dark, none of this would have happened.

For weekly Accountability Report, I will assign the following Casualty Numbers TE.750101 to TE.750199 inclusive.

Yours truly,  
Master

## Jack Spurling—Marine Artist

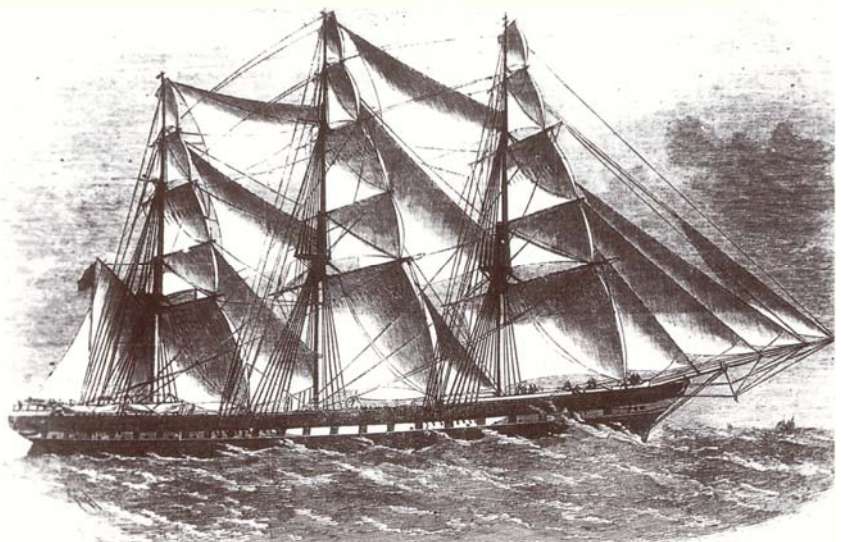
John Robert Charles 'Jack' Spurling was born in 1870, and went to sea at the age of 16 years. His first voyage was on the Canadian barque *Astoria*, where he survived a fall from aloft because he landed on a rope flaked out on the deck. It was in fact one of the braces. It may have saved his life, but he spent five months in a Singapore hospital recovering from the sort of fall that would normally have been fatal. He returned to the sea after this, serving out his time on square-riggers owned by Devitt & Moore, such as *Sobraon* and *Hesperus*. He took his 2<sup>nd</sup> mate's certificate and joined the Blue Anchor Line as a junior officer. However the fall had been severe and, seven years after commencing his apprenticeship, Spurling left the hard life of the sea and became an actor.

ferred a reward of £1,000, a considerable sum in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, to anyone who could find a fault in the rigging and sails in any of the Spurling paintings it published. No one ever claimed the money. Associated with every painting was an authoritative essay on the particular vessel by Basil Lubbock (1877-1944). Their cooperative efforts were published in 1972 in a three-volume edition entitled *Sail: The Romance of the Clipper Ships*. A single volume edition, *The Best of Sail*, containing just 36 of the paintings and essays, was published in 1975.

Jack Spurling died in 1933 in the Seamen's Hospital at Greenwich, aged 63.

In his youth Jack Spurling had shown considerable talent as an artist, going to the East India Docks to draw the sailing ships that supplied his father's jute importing business at Dundee. This was at an age of only 10 years and, before he left to go to sea, his art teacher stated "I can teach him no more." His acting career was short-lived, as that too imposed stresses his damaged body could not take. So he began to paint full time, particularly for the *Blue Peter* monthly magazine. His detailed and authentic paintings graced the covers of that magazine for years. The magazine in fact of-

*Sobraon: one of the ships on which Spurling served*





## Wreck of the *Gertie* at Wilsons Inlet

**Rod Dickson has written another of his interesting items of Western Australian history; this one on the wreck of a small iron steamer at Wilsons Inlet on the south coast on 28 July 1898.**

This small steamer drove ashore in Wilsons Inlet due to the fact that she had run out of coal for her fires. She was on her way from Port Natal, South Africa, to Newcastle, NSW, for her new owner, who was on board as a passenger. The *Gertie* was a 100 ton, iron twin screw steamer built at Preston, England, in 1891. She was 130 feet in length, breadth 22 feet and depth of hold 8 feet 6 inches. Following is the transcript of the statement made by the Chief Officer, the Chief Engineer and an A.B. for the police at Albany on the 5th of August 1898 because of the trouble between themselves and the Master and Owner of the vessel.

### Denmark, 5th August 1898.

The S.S. *Gertie* left Port Natal, South Africa on the 21st June 1898, bound for Newcastle NSW neither properly provisioned or manned for the voyage that the vessel was to undertake. The crew consisted of the following:-

C. Graham, Master;  
Thomas Burns, Mate;  
E. Duff, Chief Engineer;  
G. Rees, 2nd Engineer;  
W.L. Haven, Cook and Steward;  
S. Dickson, AB;  
J.H. Williams, AB;  
G. Luff, OS, (never had been seamen before);  
R. Weldon, Fireman;  
M. Ford, Fireman.  
Mr Horsley (owner) signed on as purser, wages 1/- per month.  
J. Rowbotham and D. Harrison working their passage, wages 1/- per month having never been to sea before.

The stores that came on board in Port Natal consisted of 360 lbs of canned meats, 2 bags of biscuits, 2 small bags of flour, 1 cwt of dried potatoes, 2 cwt of sweet potatoes, 14 lbs of tapioca, 2 small packages of sago, 36 tins of condensed milk, ¼ pound of pepper, 6 pints of vinegar, 6 bottles of rotten pickles, 1 lb of mustard, 2 lbs of macaroni, 2 lbs vermicelli, 4 x 21b tins golden syrup, 28 lbs of oatmeal, 10 lbs of currents, 10 lbs

raisins, 2 doz packets corn flour, 4 lbs suet, 30 lbs marmalade, 30 lbs coffee, 5 lbs tea, ¼ lb nutmeg, 2 bottles curry powder, 1 lb rock salt, 50 lbs rice, 15 qts split peas.

The above is a complete list of stores that came on board for 13 men to last from Port Natal to Newcastle. We had only 142 tons of coal leaving and the sails and life boats were in a bad condition. On or about the 10th of July the stores were getting very low, just enough to keep the men alive.

22nd of July we had nothing to eat.

23rd July at daylight made the land, supposed to have been at Geographical Reef [Geographe Reef] a few miles north and west of Cape Leeuwin. When the Master came to the conclusion to put into Hamelin Bay for stores and fuel as the coal was finished that morning at 8 am, but the Master said the current would not allow them to make Hamelin Bay, he therefore set his course for Brooke Inlet, [Broke Inlet], burning all the loose wood aboard and where he anchored the same evening. The hands then being pretty bad from want of food.

24th July the Master and 2 AB's went ashore in search of food and fuel, could not find none, came back on board when the Mate and Owner and 2 seamen went ashore and secured a calf weighing about 50 lbs and brought aboard on the morning of the 25th. All hands were then in a starving condition. With the entrails of the calf we managed to catch 5 schnapper which satisfied the hunger of the men for a while, it had to be allowed out as we were in a critical condition.

Tuesday 26th. Heaved up anchor and proceeded towards Albany about 8 am but put into Wilsons Inlet and anchored.

Wednesday 27th. Master, Owner and 2 AB's went on shore in the morning in search of food and fuel, they got as far as Young's farm and got a good square meal themselves and sent about 50





lbs of flour back with the seamen, who got back at 10.30 pm and the flour was all wet. The hands then were too weak to hoist the boat up. With the flour we started to make pancakes, all we had to fry them in being tallow fat, no sugar whatever to be had to put into the coffee as it was locked up in the owners cabin.

and the ship was critically situated. The Mate, 2nd Engineer and one AB remained by the ship. The Chief Engineer remaining in Denmark at the Masters request as he understood him to say he was coming from Albany by train.

On 30th July about 3 pm the Captain and Owner came in from Albany on board the tugboat *Duns-*



On the 28th July about 10 pm the ship drove ashore in a south east gale. The Master and Owner being ashore from the previous morning. Everything was done to save the ship. On the morning of the 29th had to send all hands ashore into a cave. The Mate, 2 Engineers, 1 AB and 1 Fireman proceeded to Denmark about the Master and was told he had gone to Albany. We telephoned telling him the ship was ashore. Previous to us telephoning he had communicated with Mr. J Randell and told him to go and see how the vessel was and if we wanted any stores to take us some, the Master knowing perfectly well there was nothing but the flour and that was about finished when the ship went ashore.

Mr. Randell, Mr. Crooks and Mr. Doyle, the leading man in Denmark proceeded to the scene of the wreck and found it advisable to send the men to Denmark as they were in a wretched condition

*A photograph of what is possibly the s.s. Gertie*

*key.* He asked for the men and the Mate told him they were sent, by Mr. Doyle's orders to Denmark, as the vessel was not in a fit state for the men to stop on board. (We got the following stores in Denmark on the day previous; 22 lbs fresh meat; 12 lbs sugar; 1 lb tea; 4 lbs butter; 12 loaves bread; 6 tins of milk; ½ lb pepper; 2 lbs salt; 1 bottle of ink and a pen from Mr. Crooks)

Sunday 31st July; No change in the position of the vessel, pounding very hard at high water. Master, Mate, 2 Engineers and one AB standing by the ship. J. Randell and R. Crooks engaged with their boats to wait on the ship. Master went to Denmark to get coal to try and get the ship off as the tugboat was coming from Albany the next day. Master tried, while at Denmark to get the crew on



board again but they refused as there was nothing aboard of the ship to eat.

On Tuesday 2nd August the Owner came on board about 2.30 am; he had engaged the boatmen at Denmark to bring 3 tons of coal down. He then awoke the Master, who then awoke the Mate and Engineers and the AB and demanded of them to get up and carry the coal through the surf and aboard the ship. The Mate, 2 Engineers and the AB refused to comply with his demands, the AB being bad with his foot, the others refusing as there were plenty of men available ashore and they did not sign on to carry coal, otherwise we were willing to do all in our power for the safety of the ship. At about 5 am the same morning he awoke the Chief Engineer to set the fires away as by that time there were a few bags of coal on board. On complying with his orders, the 2nd Engineer and he went below to get things ready as the starboard furnace had all the bars out of it and were replacing them when the Master sent for the Chief Engineer and told him the 2nd Engineer was knocked off duty for refusing to carry coal. The Chief then told him he could not get things ready without his help or some other persons, so had to leave it until the men came down with the surveyor, when the men went to work with a will, after getting something to eat from the stores that Captain Jones brought with him. The remainder of the stores were taken by the Master and Owner and locked away, leaving only the meat, the Master saying the stores were ordered by him. (Very little did we see of them afterwards).

The Captain of the tugboat, Mr. Douglas, then told the Mate to take his orders from him as he had contracted to deliver the vessel to Albany. We tried to get the vessel off, breaking 2 hawsers. The Master of the *Gertie* gave orders to pump the after ballast tank before the vessel was head to sea, which was the cause of her going higher up the beach. The tugboat then left and proceeded to Albany to get anchors and wrecking gear to have another go at getting her off. This was on Wednesday 3rd August. In the evening the Master came to the Mate and asked him why he did

not go and get stores in the name of the tugboat Captain. The Mate told him he could not do that as he would be liable to prosecution as he had no authority to use the Captain of the tugboats name.

The Master then said that all had finished with the ship, he then called them all aft to his cabin with one exception and entered them into the official logbook for refusing to come aboard the ship, there being no food on board. He then sent for the mate, 1st and 2nd Engineers and the AB and entered them into the official log for refusing to carry coal.

The Mate then told him to do something to himself, and as there was nothing left there aboard the ship, with the exception of what was locked up in the owners room. The Mate then sent 4 men to Denmark to communicate to Captain Jones all particulars.

4th August. Everyone packed up their effects to go to Denmark. About 2 pm the Constable from Albany came alongside the ship and he wanted to know if there was any trouble on board. We then stated our case to him in the presence of the Master and Owner. The Master then stated in the presence of the Constable that there was no food aboard and that the men were not going to get any. A Mr. Randell then asked the Master why he would not get food for the men, he then stated that he was finished with the men and would have nothing to do with them as the Master of the tugboat was providing food for the men. He then asked the Owner, why not pay the men off, he said he had nothing to do with that, it lay with the Captain. We proceeded to Denmark, until we arrived there we had nothing to eat all that day  
Signed :- S. Dickson, AB; Edmund Duff, Chief Engineer, Thomas Burns, Chief Officer.

Two days later Captain Douglas of the *Dunskey* pulled the ship off the beach and towed her to Albany where she was coaled, repaired and restored. A new crew was engaged and she sailed for Newcastle.







## ***A Kormoran Victim Writes...***

**My thanks to Rod Mackay for sending a copy of a poignant letter from a victim of the German raider *Kormoran* to the brother of one who died. I found the care shown to the prisoners by other seamen in contrast to that at the camps very interesting and enlightening. This letter should be read by all those who think that their life is a little tough!**

Note: The spelling, grammar and punctuation of the original letter has been kept as written.

52 Broadbent Terrace  
Whyalla  
South Australia

Dear Lex.

This will most certainly surprise you but will no doubt bring you peace of mind when I explain this epistle to you.

Just one month ago I was a crew member of m/v Dalby and we called at Melbourne and while there I paid a visit to some people at Williamstown who were the parents of a former shipmate of mine and perhaps you may know of them. They are Mr and Mrs McAdam of 100 Osborne Street, Williamstown, W16 and their son the late Mr George McAdam was a member of the crew of s/s "Mareeba" which was sunk by the "German Raider" "Kormoran" in the "Bay of Bengal" 240 miles North East of the Nicobar Islands while on the way to Ceylon with a full cargo of sugar. Also a member of the crew was your younger Brother Geoffrey Ford and he was watch mate of George McAdam. I knew him very well and he and George were my two best friends. We were all taken aboard the German Raider and were all put in prepared quarters in the for'ard part of the raider specially fitted out for captured Prisoners of War. We were allowed on deck 3 hours daily, one hour before breakfast, one hour before dinner and one hour before tea time. The Raider Commander wanted one man to bring the meals and I was elected to do these duties. Twice each day I also brought iced drinking water for everybody, that was 10 A.M. each morning and at 7 P.M. each evening. We were given an issue of cigarettes 25 per man each week and were allowed to toilets anytime was needed. We were given a hot bath once each week and could wash our clothing also each week.

Our food was not such a great amount but it was substancial [sic] enough to live on and I am sure that if the Germans could have given us any more

they would have done.

We were four months on board that Raider and in that time only one ship was sunk and it was a Greek Ship the "Stamatios Embiricos" just Three months after we were sunk and a week after that a ship disguised as an American Ship with the Stars and Stripes painted all over her sides and in very big letters the name of "Marie Luchebach", she turned out to be a German Cargo Vessel which had slipped out of Japan fully loaded with food and oil for the "German Raider", and according to the reconing [sic] of our chief mate who is to-day on this coast as Captain David Freeman, m/v "Lake Eyre", we were 1100 miles west of Fremantle when this ship started to discharge the cargo into the Raider which we witnessed each time we came up on deck and this was carried out night and day for (3) three weeks and during that time the Germans kept the Radio programme on from Perth for us to hear and that was the closest we had been to Australia since we had left it. During these operations we were at anchor all the time and the first unfortunate thing happened to a member of our crew Charles Gunderson A/B of Fremantle. Dropped dead and was given the finest Burial at sea I have ever witnessed. The crew of Raider including Commander all lined the deck at No 1 and No 2 Hatch in Black uniform and with reversed arms and the Union Jack and Swasticka [sic] Flags flying at Half-mast and all work ceased and all the Mareeba crew standing in front of them before the ceremony was performed by German captain Detmers and Captain Skinner of Mareeba before the burial at sea.

After the cargo was discharged into the raider, we were then transferred to the supply ship by rowing boat and then we were all put in the 'tween decks on No 4 and 5 Hold and taken well South of the Sea lanes and Australian Bight and we were feeling the cold very much as we were taken in and out of Icebergs and plenty of them and it was



while on this ship that we had learned of the sinking of the H.M.A.S. "Sydney" and the "Kormoran Raider", as the Captain of this ship came down and told us about it. After 3 weeks aboard this ship we were transhipped to the Prison Ship well South of New Zealand and it was sitting in the ocean with the Poached egg (Japanese Ensign) painted on her side and Japanese name on her boughs [sic] and stern. When we were on board we were taken in the 'tween decks of No 4 and 5 hatches and Learned of her name to be German Merchant Ship "Spreewald" twins screw motor ship and she had been fitted out in Japan with a full cargo of foodstuff for Germany. Well after being aboard for three Months we were fed reasonably well and were allowed on deck twice each day (2 hours) and were given canvas Hammocks to sleep in and two blankets each to help keep warm, and at Xmas time were given Pork for dinner but nothing extra only coffee to drink. It was on this ship that our Second unfortunate Happening as a fireman of the Mareeba was buried at Sea [died on 24/1/42]. He was Alex Mathieson aged about 56 years who lived in Sydney and had died of a groth [sic] (cancer) in the throat. It was just a moderate ceremony as they only sewed him up in canvas and draped the union Jack around him then cast him to the deep.

The Germans didn't like this and became very superstitious [sic] and said that this would bring them bad luck and exactly a [31/1/42] week later at 10 mins past 1pm we were torpedoed by a Submarine which we did not know, and I was blown overboard by the blast which had blown all the Portside lifeboats to pieces and ripped a great hole in the side by No 3 hold and the Engine room and had killed everybody in Engineroom and keeled the ship at about 40 degrees but the Starboard Engine was still running and this made things very bad& the only boats left were Starboard and three got away.

The first lifeboat to be lowered was the steelboat which was well fitted out and was lined throughout with Buoyant air-tight tanks but a very bad incident took place for as it was being lowered by the German Carpenter and another person (whom I cannot remember just now) when it was halfway down the German carpenter let go of the fall and this tipped about 30 people into the sea and also sunk the lifeboat which overturned and could not be righted. This was terrible to watch as panic

broke out and most of them were drowned because the ship kept going as the starboard motor was still running. Your Brother Geoffrey went over the port side by No 5 hatch on a raft which was made fast to the rigging and he was with Leonard McLelland a Fireman of the Mareeba and a native of New Zealand and David McNiell A/B of Mareeba and an Australian who lives in Sydney and also with them was a Norwegian Sailor off the Stamatios Embiricos named Axle Ström these were the only ones who got away on that life raft and with it being middle of Winter and in the wide open sea and in the Bay of Biscay and 360 miles north of the Azores islands this being the position of the Ship when we were torpedoed I can assure you that it was a terrible plight to be in.

I was picked up out of the water by the second lifeboat to get away and I only had a singlet on as I had torn my trousers off and pulled my shoes off to help me to keep afloat, the lifeboat was over crowded but this was better to me than trying to float, the third lifeboat got away and had the German captain of the Prison Ship and also Captain Skinner of the Mareeba, George Humphries A/B of the Mareeba David Evans A/B of the Mareeba, Greek captain and Greek Carpenter of Stamatios Embiricos also Tommy Riley 4<sup>th</sup> Engineer of Mareeba also George McAdam A/B and David Kitchen Deck Boy of West Australia and crew members of s/s Mareeba and a couple of other Germans were in No3 lifeboat which was making for the Azores was Captain Skinners last word to us all as they set off for them but am sorry to say they never were seen again.

This torpedoing [sic] took place on the 31<sup>st</sup> January, 1942 after us being prisoner of war on the high seas for almost (8) eight months and we had been in the German Raider, the Supply Ship in disguise, and the Prison Ship Spreewald and now here we were left to the mercy of the High Seas in the middle of winter. A working boat was put over and got away with 9 survivors which were William Thorpe A/B Fred Sayers Dky-man [Donkey-man] Sid Jones 2<sup>nd</sup> Cook all of the Mareeba and the rest were members of the Stamatios Embiricos. (Sam Ravenscroft was on the raft with your Brother Geoff) and Bob Sorenson chief Cook was in the work boat with Bill Thorpe. Another Liferaft was lowered out of the rigging but I don't know who were the survivors but there was only two survivors from that one.



Returning back to the steel lifeboat which the German Carpenter tipped into the sea I am sorry to say that only four people managed to turn it upright but most unfortunately they could not bail the water out of it. The 4 occupants were (2) two German Sailors, and two Australians. The two Australians were Ben Anderson chief Engineer of the Mareeba and Ralph Holmes Radio Officer apprentice of the Mareeba only 17 years of age. Well now to get into the serious side of this we were adrift 3 days and 5 hours in these lifeboats liferafts and in that time with nothing to eat or drink I can assure that it was terrible. The cold wind and dampness was beginning to tell and on the second day of February 1942 Geoffrey Ford had perished from the cold on the raft and was pushed into the sea, and also that day in the submerged steel lifeboat Ralph Holmes had perished from cold and was put into the sea, and on the third day Ben Anderson the chief Engineer had perished from the cold and he was cast into the sea and this left only the (2) two German Sailors to survive. Also on the third day on the liferaft where Geoff had perished another body had perished and it was Axle Ström, the Norwegian sailor and his body was cast to sea.

Almost at dusk a German Submarine surfaced and took the survivors on board. The total number of survivors who were picked up were 22 of Mareeba crew 7 Survivors from a Yugoslave [sic] whose name I had not mentioned as these survivors were left out of (9) nine they were sunk on the same day as the Mareeba in the Bay of Bengall [sic] by the German Raider and two of them had drowned when we were torpedoed. (23) twenty-three survivors of Stamatis Embiricos and (3) three Survivors of the German Prison Ship, making a total 55 survivors picked up by the German Submarine. The submarine searched all night for any more survivors and next day but bad weather was blowing and all hope was abandoned so evidently the third lifeboat had sunk and all had perished. When we were taken aboard the Submarine we were all given a tot of cognac, and then given a hot meal and all given a stretcher to sleep in (2 in each) for the night, and I was given a long pair of woollen underwear and a woollen blouse to put on to help keep me warm and I appreciated it very much as I only had a singlet on when I was picked up. The next morning we were all taken into the torpedo chamber and that is where we stayed until we reached the coast of

France after the (6) sixth day on board the Submarine. The Commander of the Sub. told us the real reason he put us in the torpedo chamber was that he had no where else he could put us as the whole of the crew had given up their beds for the night so that we may all get some much needed rest after the ordeal we all had been through. We were given (3) three hot meals each day while in the Submarine but had to sit up all the time till we reached civilisation again.

On the Fourth day we surfaced 3p.m. European Zone time for the news and heading for Bordeaux on the coast of France and we were spotted by the Aeroplanes and had to crash dive and get out of the way or we would have been blown to pieces. Well we could not get into Bordeaux so we finished up the coast of France 100 miles from Bordeaux at a place called Lorient and was I glad to put my feet on the terra firma (soil) again. Well the snow had been falling and not having any boots didn't help me to keep my feet very warm but I still survived, and after being given a very good hot meal by the French people we were all put in two motor lorries and taken (20) miles away to a place called "Vannes" and put in big barracks which were occupied by French Moroccan Troops and while there the Moroccan Troops gave me a pair of military boots two pair of woollen socks a khaki shirt a woollen singlet, Battle Dress coat and trousers and an Overcoat and Balaclava hat, so I was beginning now to feel a little bit at ease.

We only stayed there for two nights and then were taken by train to "St Nazaire" where we stayed for 2 weeks and we were glad to leave there because the commander hated "Der British" and he only gave us one meal each day and that was the mid-day meal.

After leaving there we were put in cattle trucks with straw in to sleep on and taken from place to place and around the South of Paris and finally we crossed the Border into Germany and then were taken to Bremen and then we were taken by motor lorry to a place (18) eighteen kilometres from Bremen called Westertimtke, which had barracks specially built for Prisoners of War and was surrounded by Barbed wire Fences 10' feet high and guards all around the wire and a Machine Gun Tower on each corner of the camp. The Barracks had Bunks 2 high and had 24 to 26 men in



each room which was only 10' by 12' so you can guess what it was like. After we were interrogated [sic] we were then mixed with the other 3,000 prisoners who were all Seamen as this camp was for seamen only.

The food was not so good as we only got sauerkraut and potatoes to live on but then we started to get Red Cross Parcels, (1) one per man per week and this helped us out very much but as the summer came so I used to go and work on the farms and they used to treat me like of one of their own. In the winter time we used to run shows in the Merchant Navy Theatre which was a barrack turned into a place for shows and this used to keep up the morale and spirits of the rest of the lads. I took part in about 26 of these shows while a P.O.W. and have a Diploma to show in appreciation of my efforts to the camp but it is still rolled up as I have never had it framed as yet.

Every day and night we saw the air raids on Bremen and Hamburg and they used to frighten us as we had no air raid shelter to get into but the Airmen must have known that we were Prisoners of war. We saw some terrible things happen but then that is War and so that is that.

We were released on May the 8<sup>th</sup> by the 53<sup>rd</sup> Highland Division all Scotch Regiment and I was very ill at the time and was taken to a Hospital

just outside of Bremen called "Celle" and had a temperature of 106° and was very much run down so I was taken from there and put in an ambulance wagon and taken on to Brussels and put in an ambulance Dakota plane and flown across to England to Red Hill Downampney airfield and taken by ambulance to E.M.S. Hospital in Stratton near Swindon and after (3) three weeks there was allowed to go out and sent to Australia House where they sent me to Glouster [sic] House by Sloanes Square in London but I got ill again and had about 5 blackouts and was put in University Cottage Hospital in Tottenham Court Road London and had that high temperature of 106° again and this time they built me up and when I left Hospital I had weighed 11½ stone which was 2½ stone heavier than when I went in there.

The Red Cross sent me up to Wales for a Holiday and then to Kingston on Thames and then to Scotland where I sailed for Australia on the Empire Rawlinson and arrived back home on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1945, and was I glad to get back home.

Well now Lex I do hope that I have eased your mind and that this little epistle will interest you and give you the facts and knowledge of what you wanted to know. And now I am

Yours Respectfully,  
Jack Bottomley

#### Editor's note:

The *Mareeba* (3,472 tons) was sailing from Batavia to Colombo with a cargo of 5,000 tons of raw sugar when the *Kormoran* forced her to stop by shelling, then sank her with explosives at 8° 15' N and 88° 06' E.

The *Kormoran* (9,400 tons) had been originally launched as the passenger ship *Steiermark* of the Hamburg-Amerika Line, having four 9-cylinder diesel engines totalling 14,000 hp. She was armed with six 5.9" guns.

The Yugoslav ship referred to in the letter was the *Velebit* (4,153 tons) from Split, Yugoslavia, sailing in ballast to Moulmein. This ship did not stop when demanded by the *Kormoran* and was very extensively damaged by shellfire, being left a burning hulk. A boat with nine survivors was sighted and these were taken on board the raider. Unknown to the *Kormoran* some of the crew remained on the burning wreck which eventually drifted ashore on one of the Andaman islands, where they were marooned for some weeks before being rescued.

The *Stamatios G. Embiricos* (3,941 tons), from Mombasa to Colombo in ballast, had been steaming along with her lights on and was taken without firing a shot. She was sunk after the crew abandoned ship.

The replenishment ship was the *Kulmerland* (disguised as the *Marie Luchebach*) and the position for the meeting was 32° 30' S and 97° E. This was a little over 800 miles west of Fremantle, closer to that port than the 1100 estimated by the Chief Mate of the *Mareeba*.

#### Reference:

Detmers, T., 1973, *The Raider Kormoran*. Universal-Tandem publishing Co. Ltd, London.

This is a complete list of the full complement.

Crew of <sup>S</sup>/<sub>S</sub> Mareeba = 6<sup>th</sup> April 1911

Chief Cook. Sorenson, Robert.

2<sup>nd</sup> Cook. Van Brughel, Christian.

Officers Deck Side

Captain Skinner.

Chief Mate. Freeman, David.

2<sup>nd</sup> Mate. Rogers.

3<sup>rd</sup> Mate. Long, Douglas.

1<sup>st</sup> Radio. Redmond, Ronald.

2<sup>nd</sup> Radio. Currie, Noel.

3<sup>rd</sup> Radio. Holmes, Ralph.

Chief Steward. Keegan, Colin.

2<sup>nd</sup> Steward. Pratt, William.

3<sup>rd</sup> Steward. Bentley, Charles.

Carpenter. Jerseyman, Victor.

Boatswain. Rose, Robert.

Storekeeper. Humphries, George.

Able Seaman. McNeil, Gilbert.

Able Seaman. Thorpe, William.

Able Seaman. Melville, George.

Able Seaman. Evans, Douglas.

Able Seaman. Gunderson, Charles.

Able Seaman. Lucas, (-yank) John.

Able Seaman. McAdam, George.

Ord. Seaman. Ford, Geoffrey.

Deck Boy. Kitchen, David.

3<sup>rd</sup> Cook. Jones, Sidney.

Officers Engine Room

Chief Engineer. Anderson, Bernard.

2<sup>nd</sup> Engineer. Gordon, John.

3<sup>rd</sup> Engineer. Hill, James.

4<sup>th</sup> Engineer. Pielley, Thomas.

5<sup>th</sup> Engineer. McCowan, Kenneth.

Donkeyman. Sayers, Frederick.

Greaser. Ravenscroft, Samuel.

Greaser. Mc Kay, John.

Fireman. Langtry, John.

Fireman. Dooley, Lionel.

Fireman. McLelland, Leonard.

Fireman. Mathieson, Alexander.

Fireman. Hayes, Dennis.

Fireman. O'Toole, Martin.

Fireman. Bradley, James.

Fireman. Gannon, Patrick.

Fireman. Martin, Horace.

Trimmer. Bottomley, Jack.

Trimmer. Griffiths, Jack.

Trimmer. Brown, William.

Trimmer. Nieuwenhizen, Edward.

Trimmer. Gill, Rio.

Trimmer. Marcusson, George.

names marked red were drowned in Bay of Biscay



# QUIZ

## Answers to September

1. St Alouran Islet lies 3½ miles south-east of Cape Leeuwin.
2. Corposant is more commonly known as St Elmo's Fire, or Jack-O'-the lantern.
3. Limber holes are holes passing through the floors, close to, and on each side of, the keelson. They allow water in the bilge to run to the lowest point so that it can be removed by a bilge pump.

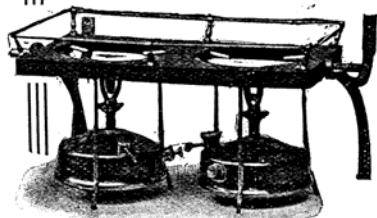
## Questions

1. On what date and where was the battle between the cruisers HMAS *Sydney* and *Emden* ?
2. After whom or what was Hawley Shoal, on the Five Fathom Bank west of Mt Haycock on Garden Island, named?
3. What is the 'nock' of a sail?



### BELLS.

No. 3. Light Pattern 8 in. Wrought Brass Bell Bracket—Bracket polished and detachable. Price 7/6 each.  
Many other patterns are illustrated in our Catalogue. Particulars on request.



### The "S.L." Primus Gimballed Range New Design. Registered. No. 2.

Malleable cast iron galvanized, with brass pillars and rails. To be fixed fore and aft, gimballed one way. Stoves can be withdrawn and used separately. O.A. Size, 21-in. x 10-in. x 11-in.  
Price (Range only) 15/-

## SIMPSON LAWRENCE FITTINGS

Enable you to get the maximum amount of convenience with a minimum amount of space occupied. We can supply everything necessary in fitting out and equipping your yacht, and shall be pleased to quote on receipt of particulars of your requirements.

**SIMPSON LAWRENCE & CO.,**  
11 ST. ANDREW'S SQUARE, GLASGOW.  
Telegrams: "Afloat" Glasgow.

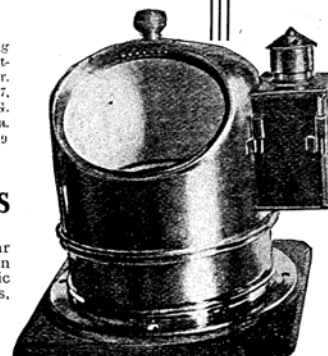
### AGENTS ABROAD:

New Zealand—Fleck & Cameron, 32, Dowling St., Dunedin. Norway—Damsgaards Baatbyggeri & Motorforretning, Damsgaard, pr. Bergen. Belgium—Maurice Pauwaert, 37, Place du Dock, Ghent. Hamburg—R. G. Schreiber, Civ. Engineer, Borsenbrücke 2a. Vancouver, B.C.—Tullis & Hamilton, 1119 Premier St., W.

### THE "POINTER" COMPASS (Reg. Design.)

Bayonet-jointed dome, lifting clear for taking bearings. Barton paraffin lamp or tray and holder for electric light. Unship lamp, polished brass, teak base. Best Liquid Compass.

With 4-in. Compass, £4 5s.  
5-in. .. £4 10s.



**Maritime Heritage Association Inc.**  
23 State Street, Victoria Park, Western Australia, 6100.

