

# MARITIME HERITAGE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

Volume 26, No. 4. December 2015

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

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

C/o: The Secretary (Marcia Van Zeller)  
47 Conochie Crescent  
Manning, W.A. 6152

Treasurer: Bob Johnson, PO Box 1080, Guilderton, W.A. 6041.

Editor: Peter Worsley. 12 Cleopatra Drive, Mandurah, W.A. 6210  
Email: [mha.editor@gmail.com](mailto:mha.editor@gmail.com)



*De traankokerij van de Amsterdamse kamer van de Noordse Compagnie op Smerenburg*  
(The train oil cookery of the Amsterdam chamber of the Northern Company at Smeerenburg)

Painting: *Cornelis de Man, 1639.*

See article page 16



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

(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, emailed, typed or on disk, to:  
The Editor, 12 Cleopatra Drive, MANDURAH, Western Australia, 6210. [mha.editor@gmail.com](mailto:mha.editor@gmail.com)

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.

The MHA is affiliated with the Royal Western Australian Historical Society (Incorporated)

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

# MHA End of Year Windup & Book Launches

**When: 10 am Sunday, 22 November 2015**

**Where: Hicks' Private Maritime Museum  
49 Lacy Street, East Cannington**

For catering purposes please let Doris know if you will be there.

**Email: [hicksmaritime@bigpond.com](mailto:hicksmaritime@bigpond.com)**

or

**Tel: 9451 6828**



## Did You Know?

In the Royal Navy of the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the term sloop had a quite different meaning to that which we now use. A sloop is now considered to be a fore-and-aft rigged sailing vessel with a single mast and single headsail, although in the US a sloop can have two headsails. However, 200 years ago the Royal Navy sloop was of no specific rig. There were brig-sloops and ship-sloops, the former having two masts and the latter three, in both cases all masts were square-rigged. What differentiated sloops from other naval ships was that a sloop, whatever the rig, was under the command of a commander (one rank less than a captain) and had only a single deck carrying guns. Rated warships were commanded by captains or higher, and carried guns on more than one deck.



# 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 1904 the boat-header on the New Bedford whaling barque *Sunbeam* (255 tons, built in 1854), Charles W. Smith, stated: "There are only two kinds of whales. One of 'em is the Sperm Whale; the rest of 'em is the other."

*My father was the sort of man who, if wrecked on a desolate island, would find his way home, if he had a jack-knife and could find a tree.*

Joshua Slocum, 1898.

The first Government schooner in WA, the *Ellen*, was built in Bombay in 1819 as the ketch *Chaser*. In early 1830 the *Chaser* was bought by Captain James Somers Rae and Henry Clinton, re-named *Emelia and Ellen*, and sailed to Fremantle. In May 1830 it was blown ashore during a gale in Owen Anchorage. Governor Stirling negotiated with Rae (Clinton having died in March 1830) for the sale of the ketch as payment of a debt owed by Rae. The *Emelia and Ellen* was re-fitted, the rig changed to that of a schooner, and re-named *Ellen* after Stirling's wife.

When HMS *Victory* was ready for launching on 7 May 1765 it was found that the gate to the dockyard in which the ship lay was 9½ inches narrower than the beam of the ship. Shipwright Hartly Larkin organized every available shipwright, and they hewed away the sides of the gate with adzes sufficiently for *Victory* to be launched.

In 1831 First Sea Lord Sir Thomas Masterman Hardy signed an order for the 66-year old HMS *Victory* to be broken up. When he got home and told his wife she burst into tears and sent him back to the Admiralty to rescind the order.

In 1854 Yorkshire born Edward James Harland moved from Glasgow to Belfast to take up the position of manager of Robert Hickson's shipyard. In 1857 he hired Gustav Willheim Wolff as his personal assistant, and one year later Harland bought out Hickson for £5,000. This was the start of the firm of Harland & Wolff, builders of the *Titanic*.

*No sane person, with the exception of His Excellency, who expresses himself agreeably surprised at the progress the colony has made, can avoid seeing how much it has retrograded since the departure of Mr Hutt; every ship that leaves, especially those bound to other Australian colonies, carries with it more people than we receive (excepting such refuse as Parkhurst boys) in ten arrivals.*

*Inquirer*, 10 May 1848: 3a.

A builder's half-model of the famous clipper ship *Thermopylae* was recently bought at auction for £13,200 by the Aberdeen Maritime Museum. When it was built in 1868 the *Thermopylae* cost £9,000.

During World War II the 1,620-ton diesel yacht *Philante*, built in 1937 for Sir Thomas Sopwith, was requisitioned by the Royal Navy, armed with a 4-inch gun and used as a convoy escort vessel. At the end of the war it was returned to Sopwith, who sold it in 1947 to Norway, where it was re-named *KS Norge*, and is the Norwegian Royal Yacht.

The largest American centerboard schooner was the five-masted *Governor Ames*, 265 ft long, 50 ft beam and with a centerboard 35 ft long which dropped 14 ft.

On 26 November 1890 the four-masted barque *Shenandoah* was launched at Bath, Maine. At that time it was the largest capacity sailing ship ever launched in the USA, being 3,258 tons net. A picture of this vessel featured on the United States Government register papers of ships flying the American flag, and on the licences issued to masters of American sailing ships.

The Tasmanian-built whaling barque *Runnymede* was wrecked at Frenchman Bay near Albany on 19 December 1881. The wreck lies very close (alongside according to one contemporary newspaper report) to that of the *Fanny Nicholson*, a British built but Tasmania-owned barque, wrecked on 22 November 1872.



# QUIZ

## Answers to September

1. The squadronal colours of the Royal Navy were red, white and blue, and this was also the ranking, red being the senior squadron. When squadronal colours were no longer used, the Red Ensign was allocated to the Merchant Navy, the White Ensign to the Royal Navy and the Blue Ensign to the naval reserve and naval auxiliary vessels.
2. A cringle is a short piece of rope worked grommet fashion into the bolt rope of a sail, and often containing a thimble.
3. Jon Sanders departed Fremantle on 25 May 1986 and returned 658 days, 21 hours and 18 minutes later on 13 March 1988. He sailed 71,023 nm in the triple circumnavigation.

## Quiz

1. On what date was the steamer *Georgette* wrecked at Calgardup in the south-west of Western Australia?
2. Since the days of the magnificent J-class yachts, have racing yachts become progressively more ugly?
3. The first challenge for the America's Cup was made in 1870, by Englishman James Lloyd Ashbury, owner of the 188-ton schooner *Cambria*. He lost. What was the name of the winning American yacht?

## DETROIT

### MARINE ENGINES

Petrol or Paraffin

All outfits include:

PRICE for complete sets from	<b>£15</b>	{ Bronze Shafting, Propeller, Ignition, Silencer, Wiring, etc.
------------------------------------	------------	--

Sizes . . . 2 to 20 h.p.  
All Outfits sold on 30 days' free trial.

Prompt delivery from

### DETROIT ENGINE WORKS

94, Hatton Garden, London, E.C.

Northern Branch - - 40, John Dalton Street, Manchester.

## LIVERPOOL TO MELBOURNE PACKET FOR

The 5th July 1864.

The Magnificent Frigate-built Clipper Ship

### **DONALD MACKAY**

Captain Richards.

2069 Tons Register, 5000 Tons Burthen.

This leviathan ship was built expressly for the "Black Ball" Line by Donald M'Kay, Esq., builder of the *Lightning*, *Champion of the Seas*, &c. She is the largest and one of the fastest in the Australian trade, and her arrangements for all classes of passengers are of the most superior description.

For freight or passage apply to  
**JAMES BAINES & CO.**, Water-street. Liverpool;  
**GIBBS, BRIGHT & CO.**, Merchants, 1 North John-street;  
**T. M. MACKAY & CO.**, 1 Leadenhall-street, London.



## *Indian Queen*

A remarkable tale of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century near-shipwreck and survival.

At 2.00am on 1 April 1859 while homeward bound from Melbourne to Liverpool under Captain Brewer, with 41 passengers and a cargo of wool and gold dust, the ship *Indian Queen* of the Black Ball Line collided with an iceberg at 58°S, 151°W. As the ship was doing 12 knots the resultant damage was severe. All the masts and yards above the lower masts were left hanging over the starboard side. The foremast had broken off just above deck level and was hanging aft at an angle of 45 degrees, held by the forestay and rigging. The main yard had snapped in half, part of the bowsprit was floating under the bow and the mizzen topsail yard had also broken in two. The butt of the bowsprit had been driven aft into the forecastle, and the starboard lifeboat had been crushed by the falling spars.

The night was dark, the north-west wind strong, sleet was falling, and as the passengers rushed on to the deck they found the ship lying broadside on to a gigantic iceberg. To compound their shock they found that there was no one at the wheel, the port life-boat was missing and there was nobody on the poop. The carpenter, Thomas Howard, appeared from where he had been sounding the pumps and declared that the *Indian Queen* was making no water. The second mate, Leyvret, then announced that Captain Brewer, the mate Jones and 15 of the 20 crew had panicked and deserted the ship. Such was their panic that the captain had even abandoned his own son, a 16-year old apprentice on the vessel. The crew that remained were the second mate, carpenter, boatswain, cook and steward, four able seamen and two boys. The passengers numbered 26 young men, eight old men and seven women and children.

Under the command of the second mate, those crew that remained and the young male passengers began to clear the tangle of fallen spars and gear, and also the tons of ice that had fallen on to the deck. As the crew were working they saw the boat with the captain and other deserters trying to regain the ship. The boat appeared to be without oars and the seas were washing over it. Those on the ship threw ropes out, but the boat was too far away for these to reach. In the strong wind, rough seas and darkness the boat disappeared, and neither it nor its crew were seen again.

On the *Indian Queen* the crossjack was backed with some difficulty and the head of the spanker hauled in, causing the ship to drift clear of the

iceberg. Luckily the backwash from the waves hitting the berg kept the ship from pounding on the ice as the *Indian Queen* floated past. It took them an hour to drift clear of the end of the ice. Daylight arrived, and in the lee of the iceberg they began to sort out the mess. Suddenly another large iceberg loomed up, and it was only by hard work with the couple of sails that could be set that they managed to move clear. That iceberg drifted past no more than 100 yards off. Just then the remains of the foremast fell, smashing the only remaining boat, the long boat.

They tried unsuccessfully to saw the foremast in two in order to remove it, but the rolling of the ship prevented this. They then cut away some of the bulwarks and managed to lever the mast overboard, where it drifted away.

Using the remains of the main and mizzen masts and the few spars and sails left, they set sail for Valparaiso, some 3,800 miles away. When they had sailed northwards to calmer seas sheer legs were rigged, and using these a topmast was fastened to the stump of the foremast. Topsail yards were crossed on this and the bit of main mast that was still standing, which gained a little extra speed. The *Indian Queen* weathered numerous gales as it slowly sailed northward, undermanned, with no captain and under jury rig.

The *Indian Queen* arrived off Valparaiso 40 days after the collision and 54 days out from Melbourne, and was towed into the port by the boats from HMS *Ganges*.

Peter Worsley

**Note:** The *Indian Queen* was a full-rigged ship of 1,041 tons, built 1853 by W. & R. Wright and Smith of Nova Scotia.

### **References:**

Lubbock, B., 1975, *The Colonial Clippers*. Brown, Son and Ferguson, Ltd, Glasgow.

*The Hobart Town Daily Mercury*, 18 November 1859: 2a.

*The South Australian Advertiser*, 15 September 1859: 3d.

Wallace, F.W., 1924, *Wooden Ships and Iron Men: The Story of the Square-rigged Merchant Marine of British North America, the Ships, Their Builders and Owners, and the Men who Sailed Them*. Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd, London.





## The Wreck of the *E.B. Allen*

On 20 November 1871 the 276-ton centre-board schooner *E.B. Allen* was carrying a cargo of grain to the city of Buffalo, New York. There was heavy fog, and about two miles south-east of Thunder Bay Island in Lake Huron the schooner collided with the barque *Newsboy*. The barque tore a large hole on the port side of the *E.B. Allen* causing the schooner to sink. Luckily the crew were all taken off by the *Newsboy*.

Today the wreck of the *E.B. Allen* lies upright in 100 ft of water in remarkably good condition. Much of the decking has gone, as have the masts.

However, the windlass, anchor chains, rudder, and centre-board winch remain in place. The wreck is a favourite dive site, and consequently there are many photographs showing the excellent preservation of wooden vessels in cold fresh water.

The *E.B. Allen* (O/No. 7818) was built by H.C. Pierson at Ogdensburg, New York, and launched in 1864. This was not the schooner's first collision. In 1868 it rammed the schooner *Persian*. The *E.B. Allen* did not stop, apparently presuming the *Persian* was not badly damaged. In fact the *Persian* sank, and all ten crewmen were lost.



*The remarkable condition of the E.B. Allen after nearly 144 years underwater. The visibility is exceptional.*





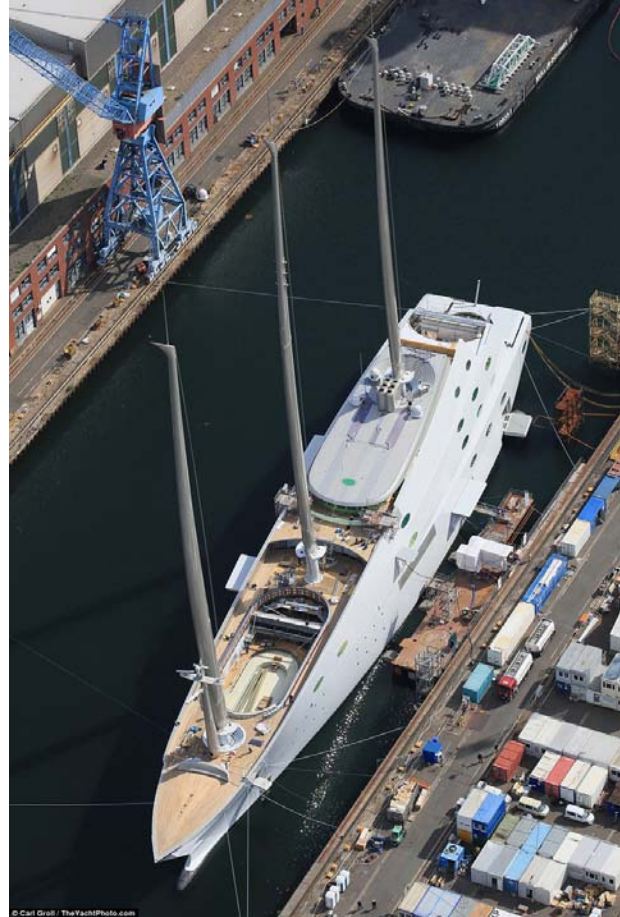
# The Biggest Yacht in the World

The biggest yacht in the world, designed by Frenchman Philippe Starck, was launched near Hamburg, Germany, earlier this year. The 468-foot long vessel has a displacement of 12,700 tons and is owned by Russian billionaire, Andrey Igorevich Melnichenko. The three carbon fibre masts, the tallest 300 feet above the deck, were made in Portsmouth, UK, and shipped to Nobiskrug near Hamburg. They are the largest and strongest free standing carbon fibre structures in the world.

The vessel has eight decks, and carries a crew of 54, plus 20 passengers. There is a large swimming pool on the teak deck and provision for a helicopter to land. The keel incorporates a glass viewing bubble made from one of the largest single pieces of curved glass ever made, 193 square feet and weighing 1.8 tons. The yacht is powered by a hybrid mixture of diesel and electric engines, two diesels each of 4,830hp and two electric motors each of 5,770hp.

The yacht, not just the biggest yacht but also the biggest sailing vessel in the world, has a top speed of 20.8 knots and a cruising speed of 15.6 knots. It replaces Melnichenko's previous £190 million yacht. At a cost of £260 million the single letter name A seems a bit ordinary for this

large yacht. But then are its looks something the owner could really show with pride?





# My Time on the *Singa Betina*

## Part 5 of Ted Whiteaker's article.

Pulau Raja, nowadays known more commonly as Pulau Palu'e, was one of our overnight stops on the way to Maumere. This island is a steep volcano, known as Paluweh (or more recently "Rokatenda"), that rises some 3000 metres above the sea floor, with 875 metres showing above sea level. With a base diameter of almost four miles at sea level, the volcano was a significant presence in the area, accentuated by a smouldering peak with a constant plume of smoke trailing out to the horizon. The depth of the ocean plunged away steeply close to shore, so to avoid laying out miles of anchor chain and rope to get to the bottom, we tied the stern to a solid rock outcrop on shore and anchored the bow to seaward.

We could see many huts perched high up on the slopes wherever there was a foothold. There are no roads or vehicles on the island, and it is a two-hour boat journey to the coast of Flores. Local legend has it that the island's inhabitants originated from the Himalayas, while the language spoken on the island is a Malayo-Polynesian language called Palu'e. The people of Palu'e are reputed to consist of several sects: the Kimalaja (Himalaya sect), Lo'imite, Ubimuri, Kinde Pima, and Surya (Sun God) sect.

The largest known eruption of Paluweh was in 1928, when half the population of 266 perished in the associated tsunamis. Since then the volcano has bubbled and burped away between numbers of eruptions, with the latest claiming a few lives in August 2013. Current population figures vary wildly on the internet from 1,000 to 10,000; nevertheless illustrating the determination of the people to stay there. During the night we were there, we could see the patchy red glow of pyroclastic flows up high, and one had to marvel at the tenacity of the villagers living in such unstable conditions. Three months after our visit Paluweh blew again, and on 24 August 1982, ocean water temperatures around the island measured as high as 98°C. Villagers were evacuated on that occasion, with no fatalities recorded.

The island had a brooding air of impending doom about it, oddly contrasted by the beauty of the sheer aspect of the volcano rising from the relatively tranquil sea of the leeward coast. Despite the scenic grandeur, our spirits lightened considerably when we uncoupled from the shore and headed on to Maumere.

Maumere is the principal capital of Flores, and a friendly place. We topped up our fuel supplies – it seems remarkable nowadays to consider the price we paid for diesel was about fifteen cents per litre. Ten metre lengths of good, straight and strong bamboo were priced around AUD\$7.00 per length. Western goods were in demand. A pair of jeans could sell for AUD\$55.00. Unfortunately, our clothing was threadbare and we had none to spare.

We careened *Singa Betina* at a fishing village called Wuring, a few miles northwest of Maumere, and again attended to the weeping seams. After a week, we topped up our water supplies and were preparing to depart Maumere when the friendly Harbour Policeman, Alex, came on board to tell us that there was a cholera outbreak in the area, with many people dead and dying in the surrounding mountain villages, and a lot of sick people in Maumere itself. The cholera was thought to spread via the water supply. I sought the advice of the Ship Captains' Medical Guide, which described the onset of the disease as characterised by "rice-water stools", and stated there is no remedy other than hospitalisation, with death generally ensuing quite swiftly. The only possibilities of a hospital in our direction were at Kupang or Dili, on Pulau Timor, which were both a minimum of two days sailing from Maumere. For the next few days as we headed eastwards we were very attentive to our daily bowel movements, which never quite attained the status of rice-water, much to our relief.

Another overnight stop was at a place called Teluk Kele Wae, on Pulau Alor. We anchored shortly after dawn at a sheltered beach backed by a coconut palm plantation. The steep mountains around formed a deep gully here, with a small stream running down to the beach. We could see no signs of human presence, and relaxed. However, after half an hour or so, we began to notice occasional furtive figures darting sporadically from trunk to trunk in the coconut plantation. Another half an hour passed with occasional movement, and then a couple of figures stood away from the trunks behind which they had been hiding. After a few minutes, two others joined them, presenting a posse of four men quietly observing us. I gave them a wave, to which, somewhat hesitantly, they responded in kind. I then jumped into the dinghy, fired up the Seagull outboard, and motored to





shore to attend to formalities. I anchored the dinghy, and as I walked up the beach toward them, the men adopted a very timid stance, lined up ready to flee behind a spokesman who seemed terrified by the situation. They were small statured people, of slight build and no more than 150cm in height. I assumed my best non-threatening manner, and addressed them with a polite “Good morning, Sirs” in Bahasa Indonesia, and briefly explained our presence. They visibly relaxed as I spoke, and were much relieved at being able to converse, although they had difficulties understanding everything I said, and I had problems understanding their speech. Bahasa Indonesia was obviously a second language for all of us. They indicated that we should all come ashore and go up to the kampong beyond the plantation where the schoolteacher supposedly spoke English. A few more people had sidled up to us as we spoke, and when we had the crew ashore and set off for the kampong we were surrounded by a dozen or so villagers, excitedly chattering away about us. It appeared that European visitors on sailing boats were a rare event here.

It became rapidly obvious that the schoolteacher knew only a dozen or so words of English, and I thought I perceived a loss of face issue when it became obvious to the crowd that he was floundering. Communication was awkward, and I reverted to bahasa, telling them of our journey and a little of what Australia was like. A translation of whatever was said was passed around the audience, and everybody marvelled at everything. Then three men appeared on the track from the mountains and approached the gathering. These men were huge; around 185 cm tall, fit and well-muscled. The leader appeared to be a man in his fifties, followed by a strapping fellow in his thirties wearing a yellow plastic construction helmet on his head, and an older fellow who looked to be in his early sixties. They were barefoot, clad in sarongs, with blankets and water bottles slung over their shoulders, and bearing large parangs. They had bulging potbellies, and looked like meat-eaters. The little people all cowered and looked at the ground while the three newcomers surveyed the situation with a commanding air and questioned them about us. After extracting the story, they resumed their journey down the path to the beach.



The kampong of tiny huts was half a mile up the gully, and built on steep ground with somewhat sparse natural vegetation. It seemed a strange place for a village, being on such steep ground, and so far from the beach. Tsunami minimisation, perhaps, or a defensive measure – the kampong was low profile, and invisible from the sea. We were taken to the schoolteacher’s house. Chairs were fetched, and we sat in the front yard as more people came to observe the proceedings.

I was fascinated by the power dynamics, and asked the schoolteacher who the men were, and where they came from. He was withdrawn, and unwilling to answer, and there was an awkward period where not much was said. Everybody seemed to be waiting sombrely for something they knew was

going to happen. Then the three men reappeared from the beach, obviously having satisfied their curiosity about our boat. Silence reigned as everyone examined the ground in front of him. The men stopped and said a few words to the crowd generally, and the older fellow looked my way. Our eyes locked, and my expression of intense curiosity and interest must have been obvious, for he smiled, and then spoke to me in a sign language of fluid and expressive body movements. He gestured to include himself and his compan-



ions, indicated a direction along the path up into the mountains, and with his hands implied an ascent of several stages over two or three days, followed by an open-handed invitation for me to accompany them. There was a twinkle in his eyes as he smiled at me and waited for a response. I was gob-smacked at the clarity of the proposition, but a little unsure that I had read it right, and looked down to the cowering teacher beside me, asking excitedly what had been said. The teacher refused to look up or respond. I looked back sadly to the old fellow, who smiled, shrugged, and made a small, sympathetic hand movement dismissing the matter, and the three of them turned onto the path and walked off into the distance.

I felt a pang of disappointment as a sense of opportunity lost washed over me. Wandering up into the mountains with these blokes would have been quite an adventure. I later discovered that the people in these areas had been known to practice cannibalism in comparatively recent times, so maybe it was best that the opportunity was lost. I got the impression that the big fellows were the lords of the area, and the little people were the plantation tenders in some sort of serfdom to them. It was a very intriguing situation.

We returned to the boat, and after a break took a late afternoon stroll along the beach. The villagers were out and about, and chatted with us as we wandered along. An old man came running up with a Polaroid photo that he thrust into my face, gibbering excitedly. The photo was of an aluminium washing bowl containing the stillborn foetus of Siamese twins. When I realised what it was, he told me it was his daughter's miscarriage, which had happened about a week previously. He seemed proud of it, but perhaps it was his method of dealing with grief. I found the incident quite bizarre.

We left the following morning for Dili, the capital of East Timor. It had been seven years since the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. When the invasion began in December 1975, I was working at Darwin Airport as an Air Traffic Controller. Our teleprinter began to receive reports from Fretilin (the Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor), the leftist partisans who were then engaged in a civil war against the Indonesian-aligned party known as UDT (the Timorese Democratic Union), following the hasty withdrawal of the Portuguese colonial administration from the country. Darwin was the closest Australian city to East Timor, and before the collapse of civil order, Dili and Baucau were handy destinations for cheap holidays over-

seas, with regular air services from Darwin. Timor was also a primary link in the "hippie trail" that was frequented by cheap travellers wending their way to and from Australia through South East Asia. There were family ties with expatriate Timorese living in Darwin, and the situation had an immediate currency little understood or appreciated elsewhere in Australia. When the Indonesian forces arrived in Dili, Fretilin had occupied the airport control tower, and were reporting on Indonesian military activity as they were being attacked, and requesting assistance from the Australian authorities. Media reports on the situation were sketchy at best, and little was known publicly about the progress of events. The telex messages were forwarded to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Canberra, and I was following the saga with some interest, expecting to see some evidence of movement by the Australian Government. As the days passed, the telex messages became more desperate as Fretilin was being overwhelmed by the invaders, but there was nothing reported in the press, and it became obvious the information was being suppressed. Someone eventually leaked the information to the media shortly after the messages ceased when Fretilin were overcome by the Indonesian forces.

I continued to follow the East Timor situation over the years, and when we first arrived in Kupang on our outward journey from Australia ten months previous, I asked many people whether it was possible to visit Dili. Responses were equally divided between the yeas and nays, and I was keen to try our luck and see just what was happening on the ground there.

We anchored in Dili Harbour at 9.30am, threw the dinghy overboard, set up the plastic shade tarps and sat around while we boiled the billy and considered our position. There were no other boats around, and not a lot of activity on shore until we heard a shrill whistle from the beach, where two well-dressed men in civvies were trying to attract our attention. I went ashore, and they told me that I must go back to the boat, collect our papers and passports, and go with them to Military Headquarters. The rest of the crew were to remain on board the boat. They were polite, but firm in their directive. I told them that we had just arrived and needed to clean up, and asked if it would be possible to wash and have breakfast before accompanying them. They insisted there was no time, and I must return forthwith. I did as they said, and we went to Military Headquarters, where I was ushered into a conference room with glasses of water, paper and writing materials set out on a long table.



I was placed at the head of the table as the room slowly filled with various uniformed officers. Eventually the idle chatter died out and it seemed the formalities were about to begin. I took the initiative, stood up, and addressed them in bahasa, saying that I wished to tell my story, from the beginning. Most Indonesians like a good story, and the assembly relaxed in their chairs and sat back in anticipation of my tale.

I felt oddly detached from reality due to lack of sleep and an empty stomach, and was still at sea with my sense of balance, gently rocking with the waves. I explained that we had departed Australia the year before, and when we got to Kupang, I had enquired about the status of Dili, with replies for and against. I knew there had been trouble in Dili in the past, and did not wish to upset the Indonesian Government. We had sailed via Bali to Singapore, and on to Kuala Terengganu, and were now on our return journey to Darwin. We had gone aground on a reef in Bali, and had some leaking problems with the boat, which we had attempted to address in Rinja. The seas were too rough for a direct route across the ocean to Australia, and we were forced to travel further eastwards to cope with the strong headwinds. From Maumere, we considered our options for a major port in order to stock up on food supplies, and Dili was a logical place to do so. That was how we came to be there.

I then sat down while they discussed the issue amongst themselves, and they asked a few questions about whether there were any other problems with the boat. I mentioned that we had a burst high-pressure hydraulic hose on the gearbox that was an issue, but we were capable of carrying on with makeshift repairs. I could not follow the discussion that ensued, and waited until the meeting dissipated shortly afterwards and I was left with the two agents who had brought me there. They informed me that they would assist us with food supplies, and try to find a spare high-pressure line for the gearbox, but then we had to leave immediately – we could not stay. I said that we could cope with the gearbox hose, but we needed food, and I would have to return to the boat to get some money. They were perturbed by this, wanting us to leave as quickly as possible, and asked how much money we were intending to spend. I suggested 30,000 rupiah, and they happily said that they would lend me that amount.

We would go to the market, and I would give them back the money when they took me back to the boat.

They drove me to the local market, a large, sprawling shed of relatively recent construction, crowded with local people selling produce, clothing and other knick-knacks. These were the people I really wished to see and communicate with, if possible. However, none of them would engage with me. They studiously avoided eye contact, and when I stopped to ask in bahasa how much a bunch of beans cost, there was no response. One of the agents repeated the request in Tetum, the lingua franca of the East Timorese, and translated for me. This was my first surprise. I expected Bahasa Indonesia to be widely spoken, but with their innate resistance to occupation, the Indonesian language was useless as a means of communication. I was disappointed at my inability to converse with them, and as we progressed around the market, I soon realised that the two agents accompanying me were an added disincentive to any meaningful communication.

There were several people selling woven ikat-dyed blankets. Before we left Australia, a friend in Darwin had given me money to buy a blanket for him, and I checked out the materials and talked prices through the interpreter. An older man in his fifties approached with a beautiful blanket, but the price was beyond reach. I offered my maximum, but he would not accept it, and smiled good-naturedly and wandered off. We continued around the market as I gathered what produce we could afford, and the old fellow with the blanket returned and proffered it to me again. I looked at him, and our eyes locked. It was a very brief encounter, but I received an instant communication of spirit in adversity, and felt that this was what I had come for. I understood that, despite all of the atrocities committed by the Indonesians in East Timor, the people were passively resistant and strongly united in spirit, and the war was not over by a long shot.

The agents took me back to the beach and I returned to the boat under strict instructions to leave port immediately. The men stayed on the beach watching until we got under way, a little over four hours since our arrival in the harbour.

*To be continued...*





# HMS *Hood*'s bell Recovered

This article by Jamie Seidel was posted on the internet in August 2015

The bells rang out action stations on the morning of May 24, 1941. Soon after, HMS *Hood* — and 1,415 men — was resting on the seabed. Now tech billionaire Paul Allen has recovered one of those bells to perpetuate their memory. HMS *Hood* was Britain's largest battleship. When she suddenly blew up, only three men survived. Now, some 74 years after the tragic event, entrepreneur and philanthropist Allen has led an expedition to recover one of the ship's two ceremonial bells. Ships' bells were a centrepiece of a naval military, social and religious life: Among other services they would sometimes be used as baptismal fonts for the newborn children of officers and crew.

Permission to recover the ship's bell from what is a designated war grave was granted by Britain's Ministry of Defence after *Hood*'s last living survivor — Ordinary Signalman Ted Briggs — and the HMS *Hood* Association indicated a desire for it to become a memorial for the cataclysmic event. Mr Briggs died in 2008, aged 85.

“There is no headstone among the flowers for those who perish at sea,” said Hood Association president Rear Admiral Philip Wilcocks, whose uncle was among those killed. “The recovery of her bell and its subsequent place of honour in the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth will mean that future generations will be able to gaze upon her bell and remember with gratitude and thanks the heroism, courage and personal sacrifice of *Hood*'s ship's company who died in the service of their country.”

It took only one salvo each from Germany's newest battleship, the *Bismarck*, and the heavy cruiser *Prinz Eugen*. Many questions remain as to exactly how the British battlecruiser blew up. It was the largest loss of life suffered on any single British warship. *Hood* was the crowning glory of Britain's Royal Navy. Her loss tore a hole in the heart of British society and wartime morale.

*Hood*'s wreckage — including the bell — was first

discovered 2,800 metres under the surface in 2001. The shattered remains, while confirming the battlecruiser's aft store of ammunition exploded, has not yet revealed what caused the fire that triggered the detonation.

An earlier expedition in 2012 was hampered by heavy weather. Attempts to recover the bell failed. But, on 8 August 2015, Mr Allen's personal yacht and undersea exploration vessel M/Y *Octopus* finally managed to return to the debris field and pluck the bell from the mangle of metal and mud.

“This year marks the 70th anniversary of the conclusion of World War II, and this effort commemorates the hundreds of brave sailors who were lost at sea,” Allen said in a press release. “It is a true honour to undertake the expedition to recover the bell from ‘The Mighty *Hood*’.”

After 74 years at the bottom of Denmark Strait, the bell is in surprisingly good condition. It will, however, still need to undergo 12 months of conservation treatment before it can be displayed in public. The inscription it bears reveals it is actually an artefact from an older battleship *Hood* which served between 1891 and 1914. It was installed in the newly commissioned *Hood* in 1920. “An engraving on the bell also records the wishes of Lady Hood who launched the ship in memory of her late husband Rear Admiral Sir Horace Hood KCB DSO MVO who was killed in the battle of Jutland,” director of Blue Water Recoveries David Mearns said.







# The WA Rope and Twine Company

An article by Julie Taylor about an important historical precinct

In a quiet little residential area of Mosman Park, two street names and a small unassuming park provide the only clues that a factory with a maritime connection used to stand nearby.

extended for nearly 330m behind the factory buildings eastwards towards Buckland Hill. By peering through the picket fence, onlookers were able to see the rope making machinery moving up and down the rail lines inside. The rope walk is long gone, but its location is commemorated by a

road of the same name. Although long, it has several bends giving it little resemblance to its predecessor.

A significant expansion of the premises had been completed by 1957 which is evident in an aerial photograph from 1974. This photo also clearly shows encroaching urban development including high rise apartments nearby.

The company's land had been gradually sold off over the years. The remaining property was sold in 1989 and the buildings demolished in 1990. An aged care home and retirement village now stand on the site.



*Two suburban streets, named the Rope Walk and Kinnear Ramble, and the Rope Works Park, are all that mark the existence of a lost part of Western Australia's industrial and maritime heritage.*

The WA Rope and Twine Company was established in 1912, equally owned by George Kinnear & Sons Pty Ltd and James Miller Ropes, Twines and Textiles. The factory was situated on the northern side of Boundary Road, facing Stirling Highway. It was a Mosman Park landmark for nearly 80 years.

The company was a major manufacturer of rope and twine and supplied WA and interstate markets including the fishing industry, merchant shipping and the Royal Australian Navy.

A striking feature of the site was the iron-roofed rope walk which

*Looking eastwards up today's Rope Walk.*





The Rope Works Park on the corner of the Rope Walk and Kinnear Ramble contains a small plaque marking the location of the factory.

<http://www.mosmanpark.wa.gov.au/community/history-of-mosman-park/the-mosman-park-heritage-trail>

### References

Tuettemann, Elizabeth, 1991, *Between River and Sea, A History of Mosman Park, Western Australia*, Town of Mosman Park.

*Cross Section*, August 1957, No. 58 . Department of Architecture, University of Melbourne. <http://hdl.handle.net/11343/24051>



*The WA Rope and Twine Company in the 1930s. Stirling Highway runs past in the foreground, Boundary Road on the left running upwards towards Buckland Hill. The 330m long rope walk is a significant feature in the landscape. State Library of Western Australia, 022454PD*



*1974: The factory is still a local landmark but urban development is closing in. State Library of Western Australia, 265398PD*





Jim McDonald, a fisherman from Redford, Scotland, spent three years building a 24-ft long scale model of the USS *Missouri*, the battleship on which the Japanese surrendered at the end of World War II, using hundreds of thousands of Lego blocks. The very detailed model was built in his garage. Commencing in 2012, the recently finished model was to be the biggest Lego ship ever built. However, he was pipped at the post by Dan Siskind of Minneapolis, USA, whose 1:35 scale Lego model of the same ship is 25.5 ft long.



## A SELECTION OF DOCUMENTED SIGHTINGS OF POINT CLOATES, MADE BY ENGLISH SHIPMASTERS BETWEEN 1620 AND 1818

Year	Ship	Owners	1770	<i>Harcourt</i>	English East India Co.
1620	<i>Royal Exchange</i>	English East India Co.	1771	<i>Pigot</i>	?
1620	<i>Unittie</i>	English East India Co.	1780	<i>Pigot</i>	?
1620	<i>Beare</i>	English East India Co.	1796	<i>Belvedere</i>	English East India Co.
1622	<i>Trial</i>	English East India Co.	1797	<i>Coutts</i>	?
1681	<i>London</i>	English East India Co.	1798	<i>Dublin</i>	English East India Co.
1705	<i>Jane</i>	English East India Co.	1798	<i>Caledonia</i>	English East India Co.
1718	<i>The Prince Eugene</i>	Ostend Syndicate	1800	<i>Cartier</i>	English East India Co.
1719	<i>The House of Austria</i>	Ostend Syndicate	1801	<i>Elizabeth</i>	English East India Co.
1721	<i>The House of Austria</i>	Ostend Syndicate	1811	<i>Hibernia</i>	English East India Co.
1721	<i>St Joseph</i>	Ostend Syndicate	1818	<i>St Antonio</i>	?
1721	<i>La Flandre</i>	Ostend Syndicate	1818	<i>Greyhound</i>	Colonial (Sydney)
1724	<i>Aigle</i>	Ostend East India Co.	1818	<i>Moffat</i>	Colonial (Sydney)
1739	<i>Prince of Wales</i>	English East India Co.			
1743	<i>Haeslingfield</i>	English East India Co.			
1758	<i>Elizabeth</i>	English East India Co.			

**Reference**  
*Port of Fremantle Quarterly* – Autumn, 1975.





## Smeerenburg

Smeerenburg on the island of Amsterdamøya at the north-western corner of Spitsbergen is at latitude 79° 40' north, 11° 00' east. It was named by the Dutch whalers, and the word means 'Blubbertown'. It became the main base for their Arctic whaling during the early 1600s. The Amsterdam chamber of the Noordsche Compagnie established a temporary whaling station there in 1614. The crews lived in tents during the short ice-free season. This continued each year until around 1620, when a ship was sent with building material to set up a more permanent base. The site was chosen because it had an area of relatively flat ground and was well sheltered from the winds, being 3–4 miles from the sea in Smeerenburgfjorden. At the height of 17<sup>th</sup> century whaling the town had a population of about 400 in summer time, there were eight try-pots set up, 16 or 17 buildings with a central fort (with two guns) and some 15 ships anchored off the shore. The town was divided into sections with each of the areas belonging to one of the Dutch towns with an interest in whaling. Amsterdam, Middleberg, Veere, Vissingen, Enkhuisen, Delft and Hoorn each had their own cookeries for extracting the oil and warehouse for storage.

There were also ancillary trades such as smithies and coopers operating. In 1632 the Basques had raided a Dutch whaling station on Jan Mayen Island, so in 1633–34 a party of seven men were sent to winter over at Smeerenburg to protect the Dutch interests there. This was the only successful wintering in the history of the town. A second attempt the following winter resulted in the death of all seven men. The station was abandoned around 1660 as the Dutch began to take the blubber back to the Netherlands for processing.

Archaeologists have conducted research at Smeerenburg during which they found 101 graves. Many of the artefacts discovered are now in the Spitsbergen Museum at Longyearbyen, the major town on the island of Spitsbergen. Because of the extremely cold climate, the preservation of these artefacts is remarkable.

**Note:** Some authors have perpetuated the myth that at its height the town held 15,000 to 18,000 people and that as many as 300 ships were anchored off the shore. This is incorrect, as the amount of land suitable for habitation, even during the few months of the year that the station operated, is obviously insufficient for these numbers.



*This photograph shows three piles of stones which are the remains of ovens from the 17<sup>th</sup> C Dutch whaling days. Each would have held a try-pot.*

*The photograph was taken from close inshore by the editor, in July 2013.*

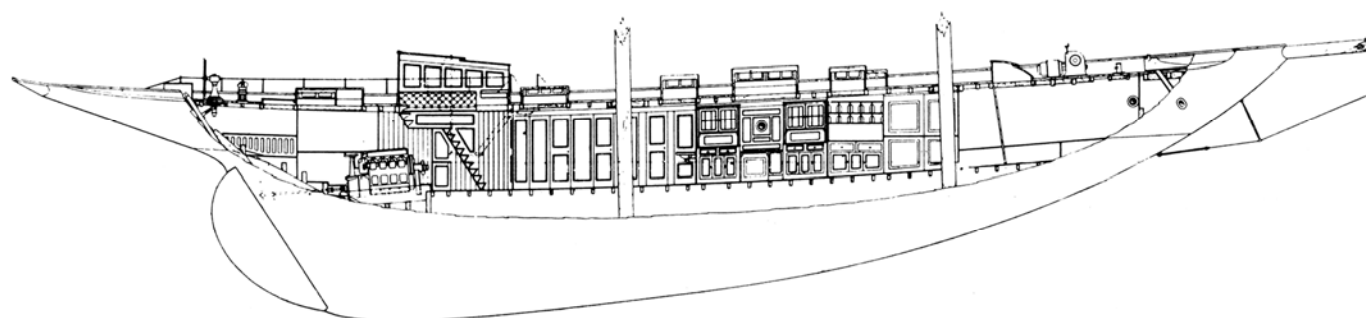




Some years ago I came across this dramatic photograph of the lovely gaff-rigged schooner *Altair* sailing against a background of a stormy sky. Both the photograph and the yacht impressed me at the time, and this feeling has not altered, so I offer it for the enjoyment of the readers of the journal.

Designed and built by William Fife & Sons, Fairlie, Scotland, in 1931 for £21,500, *Altair* has been recently offered for sale for €6,000,000. The 107.8-ft schooner is built of 2¼ inch Burma teak planking on 8 inch by 6 inch oak frames, a teak deck and spruce spars. Ballast weighs some 62 tons, and the loaded displacement is given as 155 tons. With a beam of 20.6 ft there is plenty of space on board.

Peter Worsley





# Ships Of The State Shipping Service

By Jeff Thompson

No. 38 *Mary Durack* I M O No. 8607572

The second of the three chartered Chinese built vessels was launched on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1988 as *Baltimar Neptune* by Zhong Ghua Shipyard, Shanghai, China (Yard No 8604) for M/S 'Baltimar Neptune', Nassau. As built she was 2,854 gross registered tons, 3,170 deadweight tons, 91.2 metres overall, 84.2m between perpendiculars, 14.7m breadth, 4.6m draft with a single 4 cylinder Hudong - B & W 41.35 MCE diesel of 2,300bhp to give a service speed of 13 knots.

On 1<sup>st</sup> October 1988 arrived at Fremantle from Singapore.

On 7<sup>th</sup> November 1988 was renamed *Mary Durack* at a ceremony at No. 2 Berth North Quay by Mrs Barbara Pearce, wife of W.A. Minister for Transport and Planning, with Dame Mary Durack being present.

In July 1991 returned to owners and renamed *Saigon Neptune* on re-charter. During 1992 was renamed *Baltimar Neptune*. In 2005 the ship was renamed *Neptune Scan* with Bahamas registration.



*The Mary Durack after renaming as the Baltimar Neptune*

Photo courtesy Marie-Anne van Bergen

## Old Nautical Quotations

Here lies the body of Michael O'Day  
Who died maintaining the right of way;  
He was right, dead right, as he sailed along,  
But he's just as dead as if he'd been wrong.





# New Solo Circumnavigation Race in 2018

In celebration of Sir Robin Knox-Johnston's historic 1968/1969 non-stop, world's first, solo circumnavigation of the globe, in the Sunday Times 'Golden Globe' yacht race, a new 'Golden Globe Race' will be staged on its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, in 2018. The aims and objectives of this Golden Globe Race are: To create a unique 'retro' non-stop solo around the world race, in the image of the original Sunday Times 'Golden Globe' that draws sailors back to the age of 'one sailor, one boat' facing the great oceans of the world. Entry is by invitation only, for sailors over 18 years of age at the start. Entrants must show previous ocean sailing experience of at least 8,000 miles and another 2,000 solo, by 1 March 2018.

Like the original Sunday Times event, the 2018 Golden Globe Race is very simple. Depart Falmouth, England on 14 June 2018 and sail solo, non-stop around the world, via the five Great Capes and return to Falmouth. Entrants are limited to use the same type of yachts and equipment that were available to Robin in that first race. That means sailing without modern technology or benefit of satellite based navigation aids. Competitors must sail in production boats between 32ft and 36ft overall (9.75–10.97m) designed prior to 1988 and which have a full-length keel with rudder attached to their trailing edge. These yachts will be heavily built, strong and steady, similar in concept to Robin's 32-ft vessel *Suhaili*. *Suhaili* had 6in by 6in stringers and was planked with 1¼in teak.

In contrast to the current professional world of elite ocean racing, this edition travels back to a time known as the 'Golden Age' of solo sailing. *Suhaili* was a slow and steady 32-ft double-ended ketch based on a William Atkins 'Eric' design of 1924. She was heavily built of teak and carried no computers, GPS, satellite phone nor water-maker, and Robin completed the challenge without the aid of modern day shore-based weather routing advice. He had only a wind-up chronometer and a barograph to face the world alone, and caught rainwater to survive, but was at one with the ocean, able to contemplate and absorb all that this epic voyage had to offer.

This anniversary edition of the Golden Globe Race is a celebration of the original event, the winner, his boat and that significant world-first achievement. Competitors in this race will be sailing simple boats using basic equipment to guarantee a satisfying and personal experience. The challenge is pure and very raw, placing the adventure ahead of winning at all costs. It is for 'those who dare', just as it was for Robin. They will be navigating with sextant on paper charts, without electronic instruments or autopilots. They will hand-write their logs and determine the weather for themselves. Only occasionally will they talk to loved ones and the outside world when long-range high frequency and ham radios allow.

It is now possible to race a monohull solo around the world in under 80 days, but sailors entered in this race will spend around 300 days at sea in little boats, challenging themselves and each other. The 2018 Golden Globe Race will be a fitting tribute to the first edition and its winner, Sir Robin Knox-Johnston.

## Note:

William Robert Patrick 'Robin' Knox-Johnston CBE, RD and bar, was born on 17 March 1939, and served in both the Merchant Navy and Royal Naval Reserve. *Suhaili* was built of teak in







Bombay while Robin was serving as an officer in the British India Steam Navigation Company, and launched on 19 December 1964. On 18 December 1965 Robin sailed from Bombay for England. However, a lack of money meant that he had to stop in South Africa and work, so did not complete the voyage until early 1967. In 1968 he was one of nine sailors who attempted to achieve a solo non-stop circumnavigation of the world. He was the only one to complete the voyage, which commenced at Falmouth on 14 June 1968 and finished at the same port 313 days later on 22 April 1969. For this achievement he was made Commander of the Order of the British Empire.



Atkins, W., 1976 (1949), *Of Yachts and Men: An account of many happy years of building, designing and living with small boats; with plans and illustrations of some of these boats, and the circumstances under which they were conceived.* Sheridan House Inc., Dobbs Ferry, NY.

Knox-Johnston, R., 1969, *A World of my own.* Cassell & Company Ltd., London.

### References

Information about the 2018 race is courtesy of McIntyre Adventures.



### Maritime Heritage Association Inc.

PO Box 1080, Guilderton, Western Australia, 6041.

