

MARITIME HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

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Maritime Heritage Major Projects

J Shed

The background to this project appears in the current edition of the *Leeuwin Lines* but has been reproduced here for those members who are not on the *Leeuwin Lines* mailing list.

In October 1989 the Maritime Heritage Association first approached the Fremantle City council with a proposal to restore 'J' Shed to its original 1913 character for use as a centre for the preservation of traditional maritime trades.

The proposal - a sensitive re-development plan with costs shared between local government and a community organization - was very positively received by the Council. After that initial approach, discussions progressed steadily between the Fremantle Council's Planning Department and a sub-committee from the Maritime Heritage Association, resulting in the lodgement of a formal submission with the Council in mid May.

The proposal aims to restore the original 1913 character of the outside of the shed while developing an interior layout to house a working co-operative of maritime trades and skills such as wooden boat building, sailmaking, woodcarving, blacksmithing and rigging. A revitalized 'J' shed could then become the centre for the preservation of these traditional trades in Fremantle in an area of unique significance to the maritime history of this state.

It is hoped that the Council will grant a long lease to the M.H.A. so that the trades people working in 'J' shed can have time to develop viable businesses in their particular areas. The M.H.A. acknowledges the generous assistance of Bill Peacock, director of Construction Evaluations, who has given his time freely to help prepare costing for the reconstruction of the shed.

It is also planned that the public will be strongly encouraged to feel part of the project. Visitors will be able to wander through the downstairs area where space has been set aside for each maritime trade and a chandlery, coffee shop, for model making and display, and then to climb the stairs to the mezzanine floor and watch the sail makers at work.

Regular courses will be offered in skills such as rigging,

wooden boat construction and maintenance and sailmaking. The first of these courses to be run by Jim Rutherford of S.T.A.W.A. 'B' shed, will concentrate on traditional rigging and splicing. It is hoped that S.T.A.W.A. members will be keen to participate in the 'J' shed project courses.

With the development of this valuable community asset a physical focus will evolve for a variety of exciting projects which aim to enhance the maritime characteristics of Fremantle's historic West End precinct. The success of other M.H.A. initiatives such as the restoration of the pearling lugger *Trixen*, the re-establishment of the Fremantle Whaling Station and the development of whaleboat racing will be greatly enhanced by the establishment of this facility.

'J' shed began its life at the eastern end of Victoria Quay in 1913. Over the years, as shed sizes were increased to handle the increasing amount of traffic, it appears that it was absorbed into a larger complex named 'H' shed.

In the 1960s the eastern end of Victoria Quay changed dramatically with the completion of stages one and two of the Passenger Terminal built to coincide with the Commonwealth Games in 1962. Beginning in 1965, a major reconstruction of 'H' berth was commenced which eventually led to the removal of 'H' shed from that site. An aerial photograph taken at the end of October 1967 shows the framework of part of 'H' shed being re-constructed below the Round House at the northern end of Bather's Beach. Another photograph taken four months later shows the reconstructed shed - now referred to as 'J' shed - in place.

The shed in its new position was originally used as a fibreglass store before part of a general storage area associated with port activities.

In 1983 the Round House, adjacent cottages and land were vested in the City of Fremantle. The area around 'J' shed was cleaned up but the shed, now no longer in use, fell into disrepair.

Since that time there have been many suggestions put forward for the development of the immediate area on which 'J' shed stands. These ideas range from a car park to a restaurant, the site for an America's Cup model collection, a home for a local theatre company and a facility for the proposed Notre Dame University. For a variety of reasons none of these ideas have been developed.

The proposal put forward by the M.H.A. aims to take the shed back to its roots - as a working part of maritime Fremantle.

Oral History Programme

The Maritime Heritage Association's application for the Bureau for the Aged "Bringing Generations Together" grant was successful. The Bureau approved \$1,090 to pay for the Battye Oral History course for two people and purchase an audio cassette recorder, two microphones, two microphone stands, 10 audio tapes and funds towards the transcription of two successful interviews.

The Oral History Programme being established for schools is being co-ordinated by Marianne Cronin, Melville District Education Officer and Mike Lefroy, Endeavour

Replica. A meeting with the two co-ordinators, Sally May and Lorraine Stevens, Fremantle City Library established the basic structure and integration of the programme within the guidelines of the Fremantle City Library and the Batty Library in the State Alexander Library.

A list of prospective interviewees is being compiled for students and from which they can make a selection. Several local schools have expressed an interest in being involved in the programme. Once operating, the programme is likely to attract other schools.

The Maritime Heritage Association is still to establish its Oral History programme which should be up and running before the end of 1990. Discussions with a mature aged post-graduate student from Murdoch may result in acquiring an anchor person to establish and administer the programme.

***Yambulla*, Heritage and Education Working Together**

The forty foot Army workboat, *Yambulla*, was built in Western Australia during World War II and is one of 50 vessels belonging to the Western Australian Museum's historic boat collection. The Museum wants the *Yambulla* to operate in the interests of heritage and education and has offered the *Yambulla* to the Ministry of Education's Expedition Boat Shed for use by schools.

The Royal Australian Navy's Leeuwin Boat Shed in East Fremantle responded to a request to have side curtains and a canopy built over the aft deck to keep fresh water out and to protect passengers from the elements. The sailmaker, Don (Blue) Cumming, did a splendid job. The curtains and canopy provide a finishing touch which gives the *Yambulla* an air of discernment.

Detroit Engine and Turbine Company have also responded to a request to service and maintain the Grey Marine diesel engine in the *Yambulla*. Work undertaken will be done with prior notice, during off-peak working periods. Upon *Yambulla* re-entry into the water, Detroit will undertake an inspection and service of the engine. Their assistance and generosity is warmly received and greatly appreciated.

The Ministry of Education has provided \$10,000 towards the repairs to the *Yambulla*'s hull. The Museum is providing a further \$6,000 from contract funds for additional work to complete the restoration. Radar, sonar, satellite navigation, echo sounder, VHF and HF radios and other instruments have been reallocated to the *Yambulla* from the *Evening Star*.

The skipper of the *Evening Star*, Paul Boddington has generously contributed his time, expertise and hard work in supervising the restoration of the *Yambulla*. Paul Boddington's assistance has considerably reduced the overall expense of the project and his efforts are greatly appreciated. Ideally, the Expedition Boat Shed could do with someone of Paul Boddington's capabilities and skills including the care and operation of the *Yambulla*.

The *Yambulla* was slipped at Marko's Slipways in late June and the foredeck, side and aft decks replaced, several outer planks replaced, bow re-caulked, propeller and shaft removed and tested, fuel tanks removed and tested, transom planks replaced and other jobs undertaken under Marko Sambrailo's supervision and that of Paul Boddington. The workboat will be returned to the water before the end of July in preparation of being officially launched for use by the Expedition Boat Shed in early August.

Yambulla will be used by the Expedition Boat Shed for the following:-

1. extension of snorkel diving programme - boat dive
2. extension of survival swimming and boat safety
3. river awareness and survey
4. navigation exercises
5. historical significance and educational discovery of the river
6. significances of Fremantle's historic vessels and their maintenance
7. environmental data gathering, monitoring and observation

The *Yambulla* will be the first Australian vessel to be surveyed by the Department of Marine and Harbours under a special classification for "historic vessels". This special classification under "commercial" vessel surveys acknowledges that historic vessels need to be partially (if not totally) self funding if they are to be preserved and therefore need to operate on a user pay basis to subsidize their operation and maintenance. By establishing an historic vessel category, the safety and operation of such vessels comes under review by the Department of Marine and Harbours and is regulated accordingly. Under the existing "commercial" survey requirements, *Yambulla* would not have been eligible for survey as it does not have a self draining deck or watertight bulkheads. Constructional changes would defeat the value of preserving the vessel as a genuine and authentic example of its type or class.

Yambulla is now eligible to come under a 1E or 1D commercial survey with restricted operation in (a) waters gazetted as smooth (inland waters); (b) from a line joining the North Mole of Fremantle Harbour to West Rock by Carnac Island then a line from West Rock to Beacon Head; (c) the vessel may only operate in area (b) when the wind conditions do not exceed 15 knots and the sea does not exceed 1 metre; (d) and may only operate in daylight hours.

This is a major breakthrough for the preservation of historic vessels and their safe and regulated operation. Most states of Australia survey their historic vessel under a private survey and while not charging directly for passage, charge for "lunch" and other items to generate funds for the operation of the vessel. This means that the safety and operation of the vessel depends upon the operator and who does not need to comply with commercial operation standards in any way, apart from the legal implications in the event of an accident.

The Department of Marine and Harbours and its staff are to be championed for the responsive and rapid way in which they have introduced the special exemption for "historic vessels". Their co-operation and empathy for preserving the state's maritime heritage is greatly appreciated.

The *Yambulla* project has been an exercise in community co-operation in the interests of preserving heritage and promoting maritime educational activities. It is worthwhile listing all the players in this project: - W.A. Museum, Ministry of Education's Curriculum Policy Branch, Expedition Boat Shed, Detroit Engine and Turbine Company, Royal Australian Navy's HMAS Stirling and Leeuwin Boat Shed, Department of Marine and Harbours, Marko's Slipways and the Melville District Education Office.

***Trixen*, Broome Pearling Lugger.**

Trixen holds the distinction of being one of the oldest continuously registered pearling luggers in Western Australia. It was originally built in Broome in 1904 and then rebuilt and re-launched in 1949. It is an example of an early model lugger having grown frames and other structural timbers cut from kadjebut. The frames were cut out of local timbers to the pattern of the moulds, which were attached to the keel before the stringers and planks were laid (priv. comm. Doug D'Antoine 27/11/81).

Until the 1920's Australian pearling luggers were propelled by sail, but after this time auxiliary engines were installed. *Trixen* (1) was built for Elisa Miller of Broome who registered her as a schooner-rigged sailing vessel with the Port of Fremantle in August 1911 (Register of British Ships, Book 5, Folio 83). Why seven years elapsed between when the vessel was built and being registered is not known. Possibly the keel was laid in 1904 and completion delayed for some reason - perhaps a slump in the fishing market. The Registry of British ships normally take the date of the laying of the keel as the age of the vessel and not the date of completion, accounting for deterioration of the foundation timbers.

Broome luggers built before 1920-25 had plumb or straight stems and elliptical sterns, whereas after 1925 they were built with a spoon bow and counter stern in the tradition of the 'Aru Island' luggers, *Kaviie*, *Kapiar*, *Karang* and *Queen*, which were brought to Broome in the early 1920s by McKenzie. Although known as 'Aru Island' luggers by people in Broome, most of these vessels appear to have been built in Queensland. Because the 'Aru Island' luggers proved to be better vessels, most of the luggers built at Broome after 1925 copied their design (priv. comm. Doug D'Antoine, 27/11/81) and this change in design is reflected in the rebuilding of the *Trixen*. The history of *Trixen* is somewhat atypical of evolution of design and technology in boats having in part survived three distinct stages of major renovation while still maintaining the name of *Trixen* and remaining a registered pearling lugger until the 1960s.

In July 1981 Les Penny donated the *Trixen* to the Museum and it was placed in storage until 1986, when the

hull was totally refurbished under the supervision of Jay Lawry with funds provided by the Commonwealth Employment Program Grant. Although restoration is incomplete, it is intended that the *Trixen* go back into the water with a complete rig and auxiliary motor.

Two draft sail plans have been produced for the Broome pearling lugger, *Trixen*. Discussion has ensued as to the authenticity of rigging for the period 1949. Like all the "best laid plans of mice and men" the period around 1949 is one of transition in technology and requires specialised research. Generally speaking, most detailed research on pearling luggers tends to concentrate on the pre-World War II.

The Museum is to pursue this research and produce plans for the vessel's restoration and return to the water. The vessel has been offered to the *Leeuwin* Sail Training Foundation for use as a sail training vessel for primary operation in the Cockburn Sound area. Dr Malcolm Hay has taken a personal interest in the *Trixen* and has offered his assistance towards seeing this project come to fruition.

Monthly Public Meeting - Reviews

These meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month in the Education Section of the Western Australian Maritime Museum, Cliff Street, Fremantle at 7.30 pm, directly after the Association's executive meeting.

There is a brief update on Maritime Heritage matters from executive members followed by a guest speaker.

April - Ross Shardlow who provided the background to the formation to the Association and how its development had progressed.

May - Jack McIlroy, an archaeologist, presented slides and spoke about the archeological aspects of whaling stations in WA, in particular the Bathers Beach site which is close to J Shed.

June - Jeremy Green, Head of the Museum's Maritime Archaeology Department was to have spoken about the *Batavia* reconstruction in Holland but an impromptu field investigation prevented his address. In his stead a video about the VOC East Indiaman, *Batavia*, and the Dutch replica project was shown. Geoff Kimpton who has been reconstructing the original *Batavia* is currently in Leylstad, Holland and upon his return he might provide an update on the *Batavia* replica.

July - Geoff Reiley, formerly an executive of the Cheynes Beach Whaling Station in Albany, gave a very interesting overview of the history of whaling in WA. Of particular interest were some fascinating insights into the workings of the Cheynes Beach Whaling Station.

Monthly Public Meetings - Previews

August - Andrew White will be talking about windsurfing in Western Australia and associated industries.

September - An archaeologist from the University of WA will hopefully be talking about 19th Century whaling and sealing industries (to be confirmed)

October - Patrick Baker, WA Maritime Museum's spe-

cialist photographer will present a talk titled "A history under the sea - a photographer's view".

November - Jeremy Green will talk about the Lelystad Batavia replica project and members may be interested to see the *Batavia* documentary shown in June if the meeting so chose.

December - Graeme Henderson will talk about the pearling industry, specifically in WA. Graeme is the Senior Curator of the Colonial Wrecks Programme at the WA Maritime Museum.

Maritime Heritage State Branches

Albany

Gary Tonkin, scrimshander, has been promoting the Maritime Heritage Association and its projects in the Albany district, in particular the idea of building or obtaining a whaleboat that can be used for display and racing.

The idea has been enthusiastically received, in fact it seems there is a group already working on such a proposal.

Gary is currently overseas and will be calling at various maritime and whaling museums in Europe and America to collect research material on whaleboats and the whaling industry in general.

When Gary returns he will be concentrating on the establishment of a maritime oral history programme in Albany.

Broome

Unlike Albany, the awareness and interest in Broome as a significant centre of Western Australia's maritime heritage has not been consolidated. The need to promote a Maritime Heritage Association in Broome is a urgent mission to activate a concerted effort towards preserving Broome's maritime history, particularly its links with pearling and the diversity of cultures reflected in that industry.

Bernie Unwin has visited Broome several times this year eliciting interest from people in Broome who might provide the basis for a Maritime Heritage Association. This project would be assisted by sending several people to Broome for a series of public lectures to help stimulate the foundation of the Broome Maritime Heritage Association.

Broome does have a small museum however, it lacks the community support and interest which could heighten its focus of attention for local people and visitors.

Broome also has a very interesting array of Asian vessels confiscated because of breaches of Customs and Fisheries Departments' regulations. Four vessels are of particular interest.

Soepe Soepe originate from the area of Buton Island in Indonesia and where most of the confiscated Indonesian *perahu* originate from. This particular type is an open boat of around 15 metres and is motorised. Although the design and building of these vessels are now heavily influenced by motorisation and European wood shipbuilding techniques, their ancestors the *palari* plied the shores of northern and western shores of Australia long before the arrival of Europeans.

Buton *perahu lambo* are the most common vessels confiscated, primarily for trochus gathering in Australian waters prohibited to Indonesian mariners. These are counter sterned vessels, sometimes transom sterned, and are motorised. In profile, these vessels are reminiscent of the early *padewakang* and later *Patorani* which were the earliest types of Indonesian fishing boat to ply Australian shores. The sides of the vessels are built up above the sheer or rail, forming the walls of the deckhousing.

The only Cambodian/Vietnamese vessel to be confiscated to date, represents the political events in South East Asia and their impact on Australia. There is also a vessel which originates from Korea and is in the same style as the Chinese junk, only modernised. Although both vessels are motorised and modern, they are excellent subjects for specialised research and general interest.

The early pearling industry of Broome relied heavily upon Asian labour including divers, shipbuilders and carpenters. Like the ambience of the pioneering days of the pearling industry, the impact and contribution of this multicultural industry is being gradually eroded. Hopefully, with support, Broome will become a centre actively employed in preserving and promoting its maritime heritage with the same strength as Geraldton and Albany.

If anyone has a contact in Broome who might be interested in setting up a Maritime Heritage Branch, please contact the President or Secretary.

Notes and News

Export of Steamships Controlled

The Minister for the Arts, Tourism and Territories announced on June 6, 1990 that anyone wanting to export a steam powered vessel from Australia must now apply for an export permit. In a move to protect our steamship heritage, the National Cultural Heritage Control List under the Protection of Moveable Cultural Heritage Act 1986 has been amended to include all steam propelled vessels.

The amendment to the List was recommended by the National Cultural heritage Committee to ensure that important vessels built in the last twenty years of steam technology are subject to export control. Previously only steam powered vessels built in Australia before 1930 or in use in Australia before 1920 were listed.

During the period from 1920 to 1939 Australian ingenuity and expertise in marine architecture and engineering produced sophisticated developments in steam propulsion. Vessels produced during this period are regarded with great affection by many Australians.

Inclusion on the National Cultural Heritage Control List means that vessels whose loss would seriously diminish our cultural heritage will be refused an export permit (ref: New Release, Minister for Arts, Tourism and Territories, The Hon. David Simmons MP, June 6 1990).