

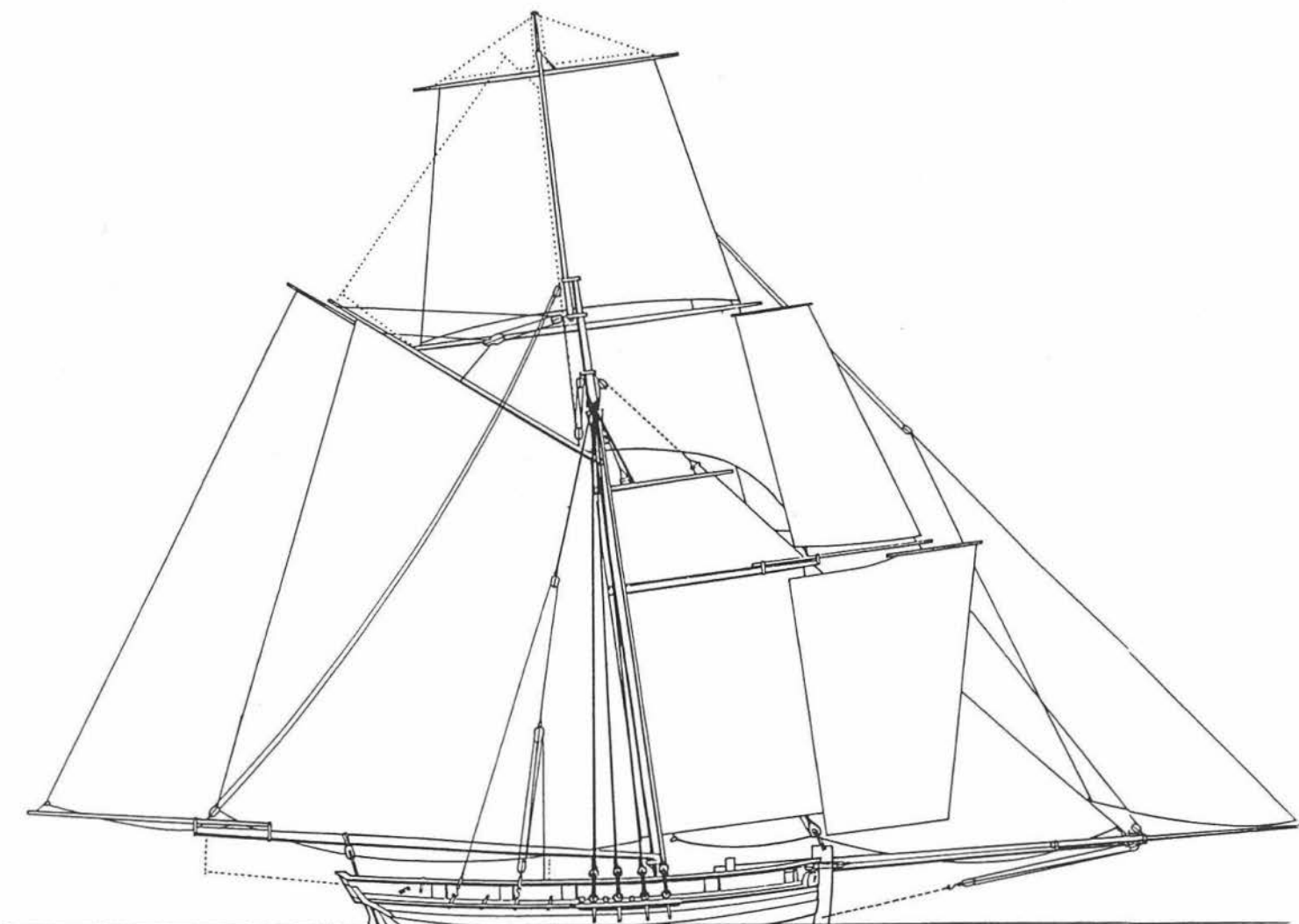
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A drawing by Ross Shardlow of an English cutter c.1780. (See feature articles on *H.M. Cutter MERMAID* beginning page 7.)

Schedule: S.T.S. LEEUWIN ADVENTURE VOYAGES

No.	Departure	Arrival	Remarks
14/95 10 days	DARWIN 26/6/95 Mon	DARWIN 6/7/95 Thu	N.T. schools, TAFE, tertiary holidays
15/95 11 days	DARWIN 10/7/95 Mon	BROOME 21/7/95 Fri	N.T./W.A. school holidays, visiting Kimberleys
16/95 20 days	BROOME 1/8/95 Tue	JAKARTA 20/8/95 Sun	Sail Indonesia '95 \$1780 includes travel
17/95 20 days	JAKARTA 20/8/95 Sun	DAMPIER 9/9/95 Sat	Sail Indonesia '95 \$1780 includes travel
18/95 10 days	DAMPIER 12/9/95 Tue	GERALDTON 22/2/95 Fri	General public: visiting Ningaloo Reef, Abrolhos Islands
19/95 5 days	FREMANTLE 26/9/95 Tue	FREMANTLE 30/9/95 Sat	Special voyage for young people with physical limitations
20/95 10 days	FREMANTLE 3/10/95 Tue	FREMANTLE 13/10/95 Fri	School holidays: minimum age 15 years. Visiting Abrolhos Islands
W3/95 2 days	FREMANTLE 13/10/95 Fri	FREMANTLE 15/10/95 Sun	Whale watching weekender
21/95 10 days	FREMANTLE 19/10/95 Tue	FREMANTLE 27/10/95 Fri	General public, visiting Bunbury



S.T.S. LEEUWIN

For information on all voyages, contact:

THE LEEUWIN SAIL TRAINING FOUNDATION

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Western Australia's Ships' Figure Heads

By Gordon de L. Marshall

Ship's figure heads are some of the most romantic survivals from the days of sail. Despite their popularity in the last century, Australia has only some sixty-nine figure heads surviving from this time, which is few compared to other countries, and of which only nine have been found to be Australian made. Western Australia has nine figure heads which have so far been located, but these in themselves are interesting. It also possesses the oldest known piece of ship's carving, a grotesque female figure believed to be from the stern window of the ill-fated Dutch vessel ZUYTDORP, which met its end on the West Australian coast in 1712. The location of the carving when found indicated that survivors had carried it ashore, and the finder put it under his bed and slept on it, literally, for twenty years. It is now in the Geraldton Museum.

Nineteenth century figure heads began by being very upright, but naval economies meant that most figure heads on smaller ships were reduced to busts, and the picture of Captain Fremantle's CHALLENGER leaving Portsmouth for the Swan River Colony in 1828 gives us some idea. Merchant vessels were more fortunate, and the development of the clipper bow in the 1830s meant that figure heads became backward leaning, in order to fit in with the new streamlining. The CUTTY SARK bow is perhaps the most famous example. The bow was widely copied on schooners and cutters, and most surviving nineteenth century figure heads are from these. In addition, scrolls, known as billet heads or fiddle heads if they were curled backwards, were widely used in place of figure heads, although few survive. Another form was the "medallion head" consisting of a medallion under the bowsprit, of which the schooner GRACE DARLING was a well known WA example.

The majority of figure heads depict women, something of a contradiction. Women on board were considered unlucky, something the French Navy is reputed still to practise, but a naked woman was

believed to be able to stop a storm at sea. Consequently many figure heads featured naked ladies, and over time this was reduced to the figure head having one or both breasts bare. Come the prudish nineteenth century, shipowner's wives and daughters appeared buttoned up in Victorian dress. Nevertheless, these shipowner's wives appearing as figure heads are an interesting example of vernacular art, and leave us an impression of people who would not otherwise be recorded at all. In this category we find the figure heads of the GUDRUN, MARY MOORE, JANE SPROTT, ANNIE LISLE, and many others around the country.

Figure heads varied from full length standing to three-quarter and half-length figures, down to busts and even heads. The most commonly encountered figure heads are three-quarter length figures, ending at mid-calf.

The oldest figure head in Australia is the LARKINS, of 1808, now in the Albany Residency Museum. The Indian-built LARKINS served as a convict transport before becoming a P&O coal hulk at Albany in 1853, in which capacity she served until broken up in 1876.



The Figure head from ANNIE LISLE of 1864. (Photo, the author.)

Her figure head, depicting an Anglo-Saxon warrior, was subject to abuse by larrikins before becoming a gate post. As it was made of teak it endured extremely well, and was donated to the Museum in the 1960s. It shows a high standard of carving.

The other gate post was the LADY LYTTLETON figure head, made in Lyttleton, New Zealand, in 1861. The vessel sank off Emu Point, Albany, in 1867 and the softer wood of the figure head meant that it had virtually no facial features at the time of restoration. It is unusual in so far as it stands on a scroll.

Also in the Albany Museum is the tiny bust of the schooner AGNES, built at Brisbane Water, NSW in 1874, and wrecked at Bremmer Bay in 1892. At the time of the wreck the AGNES was carrying the body of a girl who had died of scarlet fever. The wreck was largely dismantled for constructing the Wellstead homestead, and the girl was buried on the property. The figure head was recently donated to the museum, and

The well known replica of the brig AMITY at



GUIDRUN, ex BRAIDWOOD's figure head of 1880. (Photo, Fremantle Maritime Museum.)

Albany is one of the few Australian made figure heads which, we are told, had "half a woman's bust" carries the reduced figure head of the MARY MOORE, a small China tea clipper built in Glasgow in 1868, which served as a coal hulk at Albany for many years. The figure head was found half buried in a back garden, and its lower part could not be saved. The two scrolls on the head are additions.

In private hands may be found the severed head of the Norwegian sailing ship MANDALAY, built in 1880 and wrecked at Nornalup in 1911. After the vessel was irretrievably ashore, the crew ritually beheaded the figure head to "kill" the spirit of the ship, an action not often seen in modern times.

At Busselton the Museum has what was hoped to be a seventeenth or eighteenth century Dutch figure head, but unfortunately it has all the hallmarks of being from a nineteenth century cutter or schooner, since all the Dutch ships of this period had lions for figure heads, and this particular example is a weathered



female figure with a backward lean.

The Fremantle Museum has the weathered figure head of the Canadian built GUDRUN, ex BRAIDWOOD, built in 1880 and under Norwegian ownership. She was wrecked off Shark Bay in 1901 after the ship's carpenter had, for unknown reasons, taken to drilling holes in the bottom! On arrival at Carnarvon the crew sold the figure head to a resident for one shilling, and it remained in a garden unlit donated to the museum in 1967. It is considerably weathered, but still has a cheery look.

Also in the Fremantle Museum, can be seen the restored figure head of the SAMUEL PLIMSOLL, a record-breaking iron clipper built in 1873, which served as a hulk at Fremantle for many years before disposal in the 1920s. Samuel Plimsoll, of Plimsoll Line fame, was one of the many forgotten benefactors of humanity, a member of British Parliament and known as the people's friend. Brown-coated worthies were not uncommon as figure heads, and there is another Plimsoll figure head in the Cutty Sark Museum, Greenwich.

Also in the WA Museum is the damaged head of the schooner ARGO, the only known surviving WA figure head. Even the date is uncertain, as two schooners called ARGO built in WA are recorded as having no figure heads.

When John MacArthur brought the first flock of stud sheep to Australia, he called his ship the ARGO, and the figure head was the golden fleece, almost a prophetic augury.

Figure heads did not always survive. In South Australia the figure head of the LADY PALMERSTON was burnt under a washing copper, and this must have happened to many others around the country.

In December 1871 the partly charred figure head of the BLUE JACKET was washed ashore on Rottnest Island, and sent to England where it was identified. The BLUE JACKET had been abandoned on fire near the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic nearly two years before, and had taken this time to drift 9 000 miles to Fremantle.

Very few figure heads were actually made in Western Australia, and a total of only five are recorded in ships' registers from 1856 to 1900. The first was described as "a woman" fitted to the 85 ft schooner NEW PERSEVERANCE built in Fremantle in 1857; the next a "man full figure" was fitted to the 90 ft brig CHAMPION the following year. The remaining three were all female figures fitted to the MARY HERBERT in 1875, the IRIS in 1876 and the JANET in 1878. Nevertheless, some forty five billet heads are recorded as fitted for the period, of which only one survives, possibly, on the wreck of cutter ADA of 1886 in Oyster Harbor. Only one figure head maker is known, John Peters of Albany, who made this particular billet head.

The only major figure head collection in Australia is



Albany Residency Museum has the 1861 figure head of LADY LITTLETON. (Photo, the Author.)

in the South Australian Maritime Museum, which has seventeen, and this is entirely due to the enterprise of the former curator, Mr. Vernon Smith, who went around gathering figure heads out of people's gardens. He wrote that it took quite a lot of courage to walk into a gentleman's home and ask for the figure head standing on the lawn. He was not always successful, and records with regret several figure heads that fell to pieces during his lifetime. Sadly, his example was not imitated in other cities.

Of the figure heads in this collection, two, the VILLE DE BORDEAUX and the ANNIE LISLE, have close connections with Western Australia, and a further one, the JANE SPROTT, is in private hands.

The ANNIE LISLE was built in Quebec, Canada, in 1864, and later used in the Adelaide - Fremantle trade. On the 20th May, 1887, she was run down by the German owned AUSTRALIND, and thereafter used as a hulk at Fremantle.

Of more interest is the figure head of the VILLE DE



BORDEAUX, associated with that redoubtable mariner, Captain Thomas Symers of Albany, the wreck of whose last ship, the FAIRY, can still be seen in shallow water in Albany Harbor. Somers, a native of Scotland, spent a year in Crusoe-like conditions on a small island near Tristian Da Cuna after the wreck of his vessel. After settling in Albany, his ship CALEDONIA did much towards exploring the WA coast. Somers, seeking another vessel, invested in VILLE DE BORDEAUX and mortgaged the CALEDONIA.

VILLE DE BORDEAUX (City of Bordeaux) had been built as a French warship in 1836 but converted to a whaler. Visiting South Australia in the 1840s she was detained for illegal trading and never sailed again. At one point the French frigate L'HEROINE appeared at Port Adelaide with decks cleared for action, and demanding restitution of the vessel. Somers' involvement with the VILLE DE BORDEAUX merely resulted in him losing both her and the CALEDONIA. Nothing daunted, he set to work to build another ship, the FAIRY, but she was sabotaged before she left Albany. VILLE DE BORDEAUX was reduced to a lightship off Port Adelaide, and her figure head, after several battering adventures, ended up in the Maritime Museum. It is the only French figure head in Australia.

The final figure head of WA interest in SA is the Jane Sprott of 1868. Later named COPELAND, she was in the South Australia - South Africa trade for years until reduced to a coal hulk and taken to Albany, where she spent the last twenty five years of her life, finally being sunk off Bald Head. The COPELAND would have visited Fremantle and Albany in the course of her travels, and the figure head in all probability represents Jane Sprott.

In modern times, figure heads have come into vogue in a limited way on sail-training and replica vessels. In WA we have the LEEUWIN (lioness) of 1988; in SA there is the ONE AND ALL, and replicas have been made for the JAMES CRAIG and WILLIAM IV in Sydney and the POLLY WOODSIDE in Melbourne. Fremantle Harbour was also graced with a replica viking ship, complete with figure head, so it is to be hoped that figure heads will continue to be seen in some form for several years to come.

(Gordon de L. Marshall is a maritime archaeologist who has been making a study of ships' figure heads in Australia. He would be glad to hear about any new ones, and can be contacted on (08) 386 0507, or at 1/11 Paringa parade, Old Noarlunga, South Australia.)



Albany Residency Museum also has the oldest known figure head in Australia, that of the LARKINS, of 1808. (Photo, the Author.)

Apologies are due to Gordon, whose book "Maritime Albany Remembered" was mistakenly titled "Maritime Memoirs of Albany" in the previous edition of the Journal. To add insult to injury, he was mistakenly called Gordon de la Marshalls! (Not my fault. I only print what I'm given! EDITOR.)



H.M. Cutter MERMAID

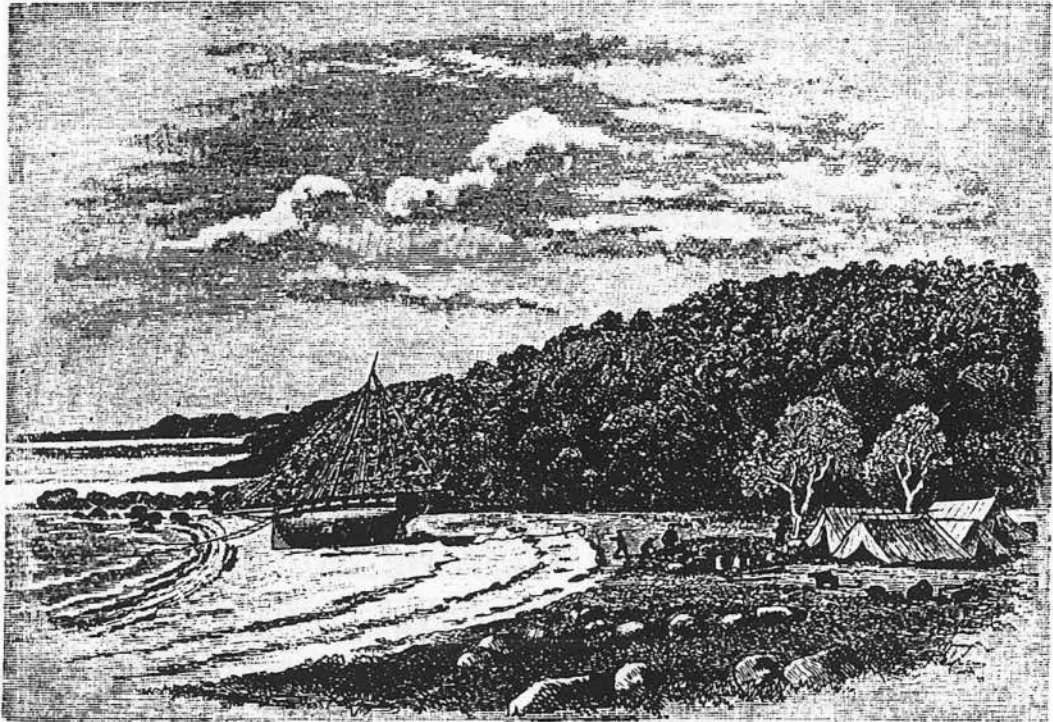
Mr Roy Dedman has kindly allowed the MHA to reproduce the following extract from his book South West by South – The Maritime Story of the South-West and Southern, Western Australia; Volume 1. The extract describes the exploits of H.M. Cutter MERMAID on Western Australia's south coast in 1818 and nicely compliments Nick Burningham's earlier article Further Endeavours – H.M. Cutter MERMAID (MHA Newsletter Vol 5, No 1, March 1994).

(The extract compliments Nick Burningham's earlier article on the MERMAID (MHA Journal Vol. 5, No. 1, March 1994) which focussed mainly on her survey work on our northern coast.)

The MERMAID, a cutter of 84 tons, was under the command of Lieutenant Philip Parker King. She had a length of 56 feet (17.07 metres), a beam of 18 feet 6 inches (5.6 metres approximately) and a loaded draft of 9 feet (3 metres). She had been built in India of teak, but hailed from Sydney, being owned by the Government of N.S.W. The crew consisted of: Captain, Lt. Philip Parker King; Master's Mates, Frederick Bedwell, John Septimus Roe; Crew, 12 seamen, 2 boys and Boongaree, a Port Jackson Aboriginal.

On the 20th January, 1818, at daylight, the MERMAID was close to Bald Island and sailing westward was able to anchor in King George's Sound by the afternoon. Their first anchorage was the same as used by Vancouver, Baudin and others; that is, between Seal Island and the mainland. During the afternoon they landed on Seal Island to search for Flinder's bottle, but it could not be found. They did however find evidence on the visit of the EMU in 1815

On the 21st January, anchor was raised and they sailed across the Sound, to Oyster Harbour: ... off which we anchored to examine the bar; after satisfying on this head and choosing a spot within the entrance to anchor at, we got under sail and in crossing the bar had not less than 13 feet and a half, being nearly about the time of high water; but between the heads of the harbour it deepened to five, seven and eight fathoms. Our anchorage was about 25 yards from the



Engraving from Cassell's Picturesque Australasia, showing MERMAID beached at careening Bay in Australia's far north-west. The engraving was taken from an original pencil sketch in John Septimus Roe's logbook.

eastern shore and not much more than fifty yards within the narrowest part of the entrance; it was convenient for our purpose, as the wood was abundantly procured close to our water holes, which were dug at the end of the sand within thirty yards of the vessel; so that the people employed in these occupations could be protected against the natives by the proximity of the cutter, without preventing the necessary repairs to the riving being carried on at the same time by the remainder of the crew on board.

Thus in one or two rather long sentences, King explains the whole purpose of their visit to King George's Sound; plus of course some crew relaxing before proceeding to their tasks on the north-west coast.

Being from Sydney, King was familiar with aboriginals, but nevertheless he was conscious of the vulnerability of his comparatively small crew and the need for them to keep together. They visited Green Island but were unsuccessful in finding any evidence of Vancouver's garden as had Flinders and Baudin before them. King planted a garden of his own and had the ship's name and the year of her visit carved on a stump. He makes no mention of the plot marked out by the ELLIGOOD.

On the 31st January, 1818, wooding, watering and repairs were complete so a boat was sent to deposit a record bottle on Seal Island. On February 1, 1818:



Phillip Parker King (engraving taken from a miniature painting on ivory. Note the representation of MERMAID in the background) P.P. King was the son of the third Governor of New South Wales and was the first Australian to reach the rank of Rear Admiral.



... the cutter was warped out of Oyster Harbour; and as the wing was from the eastward, we profited by it; after beating out of the Sound we steered along the coast and at 8 o'clock were abreast of West Cape Howe.

It may be noted here that King was quite willing to sail out of the Sound on an easterly wind, in contrast to Vancouver, Baudin and Flinders. This is because a cutter with its fore and aft rig can beat to windward much better than a square-rigged ship such as the *GEOGRAPHE* or the *INVESTIGATOR*. By the time the *MERMAID* rounded Cape Leeuwin, the crew was suffering from a bowel complaint and symptoms of dysentery:

... This sickness prevented our examining any part of the West Coast as we passed it; our course was therefore held at a distance from the shore ...

Thus we can say that on this occasion King only called in passing and made little contribution to the knowledge of the region.

Copies of "South-West by South", Vol.1, may be purchased from the author by forwarding \$19.50 plus postage to the following address:

**2 Hewitt Way
Booragoon WA 6154**

More About H.M. Cutter MERMAID by Ross Shardlow

In response to Nick Burningham's article Further Endeavours -H.M. Cutter MERMAID, the MHA has received several inquiries asking what became of the MERMAID after her survey work in the far north-west of Australia. Ross Shardlow attempts to answer some of these queries.

On December 9, 1820 H.M. Cutter *MERMAID*, under the command of Lt. Phillip Parker King, limped into Sydney Cove having been "considerably damaged at sea". She had returned from her second major surveying voyage to Australia's far north-west where she had suffered heavy damage to her stern post and keel. She was also suffering severe corrosion problems with her iron fastenings. To add to these problems she had been nearly lost on submerged rocks off Cape Banks, Botany Bay, on the return voyage.

When she was hove down and surveyed it was found that her iron fastenings had entirely decayed, the only thing keeping her from falling to pieces being her protective copper sheathing. Despite her poor condition, *MERMAID* was not condemned. She underwent an extensive refit, re-fastened with copper instead of iron, and continued work in the Government Service. In

order to complete his coastal survey, Lieutenant King therefore took command of a new vessel, the 160 ton brig *BATHURST*.

There is some suggestion that *MERMAID* was re-rigged as a schooner during this refit. Certainly Lt. King recommended she would be more handy as a schooner and would have converted her himself except that "... there was no opportunity of making such an alteration". Chris Halls, in his article *The Mermaid Story* states that she was re-rigged as a schooner during her 1821 refit. She was also described as a schooner on her next voyage.

On March 21, 1821 in company with the Colonial Schooner *PRINCE REGENT* and the Colonial Cutter *SNAPPER*, *MERMAID* departed Port Jackson on her enterprise, the founding of the settlement of Port Macquarie.

When approaching Port Macquarie, MERMAID got into difficulties. The Commandant reported "... the schooner MERMAID, in coming in struck on a sunken rock at 7.30 p.m. but soon got off, having unshipped her rudder, the pintles and braces having been torn away".

MERMAID's new commander was Captain William Kent, whose previous command was the PRINCE REGENT and it was again with the PRINCE REGENT that MERMAID departed on her next voyage – the distant Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). The PRINCE REGENT had been purchased for the voyage by the London Missionary Society. The two vessels departed Sydney on October 16, 1821 and arrived at the Sandwich Islands in March the following year. The 1822 listing of vessels calling at the Sandwich Islands records the following:

MERMAID British registry, sloop, 61 tons, Capt. Kent, master: arrived March 29, 1822, Rev. William Ellis, Daniel Tyerman, and George Bennet, British missionaries, on board; accompanied by PRINCE REGENT, departed ... [MERMAID returned later in the year.]

PRINCE REGENT Schooner, 70 tons: built at Port Jackson, New South Wales: arrived April -- 1822: convoyed by the MERMAID presented to Kamehameha II on May 1, 1822 as a gift from King of England to fulfil a promise made to Kamehameha I by Vancouver.

Here we have MERMAID described as a sloop, a single-masted vessel similar to a cutter. Furthermore, listings for subsequent years continue to refer to her as H.M. Cutter, Government Cutter or H.M. Colonial Cutter. It is not until 1828 that she is listed as either Government Schooner or Government Ketch. This seems to put some doubt about MERMAID being re-rigged as a schooner in 1821.

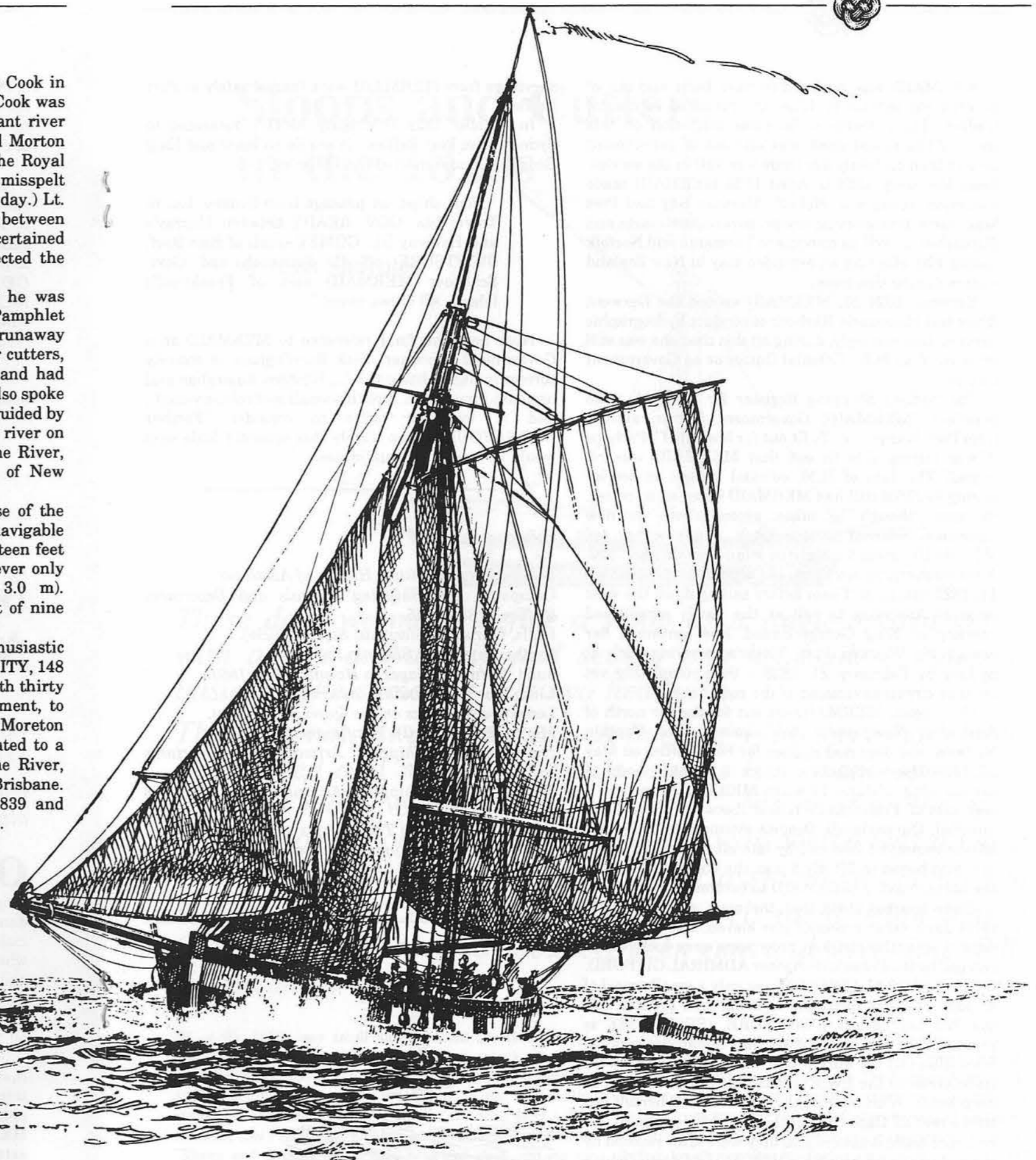
On January 24, 1823 MERMAID returned to Sydney from the Sandwich Islands by way of Tahiti. After a three-month cruise in New Zealand waters she was next employed in the exploration of Moreton Bay and the Brisbane River. Under the command of Lt. John Oxley, MERMAID departed Sydney on October 23, 1823 in search of a suitable site for a new penal settlement. Oxley sailed north as far as what is now Bowen, discovered the River Bowen and then turned south, retracing his route as far as Moreton Bay.

Moreton Bay was discovered by Lt. James Cook in the ENDEAVOUR on May 17, 1770. Though Cook was less certain, Banks suspected that a significant river must empty into the bay which Cook named Morton Bay after the Earl of Morton, president of the Royal Society. (An edited edition of Cook's voyages misspelt Moreton and it has remained that way to his day.) Lt. Matthew Flinders also explored Moreton Bay between 1799 and 1803 but reported that it was "an ascertained fact that no river of any importance intersected the coast between 24° and 39° of S. Lat."

When Lt. Oxley arrived at Moreton Bay he was lucky to come across two castaways, Thomas Pamphlet and Finnegan. Though suspected of being runaway convicts, these men claimed they were timber cutters, had lost their boat on nearby Bribie Island and had been living with the natives ever since. They also spoke of a large river emptying into the bay. Oxley, guided by the castaways, then entered the mouth of the river on December 2, 1823 and named it the Brisbane River, after Sir Thomas Brisbane, then Governor of New South Wales.

Oxley sailed the MERMAID up the course of the river, enthusiastically reporting that it was navigable for fifty miles (80 km) for vessels drawing sixteen feet (4.9 m). The bar across the river mouth however only drew between four and ten feet (1.2 – 3.0 m). Conveniently, the MERMAID had a draught of nine feet (2.7 m).

Following Oxley's sometimes over-enthusiastic reports, the newly purchased Colonial Brig AMITY, 148 tons, departed Sydney on October 14, 1824 with thirty convicts and a detachment of the 40th Regiment, to establish a penal settlement at Humptybong, Moreton Bay. The following year the depot was relocated to a more favourable site further up the Brisbane River, called Eagle Farm, close to the present site of Brisbane. Transportation to Moreton Bay ceased in 1839 and opened up for free settlement on May 4, 1842.



H.M. Cutter MERMAID. (Illustration by Ross Shardlow.)



MERMAID was reported to have been sold out of government service in 1824 and returned to coastal trading. There seems to be some confusion on this point. If the vessel itself was sold out of government service then certainly her trade was still in the service. From February 1824 to April 1826 MERMAID made numerous voyages to Hobart, Moreton Bay and Port Macquarie, transporting troops, government stores and dispatches as well as convicts to Tasmania and Norfolk Island. She also had an extended stay in New Zealand waters during this time.

Between 1824-25, MERMAID visited the Derwent River and Macquarie Harbour to conduct hydrographic surveys. Interestingly, during all this time she was still referred to as H.M. Colonial Cutter or as Government Cutter.

The Sydney Shipping Register for April 11, 1826 describes "MERMAID, Government Cutter, arrived from Port Macquarie. To fit out for Melville I". Perhaps it was during this fit out that MERMAID was re-rigged? The List of H.M. colonial vessels in service during 1827/28 still has MERMAID listed as a "cutter, 92 tons" though in other accounts she is now sometimes referred to as a ketch. Whatever her rig, MERMAID sailed for Melville Island on May 23 1827. After discharging her cargo she departed on November 11, 1827 calling at Timor before sailing down the west coast of Australia to call at the newly established garrison at King George Sound. She continued her voyage via Western Port, Victoria, arriving back at Sydney by February 21, 1828 – thus completing yet another circumnavigation of the continent.

Once again MERMAID set out for the far north of Australia. Now under the command of Captain Nalbrow, she departed Sydney for Port Raffles on May 13, 1829. However disaster struck in the early hours of the morning of June 13 when MERMAID ran onto a reef east of Frankland's Island (between Cairns and Innisfail, Queensland). Despite attempts to kedge her off she remained fast and by late afternoon she rolled over and began to fill. By 8 p.m. the crew had taken to the boats, leaving MERMAID to become a total wreck.

Some sources state that the crew were adrift for three days, other accounts give eleven. However many days it was, the stricken crew were very lucky to be rescued by the Colonial Schooner ADMIRAL GIFFORD. As the ADMIRAL GIFFORD was only a small vessel of 43 tons, she was fortunate in being able to later hail the 323 ton barque SWIFTSURE. (SWIFTSURE is reputed to be the same vessel that Bonaparte escaped from Elbe in.) On July 4 the MERMAID'S crew were transferred to the SWIFTSURE but they were still in deep water. Within hours the SWIFTSURE herself ran onto a reef off Cape Sidmouth (north of Cooktown). All on board made it ashore and they were later rescued by the passing snow brig RESOURCE, of 242 tons, which was bound for Bengal. Eventually the shipwrecked

survivors from MERMAID were landed safely at Port Raffles.

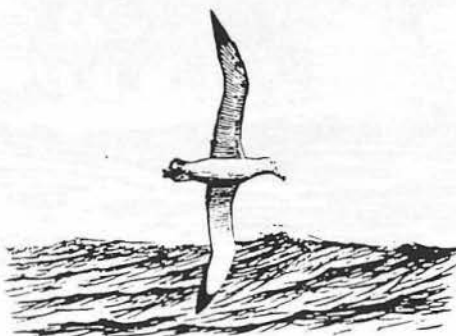
In October 1829 H.M. Brig AMITY, returning to Sydney from Port Raffles via the Swan River and King George Sound, reported the following:

"...four ships, on passage from Sydney, lost in Torres Sts: GOV. READY between Murray's and Halfway Isl., COMET south of Boot Reef, SWIFTSURE off C. Sidmouth and Govt. Schooner MERMAID east of Frankland's island. All crews saved."

Note here the final reference to MERMAID as a Government Schooner. Nick Burningham is entirely correct in highlighting the "... Western Australian and national importance ... of this small and robust vessel", and if we ever were to consider "Further ENDEAVOURS" then surely this splendid little ship would be one of the candidates.

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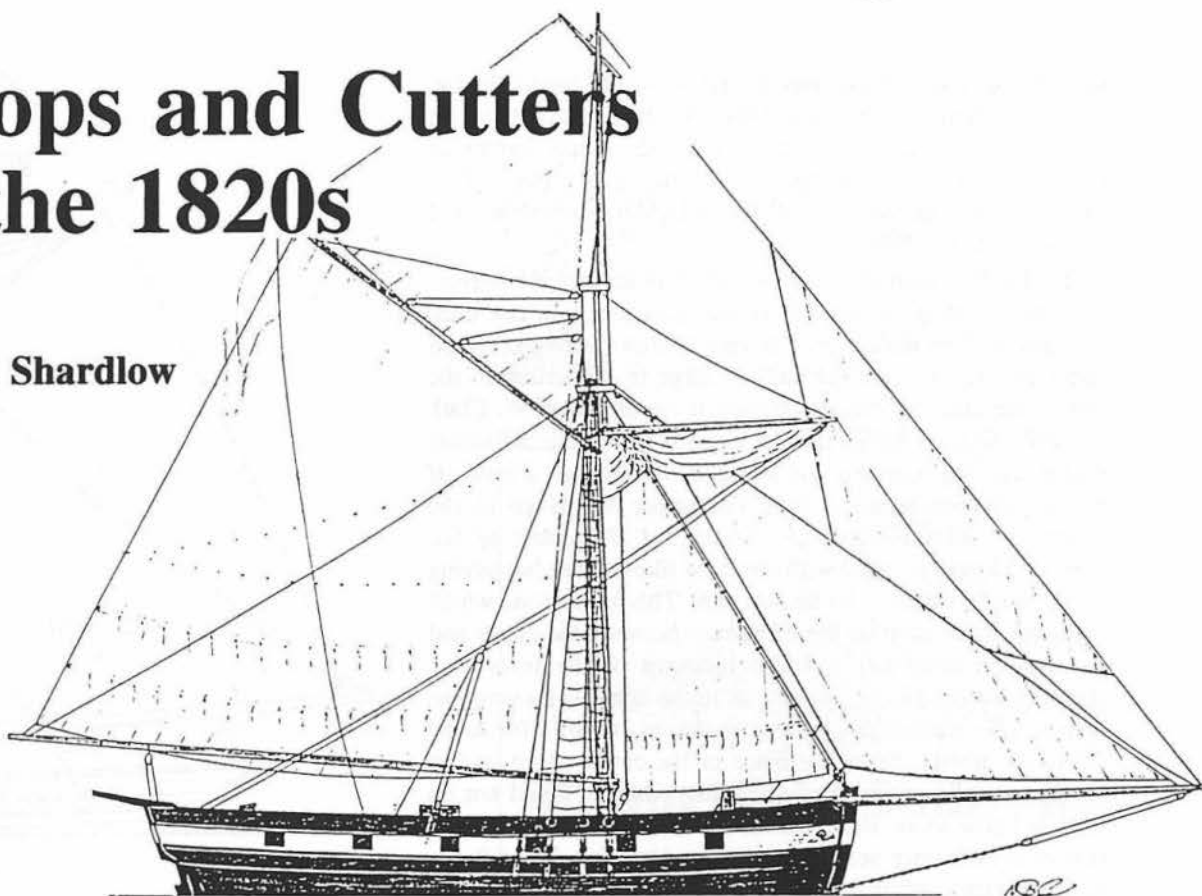
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Sloops and Cutters in the 1820s

by Ross Shardlow



These days we might define a sloop as a single-masted vessel with a fore-and-aft rig and setting one headsail. A cutter is basically the same but sets two headsails.

This was not always the case. A book of 1750 says that sloops "are sailed and masted as men's fancies lead them, sometimes with one mast, with two and with three". We must be therefore careful not to confuse the term sloop of war, which was a naval term and referred to a vessel's rating (class) and had nothing to do with her rig. Sloops of war were vessels rated below that of frigates, usually carried about eighteen guns and were either full-rigged ships or brigs.

In the 1820s any small single-masted vessel might be called a *sloop* whether it was a sloop, smack or cutter. (Without getting too carried away here, let us refer to *smacks* as any sort of fishing vessel, irrespective of rig, but usually engaged in trawling.) The 1794 edition of David Steel's *The Elements and Practice of Rigging and Seamanship* states that "Sloops and Smacks are vessels with one mast, and rig as cutters, but much lighter".

So what is a cutter? A nineteenth century cutter is a single-masted vessel setting a mainsail, topsail, foresail and jib. Sometimes a jib topsail was also set. The distinguishing feature was her very long running bowsprit, which could be moved in and out to increase the sail area. Cutters carried an enormous sail area and "were without question the fastest vessels afloat" (before tea clippers that is). Early examples of the rig crossed four yards, carried flying jibs, studding-sails, ring-tails, water



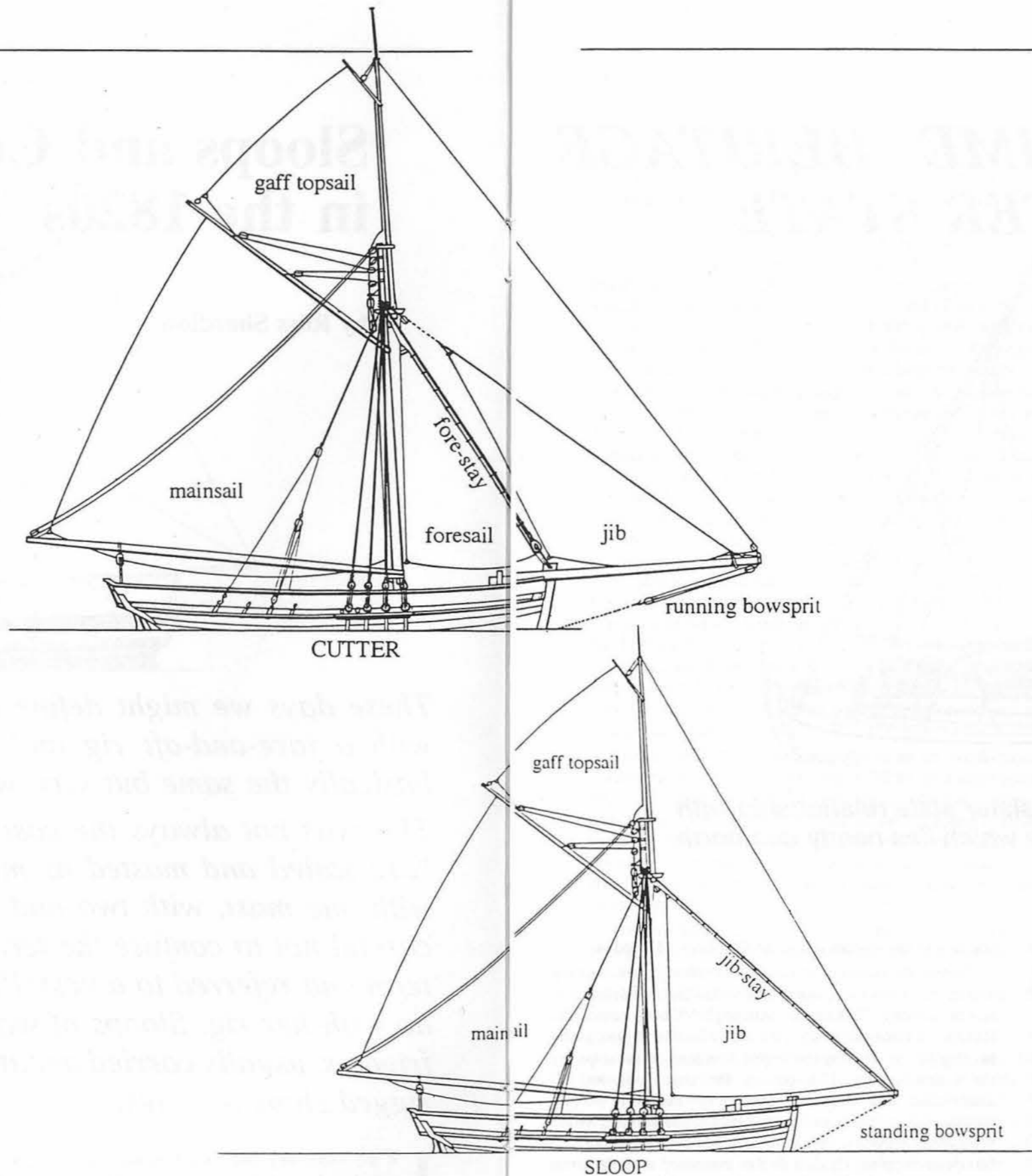
sails and save-alls. Seemingly the rig was only limited by the size and courage of the crew. However, by the 1820s the rig – though formidable by today's standards – was somewhat reduced, usually crossing only one yard (see Nick Burningham's illustration of MERMAID, MHA Newsletter Vol 5, No 1, March 1994).

By 1815, Flaconer's *A Universal Dictionary of the Marine* described a sloop as "a small vessel furnished with one mast ... it differs from the cutter in having a fixed steering bowsprit and a jib stay, nor are the sails so large in proportion to the size of the cutter". This description is simplified in W. Clark Russell's *Sailor's Language*: "A sloop is a one-masted vessel with a standing bowsprit and a foresail that sets on a stay". If this explanation seems a little inadequate let us go to the sumptuous definition from A. Ansted's *A Dictionary of Sea Terms*: "Sloop – a vessel with one mast like a cutter but having a "jib stay", which a cutter has not. This definition, which gives the foundation of the difference between the cutter and the sloop, necessitates that the bowsprit of the latter is a standing (or fixed) one, and not, as in the cutter, a reeving one (that is, one ready at any time to be drawn inboard), for in the sloop, the jib-stay takes the place of the cutter's fore-stay in giving permanent support to the mast, which it could not do were it liable to be shifted in or out with the bowsprit. The structural difference between the two is therefore in the fixing of the bowsprit, while the result of this difference is seen in the arrangement of the head sails...". The full description goes on for another 412 words but I think we have the general drift of it here.

Just when we think we have the explanation firmly set in our minds, consider that some sloops set two headsails, thus giving a very similar appearance to a cutter. And, of course, we must note that a cutter is also the name for a rowing boat "... supplied to ships of war. They are in general clencher-built, that they may be as light as possible: they vary from 32 to 16 feet in length, and are used for various purposes that are common to ships' duty." (Fincham 1829).

Not surprisingly, cutters (that is to say, the fast sailing type), became very popular with smugglers – and the customs men that pursued them. Approved cutter builders were known to produce identical vessels side-by-side in the same yard – one for the smugglers, the other for the revenue service!

In order for the Government to maintain its edge, an Act was therefore passed in 1787 that prohibited any cutter, other than naval vessels, from having a bowsprit longer than two-thirds the hull length. What's more, the bowsprit had to be made fixed. Any cutter found with an illegal bowsprit was automatically confiscated by the Crown. There was an amusing court case in England on this issue, where a cutter was seized for having a bowsprit that exceeded the legal limit. In giving his defence, the owner claimed that whereas his bowsprit was oversize, it was also immovable – therefore his vessel was in fact a sloop, not a cutter, and thus exempt from the Act. He won his case.



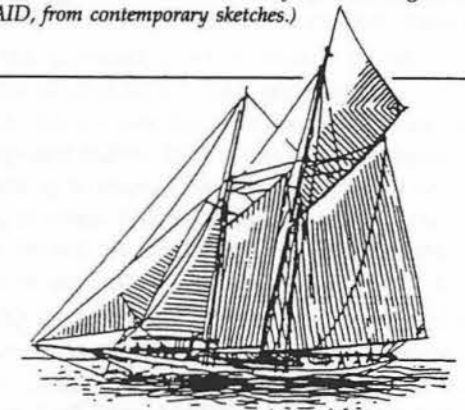
Comparison between the cutter and sloop rig, showing the different arrangement of headsails. (Illustration by Ross Shardlow.)



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- Anderson, Romola & R.C. *The Sailing Ship*.
- Henderson, James *Sloops and Brigs*.
- Smith, Graham *King's Cutters*.

(Header illustration is a reconstruction by Nick Burningham of H.M. Cutter MERMAID, from contemporary sketches.)



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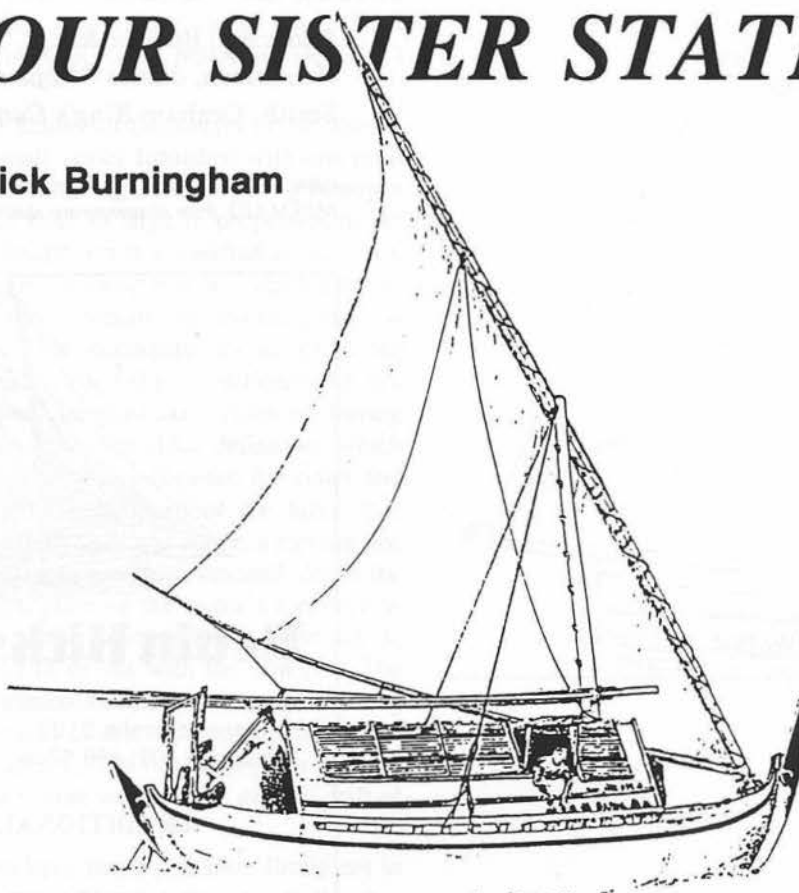
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THE MARITIME HERITAGE OF OUR SISTER STATE

by Nick Burningham



Western Australia has a sister state relationship with the province of East Java which lies nearly due north of us in Indonesia.

The people of East Java belong to the large group of peoples called the Austronesians or Malayo-Polynesians. They were the first people to develop capable sea-going vessels and to regard the sea, oceans and islands as their world rather than the limit of the inhabitable world. In late pre-history they expanded rapidly out from island Southeast Asia, populating the Pacific and also launching a systematic migration westwards across the Indian Ocean to the large island of Madagascar off the coast of Africa. Spread from Taiwan in the north to New Zealand in the south, and from Easter Island to Madagascar, they were by far the most widely spread people on earth before the European age of discovery and the advent of the World Economy and Community.

The major maritime powers of Southeast Asia, principally the Sri Wijaya empire, were centred on western Java and eastern Sumatra, but by the time of the European arrival in the region, the focus of maritime commerce was shifting to central and eastern Java, particularly the port of Gresik

adjacent to the modern capital of East Java – Surabaya.

During the period of colonial domination, native shipping was largely restricted to operations within the archipelago that is present-day Indonesia. Although Albuquerque, the Portuguese commander who first sailed into the region, found his flagship dwarfed by the largest Southeast Asian ships, by the middle of the 17th century the large *jong* had all disappeared. The Japanese and other maritime peoples continued to sail vessels of up to, perhaps, one hundred tonnes deadweight capacity, operating as a local feeder service to European shipping. Gradual decline continued until the Great Depression of the 1930s. With the alarming fall in commodity prices and volume of trade, the Dutch shipping company KPM, which had been aggressively trying to wrest the last long distance trade from the *perahu* shipping, was obliged to consolidate its most profitable operations and in so doing left more room for the *perahu* on runs where lower freight rates were paid. The Javanese probably played little part in this



revival of native shipping but the Madurese, from Madura and the smaller islands off the north coast of East Java, had retained strong maritime traditions and long distance voyaging.

Today Madura and neighbouring islands is probably the best places to see traditional Indonesian *perahu*. Indeed it must be almost the only place on earth where one can see a really vibrant and even resurgent tradition of building and sailing traditional craft, including large engineless cargo carriers. Madura is only a little larger than the island of Bali, but it supports at least five distinct boat building and maritime trading traditions on different parts of the coast. Outrigger canoes used for fishing continue to rely on large lateen sails for propulsion, but the larger fishing craft and the inter-island trading vessels nearly all use auxiliary motors and have cut-down sail plans. A major exception to this use of auxiliary engines is found in the *perahu janggolan* from the isolated area of Madura called Sreseh. The largest engineless *janggolan* built in recent years can load more than 200³ m of timber. They are exotic looking craft, with bold sheer, ram-like projections of the keel, transoms at bow and stern with carved and painted decorations, and a unique rig featuring large lateen sails which, in the absence of real masts, are held up by props and guyed to thwartships projecting booms – port and starboard. Smaller *janggolan* of similar design carry cargoes of coarse salt across the Madura Strait to Pasuruan, about 50 km southeast of Surabaya. Nearly one-hundred *janggolan*, each capable of loading about 40 tonnes, continue to work in the salt trade to Pasuruan and one can sometimes arrange to sail to Madura on a *janggolan* returning empty.

Sreseh, the home of the *janggolan* is on the south coast, towards the western end of the island. On the mid-south coast there are long open sandy beaches where colourful shallow-draft fishing vessels called *eder* and *gelatik* are found in large numbers. These vessels are examples of a large family of Javanese vessels called *mayang* which are characterised by a broad and shallow mid-section with double chines and high curving prow pieces.

Towards the eastern end of the south coast, most of the fishing vessels and larger cargo carriers belong to a family classified as the *pakesan* or *lete lete*. This type probably developed on the off-lying islands to east where the population are a mix of Madurese, Mandar from Sulawesi, and Bajo seagypsy people. The *lete lete* from the island of Raas were regularly sailed to the Kimberley coast of Australia and the islands of the northwest shelf until extension of Australia's exclusive economic zone and more strict patrolling of the region made this impossible. *Lete lete* from Raas still fish and collect trepang and trochus shell from the few reefs and islands they are permitted access to under a memorandum of understanding between Canberra and Jakarta.

Lete lete are swift and surprisingly weatherly for vessels with such shallow draft, but they are heavy and dangerous for the men who sail them. The massive upper yard of their lateen sail is too heavy to be raised and lowered at sea, so the sail must be furled up to the yard by the crew who have to climb out on the swaying yard which has no foot ropes or other

rigging to cling to. There is a long deep rudder carried on the lee quarter of the *lete lete*. Every time the vessel changes tack (by wearing round before the wind) the rudder must be shifted around the stern. In strong wind, with a sea running there is considerable risk of injury through being crushed between the rudder and the stern post if the blade takes a sheer. The largest *lete lete* which can load more than 100 tonnes, have now converted to using two rudders, one mounted permanently on each quarter, but without the fine, deep blade of the traditional rudder they make more leeway when close hauled.

On the northeast coast of Madura no large cargo vessels built. The local fishing vessels are sharp and attractive vessels related to the *lete lete* but with their own distinctive style and with long and hollow lines to the bow. As fishing vessels they were built up to about 12 m length and could be used for cargo carrying at times. Today, on the mid-north coast, huge versions of these vessels are built to carry as much as the largest of the *lete lete* in the timber trade between Java and Kalimantan.

Unlike the traditional boat building regions of Sulawesi and Kalimantan, Madura is easily reached: *Garuda* flights from Perth to Denpasar have connecting flight to Surabaya, the capital of East Java. Madura is just a short ferry ride across Madura Strait from Surabaya. But visitors are not recommended to stay at Bangkalan, the town nearest to the ferry port of Kamal. The western end of Madura, close to Surabaya, has all the hustlers and the disadvantages of the city, but none of its comforts. The smaller town of Sampang about 60 km east is more pleasant and has an adequate hotel. Sampang is the logical base for visiting the *janggolan's* home in Sreseh. It is necessary to hire a vehicle (preferably a *Bemo* with driver, this is cheaper anyway) to get to the isolated area of Sreseh. The scene in Sreseh is probably most impressive during the wet monsoon, December – April, when most of the fleet of nearly two-hundred *janggolan* is laid-up along the beaches.

A few kilometres east of Sampang is the beach resort of Camplong and it is in the area of Camplong that the stylish *perahu eder* can be seen in large number.

Up at the eastern end of the island, the main town of Sumenep is really delightful and makes an excellent base for visiting all the many ports and fishing villages in the eastern half of the island.

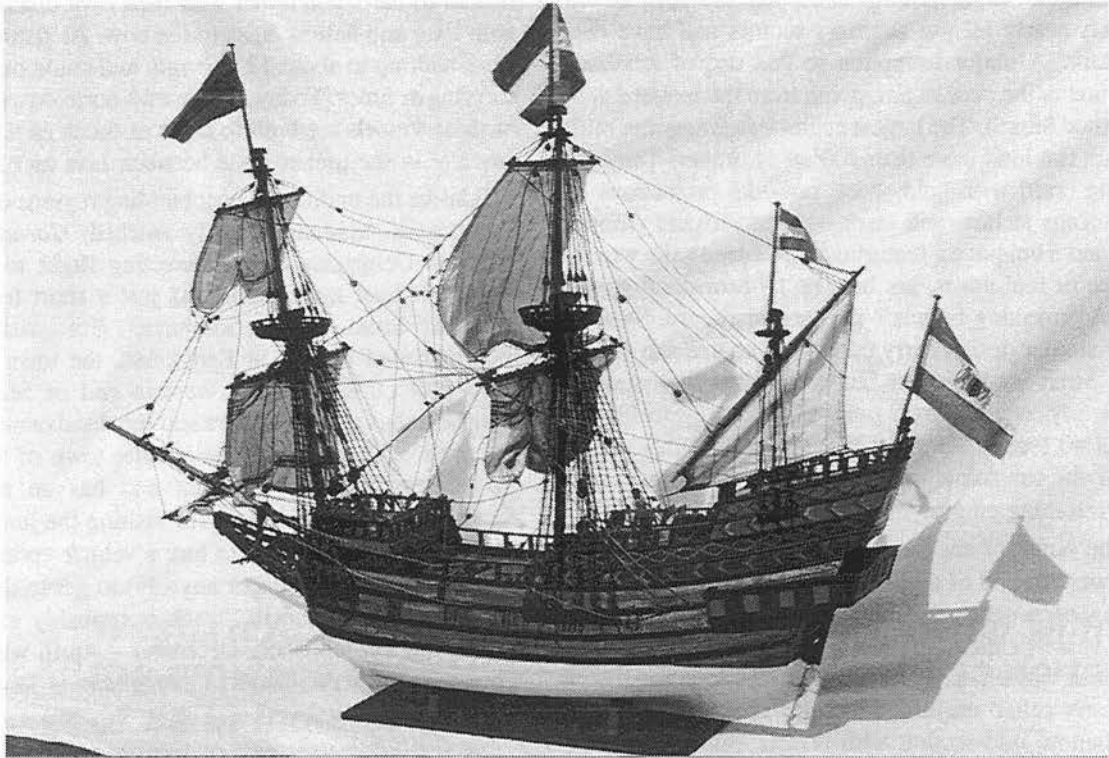
(Illustration of a *perahu lete lete* by the Author.)



DUYFKEN: Taking Shape In History (Part Two)



by James Henderson,
of the DUYFKEN 1606 Replica Foundation



THE Duyfken Foundation is gathering valuable information on old Dutch shipbuilding design and construction, while historical research is revealing new details of the events of the first European discovery of Australia.

Foundation chairman, Fremantle boatbuilder, fisherman, and pearler, M.G. Kailis, took part in the Dutch celebrations of the launching of the BATAVIA replica in early April, and brought back a detailed set of illustrations of the 16/17th century building processes applying to the DUYFKEN.

These illustrations, along with the DUYFKEN 1:31 scale model recently completed by the project's historic ships adviser, Dr. C. de Heer, will guide the development of plans for the design and construction of the DUYFKEN at the WA Maritime Museum in

Fremantle, hopefully to commence before the end of 1995.

The model is now in the Maritime Museum, and the Director, Graeme Henderson, hopes to have it on public display there soon as part of an exhibition dealing with the discovery year 1606.

Dutch shipbuilders did not work from plans at the time when the original "pinasse" DUYFKEN was built near Amsterdam in 1594. Yet 22 of these fast shipwrights could build a pinasse 134 feet long (about 41.25 metres), more than twice the length of the 65 ft



DUYFKEN, within four months. The Dutch East India Company built many hundreds of ships of varying sizes but similar design.

Mr. Kailis was accorded VIP treatment in Holland when Queen Beatrice launched the BATAVIA replica at Lelystad, symbolically christening the hull with water from the Indian Ocean. A bellarmine jug of the type recovered from the original BATAVIA wrecked off the WA Abrolhos in 1629 was used to carry the water to Holland for the ceremony. (The sturdy piece of pottery was not smashed on the BATAVIA's bow – it might have caused some cosmetic damage).

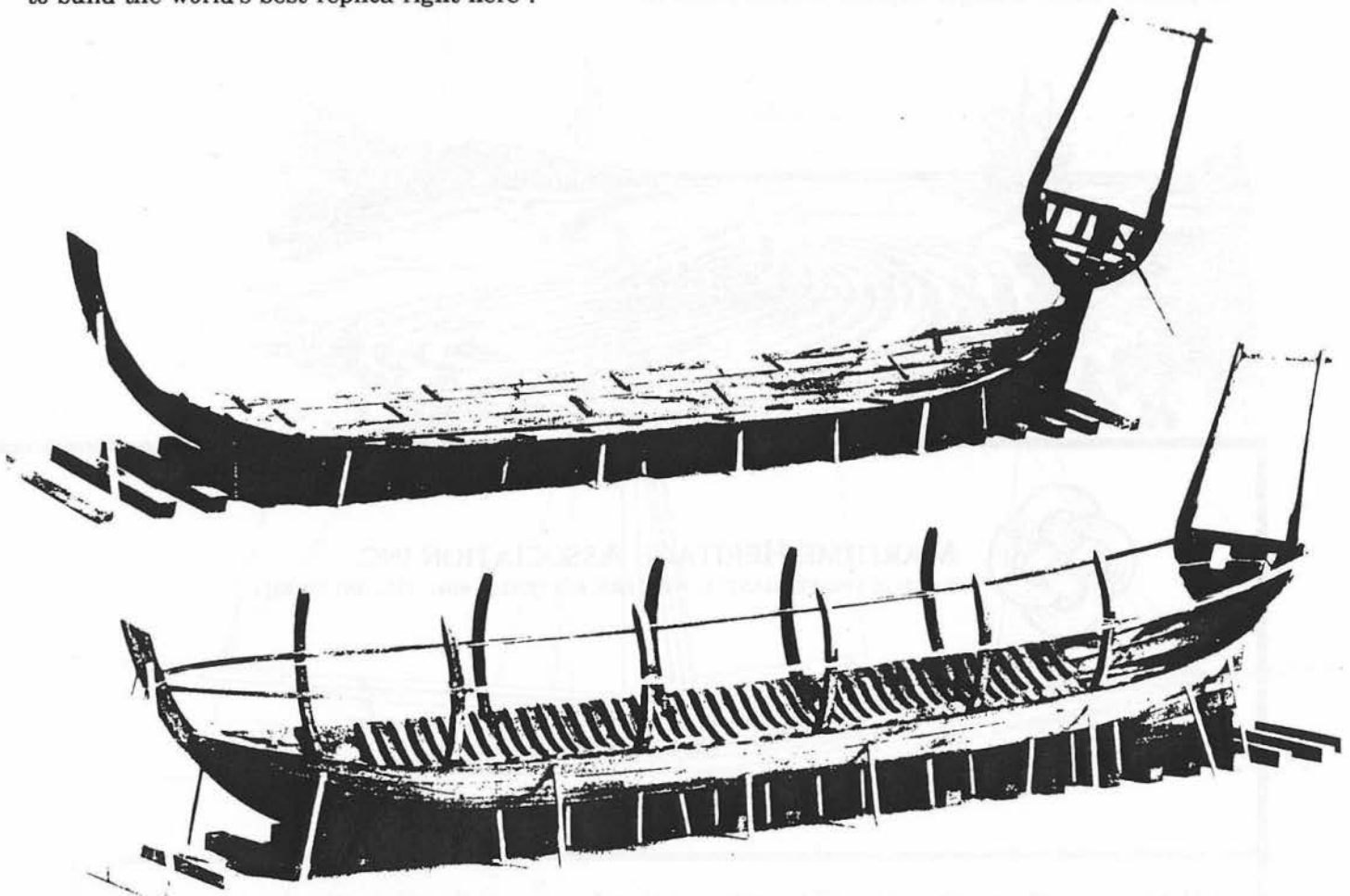
Mr. Kailis met the Dutch Queen, examined some historic replica ships and discussed the Fremantle project with Dutch experts, some corporation leaders and potential sponsors.

He returned to Fremantle convinced that by following very closely to the Dutch 16/17th century shipbuilding methods and practices, the Foundation could produce an impressive, authentic DUYFKEN. With his own experience of building about 200 fishing boats and the accumulated knowledge and talents available in Fremantle, he was confident: "We're going to build the world's best replica right here".

The Foundation hopes to win sufficient private and government support to commence construction within 1995. The replica has been estimated to cost no more than \$3.5 million over a period of two to three years. Unlike the \$16 million ENDEAVOUR replica, based in Sydney after construction at Fremantle, the completed DUYFKEN will be home-ported at Fremantle.

West Australian jarrah was used for the ENDEAVOUR, but it is expected that oak from Latvia or another European country will be used for the DUYFKEN's hull. Old engravings of shipbuilding at Amsterdam show the shipwrights applying heat to shape the timber, and the Duyfken project's technical committee, headed by Jeremy Green of the WA Maritime Archaeology division, is using samples of green European oak, supplied by the WA branch of international traders, Unimark Associates P/L, to study its moisture content and other characteristics.

Late in May the project coordinator, Michael Young, and Graeme Henderson visited some Javanese shipyards to study techniques influenced by centuries of Dutch trading and colonisation, and they



The hull first, frame last method of construction, as proposed for the DUYFKEN replica. Readers should be interested to know that Nick Burningham is presently constructing the WA Maritime Museum's 5 m scale model of BATAVIA using the same method. There isn't a drop of glue anywhere, and is well worth a look.



went to the northern Moluccas for a reconnaissance of the island of Ternate where project research indicates that the DUYFKEN was wrecked and abandoned in 1608 after a naval battle. Before her sad end, the DUYFKEN had been in the thick of a series of naval battles which helped give the Dutch East India Company supremacy in the rich Spice Islands.

If the preliminary visit to Ternate yields favourable indications, a Duyfken project expedition will go to the Moluccas next year to conduct an underwater search for remains of the ship, but it is a possibility that salvageable items may well have been transferred to other ships and her timbers may have been used in the nearby Dutch fort Orangie or other buildings.

The scattered pages of virtually buried Dutch archival history are being brought together by means of new studies in Holland and Australian translations of the information. My last maritime book, "Phantoms of the Tryall", dealt with Australia's first shipwreck; the next will be about our first European ship.

Already the material shows exciting potential in the saga of the DUYFKEN built in 1594 for the first Dutch expedition to the East Indies in 1595-97, the mystery of its possible name change, Captain Willem Jansz in

his momentous discovery at Cape York Peninsula, his exploits as an admiral capturing Portuguese and British ships ...

In 1606 Jansz was unaware that he had found another continent, and even twelve years later, when he visited the WA coast from another ship, he still thought his 1606 chart related to the New Guinea coast.

But this famous Dutch explorer, brave and chivalrous commander, and wise administrator, Willem Janszoon (his full name) should not be disparaged for his misunderstanding. Most Australians still seem to remain ignorant in 1995. Ask your children and your friends who discovered Australia, and I'll bet the vast majority reply: "Captain Cook, about 1770". After we launch the DUYFKEN at Fremantle we expect all Australians to finally get it right.

ILLUSTRATIONS:

Dr de Heer's scale model of the DUYFKEN of 1606; Seventeenth century drawings of early stages of construction of a "pinasse" such as the DUYFKEN; Sketch of DUYFKEN (below) by Ken Weston.



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