

# MARITIME HERITAGE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

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*Royal Fleet Auxiliary Regent undergoing trials.*

*See article on page 10*



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

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

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VALE

**Jack Gardiner**

31 May 1917—21 April 2010

MHA member Jack Gardiner recently passed away. A modest man, he was a fund of knowledge on many aspects of sailing. He was, during his long life, a sailor, boatbuilder and diver, and he had many stories to tell about all these pursuits. Jack was always happy to pass on his knowledge to others. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him, and our sympathies are extended to his family.

## Things They Would Rather Have Not Said

He conducted his work so skilfully as to prove every admiral arrayed against him his inferior.

The above quote by an unnamed person was made regarding Vice-Admiral Sir George Tryon, K.C.B., commander of the Royal Navy's Mediterranean Fleet in the early 1890s. Subsequently, because of a failure to accept repeated advice that his manoeuvre orders were wrong, he caused the ironclad *Camperdown* to ram his own vessel, the battleship *Victoria*, in calm Mediterranean seas with perfect visibility. 358 officers and men, including Tryon, were lost when the *Victoria* sank in ten minutes.

A good bit has been said of late as to freedom being given to inferiors to question and disobey the orders of a superior officer. Discipline must be the law, and must prevail. It is better to go wrong according to orders than to go in opposition to orders.

**Duke of Cambridge, 1893**

This statement was made as a result of the publicity which arose from the above disaster and the subsequent court martial.



# President's Report: 2009-2010

1. Regrettably I am unable to nominate for re-election because of a commitment to travel overseas on business; such absences mean that I am unable to devote the time necessary to perform the function of President. Nonetheless, the last two years have been a personally rewarding period of my life and I know that, despite some setbacks, the heart and soul of the MHA through its members, remains undiminished. This past year has not been one of notable achievement but I firmly believe that the MHA will endure. Under its new president, whoever he or she may be, may I suggest that we should set a goal and put our resources and determination to work to raise funds sufficient to display our 32-foot cutter?

2. Thanks to the generosity of its executive, the MHA continues to meet at the B Shed HQ of Leeuwin Ocean Adventure. Regrettably, due to the absence of members interstate and overseas, there was not a quorum and for the first time in my memory, we were unable to hold a meeting but MHA business was raised and discussed at several Book Club meetings.

3. Despite all of our efforts, we saw the demise of the Wooden Boat Works and the retirement of our dedicated member, Brian Phillips. Fremantle Ports proved to be intransigent when it came to showing any mercy to an organisation which has put so much into the maritime community. The auction to sell off the items which had been stored in the Slip Street premises represented years of hard graft by dedicated people determined to continue the craft of building and restoring wooden boats. The wake on the following weekend was a sad end to a centre of excellence brought about solely by Fremantle Ports. Despite having its roots steeped in the maritime history of Western Australia, the organisation seems bound and determined to expunge every last vestige of that culture and tradition and adopt a Philistinistic approach swayed only by the almighty dollar.

4. In last year's report I stated that I believed 'that 2008-2009 has been a watershed when it comes to seeing significant progress with Fremantle Ports and the Heritage Interpretation Plan for the west end of Victoria Quay' and that

'Fremantle Ports should be commended for the steps that they have taken to preserve and present this aspect of our State's maritime heritage.' I unreservedly withdraw those remarks. Despite its encouraging start, supported by the MHA, Fremantle Ports has proved to be an unbelievable turncoat in the preservation of its history. Given the obvious current attitude of the organisation, it clearly has abandoned all effort to be a leading light in the heritage stakes and consulting those members of the community who put in so many hours of unpaid work to assist it in that aim. We were advised that in February 2009, the draft Heritage Interpretation Plan would be made available, and despite correspondence enquiring of its status, I must assume that it has been shelved after the effluxion of fourteen months since. Fremantle Ports seems anxious now not to even discuss any subject involving the word 'heritage'. As a footnote, after several years as a member, Bob Johnson has resigned as a member of the Fremantle Ports' Liaison Group because it has never had any influence over the activities of Fremantle Ports and, in Nick Burningham's words, 'has existed during a decade in which [the organisation has] eviscerated the living heritage of Victoria Quay.

5. A milestone which passed unheralded was the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the MHA which was formed in 1989. A belated Happy Birthday MHA.

6. One shining light has been the donation of \$7,500 by Finding the Sydney Foundation for a trailer and signage for the 32-foot cutter. Although a significant start to accomplishing our aim, we must raise about \$12,500 to finish the job. To kick start the fund, I am donating \$100 together with several bottles of port to be used as raffle prizes. I suggest that we need to prioritise making an application to Lottery West for a grant to complete the task.

7. I will continue to work on finding a permanent home for the extensive MHA library and other resources but it shows all the hallmarks of being a long and tedious task.

8. Our web page continues to grow, albeit slowly and Bob Johnson welcomes any material



and suggestions. Visit the web page at  
[www.maritimeheritage.org.au](http://www.maritimeheritage.org.au).

9. Our programme did not achieve its aim of having its first publication in print by November 2009. This was largely due to my manuscript not being able to be completed due to business commitments. I intend to retire from my current business in December 2010 after which I can devote more spare time to its completion. I also hope to catch up with Rod Dickson to see if we can't publish a revised edition of his excellent, 'Ships Registered in Western Australia from 1856 to 1969 – Their Details, Their Owners and Their Fate'. Peter and Jill Worsley's manuscript covering the shipwrecks along the south-western coast of the State is well under way and I certainly look forward to its release. Ross Shardlow is currently working on a history of the Wooden Boat Works and Nick Burningham prepared a 'timeline of shame' detailing the duplicity and the shameful attrition of the heritage of Victoria Quay by Fremantle Ports which is reproduced as an appendix to this report.

10. We participated in the Fremantle Boat Show which commenced on 27 March 2009. Regrettably, our stand at the Fremantle Annexe of the RPYC was too far from the main scene of action on the Esplanade and visitor numbers were disappointing. There was nothing which assisted visitors to indicate that there was more to see elsewhere; the forbidding gates of the Annexe did little to help. We declined to participate in 2010. My thanks to those members who assisted over the three days of the show and to Ross Shardlow whose donation of some of his prints meant that the MHA was able to add to its coffers.

11. Despite short notice, we participated in the Company of Master Mariners, Australian Marine Pilots Association, Nautical Institute, Fremantle Ports and the Department for Planning and Infrastructure's Marine Safety Business Unit inaugural exhibition in the Fremantle Passenger Terminal

on World Maritime Day, 12 September 2009. Thanks to Ross Shardlow and Nick Burningham for manning the booth. I had the easy part and attended the cocktail party which followed the exhibition.

12. When it comes to bouquets, I would like to thank Nick Burningham not only for his contribution to the MHA in respect of his secretarial duties but also for presiding over the Superior Person's Maritime Book Reading Club which is always well attended. As usual, Barry and Doris Hicks hosted the MHA at their premises, ably assisted by Brian and Irene Lemon. In particular, our Christmas bash in November was a success and well attended. Bob Johnson continues to do his usual sterling effort as treasurer and we must yet again thank Jim Hunter, our auditor for donating his services to the MHA. Throughout the year other Committee members have always been prepared to step forward and assist and I thank you all for your support, your suggestions and most of all your experience in matters of maritime heritage. I repeat my comments in last year's President's report that Peter Worsley's major and ongoing effort in producing the outstanding Journal must not go unnoticed.

13. Our AGMs are always well attended because of the generosity of Jill and Peter Worsley and their outstanding hospitality which we all enjoy.

14. Regrettably, the many challenges which lay ahead of us last year are no less. One particular matter which we must face is the recruitment of new members and perhaps my successor might turn his or her attention to that; without new and younger members we will face decline, something which must not be allowed to happen. Above all else, we must all continue to promote, protect and preserve our maritime heritage.

Geoff Vickridge  
President  
18 April 2010

**MHA & FRIENDS**  
**Christmas Windup 2010**  
**Sunday 21 November at 10.00am**  
**Hick's Museum**  
**49 Lacey Street, CANNINGTON**





## Victoria Quay Heritage Extirpation Timeline

1989: Maritime Heritage centre proposed by Ross Shardlow

1990: MHA launched. Boat building workshop set up in B Shed, manager Brian Phillips.

1991: Boat building school in B Shed workshop.

1992: B Shed workshop becomes Wooden Boat Works, manager Graham Lahiff.

1994: Jan Jensen, blacksmith (*ex Endeavour* replica) into Smithy's Shed, Slip Street.

1995: WBW moves from B Shed to Plumbers' Shed, Slip Street, adjacent to Jan Jensen's workshop.

1996: Chris Bowman's Traditional Marine Services into C Shed. Restoration of 1890's yacht *Aorere*.

1997: *Nordhavn* restoration project, Michael Brocx, into C Shed.

1998: Swandock evicted from slipways by FPA

1998: FPA commission Victoria Quay Heritage Report from Ian Molyneux, & summary from David Heaver. Recommendations include "FPA modify statement of Corporate Intent to recognise heritage & cultural values."

2000: Fremantle Waterfront Masterplan (Cox Howlett & Bailey Woodland) released with an intention to integrate maritime heritage & the planned museum with maritime industries.

2000: FPA claim Plumber's Shed will be used for new maritime museum's air conditioning plant; WBW must quit.

2001: WBW moved from Plumber's Shed to Carpentry Shed. Jan Jensen gone from Victoria Quay.

Jan 2002: FPA gives notice to quit C Shed to Traditional Marine Services & *Nordhavn* restoration.

March 2002: FPA claim C Shed to be a ferry terminal & Traditional Marine Services can go to a Slip Street shed. C Shed remains empty, Traditional Marine Services lost to Fremantle.

2002?: Fremantle Council investigating & promoting Industrial Heritage Tourism of Port, apparently very supportive of *Wooden Boat Works* & MHA.

Dec 2002: New Maritime Museum opened. Broad agreement that it must be more than a "glass box for dead boats" – should be part of a vibrant maritime heritage precinct.

2003?: Car Museum set up in B Shed

2006(?): FPA evict Car Museum from B Shed claiming it will become a Ferry Terminal – early 2010 it remains empty.

2006: Demise of Graham Lahiff. Eviction of *Wooden Boat Works* from Carpenters' Shed. (Brian Phillips continues to store *WBW* machinery there until 2009 hoping for reprieve.)

2008: WA Planning Commission set up committee to investigate development of western end of Victoria Quay. Committee inactive after change of government though FP claim it was still operating until its recent official dissolution.

Late 2008: Lovell-Chen commissioned by FP to prepare a "Heritage Interpretation Report". Extensive submissions to workshops held by Lovell-Chen by MHA.

February 2009: Lovell-Chen submits draft report. FP claim it will be presented for stakeholder feedback but does not happen. Report not available to stakeholders 14 months later.



# 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!)



“Except when times was bad, I been on the water all my life. I never did learn to swim. I believed in the lap of the gods. I knew that if we sunk, I’d climb to the top of the mast, and if the water didn’t reach the top of my ‘ead, I’d survive. If it did reach the top of my head, I wouldn’t, simple as that. Naw, I’d ha’ sooner gone down gracefully with the old girl. If I had learned to swim – what’s the good of that? If I’m thirty miles off shore, what am I going to do? Sink to the bottom and catch a bus ‘ome?”

Charlie Jackson, barge skipper, London

In the *Government Gazette* of 1 April 1837 is a notice stating that the tender had been accepted from W. Edwards to supply one large boat and one small boat for the Colonial Schooner *Champion*. The tender price was not stated. Only seven months later, in the *Government Gazette* of 18 November 1837, tenders were called for the supply of a clinker-built boat for the *Champion*.

Henry Bull, RN, was appointed Resident of the new district at Leschanault Inlet on 14 March 1838.

18 February 1837. Tenders are called for the painting of the Colonial Schooner *Champion*.

His Excellency The Governor has been pleased to revoke the Tickets-of-Leave of the undermentioned Convicts:-

Reg. No. 8828 Joseph Deegan  
“ “ 9151 Robert Dunbar  
“ “ 9453 William Green

W.A. Stone

Pro Acting Comptroller General

*Government Gazette*, 26 May 1874: 97.

The Canning River was named after George Canning (1770-1827), Prime Minister of England.

The first will approved with probate granted to the executor in the civil court in Western Australia

was that made by William Gaze on 15 June 1832 as he lay dying of spear wounds at Kelmscott.

A yacht is like a girl at that.  
She’s feminine and swanky.  
You’ll find the one that’s broad and fat  
Is never mean and cranky.

10 December 1934. HMAS *Australia* departed Fremantle with HRH Duke of Gloucester on board, arriving at Portsmouth on 28 March 1935.

A Royal Navy corvette overshot the harbour in one north of Scotland port and came to rest with its prow firmly embedded in the coast road. By night, a passing postman just setting off on his rounds was sent cartwheeling over the handlebars when he struck the ship’s bow.

“Why don’t you show some lights?” he fumed in the direction of the corvette’s bridge.

For one despondent officer, realizing he was on his way to a court martial, this was the end of a long and particularly cruel day.

“Why don’t you ring your frggin’ bell,” he shouted back.

In 1933 the oldest coaster still working on the English Coast was the ketch *Ceres*. She was built at the small port of Salcombe during 1811.

The following two newspaper items from Rod Dickson are worth pondering over. Has anyone got any further information?

Sailed — January 11th 1890, *Marlborough*, ship, Captain Hird for London. National Mortgage and Agency Co., Agents. Passenger—Mrs Anderson.

*The Lyttleton Star*, 12 January 1890

The Glasgow registered schooner *Marlborough*, with 23 men on board, sailed from Lyttleton, New Zealand, in January 1890 and was next sighted off Cape Horn, 24 years later! There were 20 skele-  
tons on board.

*The Western Mail*, 28 March 1935



## SS *Khedive Ismail*

The following is an account of one of the worst disasters to befall an allied merchant vessel during World War II.

During 1943 the Japanese submarine *I-27* (Fukumura in command) had sunk at least two merchant ships in the western Indian Ocean. On 20 March 1943 the *Fort Mumford* was sunk, with only one survivor. On 18 November 1943 *I-27* sank the *Sambidge*, then machine-gunned the boats and rafts. There were a few survivors from this incident. The following is quoted from the reference:

In February of the following year [1944] *I-27*, still with Fukumara in command, was responsible for one of the greatest maritime disasters of the Second World War. On the 12th of the month the *Khedive Ismail*, managed by the British India Steam Navigation Company was blasted from the ocean, with the loss of 1,383 lives, including 137 of her 183 crew. Those saved totaled 201 men and six women. Only in two other instances (*Lancastria* and *Laconia*) was the loss of life aboard red ensign ships greater.

A combined operation of the two maritime services, it is one of the saddest and most horrific of war stories. KR8, a convoy of five troopships with their escort sailed for Colombo from Kilindini in East Africa. The periscope of *I-27* was so close to *Varsova* that her gun crew were unable to depress the Bofors gun sufficiently. To port steamed *City of Paris*, helpless to assist. Immediately astern was *Ekma*, which had to alter course to avoid the wreckage.

When Fukumura unleashed his two torpedoes he triggered a triple horror. Most of the 1,600 men and women aboard the *Khedive Ismail* were drowned. She sank beneath the waves in thirty-nine seconds. Three hours later, Fukumura and his crew joined their victims at the bottom of the Indian Ocean. The third element of this tragedy became a recurrent nightmare for Commander Rupert Egan, captain of HMS *Petard*, the only destroyer to sink a submarine from all three enemy navies.

Carrying a matron and sixty nurses on their way

to staff a military hospital, as well as twenty-six women from the WRNS, *Khedive Ismail* was the convoy commodore's ship. She was also carrying a battalion of African infantry and parties of British soldiers, sailors and airmen.

It was Commander Egan who depth charged the Japanese submarine as she tried to hide beneath a group of survivors. They were swimming for their lives, and their cries for help changed to screams of horror as HMS *Petard* made her attack. It was another case, not unknown to merchant seamen survivors in the North Atlantic and the Arctic, in which the sinking of an enemy took priority over helpless victims. The fact that Commander Egan had to carry out the depth-charging disturbed him so much that he later took his own life in the United States. He was transfixed with the horror and dilemma of his duty, and his ship's company was numbed by the sure knowledge that the attacks were destroying the lives of the few who survived.

HMS *Paladin*, the other senior service escort, had lowered boats in an effort to rescue survivors when *Petard*, the senior escort, began her attack. Some from *Paladin* risked their own lives by jumping over the side to save those drowning, as *Petard* made her final runs. At the third attempt *I-27* was blasted to the surface but came up still full of fight. As her gunners tried to reach the 5-inch gun they were shot down. Zig-zagging in an effort to make good her escape the submarine was rammed by HMS *Paladin*, which itself was now badly damaged. In a final action HMS *Petard* fired six torpedoes, which unfortunately were all near misses. The seventh was on target and at last *I-27* plunged to the bottom. There were no survivors.

Reference:

Slader, J., 1995, *The Fourth Service: Merchantmen at War 1939-45*. New Era Writers Guild (UK) Ltd., Wimborne Minster, Dorset, UK.



# Naval Gun Calibres

The calibre of a naval gun is the diameter of the bore, and is generally given in inches. The length of a gun is given as a being of a certain number of calibres. The main armament on HMS *Vanguard* for example had a calibre of 15 inches with a length of 42 calibres. Multiplying 15 inches by 42 gives a length for the guns of 52 feet 6 inches. Here then are some sizes for the larger guns that were on board warships in the British and American navies when battleships and battle cruisers still sailed and fought:

<i>Calibre (inches)</i>	<i>Length (calibres)</i>	<i>Weight (tons)</i>	<i>Weight of shell (lb)</i>
16	50	128	2100
15	42	97.15	1920
12	50	56.1	870
8	55	19.7	250
6	50	8.5	100
5	51	5	50
4.7	45	3.05	50
4	40	1.25	31



*A photograph of HMS Rodney which carried 9 16-inch guns in 3 turrets, plus 12 6-inch guns. Launched in 1927 the 33,900 ton battleship had 14-inch side armour, and a speed of 23 knots. Rodney took part in the sinking of the Bismark.*

## A New Salute

The *Daily News* of 6 May 1890 reported that:  
*The Admiralty have determined to introduce a new kind of salute in the navy. Up to date sailors have saluted their officers by raising their hats. For the future they*

*will bring the [right] hand up to the head, after the military fashion only with the side of the hand to the front instead of the palm. The reason for the change is not obvious – it may be due either to a desire to abolish old customs or to a fear that raising the hats may give the men colds in the head.*



# HMS *Victory*

Some facts regarding HMS *Victory* at Trafalgar for those who like numbers.

**Rigging:** 22,880 fathoms (26 miles) of hemp rope used in the standing and running rigging.

**Blocks:** 768 – in the rigging, ranging from 6” long to 26” long.  
628 – in working the guns.

**Sail area:** A full suit of 37 sails measures 6,510 square yards (including studding sails).

**Armament** (at Trafalgar):

30 x 32 pdr  
28 x 24 pdr  
30 x long 12 pdr  
12 x short 12 pdr  
2 x medium 12 pdr  
2 x 68 pdr carronade  
1 x 18 pdr carronade (used in launch)

**Weight of guns:**

32 pdr – 55 cwt (2.75 tons)  
24 pdr – 50 cwt (2.5 tons)  
12 pdr long – 34 cwt (1.7 tons)  
12 pdr medium – 32 cwt (1.6 tons)  
12 pdr short – 31 cwt (1.4 tons)  
68 pdr carronade – 35 cwt (1.75 tons)  
18 pdr carronade – 10 cwt (0.5 tons)

**Range of guns:**

32 pdr – 400–2640 yards  
24 pdr – 400–1980 yards  
12 pdr – 375–1320 yards  
68 pdr – 450–1280 yards  
18 pdr – 270–1000 yards

For standard guns, maximum range is given with guns elevated at 10°, an angle rarely used at sea. With carronades, maximum range is given with

guns elevated at 5°, an angle that could be set at sea.

**Muzzle velocity:** approximately 1,600 ft/second.

**Gunpowder used to fire a 24 lb shot:**

Extreme range – half the weight of the shot.

Point blank – quarter the weight of the shot.

Reduced range – one fifth the weight of the shot.

At Trafalgar *Victory* used 7.625 tons of gunpowder to fire a total of 29.4 tons of shot.

**Small arms & weapons:**

142 muskets  
142 bayonets  
187 cutlasses  
100 pikes  
70 pairs pistols  
200 grenades  
1 halberd  
1 drum

**Anchors:** 8 anchors with 15 cables.

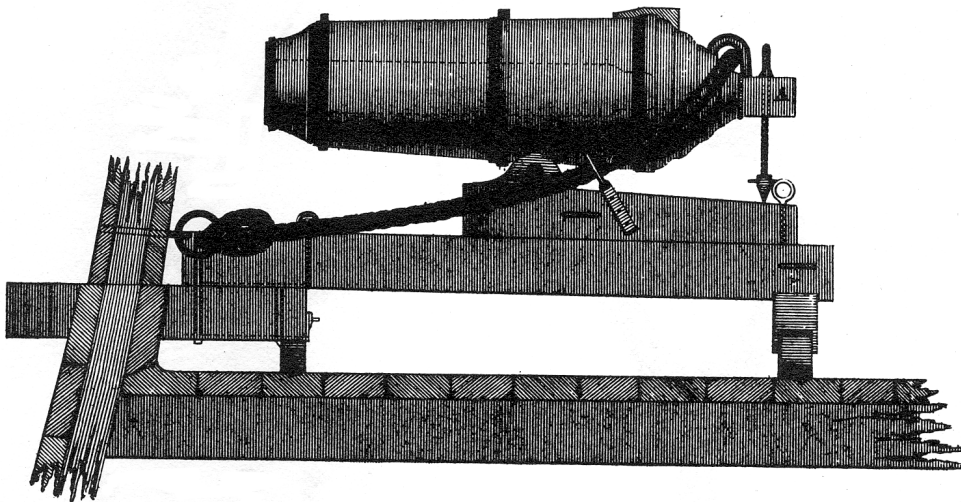
**Boats** – 6.

**Stores & Provisions:**

35 tons gunpowder  
120 tons shot  
50 tons coal  
30 tons beef & pork  
55 tons bread/biscuits & flour  
2 tons butter  
15 tons peas  
50 tons beer  
300 tons water  
20 tons, sand, pitch, tar, etc.

Reference:

Goodwin, P., 2000. *Nelson's Victory: 101 questions & answers about HMS Victory Nelson's Flagship at Trafalgar 1805*. Conway Maritime Press, London.



A carronade



## From Little Things Bigger Things Grow

A small item in the Ditty Bag set Rod Dickson reminiscing...

Once again a small snippet of information in the Journal, the last issue, has brought to mind an event from my past. The item in question was in the Ditty Bag and states :

4<sup>th</sup> December 1945. The first Jet Propelled Aircraft, a De Havilland Vampire. landed on an Aircraft Carrier, the HMS *Ocean*

From my old Merchant Navy Discharge Book, I find that I was signed on to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, stores and ammunition vessel, R.F.A. *Regent* on the 29th of May 1967. I still prefer to think that I was shanghaied and not just signed on as there was a bit of nefarious business going on in the background as I was considered a Bluddy Colonial!!

This was in Belfast in the times of the Troubles and the ship was still in dockyard hands down at Harland and Woolfe's where she was constructed. There were two sister ships and the other was named R.F.A. *Resource*. These ships were

promptly rechristened by both crews as R.F.A. *Regret* and R.F.A. *Remorse*, much to the amusement of our first Captain, whose name was D.R. Dunlop, who likewise copped a moniker, the *Red Rubber Stamp*. (On a seaman's discharge you get either a V.G., very good, or a G., good, or a D.R., Decline to Report, in red, which means that you are a right little prat and not much good to anybody.)

On the day the ship was handed over for Admiralty Inspection and Work-ups, I was sent off to Portland on the South Coast of England to undergo the N.B.C.D. Course. Nuclear, Bacteriological and Chemical Defence Course. This also entailed Shipboard and Aircraft Fire Fighting, fixed wing and rotary, (helicopters). What a wonderful time that was, the Chief Petty Officer was a bluddy Pyromaniac and proved himself every day with bigger and better fires for us mere mortals to tackle. Which brings to mind his immortal saying when we were trying to extract sand filled dummies from a crashed helicopter:



A Sopwith Pup landing on HMS Furious— 2nd August, 1917

Copyright Real Photographs Co. Ltd.





"It doesn't matter if the bluddy Dook is in the back, you get the Pilot and Co-Pilot out first. It costs half a million Pounds to train a Pilot and bugger all to train a bluddy Dook."

Explain that to the Queen!!!

Anyway I passed the course and passed out with the others at the first and last outside the dock-yard gates. I then caught the trains back to Belfast and got there just in time to sail off on her work-up exercises. First though we did our speed trials in Belfast Lough before heading south down the Irish Sea and around Lands End to Plymouth.

After proving to the Navy Boffins that we, Merchant Navy Personnel, could navigate and sail the ship all by ourselves, they agreed to let us have our Naval Staff and our Helicopter. We had a flight deck and hanger aft above the accommodation. She was a brand new Wessex Mark 5, piloted by Lieut Commander "Jolly" John Rogers. Having passed the Fire Fighting Course I was immediately promoted to Chief Flight Deck Fire-

man. It doesn't get much better than that!! Months later I was told I was a volunteer!! Anyway it was worth it as I got an extra ten bob a day on top of my normal wages and overtime.

And now I come to the reason for writing all this :-

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 1967 at 2.30 p.m. Jolly John Rogers and his offsider Aircraftsman Kipper Davies brought the Wessex Mark 5, No. 486, from the Culrose Air Station in Cornwall, around in a sweeping turn and circled her new home. I was on duty dressed in my new Fearnought Fire Suit with my offsidiers standing by with extinguishers ready for the dreaded crash-on-deck emergency, which fortunately never happened.

After the touchdown and shutdown a small ceremony took place on the Flight Deck to commemorate 50 years of the Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Navy. It was on the same day and the same time but 50 years previous that a Sopwith Pup, piloted by Commander Dunning, landed on a moving vessel at sea, HMS *Furious*.

To commemorate the occasion the Navy pro-





duced a number of post cards showing the Sopwith Pup on the front and on the back two privately produced stamps. I purchased a number of them and sent them from the ship by helicopter mail back to Culrose Air Station, and from there they went to the addressees. The only one I have left was posted to my late father who surprisingly received it in the ordinary mail with no comments, except from him as he was a Post master himself, and said it should never have got to Melbourne without the proper stamps!!

their ammunition and took it back to Britain, or dumped it at sea. We were part of the Peace Keeping Force off Aden and took part in the Beira Patrols, we visited the Island of Gan, where the Airey Fairies maintained a base, we did Gunnery Exercises off Pulo Tiomen. off Malaya, visited Mombassa, Durban, Port Elizabeth, East London, Simonstown, for showing the Flag visits. We called at Sierra Leone, (where I got my cap tally), and of course Singapore and the base at Sembawang, who could forget the bars. I can't!!

Many things happened on that flight deck and on the ship itself. We went to the Arctic to the edge of the ice, we destored the Malta Garrisons of

There are many happy memories from those days, all arising from a snippet.



Editor's note.

R.F.A. *Regent* had the following specifications:

Displacement: 22,890 full load  
 Length: 640 feet  
 Breadth: 23.5 feet  
 Depth: 26.1 feet  
 Engines: AEI steam turbines—20,000 shp  
 Boilers: 2  
 Speed: 21 knots  
 Armament: 2-40mm Bofors (not normally carried in peacetime)

Aircraft: 4 Sea King helicopters (only carries two in peacetime)

The *Regent's* official title in 1984 had been changed to Ammunition, Explosives, Food, Stores Ship (AEFS).

Reference:  
 Jane's Fighting Ships 1984-85.



# Ships Of The State Shipping Service

By Jeff Thompson

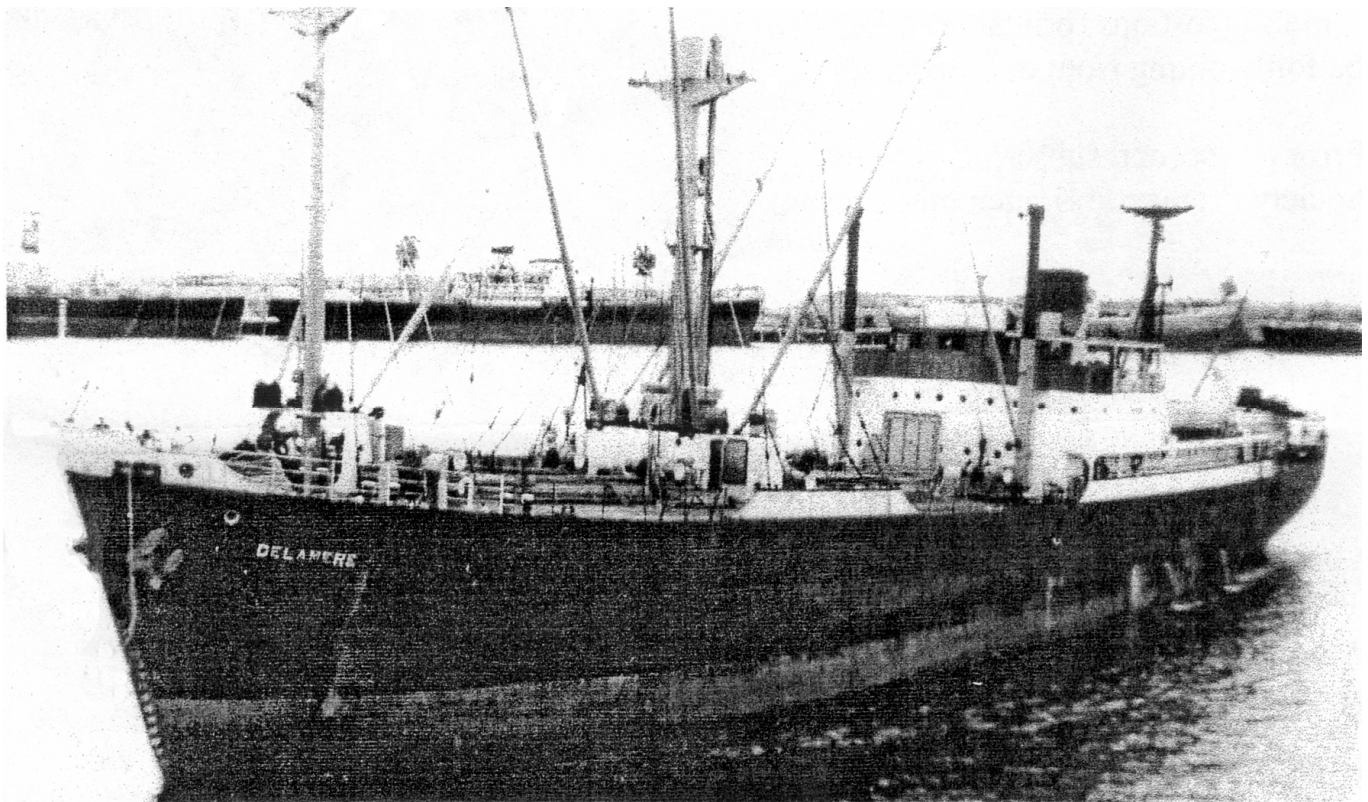
## No. 20 - DELAMERE O/No.: 156022

The *Delamere* was completed on 15 May 1946 by The Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd, Whyalla (Yard No 14) for the Australian Shipping Board (at that time John Burke Ltd were the managers). She was the 2<sup>nd</sup> ship of the 'D' class coastal general cargo vessel of the Wartime Shipbuilding Programme. She was 2,354 gross registered tons, 2,976 deadweight tons, 88.8 metres overall, 14.1 metres breadth and fitted with a 4 cylinder Lentz coal fired compound steam engine of 1,800 indicated horse power. During October 1947 management was transferred to the Australian Shipping Board.

In March 1957 the *Delamere* was purchased by

the State Shipping Service, and from April 1957 until March 1958 extensive alterations were carried out at Fremantle. These included creation of a shelter deck forward, conversion to burn fuel oil, additional refrigerated cargo space and new electric generators and winches, increasing the gross tonnage to 2,385 tons.

*Delamere* continued to operate on the coastal run to Darwin until it was withdrawn from service and sold in December 1971 to Century Shipping Lines S.A., Panama, and renamed *Century Ruby*. It was sold again in 1972 to Kwang Wah Navigation Co., Panama, and renamed *Poly*. In 1973 it was sold to Kaohsiung Steel Industry Ltd, Taiwan, where demolition began in March of that year at Kaohsiung.



## Correction

The editor has been corrected over the item in the Ditty Bag which appeared in the March 2010 Journal regarding HMAS *Albatross* being the first warship built in Australia.

Ron Parsons has pointed out that *Spitfire* was built in 1855 at Miller's Point, Sydney, by John Cuthbert. It had a gun mounted near the bow, and was the first naval vessel built in

Australia. Cuthbert also built a number of armed schooners for the Australian Station of the Royal Navy. These were employed on various duties in the south Pacific.

My information describes *Spitfire* as an armed ketch, 51' long with a beam of 16' 6", 65 tons displacement and armed with one 32-pounder. That source states: it "was not the first warship built in Australia but she was the first built for Australia's defence".





## **BLACK SIMON the drug smuggler, or BLACK SWAN?** Earnest Scribbler

LOOKING AT THE FINE PHOTOGRAPH of a big ketch anchored at Cowes in the *MHA Journal* 21(1), and reading that she was built for Messrs C.F.F. and T.J.B. Wearne I was prompted to search out my March 1942 copy of *Yachting*, wherein Henry B. Clarke recounts his 1939 transatlantic voyage in the ketch which he had re-named *MARIE*. He wrote that she had been built by two brothers who wanted a handsome yacht in which to



carry out opium smuggling. There were, he said, secret compartments abounding in the yacht. More detail is supplied in a history of the Wearnes and their automobile dealership *Wheels in Malaya: the Wearne Brothers and their Company* by Christopher Fyfe (Lana Press, Claremont: 2002) although Fyfe does not corroborate the drug smuggling.

The Wearne brothers went to Singapore from Western Australia to serve apprenticeships in the dockyards in 1893, at the behest of their brother-in-law James Craig. Early in the 20th century they began selling second-hand cars and went on to set up exclusive dealership arrangements for Malaya with most major automobile manufacturers. Today, the Singapore-based Wearne Group is an international conglomerate whose activities include high-tech manufacturing, automotive distribution, property development and engineering. One might question whether a second-hand car business was possible in 1906, in Malaya, when cars were virtually unknown, but H.B. Clarke is alone in accusing the Wearnes of drug trafficking. More venerable companies such as Jardine Matheson are a different matter.

Drug smuggling aside, the vessel in question was actually named *BLACK SWAN*. She was 96ft 9ins (29.5m) length overall, 21ft (6.4m) beam and drew 11ft 3ins (3.43m) with twenty-five tons of ballast in her keel and 145 tons Thames Measure. Designed by Camper and Nicholson, she was indeed built in Singapore, using the facilities of the Singapore Harbour Board at Keppel harbour, where she was launched on 5th January, 1927. Good quality teak was used throughout.

After fitting out and a trial sail, *BLACK SWAN* departed Singapore for Fremantle on 21st April, 1927. She called at Surabaya six days later, and on 5th May the Wearne brothers, friends including Min Easton, and their professional crew sailed into the Indian Ocean via Alas Strait, between Lombok and Sumbawa (I would have advised them to go further east). They had a hard time beating up towards the Western Australian coast, and more heavy weather while working down the coast to Fremantle where they arrived on 21st May. Later in the year *BLACK SWAN* made a short visit to Mandurah, the Wearnes' hometown. And in November she set sail for

England via The Cape. Charlie Wearne was onboard but Theo had not enjoyed the voyage from Singapore and had lost all interest in voyaging. The professional crew of eleven comprised of Captain Robert Bainbridge, a first mate and an engineer, a Malay bosun, Malay quartermasters and seamen, and a cook for the Malay crew; plus a Chinese cook and a boy to assist him.

They made Durban thirty-nine days out, on Christmas Eve.

Also anchored at Durban was Alain Gerbault's *FIRECREST*. Gerbault described *BLACK SWAN* as "... a pretty and sturdy little British ketch of one hundred and twenty tones, flying the burgee of the Royal Yacht Club of Singapore...". He visited frequently and enjoyed Charlie Wearne's hospitality.

In Cape Town one of the Malay crew jumped ship, but on 1st February when they sailed for St Helena they recruited a young Cape Malay. St Helena was reached in eleven days of easy sailing, they also called at Sierra Leone and at Bathurst on the estuary of the Gambia River. Gibraltar was reached on 12th April 1928, and a couple of weeks later they were comfortably stern-to a quay at Cannes.

It was on 30th June that *BLACK SWAN* anchored in Cowes Roads, where she remained for the summer. On 13th August, George V's yacht *BRITANNIA* drifted on to the anchored *BLACK SWAN* in a failing breeze and did some minor damage. Two days later at Southampton more minor damage was done by a tug and a motor yacht in separate incidents.

By this time both brothers were bored with yachting so *BLACK SWAN* was placed for sale through a broker. It was twelve months before she was purchased by the Comte de Sessevalle. He renamed her *SARITA* and registered her with Algiers as her homeport. In 1935 she was sold to the Comte Cahen d'Anvers who renamed her *NOROIT*. Two years later she was purchased by the second Earl Beatty, son of Admiral Beatty. At the beginning of WWII she was lying in Dartmouth where she was bought by Henry B. Clarke, an American steel magnate who renamed her *MARIE* and sailed her across the Atlantic. The next owner was Clendemin J. Ryan from whom she was requisitioned by the Coastguard for the duration of the war. Ryan's sister renamed her *CARYN* when she inherited the yacht, and in 1948 donated her to the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

In 1958 she was sold to Stephen H. Swift who took her to Puerto Rico intending to do some serious maintenance. He restored the original name *BLACK SWAN*. At that point her history becomes obscure. In the late 60s she was sold by an Insurance company, and she burned to the waterline and sank on the night of New Years Eve 1973.



## Messing about in an Ambon Yacht Race

Part 15 of Nick Burningham's failure to get a proper yacht

In July 1990, Dan Dwyer and I with Russel Hanley (a colleague from Darwin's Museum of Arts and Sciences) sailed HATI MULIA to Indonesia in the Darwin to Ambon yacht race. To make HATI MULIA easier to handle with a small crew or single-handed, I had rerigged her as a yawl with a reasonably large mizzen. In light winds HATI MULIA was a little sluggish because of the reduced area of her mainsail. Her sails were made of ordinary Indonesian polypropylene sail cloth but I had cut them a little more scientifically which helped her performance to windward. The mainsail had a single deep reef band in it for strong winds. Despite these modifications HATI MULIA sailed to windward with very similar performance to other *lambo*, something we tested sailing from Jinato to Kupang. During most of that passage we had other *lambo* in company, on the same course, and using similar sailing strategies.

I'd joined the Darwin-Ambon race largely because it seemed to be the only way to get a "Sailing Permit" for Indonesian waters in those years. There was almost flat calm at the start of the race and lacking a motor we were unable to get to the starting line, but I wasn't expecting to compete for line honours anyway. We just drifted out of Fanny bay on the ebbing spring tide. In the absence of a good southeasterly to set us and the rest of the fleet on our way, we took all day to clear the outer harbour with a light northeaster that headed us during the afternoon. In the first half of the night we were becalmed and then headed by a northwesterly. HATI MULIA was able to keep up with the cruising yachts in the rearguard of the fleet. The vanguard got out around Cape Fourcroy during the night, picked up the trade winds and sped away to Ambon Johnny Punch sailing COCKATOO setting a new race record. But we were left becalmed in the lee of Bathurst Island for

much of the next day and only gradually crept northwards during the night.

The following morning the southeast trades returned in earnest, more easterly than southeasterly. We were off, on a close reach, and soon belting along on a course that threw a lot of water over the decks. Around midday we reefed even though we were racing. The wind was cool and HATI MULIA was just too wet on that close reaching course. "Much spray and white water over vessel from stem to stern" I wrote in the log. My sextant shots during the morning and at noon are unlikely to have been accurate.

By dusk we were beyond the edge of the continental shelf and sea conditions seemed immediately improved. The following day the wind was not





quite so strong, but we continued to sail with a reefed mainsail. I took a sextant shot early in the morning which suggested we were not being set to the west as much as I had anticipated so we altered course by 10°. At 1100, in hazy conditions, we sighted Masela island, and soon thereafter Babar. We altered course to keep well to the west of Babar, hoping to avoid any wind shadow. Our noon to noon run was 130 miles or a little more. We passed Babar and Wetan but had three hours of light winds in the lee of the islands during the first half of the night. The next day we broad reached pleasantly past the tall volcanic cone that is Teun island making better than five knots at all times.

The day after that we had a yacht on the beam to leeward at dawn. We raised RACONTEUR on the VHF. They offered to relay our position to race HQ at Ambon and asked us where we were. I didn't have a position prepared in terms of Lat. and Long. I hastily read our position off the chart and passed it to them. But I made a mistake and gave latitude one degree south of where I actually thought I was. RACONTEUR relayed that incorrect position, and presumably gave it as her own position too, which had a curious consequence. By noon the sextant said we were only about 30 miles out from Ambon and soon the mountains could be seen faintly against the horizon. Noon to noon we'd run 140 miles. All afternoon we ran dead before the wind with RACONTEUR keeping pace a few hundred metres to the west. At dusk we came round onto the wind to enter Ambon's wide harbour, and much to my surprise HATI MULIA just walked away from RACONTEUR. I'd assumed the yacht would be faster with the wind forward of the beam.

I've forgotten the name of the yacht that claimed the wooden spoon as the last one across the line, but I learned that they had reduced sail and fuffed around because of the incorrect position I'd relayed through RACONTEUR.

We took part in the drinking and other competitions organised for the crews at Ambon. Russel, Dan and I were set to make a clean sweep of the *becak* (trishaw) races until the back wheel of mine came adrift and I had a nasty prang leaving me with quite a bit of gravel rash.

I did win the navigation prize. There was a prize for the neatest log entered by a navigator who had

used sextant shots rather than GPS. I hadn't known about the prize and my log was not neat. But I was the only navigator who took sextant shots in the 1990 Darwin Ambon Race and the prize (a Merlin III navigation computer) was mine by default.

That year the yachts anchored off a small village and hotel of Almahusu, down the harbour from the town of Ambon. Every day *perahu lambo* could be seen sailing up and down the harbour, usually coming in laden and leaving in ballast. Some were fine, well-maintained vessels. There were obviously still quite a large number of engineless *perahu* carrying cargoes in the Moluccas. Ambon harbour is sheltered by a long mountainous promontory, for which reason it is often windless or set with little patches of baffling breeze. Sometimes laden *lambo* took several hours, even all day, to work their way up the harbour, particularly if the slight tide was against them. Some year later I met an Australian anthropologist who had done field work on one of the remote Southeastern Moluccas, an island that she could usually only reach or leave on small and terribly crowded *perahu lambo*. She said that they had once taken a week to drift up to Ambon and two days to drift up the harbour. Some *perahu* crews row in such circumstances, but many just accept the situation.

We sailed from Ambon on 7<sup>th</sup> August, weighing anchor early in the day when there was no breeze. We rowed out through the anchored yachts before setting the sails. It took three hours to get clear of the harbour and pick up a steady breeze. There were four *lambo* beating slowly into the harbour as we left.

Winds were light during the day and through the night. We reached at an average three knots. The next day the breeze gradually strengthened. I was able to try out my new Merlin III. You took a whole series of timed sun shots in fairly rapid succession and fed them into the device along with a vague suggestion as to where you thought you were. It reduced all the shots to a calculated line of position for the time of the first shot and rejected any that fell outside a reasonable mean deviation. An impressive range of accuracy for the line of position was also calculated.

During the night of the 8<sup>th</sup> we consistently made five and six knots. The following dawn there was a *lambo* abeam on the same course, like us





heading for Wanci light and Buton Strait. During the day the breeze softened and almost stopped. Never the less we picked up the light of Wanci, or Wangi Wangi at 0110 on the 9<sup>th</sup> and were close under the land at dawn. At 0800 we were totally becalmed and rowed for an hour until a southeasterly breeze filled in. As we tacked up Teluk Wanci (the bay of Wanci) I counted fourteen *perahu lambo* anchored along the shore. We did not anchor at Wanci but continued to the Bajo village of Mola. It is a village of houses built on piles over the shallow waters at the head of the bay. *Perahu* were built there with the keel laid on heavy beams between coral-stone walls. Most houses were most easily reached by canoe rather than on foot. We stayed there a few days, during which time a number of Mola *lambo* set out for the shark fin fishery in the Australian Economic Zone southeast of Ashmore Reef.

At the market in Mola we bought wonderful fresh fish and big, sweet grapefruit. Then, one morning the price of the grapefruit had tripled. I wondered whether we were being taken advantage of, and said so. A little later the village chief called by in his big motorised canoe. He was visiting a hamlet on an off-lying island, would I like to join



*A small lambo lying off Mola*

him? So I went along. And when we were there the village chief showed me where I could buy plenty of cheap grapefruit. I suppose he'd heard of my peevish comments in the market and wanted to show that the people of Mola were not so inhospitable.

From Mola we sailed west through Buton Strait heading for the northern edge of Taka Bonerate reef and thence to Jinato where I had taken ownership of HATI MULIA six year previous. Winds were mostly light. Before dawn on the third day out we saw lights on a group of vessels on the port bow. They appeared to be anchored on a reef, but unless there was some terrible mistake in our navigation we were nowhere near a reef. Sextant and Merlin confirmed our position at dawn. The boats seemed to be just drifting, but I later learned they were made fast to a FAD anchored in very deep water. In the afternoon we passed a really huge outrigger canoe: a giant version of a South Sulawesi *jerangkat* riding to anchor and with a kind of raft, surrounded by palm fronds tethered to her stern. It was a FAD, a Fish Aggregating Device. We were told later that her anchor line would have been at least 1.5 kilometres long. In fact our chart showed the sea there more than 2000m deep. We continued to sail gently west. In the late afternoon we sighted the tiny islet of Belang Belang from the crossstreets.

At 0400, hoping we had passed Latondu sailing southwest we altered course to 170°. We could see Latondu on the port bow at dawn. We sheeted in to pass closer to the island, but the wind came ahead. With fickle and changeable winds it took us all day and half the night to tack up to Jinato where we anchored just after midnight.



*A small jerangkat at Jinato*



*Lifting out the old mast*

Russel went up to the mainland of Sulawesi on a fast boat that carried fish on ice. He was returning to Australia and his work at the Museum. I still had a month of leave without pay. When I'd stayed on Jinato in the past, virtually all of the many tonnes of fish caught on the Taka Bonerate Reef to the east had been salted and dried before it was shipped to the mainland and sold. By 1990 there was a fleet of long sharp boats that raced down to the islands carrying tonnes of ice in blocks which were broken into small lumps and mixed through the fresh fish that they bought before racing back to the fish markets of Sulawesi. Even in the mountain villages there were fish sellers who brought ten or twenty kilos of fish on ice, fresh from the coast by motorbike every day or two. The FADs, anchored well out of sight of land to the south of the Gulf of Bone were also serviced by frequent ice boats.

HATI MULIA was given a new mast while we were at Jinato. Her old mast was not rotten but it had been struck by lightning in Darwin which had splintered the truck and obliged me to shorten the

mast above the hounds. The top of the shortened mast was rather badly split and would have rotted sooner or later. Haji Syukri and some of his men made a splendid new mast, set up sheer poles, removed the old mast, and stepped a new one in a couple of days of easy work that seemed to be all joking and chatting.

But the night before we sailed, we were chatting with Haji Syukri after dinner when the men from one of his fishing boats came rushing in nearly hysterical. They had been attacked by the crew of two larger fishing boats from the mainland who were muscling in on the fishery around the island. They were ashamed that they had not been able to fight off the intruders and were in tears because they had failed their patron, Haji Syukri. He calmed them and assured them that things would be sorted out in the islands favour sooner or later.

Dan I had been a little concerned about sailing HATI MULIA without a third hand and had agreed to engage a young man from one of the Jinato *perahu* as far as Kupang where we would clear for Australia. I would pay him a decent wage. But when we were ready to sail Anis was nowhere to be found. I was confounded. He seemed a thoroughly responsible young man and we seemed to get along well with him. Haji Syukri said that Anis probably feared that we'd throw him overboard as we approached Kupang to avoid paying him, and Haji Syukri was speaking more or less seriously. What made Anis's mistrust particularly perplexing was that he was an *anak merantao*. He was a young man who, at the age of about twelve, had left his home in the mountains of Flores (or another of the Lesser Sunda islands) and walked down to a coast he had probably never seen before, there to ask for a position as cook or cook's assistant on a Bugis sailing *perahu*. Perhaps *anak merantao* like Anis were motivated by the possibility of eating something more nutritious than thin maize porridge. Whatever the motive, they leave their homes to sail on strange *perahu*, with people from another island, another culture, another language group, often another religion, and another race in the case of Melanesian Florenese. Despite all that, Anis was not venturesome enough to sail with us.





# MARITIME HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

## Our History

The Maritime Heritage Association was formed in 1989 to promote a living and working record of Western Australian maritime heritage, and to foster national and international interest in our maritime heritage for the benefit of the local community and visitors.

## Aims

- ◆ To promote, encourage and support the preservation, restoration and knowledge of Western Australian maritime heritage by providing resources and facilities for employment, education and training in all aspects of maritime heritage.
- ◆ To invite and encourage public participation in all these activities.

## Membership Entitlements

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- \* One vote on Annual General Meeting resolutions.
- \* Open to stand for election to Committee.
- \* Receive quarterly newsletters.

### **Family Member**

- \* Open to any two adults and dependent children under 18 years of age.
- \* One vote for each adult on Annual General Meeting resolutions.
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- \* Receive quarterly newsletters.

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- \* One vote on Annual General Meeting resolutions.
- \* Receive quarterly newsletters.

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- \* Open to pensioners, students, children under 18, or unemployed persons.
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- \* Receive quarterly newsletters.

## Maritime Heritage Association Inc.

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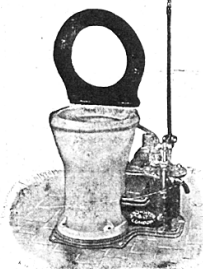
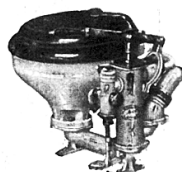
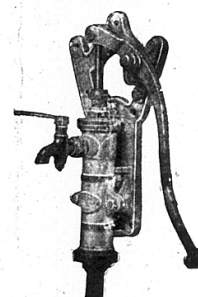
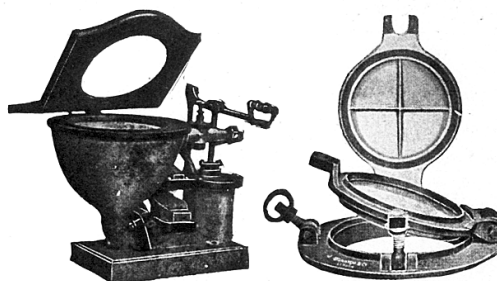
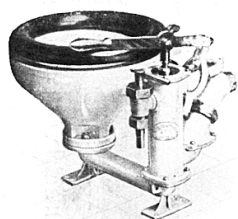
# QUIZ

## Answers to March

1. Duyfken Point was named by Matthew Flinders in 1802.
2. The captain of the *Rockingham* was E. Haliburton.
3. Cape Don is in the Northern Territory on the western extremity of the Coburg Peninsula. It was named by Philip Parker King in 1818 for General Sir George Don, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., then Lieutenant-Governor of Gibraltar.

## Questions

1. What is a jackass barque?
2. The Owen Stanley Range in Papua New Guinea, over which runs the famous Kokoda Track, is well-known to Australians. What maritime connection is in that name?
3. Gage Roads is well known, but do you know where Britannia Roads was and what is its current name?



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