

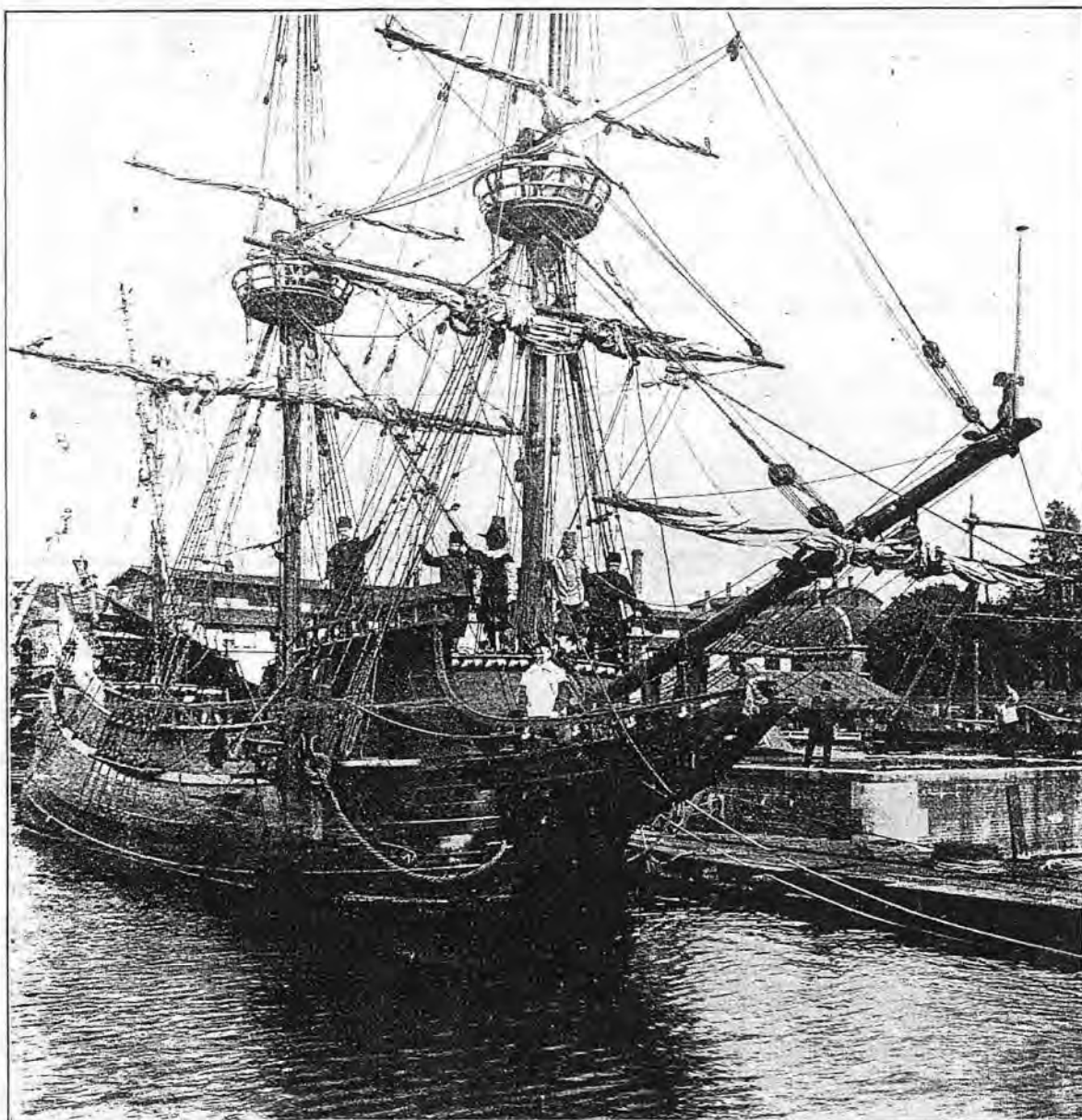
# MARITIME HERITAGE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

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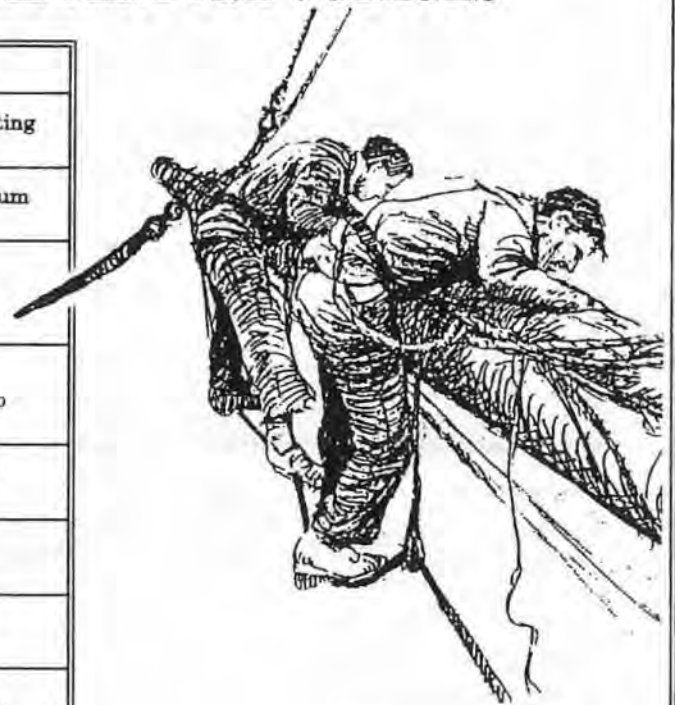
Editor: Chris Buhagiar. 13 Solomon St., Palmyra 6157



The Dutch vessel HALVE MAEN (no longer extant), regarded by maritime historians as the DUYFKEN sister ship, presented by Holland to New York (originally New Amsterdam) in 1907 to celebrate the 300th anniversary of her Hudson River landing. (See article, page 18.)

## Schedule: S.T.S. LEEUWIN ADVENTURE VOYAGES

No.	Departure	Arrival	Remarks
7/95	Fremantle 4 Apr. Tue.	Fremantle 14 Apr. Fri.	School voyage - visiting Aberlhos Islands.
W1/95	Fremantle 14 Apr. Fri.	Fremantle 16 Apr. Sun.	Weekender - minimum age 21.
8/95	Fremantle 18 Apr. Tue.	Carnarvon 28 Apr. Fri.	School holidays - visiting Aberlhos Islands.
9/95	Carnarvon 2 May Tue.	Pt. Hedland 12 May Fri.	Visiting Montebello Islands and Ningaloo Reef.
10/95	Pt Hedland 15 May Mon.	Broome 25 May Thu.	NW Youth Services.
11/95	Broome 28 May Sun.	Darwin 9 June Fri.	ECO Adventure, Kimberley coast.
12/95	Darwin 13 Jun. Fri.	Darwin 22 Jun. Thu.	NT Youth Services.
14/95	Darwin 26 Jun. Mon.	Darwin 6 Jul. Thu.	NT School Holidays.
15/95	Darwin 10 Jul. Mon.	Broome 21 Jul. Fri.	NT/WA School Holidays, Kimberley coast.



*For information on all voyages, contact:*

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## Large Watercraft in Museum Collections:

# *MONUMENTS OR COLLECTION ARTEFACTS?*

A paper delivered by Nick Burningham to the Museums Australia Conference. Fremantle, 10 November 1994

### PART TWO

**T**he traditional skills and technologies of boat and ship building, rigging, sail making, caulking, etc. are only a part of the life of such communities (and with the exception of rope making, they tend to male dominated). They are parts of the cultural heritage that can be usefully maintained, promoted or revived by maritime museums, particularly maritime museums that have in their collections watercraft that are kept afloat.

As many of you know, only too well, watercraft that are kept afloat require a great deal of maintenance, although vessels that are kept afloat in salt water probably deteriorate less rapidly than vessels kept out of the water but exposed to the elements. It seems that it is inevitable that any vessel that is kept afloat will need major structural repair and replacement of a considerable part of its fabric within a few decades. (HMS VICTORY, which is, I believe, the oldest vessel in existence that is out of doors and has been constantly maintained, is fairly precisely analogous to the axe which has had two new blades and five new handles. Much of the famous English oak in her construction was replaced by Indian teak more than one hundred years ago and much of that has been replaced.) The fact that vessels cannot be effectively preserved out-of-doors remains true and requires some comment. Looking at from







a slightly facetious point of view, it is a curious paradox that the heavy-metal pollutants from anti-fouling paint are cumulative in effect and lethally toxic to virtually all organisms except the ones that eat wooden boats or grow in long tendrils from their bottoms. And, more seriously, it is sad that a reliable and practical treatment that can be applied to prevent rot in existing wooden vessels has not yet been devised. I wonder whether the effort and expertise that conservation scientists have applied to problems such as the treatment of waterlogged wood could provide real improvements in the conservation of watercraft if it were applied in that direction?

Whether the inevitable loss and replacement of much of the fabric of a vessel is acceptable, when the alternative of displaying inside a building is a practicable alternative, is debatable and needs to be critically assessed in each individual case. If the vessels are actively used and made available, or at least attractively visible, to the public by keeping them afloat and in use, then it is probably defensible. But if these aims are not met, then it is difficult to see the value of keeping a vessel afloat and out-of-doors – if one assesses it in the light of the current western philosophy of conservation.

Maritime Museums do not have a uniformly good record when it comes to keeping vessels in the water. I believe that Mystic Seaport in the USA has been genuinely successful in keeping the majority of their floating collection in good condition. But Exeter Maritime Museum in the UK was less well funded and fought a losing battle against decay. The organisation has apparently collapsed under the strain.

On a recent stopover in London I went to look at the topsail schooner KATHLEEN AND MAY which is kept in a small dock in Southwark. I had previously visited her in 1990 when she was looking quite smart, attracting a reasonable through-flow of paying visitors, and her conservation was faced with apparent optimism. Slow-release borax suppositories had been inserted into her bottom and topsides, and it was hoped that these would keep her sound. In September of this year she was looking very sad: her masts have been taken out, she is roofed over with plastic tarpaulins and closed to the public, and there is a real threat that she will be condemned or left to disintegrate in some muddy creak (probably in Milton Creek, along with the decaying Thames Barges that are owned by the

Maritime Trust of Great Britain) unless a very large sum of money is made available for a rebuild. The ANZ Bank, whose London offices are nearby, was considering financing the rebuild but no decision had been made.

From Southwark I went to St Katherine Dock where I intended to take the new light railway down to Greenwich. But I got no further than the dock. There were nearly a dozen Thames sailing barges crowding St Katherine Dock. A wonderful sight. All but two of them were in sea-going condition and in survey. They were all looking like working vessels – clean and brightly painted but robust, slightly battle scarred, and tarry at the same time. The majority of them were commercially operated. Some are owned by large companies such as P & O Line who use them for management and executive team-bonding exercises, as floating boardrooms, and as venues for meetings and social functions. I spent the day talking to Peter Cariss, the owner of the barge WYVENHOE. WYVENHOE is used as a charter sailing vessel and for sailing or static social functions (such as staff Christmas parties and wedding receptions). Peter runs management team-building courses which are carried out with the sailing of the barge as an essential and major part of the course. WYVENHOE has also been used very successfully as the venue for exhibitions of paintings with river and maritime themes, and in a number of other ingenious roles which Peter told me about over a bottle of wine and which I have forgotten.

There are now more than thirty Thames Sailing Barges in sea-going condition, considerably more than there [were] when the last barge carried a cargo about thirty years ago. The traditional rigging, maintenance and sail-making for the barges have enjoyed a revival as a small industry in the ports of south-eastern England, principally Pin Mill, in Essex. Some barges have been rebuilt so that scarcely an original timber remains and it is not impossible that new ones will be built in the future. In fact, I was told that two new barges have been built, but I was not able to confirm this. Of course, none of them earn their living in the way they were originally intended to: by regular drudging up and down the coast with cargoes of bricks, sand, clay, manure, etc. But a great deal of the tradition of the Thames sailing barge is retained, and although it is a self-conscious attempt to preserve a fragment of maritime heritage, it is a particularly lively and

***"... Maritime Museums do not have a uniformly good record when it comes to keeping vessels in the water ... Exeter Maritime Museum in the UK ... fought a losing battle against decay ..."***



thriving tradition. The barges are frequently under sail and are worked on virtually every day. They can be based at St Catherine dock one month, on the Essex or Kent coast the next month. It is difficult to see them either as monuments or museum artefacts.

Obviously not all types of watercraft are as well suited to this kind of entrepreneurial use as Thames barges, but the sailing barges are not unique. Similar industries are growing in parts of France and Germany, while in Holland, I am told, traditional watercraft are everywhere. There are also replica ships. And there are sail training ships in many countries, including LEEUWIN based here in Fremantle, that are operated as vigorous non-profit making businesses. LEEUWIN is currently undergoing her annual refit: if you go to Victoria Quay, where the WA Maritime Museum Historic Boats Museum is located, you will find men and women, both volunteers and paid crew, practising the traditional skills of the rigger to refit LEEUWIN.

The survival of the training ships and the Thames barges remains tenuous. They must pay their way and, as we know, maintenance costs are high. Perhaps it would be appropriate in some cases for major maritime museums to host and even subsidise such operations as an effective way of preserving certain types of watercraft along with the skills and traditions that are an important part of their context. The hosting of Wooden Boat Works at the Historic Boats Museum in Fremantle is a step in the same general direction.

This might require some relaxing of the curatorial grip on collections. The challenge is to integrate more completely with the commercial and non-commercial traditional boating and shipping community: to support their activities and then to curate – to record, interpret and display with minimal impact on operations."

#### REFERENCES:

- Anderson, M., 1990. "Women's History and Material Culture in Australian Museums", *Museums Australia Journal*: special issue.
- Grattan, D. W., 1986. "Conservation of an ethnographic object too large to contemplate without a large whiskey", *Recent Setbacks in Conservation 2*.



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## Book Reviews:

# THE CHINA VOYAGE

*by Tim Severin. Published by Little, Brown & Co.*

The real-life adventures of Tim Severin, which include "The Brendan Voyage" and "The Sinbad Voyage", are probably well known to many readers, but their connection to Western Australian Maritime Heritage is rather tenuous. Mr. R. Woollett, a former Greenwich navigation instructor who did his best to teach Tim the principles of celestial navigation, is now a resident of Fremantle. However my reason for foisting this review on the MHA Journal is the uncommon opportunity to review a book from the perspective of a (minor) character in that book.

Looking for a new adventure, Tim Severin was interested by a theory of Professor Needham who speculated that the ancient Chinese had navigated across the Pacific to Mezzo-America. Needham's *Science and Technology in Ancient China* runs to almost as many volumes as the Complete Oxford Dictionary and must be one of the largest works ever published by a single author. With such compendious knowledge, it is

not surprising that he was able to identify some cultural parallels in ancient Mezzo-America; his interpretation of those parallels as evidence of contact is, to say the least, questionable. Thor Heyerdhal's theory of American origins for the population of Polynesia is no less lunatic, but was the origin of two highly readable and entertaining accounts of the *Kon Tiki* voyage, and Tim's choice of project should probably be judged in that light.

If the Chinese did voyage to the Americas some three thousand years ago, they would have sailed on a form of raft. The development of the planked boat came relatively late in that mainly terrestrial civilisation. It is generally assumed that the raft would have been made of bamboo. Indeed large seagoing sailing rafts of bamboo can still be found in a few corners of the South China Sea. By far the best of these surviving rafts are built in Thanh Hoa, Northern Vietnam; and so it was there that Tim decided to have built a "super-raft" for





an attempt at the Pacific crossing. (It has been tried before but the bamboo became completely waterlogged and eaten by toredo worms before the Pacific was half crossed.)

The sailing rafts of Thanh Hoa are usually 9 – 10 m in length, but for the Pacific crossing Tim calculated that he needed a bamboo sailing craft twice that length and three layers deep. The raft builders were understandably doubtful about such a craft and asked that an "engineer" be brought in to supervise the project. That was where I came in and why I appear as a character in *The China Voyage*. I actually appear as "a character straight out of a Conrad novel" some ten years older than my real age (thanks to Tim's self-confessed inadequacy as a mathematician). Apart from the geriatric decay, my brief appearance is flattering and contains no inaccuracies that I would choose to point out.

*The China Voyage* is a very good read. My father initially read it to see if he could recognise any of the favourable characteristics ascribed to me, but said that he found himself continuing to read the account of the voyage (which I did not go on) with real enjoyment.

Having taken part in the early chapters of the book I feel I have some small insight into how such books are written. To be successful in this *genre* you have to simplify everything. The reader wants a comfortable

armchair adventure so everything gets simplified to a kind of armchair daydream of the actual events. Virtually all the difficulties, compromises and squalor are skirted, the only unpleasantness is noble endurance.

The team of men who built the raft were wonderful: hard-working and raucously enthusiastic. But the local officials who appear in Tim's story as helpful and energetic, were thieving, boastful, lazy and obstructive from my point of view. We probably could have built three rafts for a quarter of the cost had we not needed them to "facilitate" things.

There is no disguising the discomfort of the later stages of the voyage: forty degrees north in the Pacific, flayed by a succession on winter gales with the raft gradually disintegrating under them. Even the phlegmatic Faeroese fisherman Trondur throws a wobbly. But Tim continues being calm, polite and stoically cheerful. I mentioned that aspect of the narrative to one of his former shipmates who remarked "Yes, he just goes on driving everyone else around the bend."

This is not a book to read for the searing honesty of the introspection and revelation, but it is a very lucid and entertaining narrative by the most successful adventurer of recent decades.

**Nick Burningham**

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## **SOUTH-WEST BY SOUTH** *(Volume 1: From Discovery to Settlement)*

*by Roy Dedman. Published by the author in 1993, in Perth Western Australia.*

**T**his is the first of several volumes on the early maritime history of South-western WA planned by Roy Dedman.

The author tells us that he has spent fourteen years researching and writing the book, and although he acknowledges assistance from the Western Australian Maritime Museum, this represents a major

achievement – especially as he has published the volume himself.

The book summarises the early voyages of the Dutch, French, Americans and English to our southern shores, and Roy's careful choice of quotes from the various journals, diaries and official reports helps make very interesting reading.



Although articles have been written about several of the early voyages to our southern shores, to this reviewer's knowledge, there has never before been an attempt to cover in detail all of the early maritime history of the South West. Mr. Dedman's work is therefore timely and likely to be very useful to researchers and writers, as well as to the general reading public.

The use of modern photographs to show the coast more or less as the early explorers saw it further heightens interest for the reader, as does the careful plotting of courses on recent charts of the areas being discussed.

The volume deserves professional typesetting and editing, and it is unfortunate that the author was not able to avail himself of this extra polish. It is to be hoped that Roy will continue with the series, and that in time a high-quality commercial publisher will come along and do his work the justice it deserves.

In the meantime, we eagerly await Volume 2.

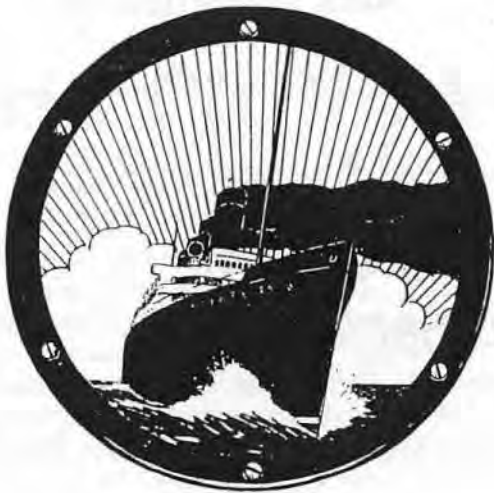
**Ronald Richards**

*The book currently sells for  
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# *International Whaleboat Racing*

*The Maritime Heritage Association is promoting the revival of the sport of whaleboat racing in Western Australia. Whaleboat racing is an exciting facet of the world-wide revival of interest in classic boats. Both Australia and the United States of America have given this highly competitive sport international status; Western Australia's proposed participation will further promote the sport and provide an exhilarating recreation for competitors and spectators alike.*

*The whaleboats most commonly used in the early days of the Western Australian colony were purchased from American whalers homeward-bound with a full cargo of whale oil. At this stage the Americans they no had no further use for their weary whaleboats, so many passed into local hands. Impromptu pulling races in Western Australia became common, but the first reported whaleboat race took place on Friday, June 2, 1837, the day after the eighth Foundation Day celebrations. A race between the Fremantle and the Perth Whaling Companies was won by the Perth boat. Whaleboat racing soon became the main event of Foundation day regattas.*

*The decline of the whaling industry saw a parallel decline in whaleboat racing, however, in 1988, the Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village and the City of Warrnambool revived the sport, though the visiting and highly experienced American team from Mystic Seaport, Connecticut, defeated the Australians and carried off the Captain Mills Cup. The following year the Warrnambool team won the first Australian National Whaleboat titles and the right to retrieve the Cup from Mystic Seaport, however Mystic Seaport carried off the second titles. Findlay Mac Nish takes up the story*

...



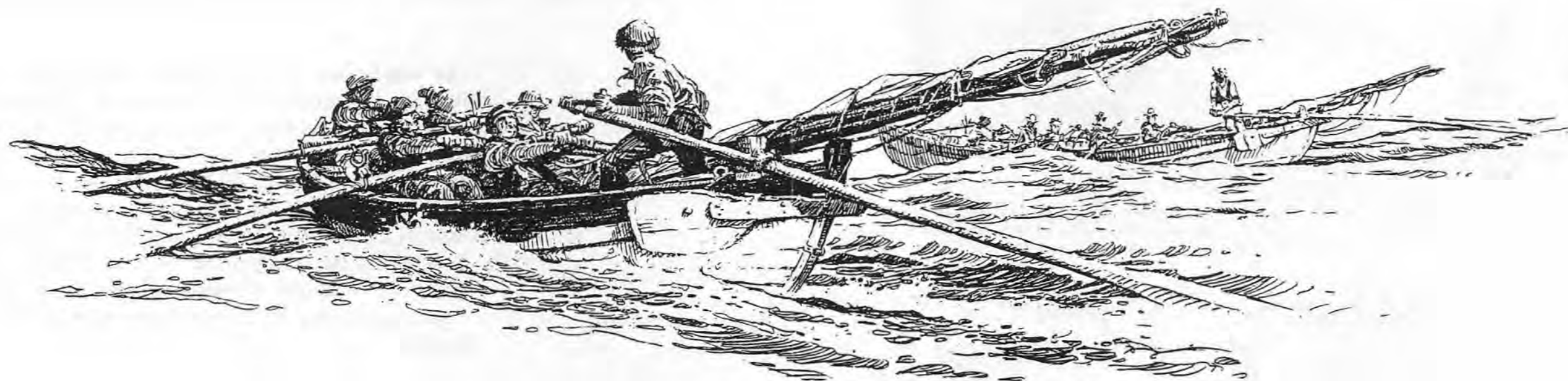
In late August of that year, two whaleboats arrived in Albany from Warrnambool, Victoria, in preparation for the 1994 Albany Maritime Festival which was planned for October. Under the sponsorship of Portland Aluminium and Alcoa, and carried across the Great Australian Bight to Bunbury as deck cargo on the ship PORTLAND, the boats were landed early to allow time for transportation to Albany, and teams to be formed and acquainted with the peculiarities of rowing such boats.

A number of teams were formed and they practised long and hard in preparation for the festival races. Teams were also put together from the crews of both the ENDEAVOUR replica and HMAS DARWIN, both of which were in port for the festival (which had been planned to coincide with the arrival of the ENDEAVOUR). One further team was involved – from Warrnambool, home of the borrowed whaleboats.

team and a number of others decided to give the challenge some serious consideration.

Because of Albany's long whaling heritage and its considerable involvement in whaleboat racing in the early days, team members decided to continue the heritage aspect of the sport, and set about finding members keen enough to continue with rowing for sport.

From September to the end of November of 1994, use was made of the Warrnambool boats – which were still in Albany, in order to drum up interest in whaleboat racing and to help those new to the sport familiarise themselves with the idiosyncrasies of rowing a boat weighing some 750 kilograms, with oars ranging in size from fifteen feet to eighteen feet for the sweep oar, and balancing a three-oar stroke against a two-oar bow side. (This format is consistent with the traditional



Many of the local teams did well in the ensuing races, which were held on Princess Royal Harbour, however they were defeated by the experience and knowledge of the Victorian team.

The present WA team grew out of the Vancouver Vikings, which did fairly well in the local competition. When the Warrnambool team threw out a challenge to take them on again in Victoria, members of the Vikings

whaleboat of the 1800s, the course used for racing being the same as the original – that is, one thousand meters in a four-turn, figure-of-eight.

By the time the boats had been returned to Victoria in November, team members of the new Albany Whaleboat Association had already developed a unique camaraderie and an enthusiasm for the challenge of creating a resurgence of interest in whale boating in

Albany, and the preparing for the anticipated visit to Warrnambool, in February, 1995.

From November onward, team members unfortunately had to train without access to a whaleboat; undaunted, they continued to work out at the gym three times a week in order to develop the required strength and aerobic stamina. Then, in the final weeks before the team had to leave for Warrnambool, the Navy Cadets came to the rescue, and use was made of their two small sailing dinghies (Corsairs) for rowing practice and helping to rekindle the skill of rowing as a team.

The team arrived in Warrnambool on Tuesday, February 14, and immediately went out onto the water to re-acquaint themselves with the boats. They practised twice daily over the five-day period before race day on the Sunday. Nevertheless, time was spared to enjoy the overwhelming hospitality of the City of

championship event raced over one thousand meters – as well as third place in the bathtub derby! Pleasing results for a team that had done the majority of its training without even a boat! Good coverage had been given to the event in the local media.

After such an auspicious beginning, the Association had to decide where the future lay once the team was back in Albany.

The Albany Whaleboat Association is now looking to continuing its development of whaleboat racing in Albany and, on a broader front, across Western Australia – hopefully encouraging centres such as Geraldton, Bunbury and Fremantle to get boats built and teams organised. If all goes well, construction of the whaleboats will be by local professional, amateur and student boatbuilders.

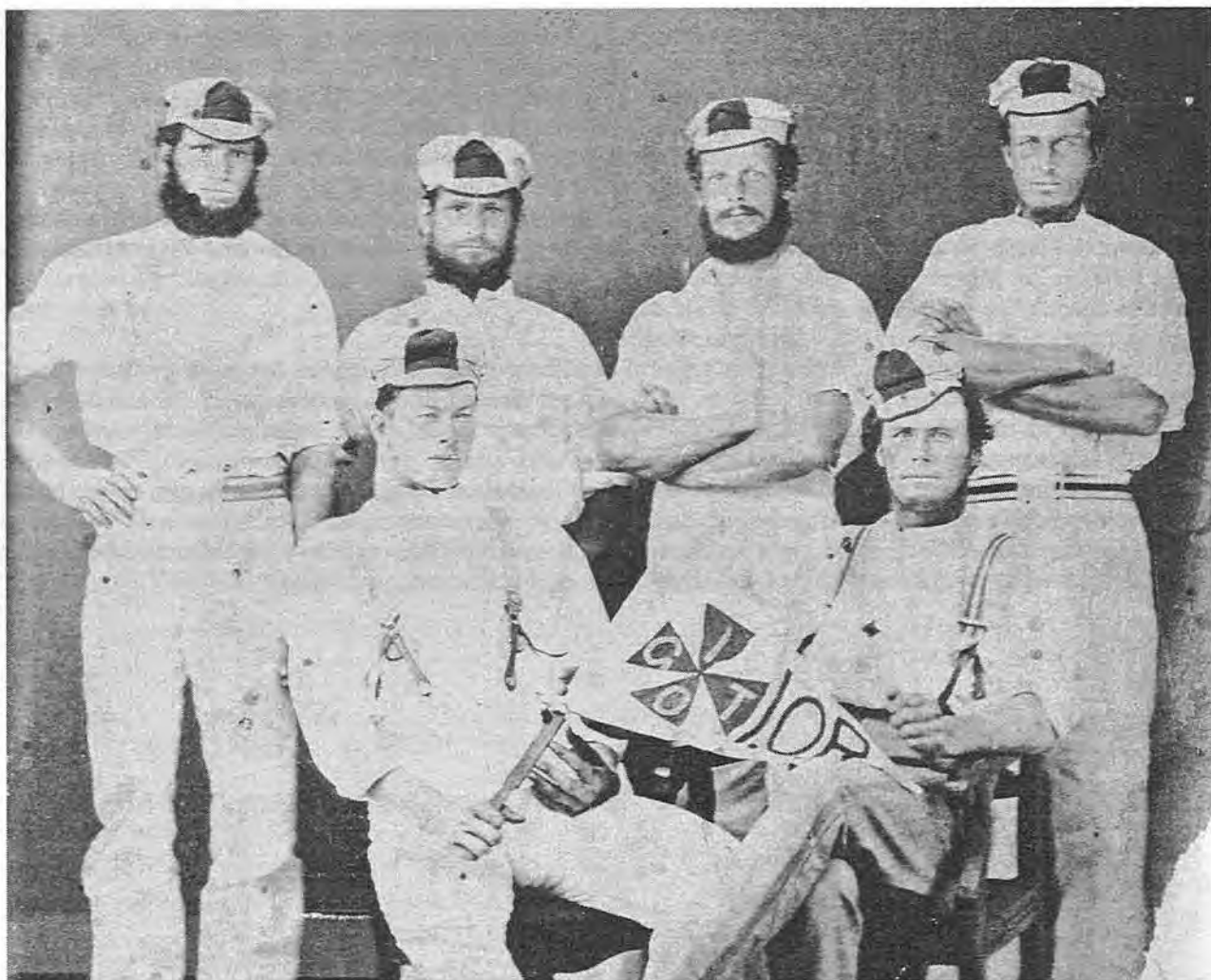
Warrnambool and its Wunta Festival, which included a three-thousand strong float and brass band parade which featured the whaleboats and crews, and a formal exchange of gifts – the Albany team presenting a shield and letter from the Town of Albany.

Race day itself saw the Albany team, now nicknamed the "WA Pluckers", finish with silver medals for the mixed open, the men's open, and the national

However, first and foremost in the minds of the members of the Association is the need to acquire a whaleboat for Albany. This is a very necessary starting point in order to make the training more tangible and to carry the current enthusiasm forward. It will also be the starting point for what Association members hope will become an annual maritime festival, with whaleboat racing as the central attraction.







*The original caption of the photograph reads: "AN HISTORIC CREW OF 1873. Winners of the three races at the Albany Regatta of December 26 that year. They were also the crew that landed the late Lord Forrester at Albany at the time of his first exploration trip. All were total abstainers. Reading left to right: Standing - Benjamin Pedden, Leonard Prideaux, John Wray, William Douglas and James Sale. Sitting - Fredrick Douglas and James Sale ..."* (Courtesy: Mrs. Hazel Flugge, nee Douglas, Albany, WA. October 19, 1994.)

Boat construction is either clinker or carvel, however, as Warrnambool is currently using carvel boats, it would seem that this is the way to go if there is to be some uniformity across both WA and Australia. Although Association members are currently busy fund-raising, the type of money needed is definitely the kind that requires generous sponsorship from a corporate body. Warrnambool had its three boats sponsored by an enthusiastic team of companies that were most supportive of activities related to the maritime heritage of their area. Feelers are now being put out to find local sponsors willing to encourage the people of Albany to make the most of their unique maritime heritage. Somewhere out there is a sponsor or sponsors who will come to the aid of this keen group of workers and help to make the dream a reality and put whaleboat racing on the annual calendar of competitive sport.

**Findlay Mac Nish**

*Editor's Note: the following contacts have been provided should you wish to be of assistance or become involved in this exciting and different enterprise:*

*at Albany -*

*Liaison: Gary Tonkin (098) 446 307.*

*Boatbuilder: Peter Cooper (098) 441 030.*

*at Fremantle -*

*Liaison: Ross Shardlow (09) 361 0170.*

*Boatbuilder: Brian Phillips (09) 339 4694.*

*Crew Training: Tup Lahiff (09) 384 7936.*





*The Albany Whaleboat Team, the "WA Pluckers", centre boat, in a close tussle "at the turn".  
(Courtesy: Chris McCartney, Warrnambool.)*



*The "WA Pluckers" and John Bell, Manager, Jaycees Whaleworld, sponsors of the trip. (Courtesy:  
Albany Advertiser.)*



# *The Beachcombers and the Abandoned Whaleboat*

by Les Douglas

*I remember my father, Captain Clem Douglas, years ago telling me about the time he and his cousin Archie Douglas came across an abandoned old whaleboat. It was on one of those trips when he was on the GRACE DARLING. The GRACE was owned and sailed by his uncle, Fred.*

*My father was about 14 years old when he first sailed on the GRACE DARLING. Also on the GRACE at the time was his cousin Archie Douglas, Uncle Fred's son. Both the boys were about the same age – all the boys at one time or another had sailed with Uncle Fred; he drove the GRACE hard up and down the coast through all kinds of weather, trying at all times to arrive as early as possible with the mail and stores.*

**I**t was a very hard and rough life in those days and Uncle Fred treated the boys the same as the rest of the crew. There were no favours shown. He taught them all he knew about the coast and the sea and made good seamen of all the Douglas's and the many others who sailed with him, including Captain Harris and Captain Winzer, both of whom went on to become chief harbour masters in Western Australia. This may account for why the GRACE had such a long run on the coast without serious mishap – there was always a couple of the Douglas's aboard who were very good at forecasting the weather. Although it was a hard life for the young boys, they enjoyed it, especially the times the GRACE had to shelter.

The coastline between Cape Leeuwin and Adelaide can be very treacherous, with strong gales and huge seas rolling up from the Southern Ocean. It therefore became necessary on many occasions for the GRACE to take shelter in one of the bays or in the lee on one of the many islands. The same would happen if there was not enough wind or sail or it was too rough to work the beach as all the stores and cargo had to be put ashore using the GRACE'S surf boat. Uncle would simply drop the anchor and wait until the weather was more favourable. During these times of waiting, some of the

crew would be allowed to put a small dinghy over and do a bit of beachcombing.

In those days there were many small steamers crossing the Great Australian Bight and still a lot of sailing ships about. Many of the sailing ships carried cargoes of timber, some of which was lashed on deck. If the ships happened to get caught in a heavy gale, some of the deck cargo would get washed overboard or have to be cut adrift because the lashings had worked loose and it was too dangerous to try to lash the timber down again with heavy seas running over the deck. Better to let it go than damage the ship or risk hurting the seamen or having them washed overboard as well.

The timber carried on deck was always large baulks 25 – 30 foot long and 18 – 20 inches square. It was mostly teak and oregon, and was very valuable.

My father said they often found baulks washed high up on the beach close to the sandhills. If they found a piece in the water or close enough to get it in, they would tie a rope around it and float it back to the GRACE, or on trips in fine weather, Uncle Fred would take the GRACE in close, drop anchor, run a line ashore and, with several men, a few planks and the



line attached to the GRACE'S hand winch, they would have the timber aboard in no time.

Uncle Fred was always on the lookout for these baulks of timber because they were very valuable and could be sold at Millars Timber Mill, in Albany, or he could get them cut there. All the timber for his first home that he built in Albany, possibly even the second home, and all the timber for the Grace Darling Hotel that he built in Esperance, came from the beach.

I can remember a lot of sawn teak planks in Captain Bert Douglas's shed at Maitland, on the Kalgan River. He chartered the GRACE and sailed her for the last couple of years that she was on the south coast. Unfortunately, the shed was burnt down in about 1925 and all was lost, together with many shipping artefacts that Captain Burt had gathered during his long association with many vessels on the West Australian Coast.

When the boys went ashore, it wasn't the timber that interested them very much - it was the many other things that could be found. I remember how I used to wander along the beaches - Cheynes, Goode, Frenchman's Bay and Two Peoples Bay, imagining that just a little further and I might find something else. So I know how the boys used to feel.

Father told me that they found many useful things like oars and lifebuoys bearing ships' names, which they painted over or used or sold; they also found water kegs that had washed out of ships' lifeboats, barrels of all sizes, big earthenware jars and plenty of smaller ones. These jars were used a lot in those days for bulk storage on ships - demijohns with cane woven around and up to form a handle on each side. These jars came in very handy for the town people. As the boys only got

a few shillings per month, anything extra they could get from selling these items came in very handy.

Of all the things they found on the beaches, there was nothing more valuable than ambergris. It is a wax-like odoriferous substance from the intestines of the sperm whale. It is grey-amber in colour, floats, and is difficult to discern, especially when washed ashore in among the weeds on the beach. It was worth £1 per ounce and when you consider that a seaman's wage was as low as £2 per month, father said they kept a very sharp eye out for it when walking among the weeds! They did manage to find some now and again, and the money was shared by all the crew.

Its value came from the fact that it was used in the manufacture of perfume, though one could hardly imagine how because if you have ever smelt a piece (and I have) you would never forget what it looks and smells like.

The boys also gathered many rare and beautiful shells. One in particular was the nautilus shell, which is white, has a very thin shell and sail-like arms, and can float half out of the water, and is

easily picked up and eaten by birds. Very few undamaged shells ever reach the beach, so the few good shells that they found were very easily sold.

Sometimes they would find a bottle with a note inside reading:

THROWN OVER FROM SHIP ... X NUMBER  
OF DAYS OUT FROM PORT ...

NAME ...

DATE ...

HOME ADDRESS ...







On one of these beach trips, just after some very heavy winter gales and high tides, everything that had come ashore during the gale had been washed high up the bank, and in some places was right in amongst the hills.

As it was about time to go back to the GRACE, they climbed one of the sandhills for a last look along the beach. Just at the back of the hill they saw a small clump of trees and something that looked like a piece of a boat. Investigation showed that it wasn't a piece of boat, but a whole whaleboat, half buried in sand to just above the thwarts, and with all the rowlocks in the rowlock cleats in place and a partly exposed oar sticking out of the sand in the boat. They scratched some of the sand away to reveal six or seven oars still on the thwarts and quite a lot of small scrub growing inside.

Father said they could hardly believe their eyes, and were quite mystified. The boat had certainly never been washed up there because all the oars and rowlocks were still in it, so it must have been put there. But why would someone have left a boat with everything in it and in such a remote place? It had also been there for a very long time, as small trees were growing in close around the sides. Father said they couldn't get back aboard the GRACE fast enough to tell the others.

Back aboard, uncle was not surprised, he had heard of a whaleboat being left ashore somewhere along the coast, though no one seemed to know much about it or just where it was. It happened so long ago that the event had almost been forgotten.

American, French and other whaling ships were working the coast many years before Major Lockyer brought the first settlers to Albany in 1827. When he came there were still a lot of whalers and sealers working off the coast as well as some operations from shore bases. Supply ships would call every so often with supplies, and take the oil away. The sailors on the small whalers would be away from home port for years.

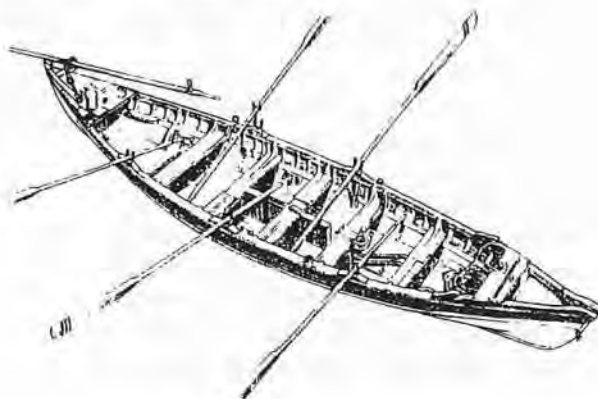
It was such a dangerous life then that all the news they had ever heard was of accidents on the whale ships. Naturally the early sailors were very superstitious; to them, many signs and events were omens of bad luck.

This particular whaleboat had been put ashore because it was believed there was a hoodoo on it. It had been capsized and damaged many times and a number of men had lost their lives in it. Others had broken legs and arms or had got caught up in the line when harpooning a whale, and had been dragged overboard and drowned. Nothing had ever gone right. Even with the best crew, the sailors were very reluctant to go out in the boat, but they had to obey the Captain's orders.

Eventually there was so much murmuring going on among the men that the Captain decided to get rid of the boat to keep the seamen's morale up. He ordered it to be taken ashore onto the beach above high water. Apparently all the gear was left in it because they wanted nothing more to do with the boat or any part of it, and perhaps wanted it left as a monument to the seamen who had lost their lives.

I was very young when my father told us about the whaleboat and my imagination would run wild. I had seen pictures in books of whaleboats standing on end, big whale tails thrashing alongside, and men standing up in the boat throwing big harpoons, and Jonah being swallowed by Moby Dick.

Over subsequent years the beach would have built up dunes around and over the boat, and trees and scrub would have overgrown the site. Fire, sand or both might have long obliterated all trace of it. I happened to mention the story to Gordon Marshall, and on numerous occasions since he has asked me to write about it. I was very reluctant to do so, not being able to state the location, only that it was somewhere along the south coast. (From *"Maritime Memoirs of Albany"*, by Gordon de la Marshalls; illustrations by Ross Shardlow.)





# More on the Swan River Barges ...

*In response to Doug Rickman's article "Memories of Barges on the Swan River" (MHA Journal, Vol.5, No.4, Dec. '94), Ron Parsons, founder member of the Australasian Maritime Historical Society, has kindly forwarded a few more facts and figures in relation to the craft that Doug mentioned. Quoting Ron's letter:*

**T**he contributor was correct in his assumption – the tugs and barges were owned and operated by the Swan River Shipping Co. Ltd., partly owned by Messrs. McIlwraith McEacharn Ltd.

The tug ALBATROSS – wooden steam ship, 55 gross tons, 7 nominal, ON-120045, was built in 1902 by W. & S. Lawrence, of Perth – and was sold to the Shell Company in 1945, her register closing in 1967 with "broken up" entered; the tug EAGLE – also a wooden steam ship of 49 gross tons, 6 nominal, and ON-120022, was built in 1906 for the company by Lawrence, her register closing with "foundered off the North Mole, Fremantle".

Among the barges owned by the Swan River Company were the PYTHON, JARRAHDAL, ROCKINGHAM, CLYO, MOLLY, ENTERPRISE, EMU, GAREENUP, AMY, GUILFORD, LINNETT, NIRIMBA, ADVENTURE and DRAGON, but so far as I can

ascertain, none were taken up for wartime duties. Those that survived the war were scuttled off in the graveyard off Rottnest Island within two or three years of war's end.

I have no record of the tug R. O. LAWS, which seems to indicate she was not registered, and any additional detail your readers may care to provide would be of interest.

The vessel built for the Brewery was, naturally, named S.B.C., and was a wooden-hulled twin-screw motor scow, of 33 gross tons, and 28 nominal, ON 131626, built in 1912 by A. E. Brown, of Fremantle. She was powered by twin Thornycroft diesels, these being replaced by twin Ruston-Hornsby diesels in 1936. She was sold in May, 1937, to the Yampi Sound Mining Company, and renamed YAMPI LASS. She was taken up by the Commonwealth in the war."



## Our Most Exciting First Ship: *The DUYFKEN 1606*

by James Henderson, of the DUYFKEN 1606 Replica Foundation



*The DUYFKEN 1606 Replica project is afloat, as signalled by our entertaining launching of the Replica Foundation at the WA Maritime Museum on February 26 – picked up by most newspapers, radio and television stations.*

*The next significant function should mark the laying of the keel of the authentic replica of Australia's first known and most exciting ship.*

**W**e hope to build the DUYFKEN beside the maritime Museum building where people can watch its progress, learn more about sailing ships and out maritime history, and contribute to the success of what we have started. Estimated cost of completing the construction is \$3.5 million.

The original DUYFKEN (Little Dove, or Pigeon) was built near Amsterdam, in 1594 for the Dutch first expedition to the East Indies of the following year. She was almost identical with the other three ships of that fleet, but was much smaller, designed to sail anywhere with them but also to carry messages and people between ships and to venture in uncharted waters and closer to shore.

**DIMENSIONS:** From stem post to stern she was only 19.3 ; the bowsprit would add another 3 m or more. Width of deck was about 6 m, and the draught 2.2 m. She was armed with ten cannon, and other weapons. The crew totalled twenty.

**RIGGING:** Three masts, and square-rigged; the main mast was about 15 m high and the foremast about 13

m. Flagpoles were raised above these. The mizzen sail was fore-and-aft and was important for helping to steer the ship. Similarly, the bowsprit sail could also be braced to help turn the ship.



**RUDDER:** Controlled by means of a tiller 4 m long, which could turn a maximum of about twenty degrees. The tiller was extremely difficult to handle in heavy seas.

The Duyfken Foundation's special consultant on historic ships, Dr. C. de Heer, of Applecross, WA, whose 1:31 scale model of the DUYFKEN inspired the replica project, notes that there are many things we don't know today about sailing characteristics of such ships. But sailing the replica of the authentic DUYFKEN replica to be built at Fremantle should show maritime archaeologists how equipment was

used and its effect on sailing.

**LIFE AT SEA?...** Unremittingly arduous. When coasting, there was hardly any rest in twenty-four hours. But in open sea, watches were four hours on watch and four hours off, except that there was often an emergency which required the efforts of the full crew.





PLANS?... No. When the DUYFKEN was built it was not the Dutch practice to work from a formal set of plans. As the world's leading shipbuilders at that time, they constructed great numbers of ships of this design, and in the busy Amsterdam harbour you would find three-thousand ships in one day. Seventeenth century engravings, paintings, Dutch United East India Company documents, and other information guided Dr. de Heer, who spent many years researching the subject and building models of significant ships.

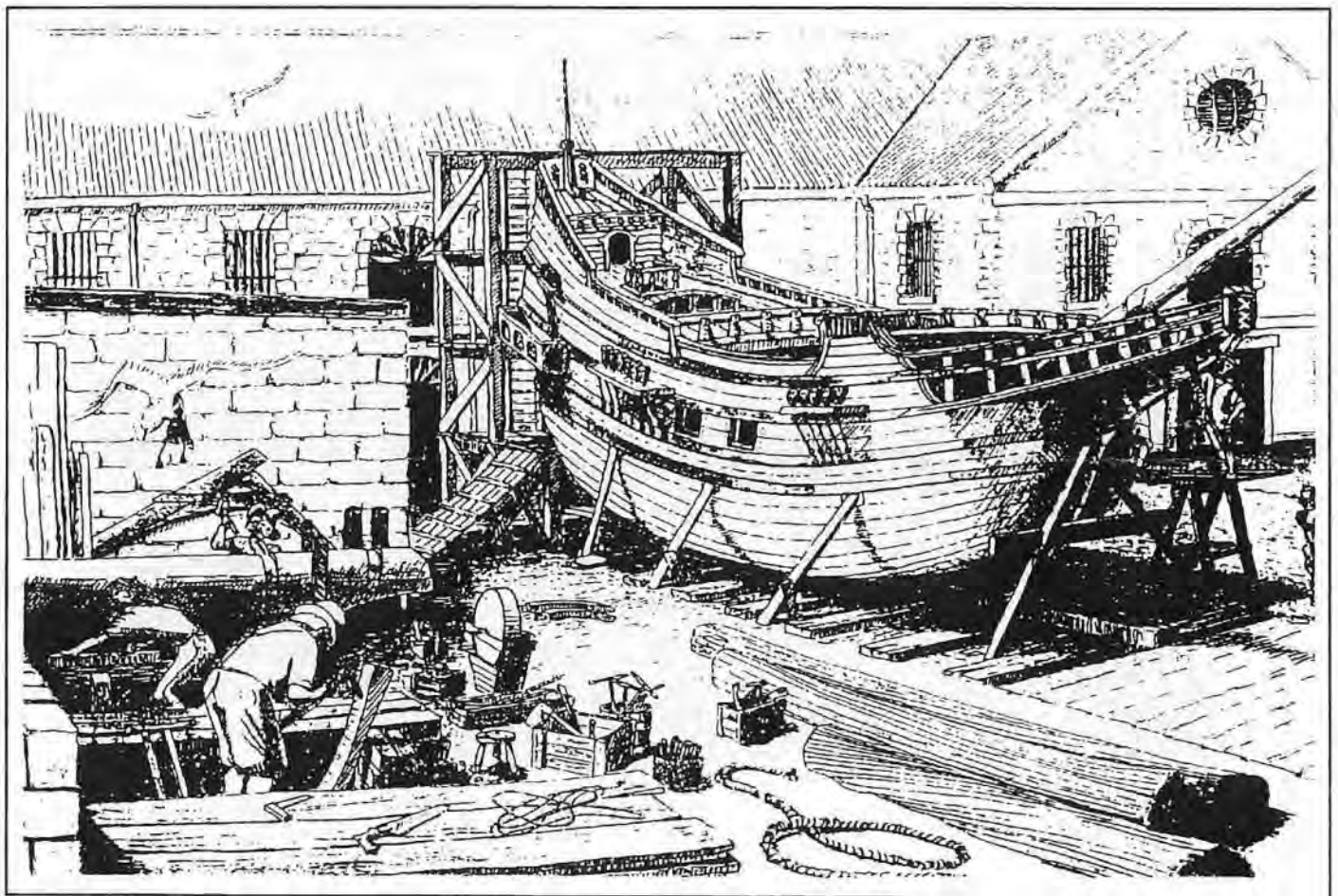
The DUYFKEN replica project was conceived late in 1993 when I visited Dr. de Heer, who had assisted me greatly over more than a decade of research for my maritime books. We concluded then that the DUYFKEN should be the next full-sized historic replica to be built and home-ported at Fremantle to replace the ENDEAVOUR when it departed for its home port of Sydney.

Soon after that, we joined forces with Michael Young, a senior State Government planning officer, who had

written a letter to the West Australian Newspapers to urge such a venture, and we joined forces, created a project committee, and eventually the Duyfken 1606 Replica Foundation, with Fremantle's fishing and pearling businessman, M. G. Kailis, as Chairman of Directors.

A seventeenth century copy of a chart made by skipper Willem Jansz of the DUYFKEN is evidence that in early 1606 he was the first European discoverer of Australia. Other Dutch and english documents of that time refer to his momentous voyage.

Jansz had sailed the DUYFKEN from Banda in late 1605 on an exploration of the southern New Guinea coast, but after he rounded false cape, contrary winds forced the square-rigger further southward and eventually down to Australia's Cape York Peninsular, at Pennefather River. Jansz competently mapped about 242 miles of that coast, and labelled it as "Nova Guinea", but there can be no doubt that it is the earliest record of any part of Australia.



*A conceptual drawing of the proposed DUYFKEN replica under construction in the grounds of the WA Maritime Museum, Fremantle. (Adriaan de Jong)*



He also came to the WA coast in 1618, as supercargo on the ship MAURITIUS, and came ashore near North-West Cape where he discovered a creek which was named after him as Willem's River.

I plan to make a "DUYFKEN 1606 Rediscovery Voyage" this year in the wake of the DUYFKEN – from Banda to Cape Keerweer (Turn-about) of Cape York Peninsula. My aim is to further the research for my DUYFKEN book scheduled for Christmas 1996, and to publicise the Duyfken Replica Project via the media and in documentary television series.

Our DUYFKEN is shown clearly by the records to have sailed from Holland to the East Indies in 1601 and 1603 before Jansz discovered Australia in 1606. Inquiries so far have yielded some rather incomplete and inconsistent data, but I believe the available evidence supports the view that this was the same ship built in 1594 for the Dutch fist expedition to the East Indies in 1595-97.

In 1608, after being actively involved in a naval battle against the Portuguese and Spanish in the Molucca Spice Islands, the DUYFKEN was reported to have "cast away" off Makian or Tidore and had been abandoned because she was badly damaged and too old to repair. We plan a reconnaissance of the islands concerned and, if it appears viable, an expedition to

make an underwater search for the remains of Australia's first ship.

To inquire or support the DUYFKEN, write to The Duyfken 1606 Replica Foundation, PO Box 1284, Fremantle 6160, or to Michael Young, 57 Fortescue St., East Fremantle, Tel. (09) 339 2041, Fax (09) 319 2775.

The Friends of the Duyfken Section enables members to participate in activities and benefits of the project.

*Editor's Note: James Henderson is an established maritime author and journalist, has won numerous in the latter profession, and has several publications to his credit; namely: Phantoms of the Tryall – 1993. St. George Books; Onward Boy Soldiers – 1992. University of WA Press; Rottnest: Links In History – 1986. Rottnest Island Authority; Marooned – 1982. St. George Books.*

