

# MARITIME HERITAGE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

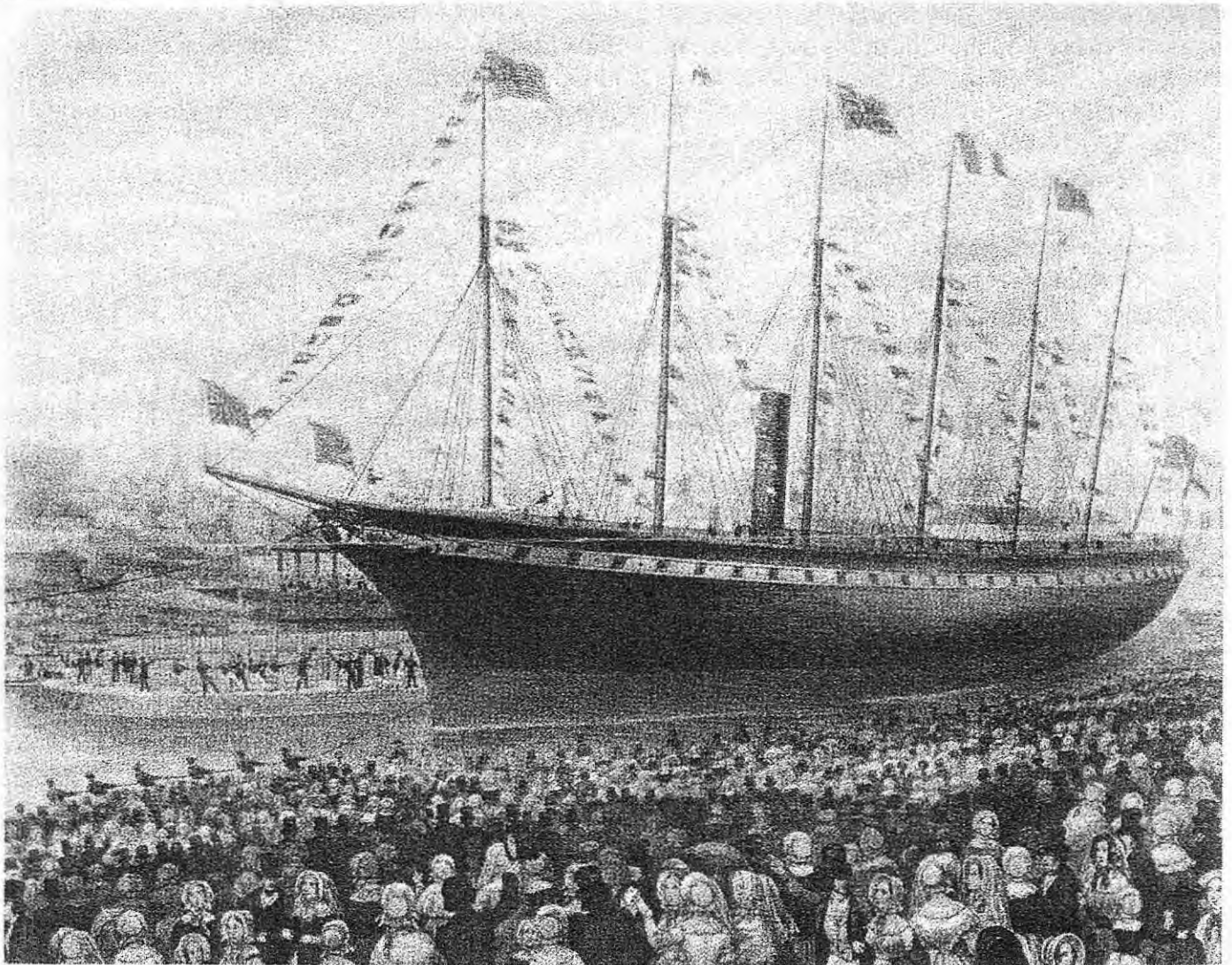
Volume 13, No. 1 . March, 2002

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

**C/o: 4 Cunningham Street,  
Applecross,  
W.A. 6153.**



**Editor: Peter Worsley. 12 Cleopatra Drive, Coodanup, W.A. 6210**



The launch of the *GREAT BRITAIN* on 19 July 1843  
See Book Review page 13



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

All of the Association's incoming journals, newsletters, etc. are now archived at *Wooden Boat Works*, Slip Street, Fremantle Harbour, and are available to members on loan. Please note that to access the videos, journals, library books, etc it is necessary to phone ahead on 9335 9477.

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

Material for publishing or advertising should be directed, preferably typed or on disk, to:  
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## EDITORIAL

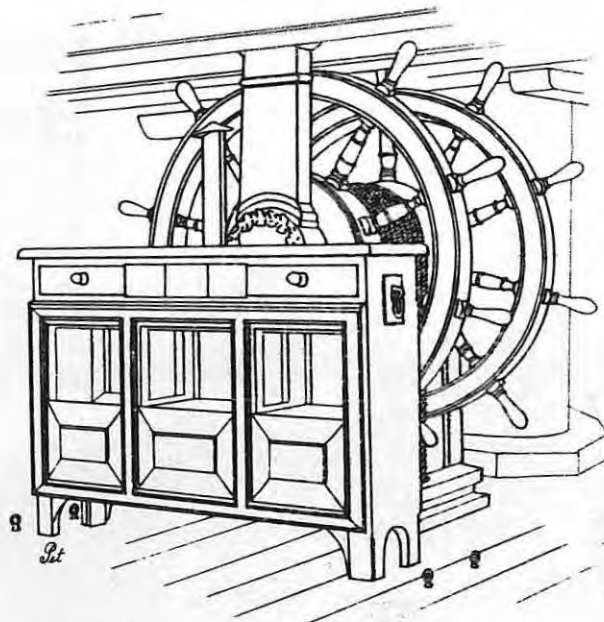
Please note the important notice regarding the Annual General Meeting to be held on 25 March. Every member should make an effort to come along to this meeting. The Association needs your input as to what we should be doing over the next 12 months (and longer). The meeting is not onerous and you will meet other members of the Association – all of whom have similar interests to you. A light supper will be provided.

There are no Presidential Tidings in this issue as Rod has been overseas until very recently. The Association should be grateful to Rod for all the work he does as President in what must be rather difficult circumstances as he spends so much time living the maritime life.

I am looking forward to taking part in proposed projects of taking boats lines during this year. The *Little Dirk* project was a great success. Brian Lemon has started or is about to start a model of the *Little Dirk* based on the plans drawn up by Ray Miller. Several suggestions have been put forward including the *Canopus* in Mandurah and the *Kerang ex Georgic* in the Whale World Museum at Albany. Please put forward suggestions of any vessel that you consider would be an interesting

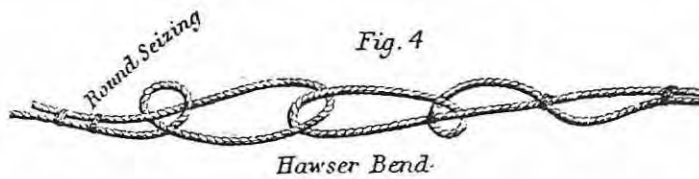
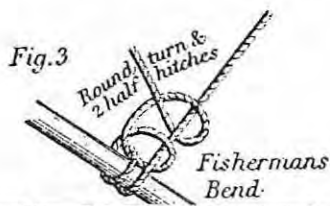
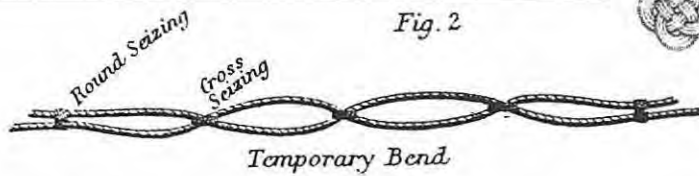
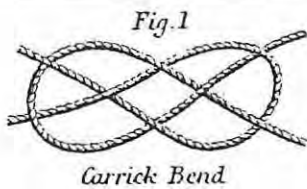
and worthwhile project, particularly if it is within the metropolitan area.

I am looking forward to travelling to Europe later this year and would like suggestions of "must see" museums, dockyards, etc. As you know my interests are mainly but not exclusively in the maritime area.



## APOLOGY

Apologies are due to those students who submitted entries to Rod Dickson's essay competition. I mistakenly stated they were from North Albany High School when it should have been Albany Senior High School.



# Important Notice !

## Annual General Meeting

The annual General Meeting will be held

**6.30pm on Monday 25 March 2002**

At

**Wooden Boat Works  
Slip Street, Fremantle**

**This is an important meeting to help chart the future of your Association.**

**Please make an effort to be there. Meet other members and have your say on what the Association should be doing.**

Fig. 5



Fig. 6

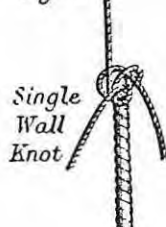


Fig. 7

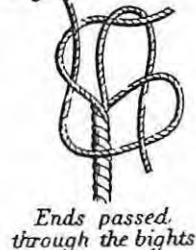


Fig. 8  
Crowning



Fig. 9



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# The Ditty Bag

An occasional collection of nautical trivia to inform,  
astound, amuse and inspire.



Offloading coal from the 80' schooner *M.A. James* in the mid 1920s, the cargo was discharge by hand, being carried ashore in baskets. The men were paid 1 penny per ton to unload the 150 tons.

The Percy and Small boat building yard on the Kennebec River, Bath, Maine, builders of large 5 and 6 masted schooners at the beginning of the 20th century had a planer with a bed 93 feet long. It was used to plane large timber for keels, keelsons, etc. It was capable of planing timber 2 feet by 2 feet and 45 feet long and was driven by an electric motor.

Stockholm Tar or Pinewood Tar was traditionally obtained from Finland. However it was shipped through Stockholm until 1765, by which time the name had become attached to it for ever.

In Britain in the early 20th century a shipwright apprentice's pay as a first year apprentice was 3/6 per week. This rose to 9/6 per week in his seventh year. After graduation as a qualified tradesman or journeyman he could expect to receive 19/- per week.

In timber shipbuilding about one third of the timber in its rough state was lost in shaping the timber in preparation for cutting into planks, beams, frame-pieces, etc. Seventy five percent of the dressed timber went into the mainframework or skeleton while the other 25% went in planking, filling, knees, etc.

The first ever diving school was founded by the Royal Navy in 1839.

A bowsprit which has a bolt at the inboard end on which it pivots so that it can be topped up in harbour is correctly called a boltsprit. This is common on Thames barges.

By 1869, the year "Twenty Thousand Leagues Un-

der the Sea" was published, at least twenty five authenticated crew-carrying submarines had been built and dived successfully.

John Phillip Holland, one of the founders of modern submarine design, was by profession a music teacher. He designed his first submarine in 1859 at the age of 17 years. In his old age he turned to designing aeroplanes. He died in 1914, five days after the commencement of World War I.

The Electric Boat Company built John Holland's submarine *Plunger* which became the US Navy's first submarine in 1900. The same company built the atomic submarine *Nautilus* launched in 1955.

Brunel's famous *Great Britain* was opened for public inspection in early July 1853 prior to her maiden voyage. The charge was 1s. per head with the proceeds "to be applied towards the establishment of an Emigrants' Home at Melbourne."

In February 1854 the cheapest fare from the UK to Melbourne on the Black Ball Line was £16. 16s. This was about a year's wages for a good farm worker.

On 7 March 1775 *HMS Endeavour* was sold out of service for £645.

The conversion of the famous Cunard liner *Queen Mary* to a troop ship during World War II was carried out in Sydney, NSW during early 1940.

The innovative steamer *Great Britain* demonstrated the practicality of iron wire standing rigging and her sharp hull shape anticipated the big and fast American clipper ships of Donald McKay by a decade. She had six masts and the rig was classed as schooner although the No. 2 mast carried square rig. Masts Nos. 3,4,5 and 6 were hinged on deck.



## *Emperor of China*

'The Cambrian', a weekly newspaper published in Swansea, Wales, published the following item on Sunday 6 May 1849 regarding the arrival of the locally owned ship *Emperor of China* that day. The vessel was owned by William Jenkins.

THE SHIP "EMPEROR OF CHINA". - The following letter was addressed to Capt. ROBERT BROWN, Master of the above Vessel, by the Passengers, at the termination of the voyage from Western Australia to Swansea. It is equally honourable as a testimony to the qualities of the fine ship in which the voyage was performed, as it is to the kind attentions of Captain Brown to the passengers under his charge:-

"Ship, *Emperor of China*, 27th April, 1849.

Dear Sir, - We, the undersigned, passengers of the good ship *Emperor of China*, at the termination of our prosperous and speedy voyage from Western Australia to Swansea, cannot separate without expressing to you how fully we appreciate your unremitting care and assiduity in the command of a vessel in every respect of first-rate qualities; and how sensible we are of those to whom we are indebted, under Providence, for that unusually speedy voyage, to your admirable skill and seamanship, and the excellent conduct of those under your command, creditable in no small degree to yourself.

Your kindness to the children of the passengers, and generous consideration of the native boys in the charge of Don Rosendo Salvado, especially claim acknowledgement, and it only remains for us, in bidding farewell, to assure you of our best wishes for your health and happiness, and the success of your career in that profession which your abilities as a commander render you fully equal to the duties of, under any circumstances, however onerous or difficult.

We are, dear sir,  
very sincerely yours,

R. R. MADDEN, Colonial Secretary, Western  
Australia

HARRIET MADDEN.

R. SALVADO.

HENRY SWENY.

WILLIAM R. DINELEY.

RICH W. NASH.

M. CONNISON.

JAMES CONNALLY.

To Capt. R. Brown".

### **In Praise of Trees**

Without the oak no beam in ship or hall,  
Without the pine no stately mast set tall.  
Without the elm no barks to store the hay,  
Without the chestnut no conker games to play.  
Without the walnut no furniture of note,  
Without the ash no oars to row the boat.  
Without the trees no place to build a home  
For nesting birds when early spring is come.  
Without the trees no blossom time to bring  
From year to year the promises of Spring.  
Without the trees no shade from summer heat,  
Without the trees no juicy fruits to eat.

We all need trees,  
Protect Them Please.

Thanks to Barry Hicks for the above poem.



# POINT KING LIGHTHOUSE

## 1867-1903

Here is the third essay in Rod Dickson's competition. This submission comes from Jean Janicke of Albany Senior High School. The photographs referred to in Jean's essay are not reproduced here as the photocopies I received were not good enough to photocopy again during printing.

As a young girl growing up in Albany, I have been no stranger to the ruins of the old lighthouse on Point King in Albany. These old brick ruins have always fascinated me in some way. As I delved into my research on this topic, the third lighthouse keeper, Samuel Mitchell, fascinated me the most having lived 36 years at the lighthouse.

Albany was the site of the first British settlement in Western Australia. Situated on the Southern Coast it was an important port of call for ships going between Great Britain and Australia. At that stage the rocks at the entrance to the Fremantle harbour caused restrictions and were unsuitable. Anyone even now could look out at King George Sound and Princess Royal Harbour to see what a wonderfully sheltered place it would have been for ships to dock.

In 1855 the Royal Mail Steam Navigation Company closed after the beginning of the Crimean war, when the steamers became troop transports. When steamers returned after the Crimean war Albany became a coal depot for the Peninsular and Orient Steam Navigation Company, P&O on their voyage from Suez to Sydney. The British government had to ensure the safety of the steamers entry into Albany and so they decided to fund and build two lighthouses, one on Breaksea Island and the other on Point King. These were to be the second pair of lighthouses constructed on the Western Australian Coast. Equipment for the erecting of the lighthouses was sent from Cardiff, Wales, by a coal ship named *Prince of Wales*. It arrived on the 9<sup>th</sup> June. Scoutings of the building site had been made and a road was already cleared from Albany to the site just over 2.5 km long.

Due to damages to the fittings and stores the building of the lighthouse was delayed, however soon a wooden light tower was built and the light mounted, showing it's first light on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1858. William Hill was the first to keep the light-

house for a few months filling in for Joseph Nelson, who assumed the position in 1858.

Samuel Mitchell, the third lighthouse keeper, was born in India near Bombay on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1844. He was a son to (Rev) William Mitchell, who was a missionary in India at that time, and Francis Tree. His family came to WA when he was merely four. William Mitchell became a Church of England Rector at the Swan River Parish. When Samuel was on holiday with the Molloy's at Augusta he had a severe attack of measles, which left him very deaf for the rest of his life. He was a serious, traditional man who enjoyed fishing and swimming.

Whilst holidaying in Albany at 33 years of age, Samuel considered the life of a light house keeper and decided Point King would be an ideal place to retire for a partially deaf man like himself, and so he became the third keeper on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1867. When Mitchell met 16yr old Mary Bispham in 1869 his ambitions to live a lonely life disappeared. They married in St John's church.

Their children were:

Frances Esther	b.1870
Andrew Forster	b.1872
Edith Alice	b.1875
Mary Tatlock	b.1877
Charlotte Augusta	b.1880
Miriam Emma	b.1883
Louisa Jane Camefield	b.1887
Esther Constance Isa	b.1890

Samuel being a "Deeply faithful man"<sup>1</sup> his children were brought up under a strict religious roof and were taught at home until they were old enough to make their way into Albany walking or on the back of a pony. With the distance from

<sup>1</sup>Erickson, Rica, "WA Bicentennial Index"



Point King to town being at least 2.5km this kind of walk would have isolated the family considerably.

After making the walk myself and taking forty minutes, on a bitumen road and walkway, it would have taken perhaps even longer for children to make the trek on a rough sandy road.

There were many hardships faced living at the lighthouse. Water was always a problem. A water spring that sat West of the lighthouse, had always been the source for water, but this dried up in the summer of 1860-61, the lighthouse keeper of the time, Joseph Nelson, requested that a water tank be put in, this however rusted. And so in July 1872 the harbour master announced, "...I have examined the Tank as described by Mr Mitchell I am of the opinion that repairs would be useless but suggest that two iron tanks be supplied...".<sup>2</sup> Samuel replaced the rusted water tank with two 400-gallon tanks and also in that time tried to dig a well. In a secondary source I read it was said I believe that the remains of this can be seen on this hill."<sup>3</sup>

I went out in search for these so called remains of a well and although I was unsuccessful in finding such remains, I did take some interesting photos. Looking at Figure 2, although it is slightly blurred, you can see two water tanks sitting on the side of the house connected to the guttering on the roof. Compared to the photo I took of the same side 131 years later (Fig. 1), the shape of house has remained the same, however there is no evidence of any water tanks.

Another serious problem faced, was the light itself. Supplies generally came from England, as Captain Butcher (The Harbour Master) felt that oil from England was of much greater quality. Yet if it was not available they had to make do with locally produced oil from Fremantle and Adelaide. The oil quality was essential, if it was good oil then it produced a bright light and less maintenance, poor oil left the light dirty and the wick needing uniform

trimming.

This oil was used to fuel the lighthouse light, the channel buoys and the lantern on the pilot boat. Samuel Mitchell became protective of his supply, hoarding what he could. When writing down how much oil he had left, for his store returns, he would make it out to be less than what there actually was. The harbour master, Captain Butcher, became suspicious of this and after inspection, his comments were "*I cannot account for Mr Mitchell's conduct in any only that I have on several occasions called his attention to the negligent way in which he performs his duty...*"<sup>4</sup> He also found reason to complain about the way Mitchell kept the light house saying that the light was barely visible, or was not extinguished at the right time in the morning. Nevertheless the light must have improved for Butcher's chastisement was replaced by an appraisal of the light being good for six months.

While technical difficulties were being faced, one of the worst came from Albany's infamous weather patterns. Of the accounts that have come down the Mitchell family line, one is about a tidal wave. Samuel was wary one day about the way the sea was behaving. He told everyone to get inside the lighthouse. Once inside he bolted the door shut securely, and waited. Soon a mammoth wave came up out of the sea and broke above the lighthouse, sweeping away everything including the water tanks. The building stood fine and the family was safe. Also Miriam, his 6<sup>th</sup> child, is said to have been swept out to sea by a wave and saved again by her sisters when she came in on another surge. These accounts are no doubt only two of many due to Albany's gusty weather. Figure 4 is a view from the rocks just below the lighthouse, the dark clouds and white caps would have been a typical view for the Mitchells.

Figures 2 and 3, both show the awkwardness of the wooden light tower, being made of painted deal boards, it was susceptible to the elements. Also its thin structure was a hindrance for the keeper to climb the ladder to the light to clean and trim it. This would have remained a problem right until the last keeper after Samuel, Captain John Gregory Reddin, when a 30ft skeleton tower

<sup>2</sup> Wolf, Adam, Wolf and Associates, Heritage Consultants. "The Point King Lighthouse, Site Particulars and History" November 1994.

<sup>3</sup> Greenslade, F.N., (1998) "Point King Lighthouse" speech at unveiling of memorial plaque on Point King, 10<sup>th</sup> Jan, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Wolf, Adam, Wolf and Associates, Heritage Consultants. "The Point King Lighthouse, Site Particulars and History" November 1994.



was erected around October 1911 and there was no need for a keeper to live there anymore. When taking photo's down there, I came across a concrete foundation pad (Fig. 5) which I believe to be the foundations of this light.

It was not the last use of this building though. When WWII came, the old lighthouse building was converted into an observation post. Figure 6 is a photo taken quite a few years later, but still shows clearly the changes made to it. Also drill holes in the rock (fig. 7) could mark the location of a former anti-submarine net, used through WWII.

Finally in August 1951, the position of the lighthouse was moved further up the hill, this can be seen in figure 6, above the building. It was decided that in the new position it would be more visible in the daylight.

The Point King Lighthouse has since been restored. Comparing figure 6 with figure 9 you can see the drastic changes that have been made. There is no longer a wall on the East side of the building and the WWII bunker look to it has been filled in with new bricks and concrete. After rummaging around the lighthouse, I managed to find small pieces of pottery and what looked like china plates. One broken piece of pottery had a trademark on it for, "W.H.Grindley & Co. England." So even after 143 years the parts of the original lighthouse and it's owners are still evident today.

The Point King Lighthouse played an important role in assisting ship navigation into the Port of Albany. Albany was the first port of call for ships from Britain carrying mail and supplies and Western Australia's contact with the rest of the nation. Albany was also the last port of call for soldiers going to war. Thus Point King played an important role in the development of Western Australia and the nation. Samuel Mitchell as lighthouse keeper for 36 years made a big contribution to the safety of these ships and the supplies and mail they brought.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### PRIMARY SOURCES

Photos taken by me.

Figures 1,4,5,7-12.

Useful to compare with other photos to highlight the changes through history.

Figure 2, 1870, from the Collection of the Albany Historical Society.

Figure 3, 1859, from the Collection of the Albany Historical Society.

Figure 6, from the Collection of the Albany Historical Society.

Great way to have a visual look at what things looked like back then.

### SECONDARY SOURCES

Greenslade, F.N., (1998) "Point King lighthouse" Speech made at unveiling of memorial plaque on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1994.

Useful for more personal look at Samuel Mitchell.

Nayton, Gay, BS (Hons) AACAI (1998) "Archaeological Investigation of Point King Lighthouse".

Useful to locate evidence of WWII anti submarine net and foundation pads.

Erickson, Rica, "WA Bicentennial Index"

Wolfe, Adam, Wolfe and Associates, Heritage Consultants. (November 1994) "The Point King Lighthouse." Site Particulars and History.

Useful for history of steamers and technical history of lighthouse, and direct quotes.

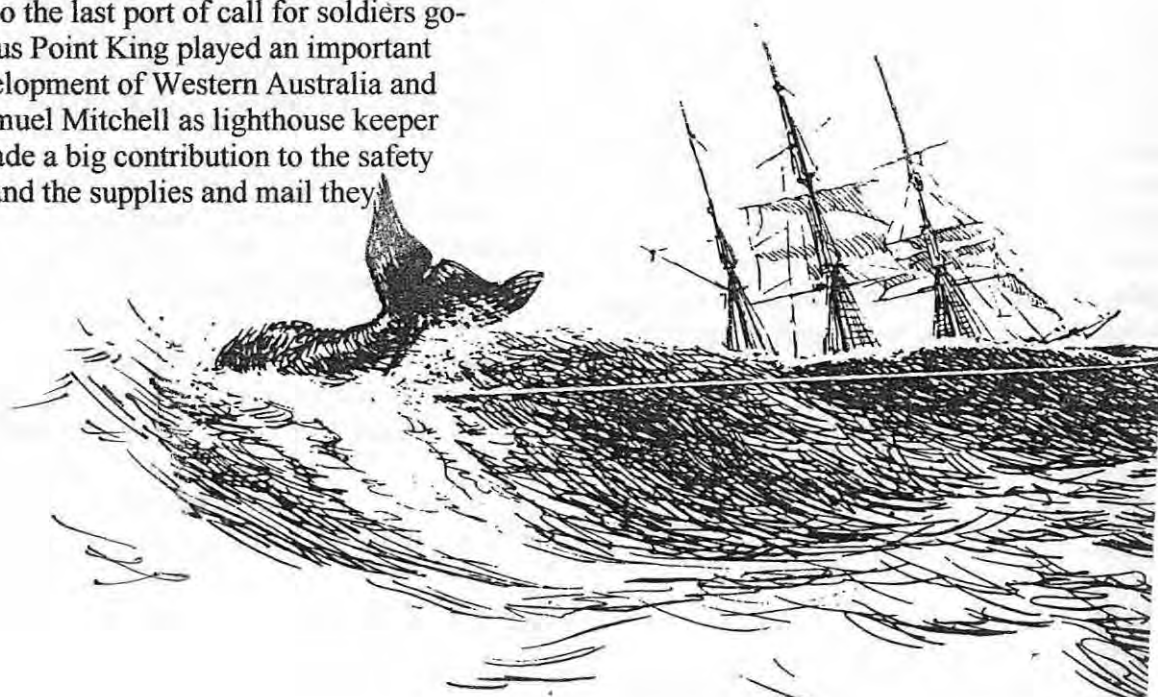
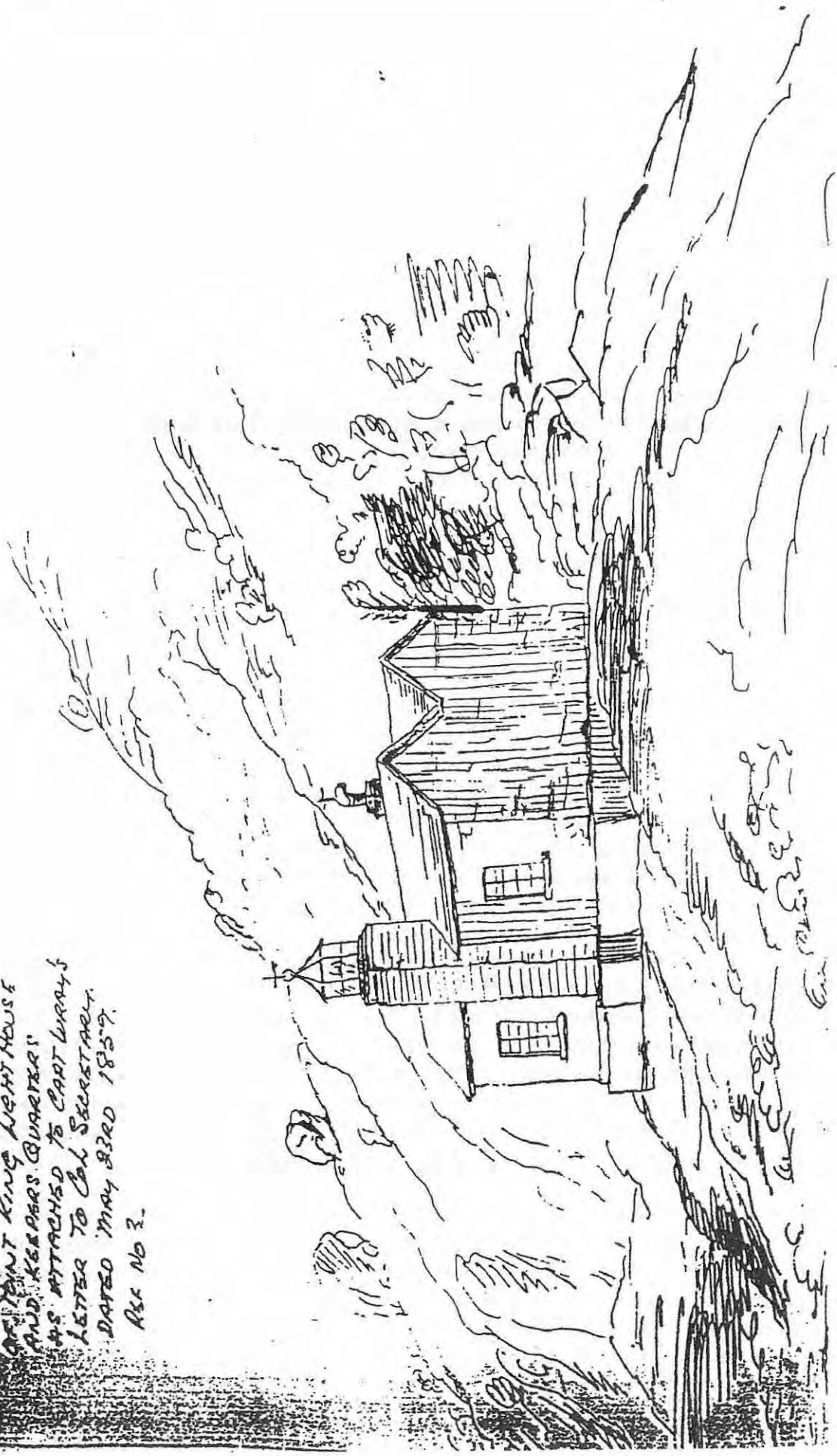




Fig. 3

ONE OF TWO SKETCHES  
OF "PANT KING LIGHT HOUSE  
AND KEEPERS QUARTERS"  
AS ATTACHED TO CAPT WARR'S  
LETTER TO COL SECRETARY  
DATED MAY 23RD 1857.  
PLATE No 3.





# THE STRATHMORE TRAGEDY

Part 2 of the extract from "The Tapper Family of Fremantle" by the late Robert J. Cook.

On board the *Strathmore*, the crew must have been horrified at the catastrophe that they had witnessed; but they reacted instantly and threw overboard everything they could find that would float (i.e. ships fenders and spars), while Capt. Burke made signals of distress to attract help from the shore. Rockets were set off, the ships guns were fired and blue lights were put up. By cruel mischance, there was nothing more that they could do to help as the ship's long-boat was ashore on the beach. The two remaining boats, a gig and a pin-nace, were use-less for such conditions. Later, George Butcher was to tell the Court of Inquiry, that he believed that they would have been swamped in their tackles if any attempt had been made to lower them.

After the capsizing, the 5 men managed to cling to the keel of their boat as it drifted away into the gathering darkness and the relentless storm. They saw the fenders and spars floating around them, but they remained with their boat.

On shore, the guns and rockets of the *Strathmore* quickly roused the people of the town and they flocked to the beach near the jetty. The 'beach' is never named, but it must have been at Bathers Bay, near the mouth of the Whalers Tunnel. However, nothing could be seen from the shore, except the rockets and the blue lights of the ship. Word quickly spread that the Harbour Master and his crew had gone out and not returned. The boat had been watched until it was alongside the ship, but then dusk and the high waves shut it from view and the anxious spectators knew nothing more until the distress signals started.

As his home was out of the town, John Tapper arrived after the crowd had gathered, but he was soon told what the situation was. Among the crowd was John's friend W. D. Moore, and a fellow cricketer, Edward Newman. They asked John if he could do anything to find out what was happening at the *Strathmore*, to which John replied, "I will go off to the ship, if I can get a volunteer crew to go with me". John had his crew in next to no-time; Thomas

O'Grady (21) of the *Maude*, Ross Hunt, James Casey, Robert Johnson (20) and William Back (24), all boatmen.

Meanwhile, George Butcher, who was acting Harbour Master in Capt. Harding's absence, had also gathered a crew which he intended to lead; but when they went to the beach they found that John had a crew and was about to set off. Butcher was disappointed, to say the least, and he asked John if he could join him. John would have no passengers. "Every man in my boat must pull an oar". Butcher said that he was prepared to take an oar, and with that, William Back gave up his place for him. Tom Tapper's account, which was set down over 60 years after the event, says that the man who stepped aside was George Cook; but the newspaper of the day names Wm. Back in 2 separate stories.

At last John's boat made off into the stormy night, guided by the blue lights of the ship. About 8 o'clock they got within hailing distance alongside and then learned of the disaster. John decided that the capsized boat would be drifting towards South Beach, so he set off at once in that direction. They rowed to within ¼ mile of the shore, but saw no trace of the missing men. Defeated in their search by the darkness, John decided it would be best to arrange for a party to patrol the beach, and so they rowed back to the jetty, arriving about 11.

Although John and his men had no way of knowing it, time had already run out for Capt. Harding and 3 of his companions. The lone survivor, Charles Patterson, described their ordeal at the Coroner's Inquiry on the following day.

Soon after they had drifted away from the *Strathmore*, while they clung to the keel of their up-turned boat, they saw the blue light on the ship and heard the firing of the guns. Captain Harding was at first able to encourage them all, but as the hours dragged by he became entirely exhausted. Time would have been very hard for them to judge, but Patterson thought that they had been in the water about 2 hours and were about ¼ mile from the



shore when Dandie, who had managed to get most of his clothes off, said that he would swim ashore and get help. He got hold of an oar and struck off, but despite his confidence, he never made it. Four months earlier, Dandie and Capt. Henry O'Grady had been the only survivors from the *Lass of Geraldton* which had capsized in a squall 7 miles off Mandurah. Dandie's ability as a swimmer had saved him on that occasion, when 7 other men had drowned.

John and his crew must have been thoroughly exhausted after more than 3 hours rowing in such terrible conditions, and in darkness. But, midnight saw them setting out along the shore accompanied by E. Newman, George Stevens, W. D. Moore, 'Butchy' D. Davis, Larry Fay, Tom Tapper (John's son aged 11), and several others. They had lanterns and carried dry clothes and brandy. The gale had not abated, for Tom remembered that when they were about South Beach, a rain squall hit them, and it was so heavy that they had to shelter in the sandhills. It was about 1.30 AM when they returned to the beach and they had only gone 100 yards further when the Harbour Master's boat was seen coming, in to the shore with one man still hanging on. As the boat was flung about in the surf, Charlie Patterson was washed off and was being dragged back by the under-tow, when D. Davis ran into the surf and rescued him. Patterson was so weak at the time that he could not have got ashore by himself. E. Newman gave him brandy while the others stripped off his wet clothes, gave him a rub down and dressed him in the dry clothes. They then took him to Reed's cottage where a fire was waiting to take the chill out of his bones.

The next morning 2 bodies were found, Lachlan McLean and Issac Price and a Coroner's Inquiry was held the same day, Monday, 24th. June, at the Court House. Charles Patterson had recovered sufficiently to be able to give evidence and the 3 man Jury agreed that, "The deceased met their deaths by the accidental capsizing of the Police Boat on the evening of the 23rd. inst. while in the execution of their duty". The body of Dandie was found 9 days later and Captain Harding's body was found on Garden Island after 14 days. I have not seen any mention of when or where the body of Samuel Akers was found.

The loss of Capt. Harding and his crew was a matter of grave concern to the people of Fremantle. Many realised that there was no equipment of any kind, ready on hand, to give aid to ships in times of emergency. A fund was started to buy an English Life Boat. Meanwhile, the "Herald" editorial mourned the loss of the popular man who had proved himself a brave and skilful boatman in 16 years of service as Harbour Master. His had been a tragic life, as according to Rica Erickson's 'Dictionary of Western Australians' Vol 3, he had lost 2 wives, and of his 4 children, the 3 daughters had died aged 24, 11 and 9 years respectively, and the only son had been killed by aborigines in 1864 at the age of 26, while exploring in the North with Panter and Goldwyre. (See monument on Fremantle Esplanade).

The "Herald" put the blame for the accident on a modification that had been made to the Water Police whale boat. Such boats were designed to be steered by an oar at the stern and the replacement with a rudder and tiller made the boat almost uncontrollable in very rough seas when the rudder would be out of the water at times.

Besides the Life Boat Fund, there was one for the purpose of erecting a memorial headstone on the grave of the 4 victims whose bodies had been recovered, and also one to be used for a token of appreciation for John Tapper and his crew.

THE TESTIMONIAL:- The "Herald" of 6-7-'67 tells of the Presentation which took place on Monday 1st. July at the Emerald Isle Hotel, corner of Henry and High Street (site of present Orient Hotel) at Fremantle. Chairman of the meeting was the Reverend Bostock who addressed the 6 heroes, then presented John with a handsome watch inscribed,

"PRESENTED TO JOHN TAPPER, OF FREMANTLE, W. A., IN MEMORY OF THE 23rd OF JUNE AND OTHER OCCASIONS".

There was also a purse containing £15 (pounds) to be divided among them and each man was given an ornate Testimonial, painstakingly prepared by the Revd. George Bostock. John was not one for making speeches and it was reported



that he "received it in silence, far more impressive than any words". However, before the newspaper went to press, a letter was received from the boat's crew, in time to be inserted at the end of the report on the meeting. I quote:-

*"They wish to express the feelings of the great pleasure they experienced, but had not the ability to utter at the public meeting which gave them such grateful proofs of appreciation of their efforts. They wish to say they were all equally willing volunteers, and only first in opportunity out of many others who were ready to go as soon as John Tapper so generously offered himself and his boat".*

The gold watch is now a treasured possession of Edward Tapper, a great grandson; and the Testimonial is now on display at the Fremantle Museum, Finnerty Street, to which it was donated by grandson William, E. Wray.

Both ships, the *Ivy* and the *Strathmore* survived the gale and were taken to Garden Island's sheltered waters where repairs were made. Finally, on 6-8-1867, the *Strathmore* sailed for Shanghai with a cargo of sandalwood. So ended another of the many stories of early Fremantle.

ODDFELLOW'S ELECTION:- The same evening that the presentation was made to John and his crew, the Odd Fellow's Lodge, No.4406, M.U. I.O.O.F., held their half-yearly meeting for the election of officers. This also took place at the Emerald Isle Tavern, in the Lodge Room. John was elected to the post of Guardian.

THE "HERALD":- As this newspaper was printed in Fremantle, it contains many items that are of interest to us; but much is lost to us as it did not start publication until February, 1867.

THE TESTIMONIAL:- Here is a copy of the document which was presented to John, as mentioned on the previous page. [This document not reproduced here as it was not clear enough on my copy of the manuscript - editor]. It contains the intriguing suggestion that John had performed other acts of humane bravery "during many years past". At the moment, it does not seem likely that we will ever discover the details.

35 people wished to show their appreciation by means of the Testimonial, but only 15 names are on the document. The others are to be found in the Testimonial Subscription List a (HS/136, Batty Lib.), but whether all the 35 subscribed is not certain. For those who are interested in the pioneers of Fremantle, the 35 names are printed below.

Chairman of the Town Trust, Chas. A. Manning started the List off with a promised donation of £3 (Pounds), but later his name was put on a short list of late payers. As his was the only name that was not cleared, it has been said that he reneged. However, I believe that he did pay up and that it was only an oversight that 'Paid' was not written alongside his name.

The List and Account are on 3 loose pieces of paper and may not be complete, as it is impossible to balance the account from the figures shown.

Cost of Watch & Chain	£7-12-0.
Engraving Inscription	10-0.
Writing on Parchments	£1-0-0.
Purse for Presentation	2-0.
Contents of Purse	£15- 0-0.
<u>Total</u>	<u>£24- 4-0.</u>

Total collected	£25-16-0.
Total outlay	£24- 4-0.
<u>Surplus</u>	<u>£1-12-0.</u>

- Alderson, R., Revd.
- Attfield, Geo., Dr.
- Bateman, John
- Bickley, Wallace
- Bostock, Geo., Rev.
- Clifton, Geo.
- Clifton, L. Worsley
- Congdon, Daniel K.
- Cooke, John Taylor
- Dixon, Herbet
- Eichbaum, Chas. Wm.
- Francisco, Alex.
- Francisco, D.B.
- Harwood, J.J.\*
- Herbert, James
- Higham, Mrs. Mary
- Hohnston, Jos., Revd.



King, Robert\*  
 Manning, Chas. A.  
 Manning, James  
 Marmion, Wm. Edward  
 Martelli, R. Father  
 Moore, Wm. Dalgety  
 Newman, Edward  
 Owston, Wm. Capt.  
 Pearse, Geo.  
 Pearse, Wm. Silas  
 Samson, Lionel  
 Scott, Mrs. Harriett  
 Shenton, Geo.

Shipton, John, Dr.  
 Stone, John  
 Thomas, John, Capt.  
 Wellard, John  
 Meredith, M.\*

The 3 names marked with \* are hard to decipher. Harwood and King would have been well known to John, but Meredith (if correct) is a mystery.

## BRUNEL'S SHIPS

By Denis Griffiths, Andrew Lambert, and Fred Walker  
 (Chatham Publishing, London, 1999)

In two parts:

Part I: Brunel and Shipbuilding  
 Part II: The Ships

Part I goes into a lot of detail about Brunel's role in the development of the screw form of propulsion and the part the Navy played in its development as well. It is shown that the Navy, far from being a negative force in the proceedings, reacting against all innovations, actually played a careful role, allowing private enterprise to carry out all the research - and bear the cost for most of it - and then taking the result and using them to the Navy's own advantage.

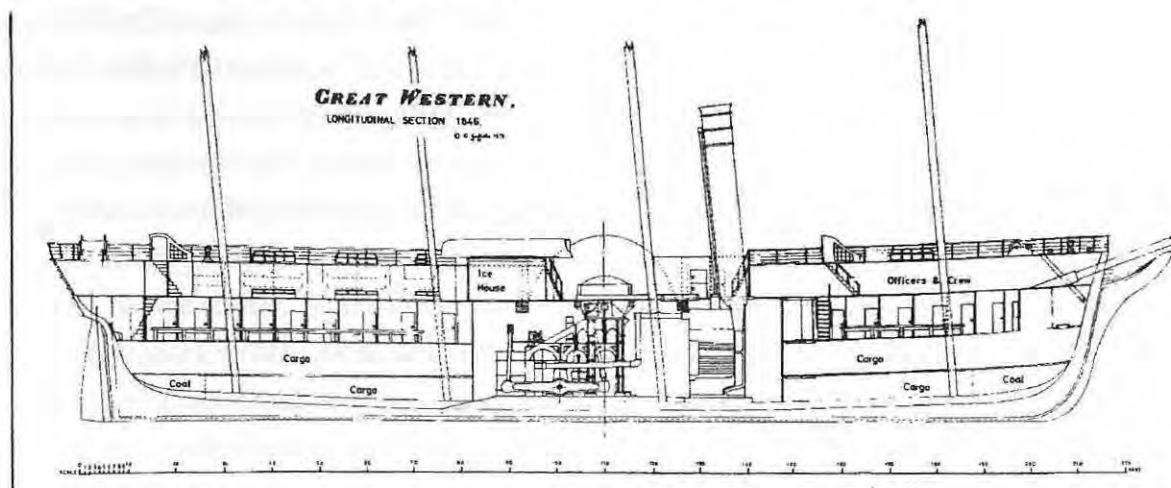
This part of the book also goes into the problems associated with building ships out of iron, giving interesting information of the difficulty of achiev-

ing dependable compass operation in iron hulls, and the added problems of marine growth on iron as opposed to copper-clad wooden ships.

Part II gives a lot of interesting data on the *Great Western*, *HMS Rattler*, *Great Britain* and *Great Eastern*. A criticism is that more could have been written here about the *Great Eastern*'s latter career as a cable-laying vessel, in which role she was quite successful.

A very well written and presented volume. Gives about what one would seem to need to know on the development of the early screw propeller for ships.

Ron Richards,  
 19th November 2001





## Sir Sidney Smith's Flotilla

Rod has sent the following article that he picked up from the internet. It makes very interesting reading as the use of catamaran or double hulled vessels for gun-boats or landing craft (and these two appear capable of either use) is not generally considered to be very old.

At 8 o'clock in the evening of 1 September 1807 Sir Sidney Smith arrived in Dover from Ramsgate in the revenue cutter DILIGENCE, to a salute of six guns from a cutter in the Roads. He went ashore in a pilot wherry and retired for the night in the York Hotel. The following morning two gunboats, CANCER and GEMINI, constructed to his design, were brought from their moorings to the harbour mouth for his inspection.

To quote from a contemporary description:

*The CANCER consists of a Galley, about 48 feet in length, cut exactly in two from stem to stern; these two parts are joined to the ends of five pieces of timber, which cross them, and are made secure by braces of iron. Upon those five beams is raised a platform, in the centre of which stands a 3-pounder, ready mounted with ammunition boxes etc. the wheels of this cannon stand in a groove, upon a sort of framework, which runs several feet beyond the bows, so that the instant the Vessel is run ashore, the cannon can be landed and instantly put into use.*

*In the centre of each of the extreme beams which join the two half Gallies masts are fixed, each of which carries a large square sail. A foresail projects from a boom. There are four rudders, one to each extremity, two only of which are worked at a time by a person on the platform.*

*The Half-Galleys are decked, with eight holes cut along each, large enough to admit a man's body to the mouth of each of*

*which is fixed a canvas bag, painted so as to prevent water penetrating, with a running string at the top. In these bags the sixteen men who pull at the oar, seat themselves, and lie them above their hips; this sufficiently lashes them to the Boat, and prevents their being washed over-board. Besides these 16 oars and the persons who manage the sails etc. this vessel is capable of carrying 50 soldiers. Her sides are lined with cork so that it is impossible to upset her and a heavy sea passes over her without doing any injury, except giving the men wet jackets.*

The GEMINI was similar in construction except that it was much larger, being made from two entire Gallies and carrying a 6-pounder gun and more soldiers. Eight oarsmen rowed through holes in the outside of each Galley while eight on the inside were provided with iron paddles. These latter were also useful for clearing sand or gravel. Both vessels drew only eighteen inches.

At one o'clock in the afternoon Sir Sidney Smith and some officers went on board CANCER, while the rest of his party boarded GEMINI. They sailed out of the harbour and, with the wind N.N.E., steered a S.W. course. The two piers were crowded with spectators, including officers and their wives, to watch the spectacle. Many of the inhabitants of Dover remembered Sir Sidney as a small boy, this being his native town, and he recognised and greeted old friends as he passed between them.

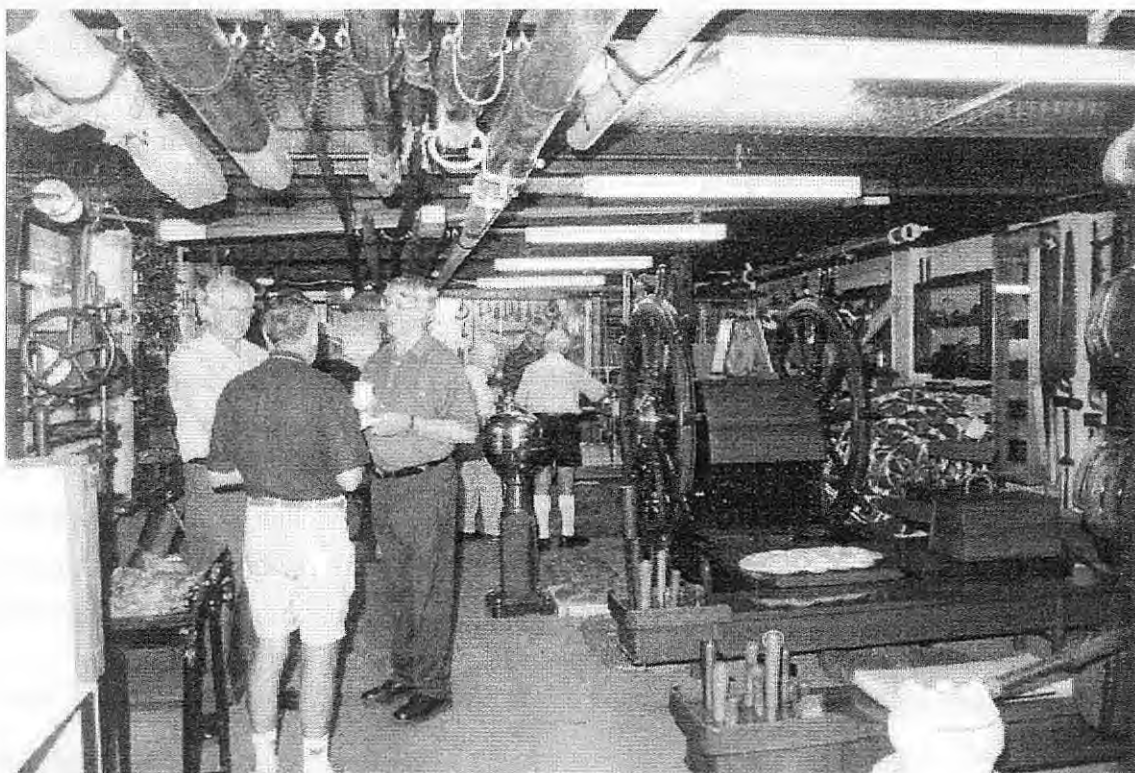


His two vessels were attended by a ten-oared Galley and the DILIGENCE. When they were some miles out to sea the flotilla tacked and stood before the wind to try out various movements. When they ran before the wind the two gun-boats easily outstripped the cutter and the Galley, the swiftest vessels there were. The Gun-brig DESPERATE then brought out twenty privates of the Royal Artillery from Ramsgate and they were put on board to fire

several shots. The flotilla then returned to Dover and the gun-boats were run onto the beach near a cottage belonging to Sir Sidney's aunt. The cannon were run ashore and several more shots were fired before they were re-embarked. Sir Sidney and his party landed to celebrate the successful trial and the boats returned to their mooring.

## Presentation of Models by Brian Lemon

**On Sunday 27 January some MHA members and I were at Barry Hicks' house to see the presentation of Brian Lemon's beautiful model of an English fishing vessel to Barry's museum.**



On Sunday 27 January some MHA members and I were at Barry Hicks' house to see the presentation of Brian Lemon's beautiful model of an English fishing vessel to Barry's museum. This was the first time I had seen Barry's collection of things nautical. I would strongly suggest that members make every effort to view this exhibition. Housed in a rambling, connected, assembly of garage and sheds is a wonderful assortment of models, blocks, shipwright's tools, ships' wheels, spars, blacksmith's tools, sail makers' benches, rigging tools and examples of the rigger's work, and much, much more. The whole lot is presented in an excellent display that is obviously the work of many, many years of making and collecting. Much of the fine woodwork evident has been made by Barry's son Robin including a double steering wheel set up worthy of putting on the finest clipper ship. The museum is not open to the general public but if you wish to view it contact Barry first and arrange a time.



# LIBERTY SHIPS

Further to the brief facts on the Liberty ship *Robert E Peary* (built in 8 days) mentioned in a recent Ditty Bag, I thought that readers might be interested in a very brief history of these ships.

By mid 1940 Britain had already lost 150 ships to U-boats in the Atlantic. They were being sunk at a faster rate than its shipbuilding industry could replace them. In September 1940 a delegation called the British Technical Merchant Shipbuilding Mission travelled to the USA to put in an order for ships to be built there. They took a set of plans with them based on a ship called the *Dorrington Court*, built by J.L. Thompson & Sons in 1939. These plans, slightly modified, had been used in Britain to build the *Empire Liberty*, the first 'emergency' war-built ship. Britain wanted 60 vessels and had designated them "Ocean" class.

The British idea of quantity rather than quality - 'ships built by the mile and chopped off by the yard' - did not go over well with many of the United States Maritime Commission members. They also saw a need for ships that could be quickly and cheaply built for the United States Merchant fleet. They put forward other proposals including a World War I design as being far more promising. Time, however, was of the essence and Admiral Land of the USMC decided to go ahead with construction of the British design, slightly modified. President Roosevelt announced the emergency programme for the construction of these ships, which he described as "dreadful looking objects". It was Admiral Land who called it a "Liberty Fleet" and "Liberty Ships" became adopted as a class name. The first vessel built was the *Ocean Vanguard* launched on 15 October 1941.

The Liberty Ship was considered expendable, and a

committee of Congress called it a "five year vessel". However America saw the need for such vessels even though at the time they were still neutral. In January 1941 America commenced construction of 200 ships for their own use. These were based on the British plan and were modified versions of the original *Empire Liberty*.

The first American Liberty ship launched was the *Patrick Henry* on 27 September 1941. She had taken 150 days to build and then a further 95 days was spent fitting out. This time was very soon considerably improved but the construction of the *Robert E Peary* in November 1942 remains a record. A total of 2,710 were built.

British design combined with American mass production techniques resulted in a vessel that has been derided over the years but which made the Allied victory possible. Over 30,000 components were manufactured in factories all over America and one of the shipbuilding yards then assembled these parts into a complete ship.

One of the main reasons for the speed at which they could be built and the low cost was that they were mostly welded. There were, however, some riveted components in the construction. Although not the first welded hull ships they were nevertheless fairly early examples of the shipbuilding method. This combined with a preponderance of unskilled welders "in training" resulted in a number of failures in the 43 miles of welding in a ship. It was claimed that 12½% of all vessels had weld defects. Despite this the Liberty ships often sus-





tained and survived terrific punishment. The *Molly Pitcher* for example was torpedoed by the *U 167* and abandoned in March 1943. The next day she was still afloat so the *USS Champlain* torpedoed her but she still did not sink. The *U 521* eventually sank her with a third torpedo. Late in the war the heavily laden *Samsoaring* bounced on the hard sandbanks near the Thames estuary resulting in buckling of her after deck with one side of her hull bulging out and a corresponding concavity in the other side. The whole after part of the ship had been forced up 3 inches yet no welding or plating split and the propeller shaft and steering gear remained in alignment. Repairs were carried out by cutting her in half and replacing the buckled section, except for the keel that was left with a series of regular waves in it.

On 6 February 1945 the *Peter Silvester* was struck by two torpedoes from *U 862* some 800 miles from Fremantle. Forty minutes later two more torpedoes hit her and she broke in two with the forward part sinking. It took a further two torpedoes to sink the stern in position 34.19S and 99.37E. This was the last Allied merchant ship to be sunk in the area.

The ships were very basic in many aspects. They were given no radio direction finders, emergency generators, fire detection equipment or lifeboat

radios and the anchor cable was reduced from an original 300 fathoms to 210 fathoms only, 135 on one anchor and 75 on the other. Many went to sea with only one anchor. They were all given standard 2,500ihp (at only 78rpm) triple expansion engines of British design combined with oil-fired boilers, again of British (Babcock & Wilcox) design. Various modifications were made during the war years to improve aspects of the vessel. An interesting point is that the upper rudder bearing was made of the wood *Lignum Vitae* (see *Ditty Bag* in the September 2000 MHA Journal). It appears that the period of use for this wood as a bearing lasted considerably more than the 40 years I stated in that article.

The dimensions were: -

Length overall	441 ft 6 in
Length waterline	427 ft
Breadth extreme	57 ft
Draft	27 ft 8 in
Displacement	14,245 tons
Gross registered tonnage	7,176 tons
Net registered tonnage	4,380 tons
Speed	11 knots
Daily fuel consumption	30 tons
Fuel oil	1,819 tons

As for the *Robert E Peary*, she was scrapped at Baltimore in June 1963. She had given almost 21 years service – a remarkable effort considering the time spent putting her together.



A delighted Dorothy McKay was presented with a beautiful model of a dinghy and jetty by Brian lemon at Barry Hicks' museum during the presentation ceremony on 27 January.



## Swan River Barges

Here is another of Brian Lemon's articles on his model making. I hope to bring you another of Brian's articles (on the making of a model of the *Little Dirk*) in a future edition of the journal.

Towards the end of the year 2000 I was approached by the City of Melville, one of our Shires, to build a model of a typical Swan River barge. There were hundreds of these, both work and cargo barges, plying the river in the mid nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At least ninety percent of these were built by the dozens of small ship-building companies dotted along the banks of the Swan River.

The Melville Shire were planning an historical museum for the mid 2001 year as a permanent learning display for the one hundred years of the City of Melville, with the first theme, the 'Melville Waters' area of the river. The Swan River runs from the port of Fremantle to the City of Perth, approximately 20 kilometres.

With the exception of a few larger motorised barges, owned by some of the large companies, the rest were towed by small launches and tugs. Many of these small barges, about sixty to seventy foot, had their own loading cranes.

Having agreed to do this model, the City of Melville sent me several old photocopies of these craft, plus some printed information. By a stroke of luck an international marine artist, historian and researcher friend of mine had done some historical research of these vessels some years ago, so was able to draw up a suitable set of plans at 1/24<sup>th</sup> scale, giving a model length of 32 inches. These barges were made from local timber, predominantly jarrah, with iron fastenings etc.

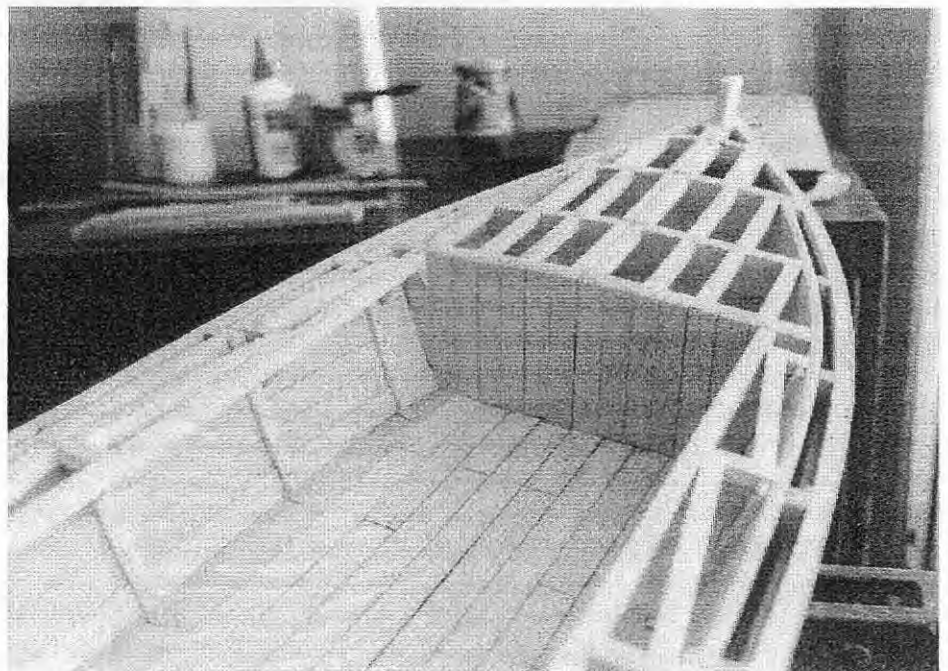
All of these barges were flat-bottomed, some double ended, but mostly fairly conventional transom-sterned and reasonably conventional bows, unlike the Dumb

Barges seen on the rivers of England. They were tiller steered.

### THE MODEL

The keel, stem and stem posts were cut in one piece of six millimetre 12-ply marine quality wood. The transom and eight frames were positioned and glued along the keel at pre-marked stations. Several quarter inch by quarter inch longitudinal stringers were secured along the sides and bottom of the frames from bow to stem to support the planking of the hull. The planks were cut from one and a half millimetre ply. Having completed the outside of the hull the cargo hold interior was tackled. The interior floor was cut from one eighth by three quarter inch wood and laid as a conventional floor. Some simulated extra interior wall framing was then built in. The final main part of the hull, the deck, was planked over suitable supporting framing with one quarter inch by one millimetre ply, later to be stained with a pitch pine stain

The next step was the details of the deck and cargo hatch area. I have shown part of the 'hold' open to show the interior which has been painted 'red lead'

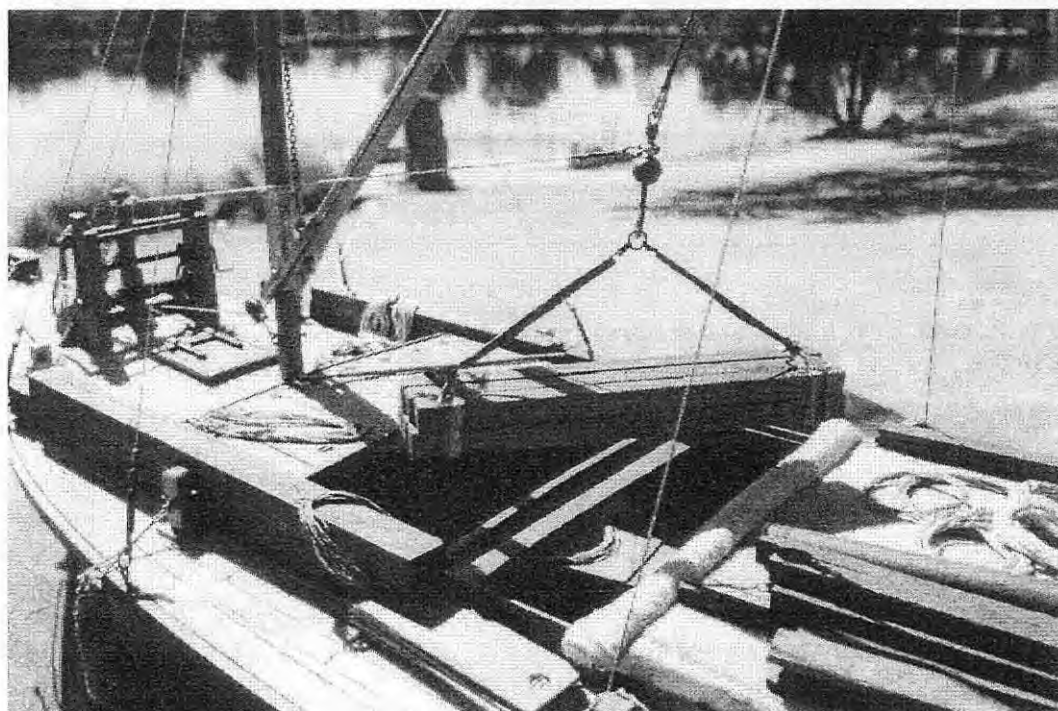




which was fairly standard for these craft. As can be seen I have left one forward section with the hatch boards in place, a larger section open with boards stacked on deck, and the final area covered with a standard canvas tarpaulin. Looking down into the hold can be seen a crate, possibly holding some form of machinery. The crane is shown with a load of dressed jarrah wood about to be loaded into the hold. The deck is loaded with various sizes of wood, possibly for jetty construction, waiting to be loaded down inside. Apart from sundry ropes is the almost mandatory ladder, and 'board walk'. A lot of the loading of these barges was done directly from the shore, therefore necessitating this method of ship to shore access. A boat hook can be seen on

are two wire supports either side of the vertical mast, secured to standard type chain plates at the edge of the deck. A floating pulley at the bottom of the mast takes the lifting wire from the winch up to the lifting crane to a sheave set in the end of this crane to a weighted hook. A rope secured at the hook can be man-handled to help lower cargo into the hold.

The rudders of these barges were large heavy units made from several heavy vertical pieces of wood, secured by flat lengths of iron either side with large nuts and bolts. For the model I cut the rudder from a single piece of 6mm 12-ply wood and cut in the vertical grooves to simulate individual pieces.



These were secured with strips of brass either side, riveted right through. The tiller was made from a solid piece of rod with a shaped end which can be secured with ropes to the stem samson posts. The rudder is held to the stem post with a length of iron rod. On the model this is brass.

I have shown the bilge pump in its stem hole. It can be lifted out and placed in a bow area if

the forward deck. Although there is no accommodation on these barges, there is access to the bow and stem interiors of these areas, which are sealed storage facilities. There is a doorway to both of these areas from inside the main cargo area, as well as straight off the deck.

The winch is a basic standard hand operated unit which is used for hauling cargo via the crane. The crane has a fixed vertical support, secured through the deck, then onto the keel. The angled lifting 'mast' is secured to the base of the vertical mast with a standard parrel system, but with a wire and chain support to the top of the vertical support. A chain runs from the top of the mast to the top of the lifting 'mast' securing it at a pre-set distance. There

necessary. I made the bilge pump from pieces of brass, but the pivoting piece for the handle was fashioned from part of a woman's earring. As most of the cargo on the Swan River in these early days of the Colony's development was wood I have tried to create this type of atmosphere on the model. The hull is painted matt black to simulate pitch and bitumen used widely in these early days, with a thin white line running from the bow to the stem just below the deck. I have mounted the model on 'barge boards' onto a piece of varnished sheoak wood with the appropriate engraved plaques.



# QUIZ

## Answers to December 2001 quiz

1. There are 128 blocks of sanstone in the portico from the *Batavia*.
2. The VOC was founded in 1602.
3. Other VOC ships known to have left the Cape of Good Hope but which never arrived in Batavia are the *Aagtekerke*, *Ridderschap van Holland* and *Fortuyn*.

## Questions

1. When and where was the *Cumberland* lost in Western Australia?
2. A wind may be said to veer or back. What do these terms mean?
3. When was the Suez Canal opened?

**DON'T FORGET THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING !**

**6.30pm Monday 25 March 2002**

**Wooden Boat Works**

**Slip Street**

**Fremantle**