

# MARITIME HERITAGE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

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*A quarterly publication of the  
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C/o: The Secretary (Leigh Smith),  
1 Meelah Road  
City Beach W.A. 6015.



Editor: Peter Worsley. 12 Cleopatra Drive, Mandurah, W.A. 6210  
Email: [mha.editor@gmail.com](mailto:mha.editor@gmail.com)

## Annual General Meeting

at

12 Cleopatra Drive  
Mandurah

on

Sunday 27 March 2011—10am

**Come for morning tea and stay for lunch**

We suggest that spouses and friends not directly involved with the meeting, might bring a small keepsake or heirloom for a 'show and tell'



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 with Ross Shardlow who may be contacted on 9361 0170, and are available to members on loan. Please note that to access the videos, journals, library books, etc it is necessary to phone ahead.

(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

I don't know how many members have visited Roly Tasker's "Australian Sailing Museum" in Mandurah. For those of you who haven't I can recommend it as a pleasant day's outing from Perth, either by car or train. The museum has a large collection of models depicting the history of yacht sailing in Australia, as well as the history of the America's Cup. There is an art gallery and a café. Seniors get a 10% discount on Tuesdays.

Darwin MHA member, Tony Duvollet, in a private letter to me was commenting on the old advertisements that appear on the back page of this journal. In particular he said that he had thought sail furlers were a comparatively new innovation. The Wykeham\_Martin's roller gear advertised on

the back page of the last journal set him looking at his current copy of Davey & Company's catalogue. This still has the furler advertised for sale, still in production after more than 100 years! Remember the old saying—"When you're on a good thing, stick to it!"



**A very Merry Christmas  
and a  
safe and happy New Year to  
all members.**

## Things They Would Rather Have Not Said

One half have to be taught everything because they know nothing; the other half because they have forgotten everything; but if they do remember anything, then it is obsolete.

**A gunnery lieutenant aboard the Russian battleship *Suvarow*, 1905**

Said about the Russian sailors just before the greatest fleet action since the battle of Trafalgar; the battle between the Russian and Japanese fleets at Tsushima on 27-28 May 1905. The battle was so decisively won by the Japanese under Admiral Heihachiro Togo that it has been described as one of the most crushing victories in naval history. In order to hide their presence the Russians had been ordered to maintain radio silence; but steamed along at night with all navigation lights brightly lit—so perhaps he was justified in his statement!



# Outfits and Passage to the Australian Colonies

*The Emigrant's Friend or Authentic Guide to South Australia, including Sydney; Port Phillip, or Australia felix; Western Australia, or Swan River Colony; New South Wales; Van Dieman's Land; and New Zealand* was published in London in 1848.

The usual length of the voyage to the Australian Colonies is about four months, and to New Zealand a little longer; and as, at whatever season of the year it may be made, passengers have to encounter very hot and very cold weather; they should be prepared for both. The following is a list of the principal articles required; but it cannot be too strongly impressed, as a general rule, that the more abundant the stock of clothing each person can afford to take, the better for health and comfort during the passage:

### Single Men's Outfit to Australia

- 2 beaverteen jackets, 1 to be warmly lined.
- 2 ditto trowsers, 1 ditto.
- 1 waistcoat with sleeves.
- 1 ditto without sleeves.
- 2 duck frocks.
- 2 duck trowsers.
- 1 Scotch cap, or thresher's hat.
- 1 Brazil straw hat.
- 4 striped cotton shirts.
- 1 pair of boots.
- 1 pair of shoes.
- 4 handkerchiefs.
- 4 worsted hose.
- 1 pair braces.
- 3 towels.
- Razor, shaving-box, and glass.

### Single Women's Outfit to Australia

- 1 warm cloak, with a cape.
- 2 bonnets.
- 1 small shawl.
- 1 stuff dress.

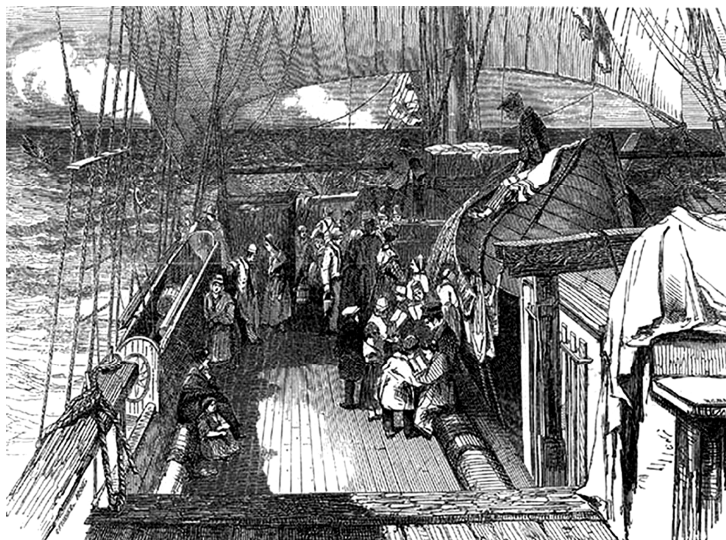
- 2 print ditto.
- 6 shifts.
- 2 flannel petticoats.
- 1 stuff ditto.
- 1 pair of stays.
- 4 pocket handkerchiefs.
- 2 ditto for neck.
- 3 caps.
- 4 night caps.
- 4 sleeping jackets.
- 2 black worsted hose.
- 4 cotton ditto.
- 2 pair of shoes.
- 6 towels.

### Each person would also require:

- 1 knife and fork.
  - 1 deep tin plate.
  - 1 pint tin drinking mug.
  - 2 shoe brushes.
  - 1 counterpane. 1 tabespoon.
  - 1 teaspoon. 2 lbs marine soap.
  - 1 comb and hair brush.
  - 1 pair of sheets.
  - 2 pots of blacking.
  - 1 pair of blankets.\*
  - 1 strong chest with lock.\*
- \*A married couple require only one set of these articles.

Cost of above Outfit for a Single Man, about....	£4.10. 0
Ditto Ditto Single Woman ".....	5. 0. 0
Ditto Ditto Married Couple ".....	9. 0. 0

The cost of an Outfit for Children varies with their size. Generally speaking, three Children under 7, or two between that age and 14, may be clothed for about £5; but a well grown Girl or Boy of 13 years of age, will cost nearly as much as an adult.



*Emigrants on Deck at Sea*

*London Illustrated News*  
20 January 1849.



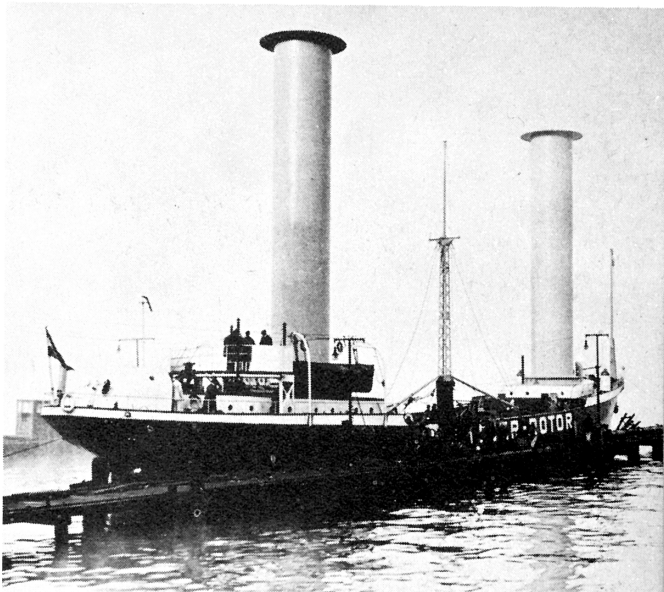
# The Ditty Bag

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

(The inspiration could take the form of contributions to this page!)



The *Buckau* was built in 1920 as a conventional 3-masted schooner, with a length of 155.8' and a beam of 29.6'. A M.A.N. 300 bhp diesel engine driving a single screw supplied auxiliary power. In 1924 she was fitted with two Flettner rotors, shown in the picture. To drive the rotors two electric motors were installed, supplied with current by a Krupp 2 cylinder 45 hp diesel engine. The rotors revolved at 100 rpm, and the wind blowing on these rotors (each 50' x 12') created far more power than on correctly trimmed sails, and gave her a speed of 8 knots. However due to the variable nature of the winds in European waters the idea was not very practical, and she was later converted into a pure motor ship.



**2 February 1914.** The well-known schooner *Grace Darling* was wrecked on the reef at Edward Island near Lancelin.

On 14 April 1866 the P & O Company at Albany launched the first wooden floating dock built in Australia. It was 129.5' in length, had a 30' beam and a depth of 9.33'. The dock was afloat until around about 1914. Its remains lie in Prin-

cess Royal Harbour, by now probably covered by modern port development.

**Fardage.** Loose wood or other substance used in the stowage of bulk cargoes to prevent them shifting in the holds of ships in a seaway.

On 22 June 1893 a Royal Navy fleet under the command of Vice-Admiral Sir George Tryon on board HMS *Victoria* was conducting manoeuvres off Tripoli. To test the mettle of his fleet commanders Admiral Tryon gave orders to form the ships into two columns six cables apart and to reverse the course by turning inwards. As this brought the vessels too close for safety the order was queried by both Staff-Commander Thomas Hawkins-Smith and Tryon's flag lieutenant, Lord Gillford. Both suggested eight cables as a minimum safety requirement.

The Admiral's terse reply was: "Leave it at six cables."

In the manoeuvre HMS *Camperdown* rammed HMS *Victoria*. The latter, only three months old, sank within minutes taking 358 officers and men with it. Admiral Tryon went down with his ship!

During the years 1874-76 the convicts in Albany built three fish ponds on the slopes of Mt Melville. Ordered by Governor Weld and constructed of earth, clay and timber, the ponds were used to acclimatise trout and perch introduced into Western Australia. The ponds were still in use in 1902, but by then they were used as a water supply for the deep water jetty and the railway workshops. They still exist, but are overgrown.

**Hood-ends.** The ends of those planks in the hull structure of a wooden vessel which fit into the rabbets of the stem and sternpost.

**13 November 1853.** The brigantine *Leander* (173 tons) was wrecked south of Dongara.





# Ships of the State Shipping Service

By Jeff Thompson.

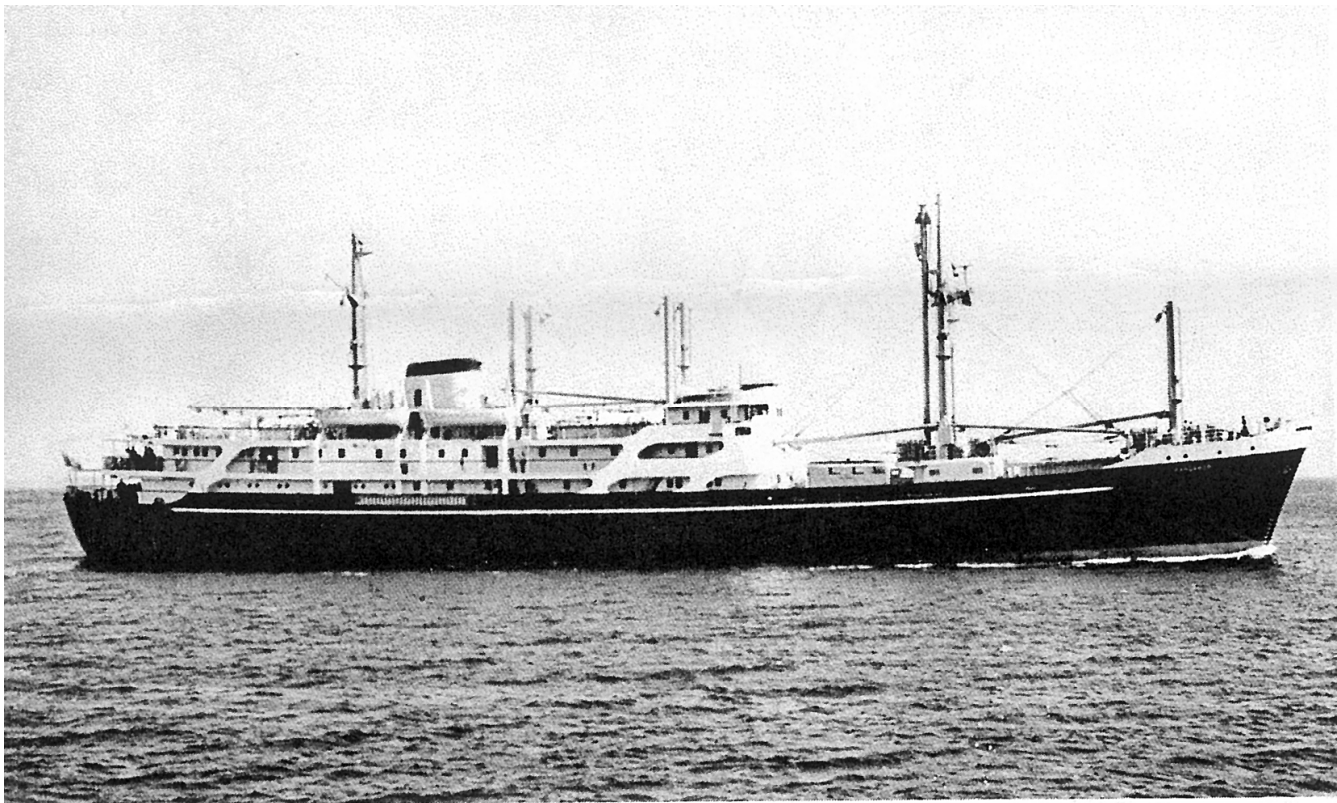
## No. 23 - Kangaroo (2) Official No: 196921

A fourth passenger ship was required for the ever popular coastal service to Darwin. This was to be the second *Kangaroo*, built by Evans Deakin, Brisbane, in 1962 specifically for the State Shipping Service. Being launched on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1962. She was 4,129 gross registered tons, 2,455 deadweight tons with a length of 98.7 metres overall, 15.2 metres breadth. and 5.5metres draught. Fitted with 2 British Polar M47M seven cylinder diesel motors with a single screw to give a service speed of 13 knots. A total of 94 passengers were accommodated, together with 300 head of cattle.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> December 1962 she left Fremantle on

her first voyage to the North West. On arriving back at Fremantle on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 1973 on completion of voyage 110, the last passenger service of the State Shipping Service was terminated after 60 years of coastal passenger service.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1973 *Kangaroo* left Fremantle for Hang Kong and on arrival was renamed *Hong Kong Fir*, having been sold to Compania de Navegacion Abeto SA , Panama for \$390,000. During 1974 the vessel was sold to Fayeze Trading & Shipping Co., Jeddah and renamed *Yara*, and being converted to carry 989 pilgrims to Jeddah. She was sold by her Saudi owners to Bangladesh ship breakers and handed over at Jeddah in December 1989.



## Old (but wise?) Nautical Quotation

Be the wind 'twixt west and north  
'Tis better not to sally forth.  
When it blows 'twixt north and east  
The sea's not fit for man or beast.  
Should it come 'twixt east and south

Remain within the harbour mouth.  
And anywhere 'twixt south and west  
Delay departure – home is best.  
But should there be no wind at all  
Tie up your ship against the wall.



## S.S. *Hyndford*

**The second part of Rod Dickson's story on the trials, tribulations and triumphs of this ship and its captain.**

Dear readers, when we left Captain Comrie and his ship, the *S.S. Hyndford* she was laying at anchor in a shallow bay on the western shores of the Falkland Islands. Most of that part of the story was worked up from a chapter in a book called *The Ocean Tramp* written by Captain Frank Hendry, who was also well known for "boys own" style nautical stories under his pen name Shalimar. But this wasn't the end of the story; Ross Shardlow managed to find a bit more of the history of the ship and passed his information on to me to complete a history of an amazing little vessel, although there were probably thousands of similar stories amongst the thousands of small tramp steamers wandering the world's oceans.

### PART 1. AT THE FALKLAND ISLANDS.

After a good nights rest, the first for quite a number of days, Captain Comrie called a morning meeting of all hands to determine their next course of action. Having studied the charts of the island group and determining their position it was agreed that the 2<sup>nd</sup> mate and two seamen would be rowed ashore to walk overland to the settlement at Port Stanley. This course was chosen as it would have been dangerous to sail the small boat around the coast in heavy weather. The cook prepared food for the men to carry and with their warmest clothes on, the 2<sup>nd</sup> mate and the two chosen volunteers, were rowed ashore to a shingled beach.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> mate had taken note of the landmarks he would see as they made their way over the coastal plains towards the distant hills, and as they made their way across the beach and into the swampy ground the men realised that this was not going to be a walk in the park.

Hours into the trudge the men reached the foothills leading up to the range that lay behind Port Stanley and even though the going was now uphill they were able to make much better time thanks to the firmness underfoot. Eventually, after an exhausting walk the three travellers breasted the final slope and there before and be-

low them was the township.

As they walked down the main and only street of the town towards the Harbour Master's Office, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mate noticed a large tug coming round the point and entering the harbour. The men entered the Harbour Master's Office and were at the counter explaining the plight of the *S.S. Hyndford* when in walked the Master and a couple of seamen from the barque *Emilie*, who they had last seen off Cape Horn. The *Emilie* had been partially dismantled in the gales off Cape Horn and had run back for the Falklands for repairs.

When the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mate had finished his explanation he asked the Harbour Master about the tug they had seen in the harbour. As fortune would have it the tug had just arrived at Port Stanley to carry out a salvage job. Seizing the opportunity, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mate, with the assistance of the Harbour Master persuaded the tug's Captain to proceed around the northwest corner of the Islands and bring the *S.S. Hyndford* to a safe anchorage in Port Stanley. As it was only a short distance to travel the price was agreed and the tug with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mate and the two seamen aboard steamed out of the bay.

One can only imagine the joy and amazement on board the *S.S. Hyndford* when the men saw the tug coming towards them. Captain Comrie must have thought he was dreaming. The tug manoeuvred alongside and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mate and seamen returned on board. The tug's Captain also came on board and the terms of the tow, as agreed by the Mate, were re-stated, agreed to verbally and then a signed agreement was made. As it was coming on to evening the tow was deferred until morning and the hands set about preparing the port anchor chain for shackling to the towing hawser.

At 4.00 a.m. all hands on board the *Hyndford* were called and the engineers and stokers got steam on deck ready for heaving the anchor. At 5.30 a.m. the tug was let go and she manoeuvred her way under the bows of the *Hyndford*, where the port chain was slowly lowered to the deck of the tug. The tug's crew then got to work and

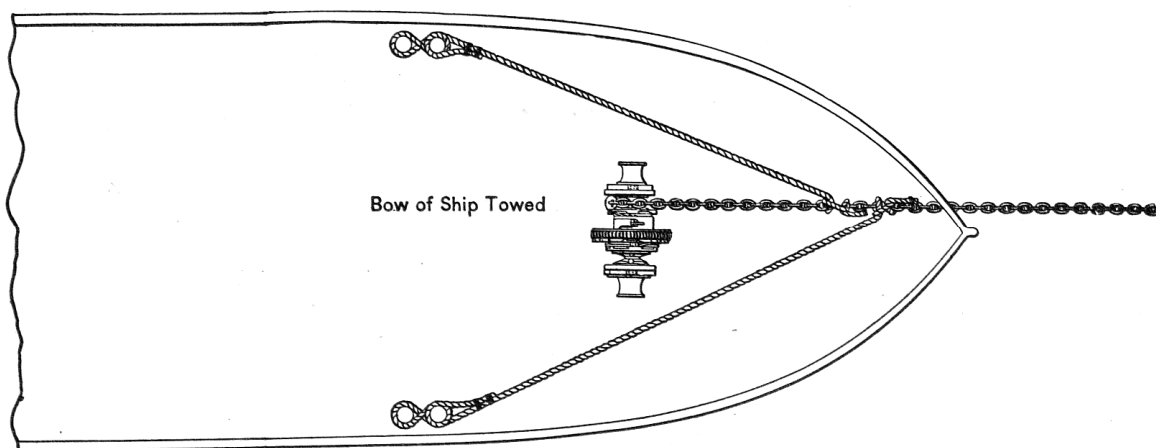


shackled the chain to the towing wire. Once secured, the tug slowly steamed ahead, paying out her wire. At the same time some more chain was paid out from the steamer. When sufficient chain and wire was in the water the tug's skipper gave two blasts on his whistle. This was the signal for Captain Comrie to heave up his anchor.

With the anchor home in the hawse pipe the tug took the strain and the *Hyndford* began to turn and move ahead following the tug. Three and half hours later the tug and her tow entered Port Stanley and the Harbour Master came out to meet them and direct them to a safe and sheltered anchorage.

## PART 2. GETTING SHIPSHAPE!

During the time the ship was at anchor and during the tow, Captain Comrie and his Chief Engineer devised a plan to get the ship back in working shape again. The first part of the plan came to fruition when the *Hyndford* was safely anchored in Port Stanley. The plan was to get the stern up and the shaft clear of the water. To this end the hatches were opened and as much cargo as possible was shifted from the after holds to the fore holds and also stacked on the foredeck. The Chief opened various valves and began flooding the forepeak tank and the forward double-bottoms. Slowly the bows sank and the stern rose up out of the water. When the shaft was clear it



Captain Comrie sent a cable from Port Stanley to the owners in Glasgow informing them the drama of the past month and of the fact that he had hired a salvage tug to get them to the safety of a sheltered harbour, where repairs could be effected.

The starboard anchor was let go and the *Hyndford* came to rest in safe waters. The tug came slowly astern reeling in her towing hawser and when the shackle reached the deck it was stoppered off and the shackle released. On board the *Hyndford* the chippie was on the fo'c'sle working the windlass and bringing in the port chain so that it could be re-shackled to its anchor.

was soon seen that the shaft wasn't sheared at all, but the blades had sheared off the propeller hub. This was far less a serious problem than a broken off shaft.

At the break of the fo'c'sle stood the ship's spare propeller, bolted to its brackets on the bulkhead. It just had to be shifted from its position on deck to the shaft!!

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Mate took charge of the after working party and organised working stages to be put overboard to port and starboard. Once at working height they were bowsed in against the shaft. The engineers now took over and removed the propeller boss with its securing pin. Next, slings were put around the ruined propeller and secured to the



cargo runners from the after derricks. Using sledge hammers the propeller was knocked from the tapered shaft and when free, hauled on deck.

Up forward the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mate and Captain Comrie set about getting the spare propeller from the bulkhead over the side and onto a hired pontoon. Using the two forward derricks with the runners married at a Monkeys Face the weight of the propeller was taken up by the winches and slowly worked across the deck and over the side. On the pontoon a small gang of men received the spare and laid it carefully flat. The pontoon was worked aft by hauling and slackening the mooring lines and slowly it was brought into position abreast the end of the shaft. During the drag aft the engineer polished the core of the hub and made sure the key way was clean and not damaged.

The two after derricks with the runners married under the counter were plumbed over the side in line with the end of the shaft. The slings were secured around the blades of the propeller and with shouted commands to the winch drivers the propeller slowly rose from the pontoon. Slowly, slowly it rose until the hub was at the right level and in line with the shaft, two chain blocks were secured and tightened, heaving the propeller onto the shaft.

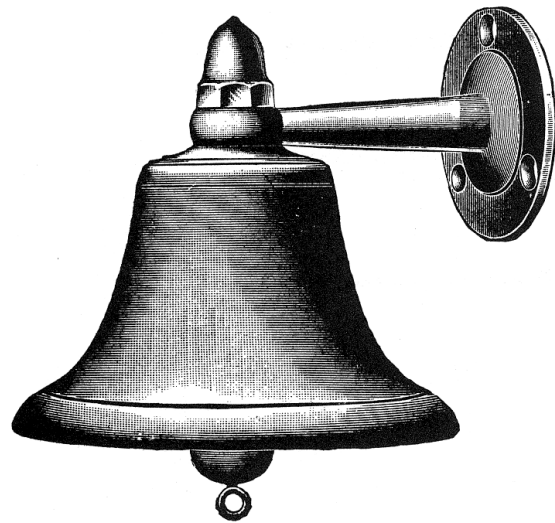
Finally all was secure and the engineers were happy with the results of their work, although it was the seamen that did all the pulley-hauley part of the operation. Captain Comrie was very pleased, seven hours from start to finish and he now had a working ship again. The Engineers started the pumps and the water was soon flushing overboard from the forepeak and double bottoms. On deck the seamen were transferring the cargo from forward back into the after holds. Once this was done the hatch boards were replaced and the canvas hatch covers tightened overall. There was one last job to be done before the *Hyndford* was ready for deep sea again. The engine was warmed up, and then on the bridge the telegraph was put to dead slow ahead. The boat was over the side with a junior engineer in her watching the propeller, when it began to turn he yelled to those on deck and the telegraph was shifted to stop and then to dead slow astern. With the trials over and successful, Captain Comrie shifted the ship across to the coaling hulk and

topped up his coal bunkers, having used a considerable amount during the days of sailing.

Reporting to the Harbour Master at Port Stanley that his repairs were now complete, he sent another cable to the owners in Glasgow, stating his intention to complete the voyage, and informing them of his purchase of extra coal. With that done he purchased an extra supply of Falkland Island lamb and mutton for the messes.

### PART 3. AT SEA AGAIN!

At dawn all hands were called and the engineers got steam on deck, Chippie, the Bosun and two seamen went forward onto the fo'c'sle and at the command from the bridge began to heave in the anchor. One of the seamen had the hose and was washing the chain as it clanked its way up the hawsepipe. As each shackle came on board and disappeared down the spurling pipe the other seaman rang the number of the shackle that passed him. Eventually it was anchor aweigh and the bell was rung rapidly to inform the bridge, that they were no longer tied to the land.



Captain Comrie put the telegraph handle to slow ahead and slowly the *Hyndford* turned to port and made for the Harbour entrance. At 1500 hours they were losing sight of land and the mates marked their departure point on the chart.

The *Hyndford* sailed west bound for the Straits of Magellan again and successfully made the transit into the Pacific Ocean again, this time without any difficulties. She turned north along the coast



of Chile to the port of Coronel where she finally got to discharge part of her cargo. After the discharge the *Hyndford* steamed further north to her final destination of this voyage, the famed guano port of Talcahuano in Chile, where she was to discharge the final cargo of gunny sacks, although some months late.

From now this small seamer became the quintessential tramp steamer, voyaging from one port to another loading and discharging cargo wherever the agents or Captain could obtain a loading. She carried mostly mixed cargoes but occasionally full cargoes of coal from Newcastle (Australia), and cargoes of wheat (from Fremantle).

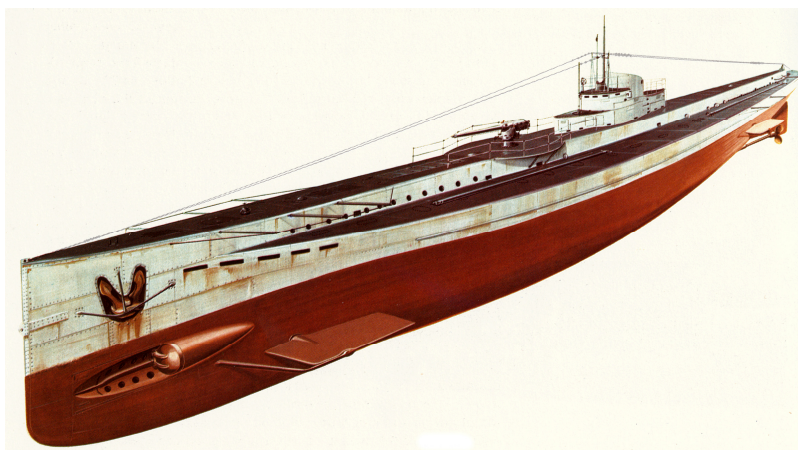
From Talcahuano the *Hyndford* steamed across the Pacific Ocean to Japan to load cargo for Brisbane and Sydney. She arrived at Brisbane on March 1, 1906 and according to the Brisbane Courier of the 17 February 1906 she was to load sleepers for Indian ports. She arrived at Pinkemba on the 2 March 1906 and began loading and also took 1,200 tons of coal for bunkers. From Pinkemba she sailed south to Tasmania and berthed at Port Esperance on the south east coast and a timber town. Here the *Hyndford* loaded 20,000 mill sawn sleepers at the Tasmanian Timber Co's mill, bound for Kurrachee and she sailed on March 22, 1906.

During December 1909 the *Hyndford*, during a voyage from San Francisco, discharged part of her cargo at Apia and then sailed for Auckland, New Zealand and on to Sydney, where she arrived with, "dressed Baltic Pine flooring; C & C Weatherboards and White Pine lining and shelving". On January 1, 1910, the *Hyndford* left Sydney for San Francisco and Vancouver.

On the 27 July, 1910 the steamer returned to Australia, berthing at Melbourne in the Yarra River's swinging basin, where she discharged 200,000 feet of dressed timber from the American west coast port of Puget Sound. From Melbourne she sailed for Newcastle, where she loaded 5,147 tons of cargo coal and 173 tons of bunker coal and 7 tons of coke, bound for the port of Ilo Ilo, a guano

port in southern Peru. Over the next four years the *Hyndford* visited New York, Valparaiso, Auckland, Tokyo, Hong Kong, India and various ports in Australia. The steamers next encounter with a near disaster came during a voyage from Japan in June 1914, when she was bound for India, via Manila and Australia. As she voyaged south through the North Pacific she encountered a typhoon when off the Philippines. As she was being buffeted by the cyclonic winds she dragged her anchors and went aground near Manila. By now she had a new Master, Captain Comrie having retired. Captain Horne, and his crew worked manfully to run out two kedge anchors, using just the ships gear. The authorities were coming to the opinion that salving her was becoming hopeless. But Captain Horne and his men weren't about to give up and the *Hyndford* finally floated free at the top of the spring tides and by using the kedge anchors. With no apparent damage to the hull or machinery she proceeded on her voyage to Sydney.

In 1914 war broke out in Europe and from that date the *Hyndford* was engaged in carrying war supplies and foodstuffs to Britain from the Colonies. In 1914-15 the *Hyndford* was engaged by the British Admiralty to carry supplies for the Australian troops at Gallipoli, she remained there at anchor for a month discharging stores as and when required. At the end of this deployment the steamer went across to Bahia Blanca in the Argentine for a cargo of wheat for Britain. As she approached the English Channel she met up with another British tramp steamer, the *Blue Jacket*, they were both bound for London and being of a similar speed they steamed in company. As they approached Beachy Head on the south coast a German submarine was lying in wait. As the steamers passed the U.35, Captain Waldemar Ko-



U-35



phamel fired torpedoes at the ships. The *Blue Jacket* was holed in her No.1 hold and with her bows partially submerged, part of the crew took to the boats and fled the scene, the remainder managed to get the ship to Southampton where she was beached.

[Captain Waldemar Kophamel was the most successful submarine commander in the war, having participated in the sinking of 224 ships for a total of 539,741 tons.]

The *Hyndford* was also hit in the bows and her crew prepared to abandon ship without any orders. When Captain Horne saw what was happening on deck he ordered the men to stop, however the port lifeboat carried away and two men were thrown into the water. Another boat was launched to go to their assistance but only one of the men was found.

Captain Horne managed to get his ship to the Downs and from there, with the pumps working flat out, and a River Pilot on board the *Hyndford* was towed to Gray's Flats near Gravesend where she was beached until repairs could be effected.

To illustrate the effectiveness of the submarine blockade of Britain by the German Navy the following table may be interesting.

*MERCHANT SHIPS SUNK OR DAMAGED  
From 18 February 1915 to 23 March 1915.*

*Dulwich* 3280 tons. Torpedoed. British.  
*Ville De Lille* 997 tons. Torpedoed. French .  
*Belridge* 7000 tons. Damaged. Norway.  
*Cambank* 3112 tons. Torpedoed. British .  
*Dinorah* 4200 tons. Damaged. French.  
*Bjaerke* 256 tons. Mined. Norway.  
*Evelyn* 3141 tons. Mined. U.S.A.  
*Downshire* 387 tons. Torpedoed. British.  
*Regin* 1841 tons. Torpedoed. Norway.  
*Branksome Chine* 2036 tons. Damaged. British.  
*Oakby* 1976 tons. Torpedoed. British.  
*Carib* 2087 tons. Mined. U.S.A.  
*Royparena* Collier. Torpedoed. British.  
*Harpallan* 5887 tons. Torpedoed. British.  
*West Coast* 1188 tons. Damaged. British.  
*Deptford* 1306 tons. Torpedoed. British.  
*Svarton* 2859 tons. Mined. Swedish.  
*Bengrove* 5840 tons. Torpedoed. British.  
*Tagitistan* 3738 tons. Torpedoed. British.  
*Blackwood* 1220 tons. Torpedoed. British.

*Princess Victoria* Torpedoed. British.  
*Bayano* 5905 tons. Torpedoed. British.  
*Adenwyn* 3736 tons. Damaged. British.  
*Headlands* 2066 tons. Torpedoed. British.  
*Floravan* 4656 tons. Torpedoed. British.  
*Invergyle* 1704 tons. Torpedoed. British.  
*Indian City* Torpedoed. British.  
*Andalusian* 2159 tons. Torpedoed. British.  
*Hanna* 1573 tons. Torpedoed. Swedish.  
*Auguste Consell* 2559 tons. Torpedoed. French.  
*Hartdale* Torpedoed. British.  
*Fingal* Torpedoed. British.  
*Llewarden* Torpedoed British.  
*Atlanta* 2094 tons. Torpedoed. British.  
*Glenartney* 5287 tons. Torpedoed. British.  
*Hyndford* 4286 tons. Torpedoed. British.  
*Blue Jacket* 3515 tons. Torpedoed. British.  
*Carntoff* Torpedoed. British.

It seems ludicrous today that the newspapers of the day were complaining bitterly about the fact that British vessels were being attacked by submarines without any warning being given. From the *New York Times*, 20 March 1915 to the *Mercury* (Hobart), 22 March 1915 the headlines state - "Attacks on British Vessels. Torpedoed without Warning."

After the repairs to the ship were completed the *Hyndford* carried on with her role as a tramp steamer, although under orders from the Admiralty. She carried the necessities of war from Britain across to France and carried foodstuffs from the Colonies to Britain. During these voyages over the years from 1915 to 1918 this small vessel was mined in the North Sea, but escaped with relatively minor damage. She was attacked and shelled by surfaced submarines on four separate occasions on various parts of the British coast and on one occasion Captain Horne had to run the *Hyndford* ashore on one of the Shetland Islands to avoid capture by the Germans. On that voyage she was bound for Archangel with a cargo of explosives. On another occasion she fought a duel with a submarine for a solid six hours when off Gibraltar and a British torpedo boat raced to her assistance.

(These incidents, the mining and shelling cannot be verified today, and the accounts of these attacks are contained in a statement made by a Captain Thomson to a reporter of the *West Australian* in 1919. The author was of the opinion





that the *Hyndford* was a part of the "Q" ship operations in the war against the German submarines, however on checking the list of all the "Q" ships, she is not a part of them and therefore these attacks were accidental, in that the *Hyndford* was in the wrong place at the wrong time.)

At the end of the War in 1918 came a change in the fortunes of the *S.S. Hyndford*. The Scottish Shipowners Association decided to sell the ship and they placed her on the open market. She was sold almost immediately to the Hogarth Shipping Company and renamed the *S.S. Baron Elcho*.

[Older seamen will know doubt remember this company by its nickname HUNGRY HOGARTHS. The company was famed for being parsimonious. The British Government laid down a Scale of Weekly Rations, which was posted on the bulkhead of the messes. Hungry Hogarths adhered to this scale exactly. Not one extra grain of sugar or drop of milk was granted above what was listed. Generally, on their ships, the crew gave the cook ten shillings each at the end of the month to go ashore and purchase special items for the mess such as jams, and they lived in the hope that the bluddy cook wouldn't divert to the nearest pub!!]

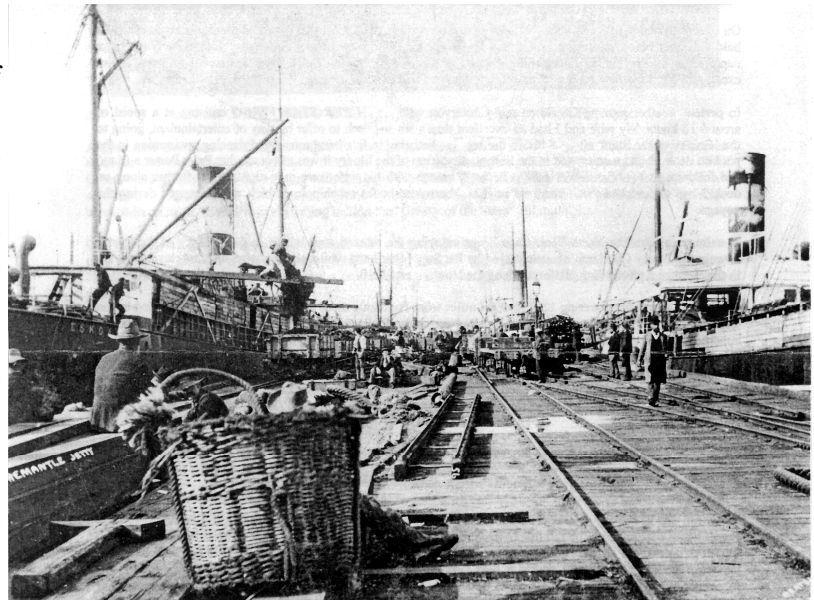
The *Baron Elcho's* trade routes were just the same as the *Hyndford's*, go wherever a cargo might be found and loaded. Post-war her first voyage was from Britain to Australia via the Panama Canal and the *S.S. Baron Elcho* arrived off Sydney Heads on the 20 May 1919. However instead of entering the harbour she was ordered north to Newcastle to load a cargo of coal for South Australia and from the *Adelaide Advertiser* of 18 June 1919 it states:

Seven vessels are still loading wheat at various South Australian ports, including three sailers. They are: at Port Pirie - the steamer *Volorda* and sailer *Suzanne*; at Walleroo - the steamers *War Faith* and *Baron Elcho* and the sailer *Gars*; at Port Augusta - the steamer *Bradford City*; and at Port Lincoln - the sailer *Alice*.

When the loading of wheat was completed the *Baron Elcho* left for Britain via Fremantle via the Suez Canal. She returned to Melbourne in Octo-

ber 1919 with a full cargo of sugar for the Yarraville Refinery from the Indonesian island of Java, the port of Tjihiljap, as supplies of sugar had run out because of the war and housewives were crying out for sugar to make their jams and jellies.

On October 31, 1919 the *Baron Elcho* left the Yarra River for Geelong to load wheat for Britain. During the next few years the ship tramped her way around the world carrying everything and anything anywhere. She returned to Sydney in April 1924 with a full cargo of linseed from Buenos Ayres via Durban. At the completion of her discharge the vessel left for Melbourne, however, en route, she was chartered by McIlwraith - McEachern's to proceed to Fremantle to load a cargo of wheat and flour for the Egyptian ports.



In 1922 the *Baron Elcho* sailed from Glasgow for New York. She then sailed via the Panama Canal for Australia again, visiting Brisbane, Sydney and Fremantle. In 1924 she arrived in Brisbane from Port Natal. Every time she passed near Western Australia she was in contact with the Applecross Radio Station where she reported her daily position and received weather reports and instructions from her agents. The *Baron Elcho* made two further calls to Fremantle, in 1926 and 1927. In 1927 she arrived from Port Natal and berthed at Victoria Quay where she loaded a full cargo of wheat for Hamburg, Germany, where she arrived on November 21, 1927.

Her days of tramping continued as before until a fateful day in November 1929 when without any





warning urgent radio messages were sent from the *Baron Elcho* to all ships - stating that the crew were being attacked and about to be drugged and murdered. The radio call was repeated over and over requesting immediate assistance. The *Baron Elcho* was at the time on a voyage from Port Said to Marseilles and not far from Malta.

The C. in C. of the Royal Naval Base at Grand Harbour, Malta, when shown the cables immediately ordered the Navy into action and four destroyers were ordered to immediately prepare for sea duties. Steam was raised and the four ships with parties of marines on board steamed at full speed from Grand Harbour making for the *Baron Elcho*'s last reported position.

[The reason for this urgency on the part of the Royal Navy was that previously in June of that year the Admiralty had received urgent radio messages from the Australian passenger liner *Jervis Bay*. She was in the Indian Ocean and five stowaways had run amuck terrorizing the 800 passengers. They were captured and locked in the lazaret, but set it on fire three times before being finally subdued.]

The four destroyers came up to the *Baron Elcho* after dark and surrounded the ship. Keeping just out of the light each destroyer lowered a launch loaded with Royal Marines, these highly trained veterans then simultaneously scaled the sides of the *Baron Elcho* and stormed the accommodation. Reaching the wheelhouse, they crashed through the doors with guns at the ready and fingers on the triggers, ready for anything.

However, all they found were some very pale faced and scared Officers and crew who had no idea what was happening and thought they were in the middle of a nightmare.

It soon became apparent that there were no problems on board at all. It was just that the Radio Officer had gone "troppo", a fairly commonplace malady amongst Radio Officers, who had to listen to dits and dots and static in their ears for hours at a time. When all was resolved the young officer was securely locked away until the ships next landfall when he could be landed and repatriated to Britain. The marines retreated to the destroyers and the four destroyers returned to Grand Harbour glad for the break from mundane port duties, showing the flag, soogieving and polishing.

As for the *Hyndford/Baron Elcho* this was her last little fling with fame on the world's stage. She loaded another two short sea cargoes, Britain/Continent and Britain/Baltic and then the owners, Hogarth Shipping Company of Ardrasan, decided that they needed new tonnage and the decision was made to scrap the *Baron Elcho*. Her last cargo was discharged and Captain Thompson received orders to proceed to Troon for breaking. She arrived at this Scottish port on the 6 May 1930 and the coal bunkers were emptied. Everything of value was removed from the ship and then the breakers set to work. Acetylene torches blazed in the grey and gloomy days as this once proud little tramp began to die. It took quite a while for that strongly Glasgow built ship to disappear but go she did, and there were not many tramp steamers that could claim as an exciting and dramatic life as hers.

## Uncapsizable Fishing Boat

With a view to diminish the loss of life occurring with our fishing fleets – some of the vessels of which not infrequently go to the bottom with all hands in a very brief space of time – Mr John White, the well-known boat builder, of Cowes, has designed a fishing vessel on life-boat principles, which, he claims, will not sink if overwhelmed by the sea and filled with water. Already two such vessels, of 30 tons, have

been sent to the coast of Ireland. A model has been sent to Mr F. Johnson of 17 Parliament Street, well known for his endeavours to diminish loss of life by shipwrecks, and it is now on view as well as some models of unsinkable, uncapsizable yachts' dinghy and cutter, as adopted by Her Majesty's Navy and Coastguard.

*Western Mail*, 23 January 1886: 9d



# What makes a 300-year-old pocket watch tick?

## X-ray analysis shows the exquisite workmanship inside a rusty relic.

This article, written by Jo Marchant, is from: <http://www.nature.com/news/2010/101011/full/news.2010.529.html>

**S**tunning details of the internal mechanism of a salvaged pocket watch have been revealed by cutting-edge X-ray analysis.

State-of-the-art X-ray scans have revealed the internal mechanisms of a corroded, barnacle-covered pocket watch recovered from a seventeenth-century wreck. The watch looks little more than a lump of rock from the outside, but



the scans show that the mechanism inside is beautifully preserved, from delicate cogwheels and Egyptian-style pillars to the maker's inscription.

Researchers from the National Museums Scotland in Edinburgh used the images to construct a three-dimensional virtual reconstruction of the watch's lost workings. They hope to use the technique to probe the internal structure of other archaeological artefacts, especially those salvaged from underwater sites. The watch and three-dimensional reconstruction are now on display in the Treasured exhibition of the National Museum of Scotland until 2011.

The watch was found on a wreck believed to be the *Swan* — a small warship that sank off the

west coast of Scotland during the English Civil War. She formed part of Oliver Cromwell's forces that attacked the Royalist stronghold of Duart Castle in Mull, UK, but succumbed to a violent gale on 13 September 1653.

A naval diver discovered the wreck in the 1970s, and it was excavated in the 1990s. Salvaged artefacts including the pocket watch, a hoard of silver coins, cast iron guns and an ornate sword hilt were taken to the National Museum of Scotland.

### Rusty remnants

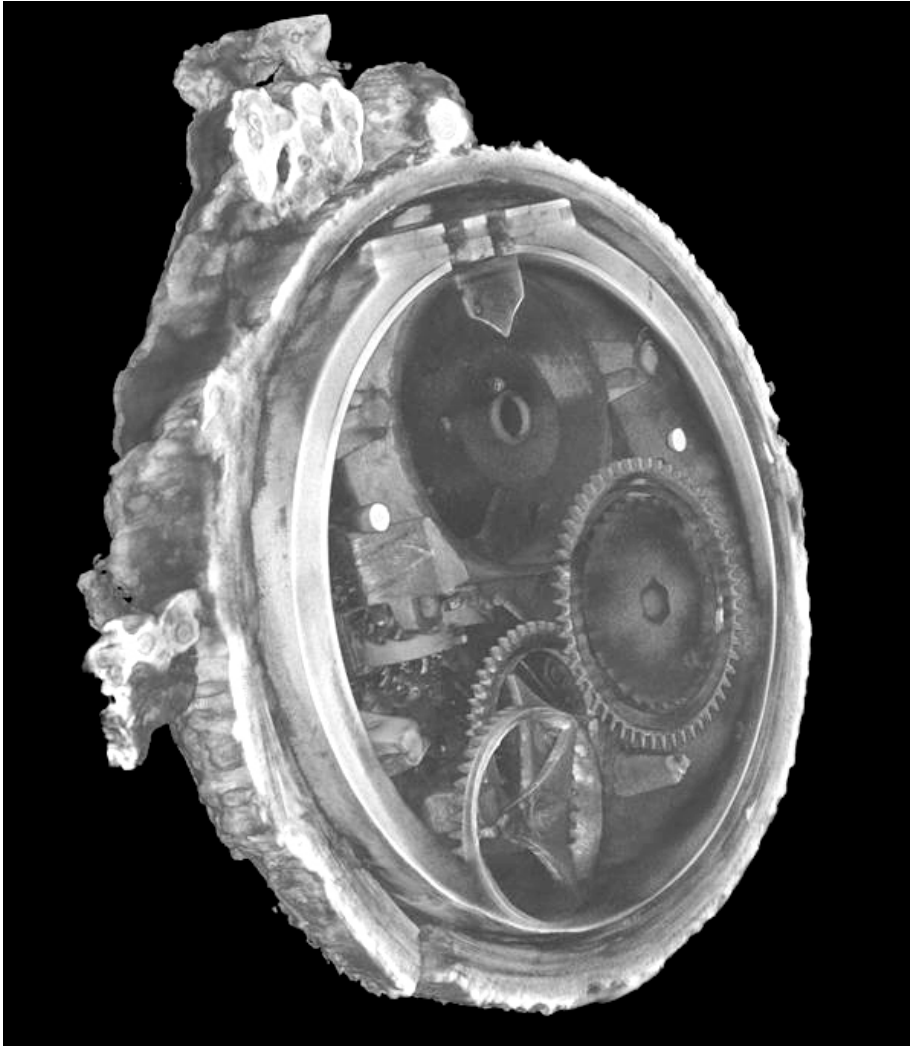
The watch itself was barely recognisable. Conventional X-ray images taken at the museum showed cogwheels inside, but didn't provide any useful information about the workings of the watch, or how well it was preserved.

Museum researchers Lore Troalen, Darren Cox and Theo Skinner saw a paper in *Nature* that described how X-ray computed tomography (CT) had been used to image an ancient Greek device called the Antikythera Mechanism<sup>1</sup>. This artefact had also been salvaged from a shipwreck.

CT involves taking a series of slices through an object at different angles, and combining them using a computer to produce a three-dimensional reconstruction of the object's internal structure. Andrew Ramsey and his colleagues at the company X-Tek Systems in Tring, Hertfordshire, UK, had developed an improved CT technique using small yet high-voltage X-ray sources, which enabled them to obtain very high-resolution images, even when penetrating dense metal.

Troalen and Cox took the *Swan* watch to X-Tek (now owned by Nikon), and the resulting images taken by Ramsey and his colleagues have a resolution of 63 micrometres<sup>2</sup> and show that much of the mechanism inside the watch is perfectly preserved.

Any parts made of steel, including the watch's



minster, London, in the years before the *Swan* went down.

Colin Martin, a retired maritime archaeologist who was at the University of St Andrews in Fife, UK, and led the original excavation of the *Swan*, describes the work as "brilliant". "We know more about the thing than we would have done if we had taken a hammer to it," he says. "And the object is still intact."

This study and the imaging of the Antikythera Mechanism show the level of detail that can be preserved inside objects even after hundreds or thousands of years under water, and demonstrates the potential of CT for probing artefacts that are encased within layers of corrosion products. For imaging small-scale structures such as inscriptions and mechanical components, "it's a dream," says Cox. The researchers now

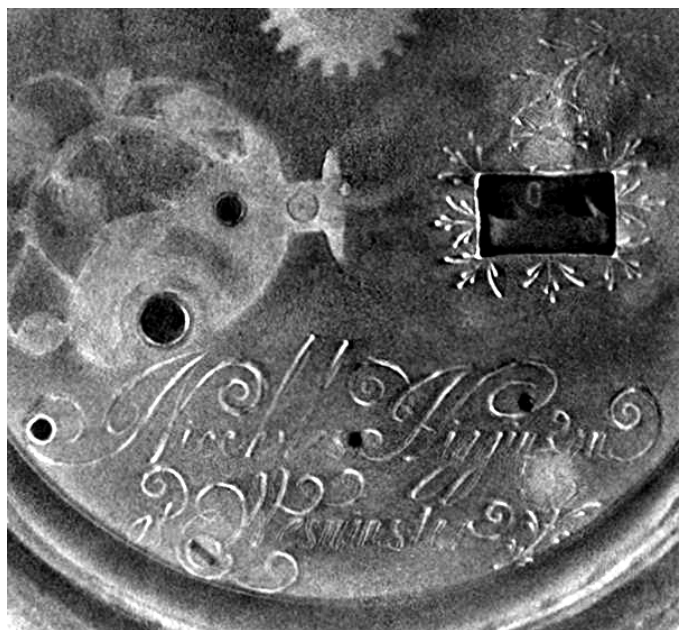
single hand as well as the studs and pins that originally held the mechanism together, have corroded away. But most of the components are brass, and in excellent condition. "The results surpassed all of our expectations," says Troalen. "We never thought that so much of the mechanism would have survived."

### Detailed dream

The resulting reconstruction of the watch shows plenty of decorative touches and exquisite attention to detail. The top and bottom plates are held together by square-section Egyptian tapered pillars, first used around 1640. Other parts of the mechanism are engraved with a floral design. The clockface itself is marked in Roman numerals with what appears to be a fleur de lys on each half-hour, and an English rose in the centre.

The researchers even found the maker's name. An engraving on the watch's top plate reads "Nicholas Higginson of Wesminster". Clock-makers' directories attest that Higginson was making watches in Chancery Lane and in West-

hope to scan a door lock from the *Swan*.





## BUILDING A BAMBOO RAFT IN VIETNAM

Part 18 of Nick Burningham's interminable memoirs of messing with outmoded technology

*In late 1992 I was asked by Tim Severin to go to Vietnam to supervise the construction of a very big bamboo raft for an attempt to cross the Pacific in the way that some people believe the ancient Chinese might have done (though the evidence is very tenuous and scarce).*

*I kept a detailed journal during my four months in Vietnam. An edited and annotated version of that journal is reproduced below. Most of the editing is simply removal of technical detail about the progress of the raft construction, and substitution of “\*&^%” for swear words.*

*I reached Vietnam on 14th December and travelled with Tim to the far northeast of Vietnam looking at boat and raft building before going on 22nd December to Sam Son where Hsu Fu would be built. Sam Son was chosen because it was a place where bamboo sailing rafts of about 9m length were built for fishing. They were equipped with three masts, a daggerboard and a rudder. The raft we intended to build was to be twice as long and three layers deep – in effect it would be three rafts one on top of another with timber frames between them.*

25th December 1992 There was a notional start to work today because the phase of the moon is auspicious, but very little was done. The weather is cold, windy and wet. In the evening we went to Mr Sou's house for dinner and heavy drinking. Perhaps we were celebrating Christmas but, in deference to the Communist deities, it was never mentioned. [Mr Sou was Chairman of the People's Committee of the Village.]



*Bamboo rafts sailing off Sam Son, northern Vietnam*

Tim, who does not habitually drink to excess, was overcome by the industrial alcohol we were using to drink numerous toasts and retreated to the hotel fairly early. I stayed for a few more drinks, then I indicated that I too would go back to the hotel — it was only a short walk. It was made clear that to me that I should ride pillion on a motorbike with Mr Chang. Chang was horribly drunk and there was no way that I was going to ride a motorbike with him. Eventually it was decided that I would ride home on a borrowed bicycle with Chang pillion on the luggage rack so that he could return the bike. We wobbled away into the cold wet night and were almost back to the hotel when, circumnavigating the shores of a huge puddle, Chang fell backwards off the luggage rack into the muddy cold waters. I stopped and looked round. There was Chang lying flat on his back in the muddy water and staring up at the low scudding clouds.

[The Christmas dinner is not mentioned in the original journal but it was memorable, particularly because of the lack of finger bowls. We ate delicious crabs, and eating crabs always leaves the hands very messy. Finger bowls were not provided, but a cloth was produced to wipe one's hands on. It was the most amazingly filthy cloth I have ever seen — it couldn't have looked less hygienic if it had the word “CHOLERA” smeared on it with excrement. I chose to wipe my hands in my hair.]

26th December Today was the first real day of work. Twenty-eight men are at work skinning bamboos. Others are building racks to dry the skinned bamboos. A huge pile of Japanese lilac leaves was pounded to pulp in a mortar and mixed with sea-water and slaked lime to make an insect repellent wash for the freshly skinned bamboos which are very attractive to borers.

27th December More than two-thirds of the bamboos had been skinned by the end of work today. I am preparing drawings and simple models to demonstrate the assembly sequence and the bamboo bending requirements. [There were about 300 giant bamboos, 9m in length.]

29th December Through Truc, our translator, general facilitator, and Government appointed minder, I spoke to the workers about bamboo joining, assembly, and bending: particularly the requirement for bamboo with different lengths of bend, and some with no bend. This is different from building their normal rafts because we are



building a raft twice as long as normal and twice as long as a piece of bamboo. My presentation, illustrated with drawings, plans and models was said to be a success with a good level of understanding achieved. However it caused quite a bit of excitement and heated discussion. The locals, if they have different interpretations of what was said, hit each other.

One piece of bamboo was given a trial bending over 4,5m of its length using heat to make it pliable: it split and collapsed in a couple of places. It was deemed not sufficiently dried. It needs a couple of days more drying. The skinned bamboos were sorted into curves, bends and straights; there are a total of 339 pieces of large bamboo in stock.

30th December Tim, Ian Lloyd the photographer from *National Geographic*, and Truc went off to the jungles whence came the bamboos today. No work at the raft site. I went to a small boat building yard to make notes and sketches.

2nd January 1993 Started bending bamboos, twelve pairs of men working on bending. There is some confusion about the requirements for different lengths of bend. The arrival of the sea breeze at lunch time put an end to work. The torches used to heat the bamboos blow out and the heat gets dispersed.

Ian Lloyd and I went for a walk over the hill to the next village and got our selves arrested, apparently for photographing in a militarily sensitive place. Most unpleasant. We were shut in a windowless hut full of mosquitoes. It took the intervention of Truc and some hours of negotiation to get us released. In fact we were simply kidnapped ransomed. Ian Lloyd and I are worth about \$50 each. Tim was very philosophical about it and said that it was good that the whole thing was resolved without anyone getting really nasty. I said that I thought they were a really nasty bunch of petty bullies.

3rd January Work started at 0400 today to take advantage of light winds before the sea breeze came in at about 1100. The fire for bending the bamboos is provided by burning old bicycle tyres as torches. The available tyres are all of appalling quality and don't last long on the terrible roads, so the supply of old tyres is almost inexhaustible. The thick black smoke produced by the burning rubber is terrible and the beach is all blackened around the raft yard.

Tim left for London today

5th January Bending has finished. The weather is now pleasant. A team of girls with hand carts are sweeping the streets. perhaps the idea will catch on and someone will be detailed to sweep this filthy hotel where

I am staying. [The Hotel was owned by Mr Khiem, Chairman of the People's Committee of the area ... in other words the local feudal lord.]

8th January I have been trying to persuade the men that it is not necessary to straighten the naturally bent bamboos as it would be for a normal fishing raft. I haven't actually succeeded in stopping them, just delayed them. Gradually bamboos are being straightened when I'm not around.

Timber for making the frames should have arrived some days ago. Lack of timber is going to delay the building. I have \$500 from Tim as a reserve for unexpected expenses. Truc, who is going to Hanoi demands it from me. I hand it over with some protest.

9th January Truc returns the \$500 before going up to Hanoi. Not for the first time there is no @\$#%ing water in this @#\$%ty hotel. All day I am covered in sand from the beach and cannot wash it off. Mr Khiem, who owns the place, runs is as badly and with as much carefully considered discourtesy as possible. Still no timber.

10th January Cleaning soot off the bent bamboos was finished today. We built the shores which will support the raft while it is under construction. There were a few problems doing it without Truc to translate but we got it right the second time. Mr Chang seems to have something to tell me and keeps shouting in the hope that I will understand. On the way "home" from the yard in the evening I see that a pile of timber has been delivered outside Mr Sou's house. It is a pretty ragged assortment of crooks and compass timbers. The frames will necessarily be of greatly varied dimension making nonsense of our long discussions about what will be the correct scantlings. Some of the timber is obviously dense and strong so fairly light scantlings will suffice. Very few, if any, of the crooks have the require angle of 30°, so I will have to alter the cross sectional shape of the raft.

11th January Started on the joining of bamboos to make 18m lengths today. There is a moderately complicated arrangement of staggered butt joints and curves of different lengths to be coordinated. I have produced a simple set of drawings to show all the details but there is little familiarity with the idea of referring to drawings. Mr Nhu, who is an old Party Official and a terribly old woman, his been put in charge. His idea is that he should look at the plans once whilst hiding in a corner where no one else can see them, and from then on he should manage with as much of the concept and detail as he can remember. There are a number of other





workers who feel they have got the whole thing worked out, though they have not been allowed to see the plans by Nhu, and they are constantly shouting their opinions and asserting that everyone else is stupid and not thinking clearly. It is a raucous atmosphere with clamorous differences of opinion and very conducive to making mistakes. Nevertheless, we make progress and five lengths are joined, or in the process of being joined, by 1100.

As well as trying to watch what the joining teams are up to under Nhu's incompetent guidance, I started to sort the jumble of timbers and measure the angles of the crooks. Apparently I was working too hard in the heat of the day and I was stopped. I went back to the yard where the joining teams were increasingly confused. Stupid Nhu had made his own "simple" version of the plans, which was wrong.

In the late afternoon I measured more crook angles — many will give only about 16°.



12 January Started sawing out timbers for the frames. The timbers are to be sawn at the front of Sou's house. For a screeve board I have a small patch of the concrete front yard. And I must be on hand to mark each frame with the sawyers immediately before it is sawn. There is no question of marking a number of frames in advance; the sawyers must be involved in the marking and it must be done when they are ready to saw it, otherwise they will forget or not understand what they are meant to saw — or so I am told. This supervision is a truly repugnant undertaking because of the state of the front yard where we work. It is full of kids and infants who are chewing up and spitting out cassava and sugar cane all day. Chickens shit everywhere; and a dying, hairless puppy has dysentery. After three hours I feel nauseous.

The sawyers are good workers and very cheerful: they are efficient (given the limitations of the saws which need frequent resharpening) and they saw reasonably close to the marked line. They are a little reluctant to create waste by sawing through the middle of the timber

so some timbers are being cut a little flatter angled than I would wish.

Meanwhile the raft builders have mastered the cutting and the joining of the bamboos but are making some very poor selections of bamboo — putting natural curve where it is not wanted and straight pieces where natural curve is required.

I ask Truc to help me discuss this problem with the workers. He seems reluctant. Eventually we went to the yard where he wandered off to chat with Chang. I waited for five minutes, then shouted for Truc to come and start translating. It transpires that Nhu, for no good reason, and at some inconvenience, has taken the plans home during the morning. I became heated.

Mr Nhu wobbled off on a bicycle to retrieve the plans and when he returned we finally had a useful discussion (I hope) about the selection of bamboo. Truc is energetic and clever but can also be arrogant and lazy where tedious supervision is required and where he has not grasped the idea himself. His indifference makes it difficult to coordinate the supervision of both the sawing of the frames and the joining of the bamboos.

A good discussion with Truc over lunch. I hope we have negotiated a *modus operandum* which can be both cordial and efficient.

After lunch we manage to mark up five frames for the sawyers to saw during the course of the afternoon so that I can go to the raft yard.

Truc tells me he is suffering from an alcohol oppression. He is not accustomed to drinking more than one beer at a sitting, especially during the day, but he is frequently obliged to drink with Messrs. Khiem and Sou.

At the yard, after making an inspection tour, we leave poor Nhu, who has been berated for wrong selection of bamboo, scratching his head over a piece which is gently corkscrewed and will not fit properly anywhere in the structure. He puts up with all this for just a few cents a day — I wish he wouldn't bother.

Truc spends most of the day trying to transmit a fax from the newly installed machine at the Post Office. At the end of the day we have eleven timbers roughly sawn and twenty-six lengths of bamboo joined up. Tomorrow we will be finished joining the bamboos for the top layer of the raft, if the rain holds off. It is cool and windy with constant drizzle.

13th January The day dawns humid and mild. We mark five more frames for the carpenters and measure the angles of those already cut. Generally the angle is correct; they will need some cleaning up with an adze or an axe.

By the end of the day we have enough joined bamboos for the top layer, but there are a couple of problems. We



appear to be running out of the 1.5m bends, and that is because they are being used in the wrong place. Again, this is because no one will consult the plans. Nhu is at fault, but Truc is also wrong about the use of the 1.5m bends. He is very reluctant to defer to me or ask me anything. He keeps telling me to look after the frames and he will supervise the joining — but he is not on top of it, he doesn't completely know the sequence.

14th January Truc has been focusing on the big picture and come up with an elegant way of assembling the raft which will not involve turning it upside down. Perhaps my willingness to accept his ideas will assuage his rampant pride.

Ten more frames are sawn today. We are running out of useable crooks. There are, however, several very large pieces which can be used to make sawn frames. In general the size and shape of the timber supplied does not much fit with our requirements.

The weather turned decidedly *brutto* after lunch putting an end to work. Grey lowering clouds and gusting wind, but not enough rain to slake the dust; and there is plenty of dust swirling around.

15th January Cold, grey and dry. We finish sawing the thirty-four crooks before lunch and I arrange them (rather optimistically) as 17 matched pairs. I have been asking for a trial lash up of thirty-six lengths of bamboo to test the beam at various positions. It was going to be done yesterday, then this morning, then straight after lunch. Presumably there is a good reason why it is not done: it's a pity that Mr Truc doesn't feel inclined to vouchsafe that reason to me. Sealing the splits in the bamboo with pitch and/or *sunta* (lacquer) is proving to be a very time consuming and messy business. I rather doubt the efficacy of it too.

Mr Nhu has developed a terrible allergic reaction to the *sunta* and is a perfect picture of misery. I'm sure he really is in considerable discomfort: his prodigious ability to express his unhappiness by screwing up his little monkey face is rather comical.

[We were using a low-grade version the natural lacquer that is used to make oriental lacquerware to seal the bamboo, hopefully to keep teredo worms out. The lacquer is exuded, like rubber, by a certain type of tree to protect itself. Called *sun ta* in Vietnamese, it is highly acidic and contains toxins that burn the skin.]

16th January **COLD!** This would pass for a very cold winter day in Perth.

Trimming of the frames is under way and finally we make a trial lash up of thirty-six lengths to test the beam. The results are generally as predicted but the beam is rather narrow around frame thirteen. This seems to be

because length six is always made from slender bamboo while length one is always made from the thickest. Truc conveys my request that henceforth length six should be made from thicker pieces and one from relatively lighter pieces. But he says it would be useless to explain why — not sound management policy.

In this bitter cold weather, with moderately strong winds and a fairly big swell rolling on to the beach, I watched two large rafts from further south trying to get out through the breakers, presumably to get home. One succeeded but the other twice turned back just before getting swept onto the rocks at the leeward end of the beach. The crew are exhausted, cold and wet.

We had a working lunch with Mr Khiem: ie lots of beer. Truc became more forthright. He tells me that some of the men will be laid off after Tet and Mr Khiem will decide who that should be. Khiem is in charge of everything. Tonight we will have dinner with the management team — Messrs Khiem, Sou, Nhu and Chang. I should prepare a speech on what has been done and a detailed explanation of what is to come.

At the end of the day Truc concedes to translate for me while I talk to the joining teams about the selection of bamboo and the need to increase the beam in the after body. It is timely too, several lengths three and six have been joined wrongly because it looks neater.

In the evening at Mr Sou's I make a somewhat grandiloquent speech and Mr Khiem replies at great leee-e-----ngth. Khiem and Sou agree that all finishing of timbers should be done before Tet, leaving only the scarfing to be done later. It is also agreed that the frames and bamboos will all be readied for assembly between 30th Jan and 7 Feb, on which date assembly will start. Launching is now scheduled for 15th March.

I discussed details of the carpentry with Sou who runs a furniture shop as well as the Village People's Committee.

#\$%&! is it Cold.

We have a few drinks over dinner but it is all over fairly early. Mr Nhu was too much affected by the *Sunta* to attend.

Back at the Hotel Sordide I listen to BBC World Service. There is a half-hour program of music hosted by John Peel who was in vogue as an alternative late night DJ on Radio 1 decades ago when I was a long-haired teenager. He has maintained a certain sarcastic style — announcing a particularly inaccessible and meandering piece of alternative mediocrity:

"Last week I thrilled you with a number by Bad Quartet from Sweden: heres another." and later

" . . . from the Album *Surfing on Sine Waves* — to be attempted under adult supervision only, I suggest."

There is not much entertainment here.





17th January At 0700 I went to Sou's to instruct the sawyers and axemen who have been impressed from the raft site to trim up the frames.

The Army Captain/Timber-getter has arrived from the jungle with a truck load of timber. Baulks (2.0m x 0.5m) of heavy (unseasoned?) hardwood. We could build quite a nice boat with the timber we have now. The previous load of timber took four days to reach here because of frequent stops and searches at check-points. The Captain brought this lot down in one night brandishing his pistol. After the truck was unloaded, the sawyers set to sawing out 50mm x 100mm battens for the internal frames, and axemen set to trimming the sawn frames — they do a good job.

At 0830 I went with Truc, Chang, and Khiem to my old friends [who arrested Ian Lloyd and me] the "Frontier Police". [I never found out why the Frontier Police were stationed several hundred miles from the border.] None of my former interrogators were in evidence. We exchanged formal pleasantries and short speeches, then handed over packages of cigarettes, booze and money. Then we had a few beers — just the thing on a freezing cold morning.

Next we went to the People's Army where we go through the same ceremony in a more convivial atmosphere. Then to the Sam Son Police HQ where we repeat the formula with a morose, cross-eyed dwarf who is said to be the 2IC. By 1030, when it was all over, we had necked several beers. Truc has told me how difficult he finds it drinking during the day, yet at the Frontier Police he sculled two bottles to everyone else's one. Later he moderated his intake, but he did some serious drinking. Is Truc a closet piss-artist, I wonder. That would certainly explain his frequent impatience, his tendency to repeat himself and over-emphasis, his tendency to fall into a deep sleep during the afternoon, lack of appetite and chubby build. He is an invaluable expediter of all the project's aims — I shall suppress these seditious thoughts.

After the social round I went to Sou's where one of the axeman had gone home suffering from *sunta* allergy.

At 1100, at the raft site, Khiem, Sou and Truc each deliver speeches that sound like harangues. I tried a more thanking and light-hearted delivery, through Truc, who is an excellent interpreter in these formal dos. The speech received a very warm ovation and the little jokes were obviously successfully conveyed. The speeches over, we gave gifts (ciggies and cheap booze) to each of the fishermen who work on the raft, starting with the two eldest who are both excellent workers and also men of great skill and dignity. They are expert at their work but do not engage in the frequent argey-bargey about how it should be done.



*Truc (right) and Shou offer kind words of encouragement*

Truc excused himself from lunch pleading exhaustion after the morning's exertions. Early in the afternoon the north wind returned with a vengeance and the weather became even colder. I feel like Scott of the Antarctic sitting here writing this diary.

There was nothing for me to do during the afternoon. I made paper airplanes from used sheets of paper and launched them from the balcony. The children scampered after them, treasuring them as rare gifts. The better-off kids use them as toys while some others seem to value them as potential kindling material.

In the evening we have a big pre-Tet-holiday-dinner. It is well-catered and pleasant. In attendance are various local big-knobs. Particularly notable is the local Colonel of the Police, Army, and Frontier Police, who looks exactly like a geriatric orang utan that has learned how to smoke cigarettes and he performs his trick incessantly. I found myself sitting down wind of him.

The meal included bifstik char-grilled with sesame seeds, and finished with a very Portuguese steam-boat containing sardines and beans and lots of chilly. After the meal, Khiem and Sou tried to start up a drinking match using beers. I sculled a couple of cans and then went to get my supply of local firewater flavoured and coloured with Irish coffee beans which Chang had sampled earlier and thought was some expensive imported booze.

After dinner, back in my room I was visited by Truc who was in a repentant mood. I complimented him on his translation of the several speeches during the day. Truc has interpolated all the correct formulae in the speeches that I have made today and yesterday. He has consistently put in "On behalf of Tim . . ." which I tended to forget towards the end of the day, as well as all the correct bits about Mr Khiem and the Workers and The Party.



# QUIZ

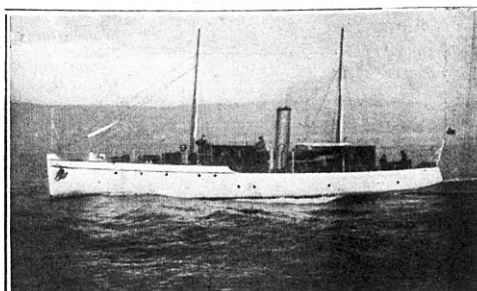
## Answers to December

1. The *Kormoran* was originally named the *Steiermark*
2. The southern most point of mainland South America is Cape Froward, 1, 178 feet high.
3. Mandalay Beach near Walpole is named after the iron barque *Mandalay* wrecked there on 15 May 1911. The barque was 201ft in length with a 32.8ft beam and was of 904 tons net. It had been sailing from Delagoa Bay in Mozambique to Albany.

## Quiz

1. HMS *Beagle* spent a considerable time in Western Australian waters. Did Charles Darwin ever come to Western Australia?
2. The *Batavia*, *Vergulde Draeck*, *Zeewijk* and *Zuytdorp* are the four known VOC shipwrecks in Western Australia. Respectively, to which VOC Chamber did each belong?
3. Where was the *City of Adelaide* built, and in what year was she launched?

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