

MARITIME HERITAGE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

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Maritime Heritage Association, Inc.*

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Ross Shardlow and Richard Knox discussing the history of the ship Byramgore over a glass of Byramgou Park's finest red.

See article by Ross Shardlow on page 12



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.)

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www.maritmeheritage.org.au

NOTICE

All members of the MHA are invited to join in a gathering to visit
Rolly Tasker's

Australian Sailing Museum



Meet before at: 12 Cleopatra Drive
MANDURAH

9.30 am, 12 October 2008
For morning tea.



We will then move on in a group to the museum. We anticipate that a viewing will take about 2 hours, and those who would like to can join in lunch afterwards.

This will provide a good opportunity for all members to get together, new members are especially welcome.

Things They Would Rather Have Not Said

I am to acquaint you that I never once was able to make use of the compass in a troubled sea, and the reason for this, I could not make the brass box keep a horizontal plane; the motion of the ship always made it incline one way or another, from which it would not of itself return; I think it is far too complex an instrument ever to be of general use at sea.

Lt. James Cook to the Admiralty, 12 July 1771

Cook is considered one of the greatest navigators and chart surveyors in Royal Navy history.



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 Russian battleship *Suvarov* which took part in the devastating Battle of Tsushima in 1905 had a conning-tower just below the bridge. Protected by 10-inch thick armour the ten-foot diameter, seven-foot high tower contained everything necessary to direct the ship in battle: wheel and compass, engine room telegraph, speaking tube, electric controls linked to the gun batteries, duplicated telephones, range finders, signalling apparatus, a navigator's chart table, and sixteen men. It must have been a bit cramped during use!

The first armoured battleship ever to have been sunk by gunfire was the Imperial Russian battleship *Oslyaba* at 3.30pm on 27 May 1905 during the Battle of Tsushima.

Sir Isaac Newton, then president of the Royal Society, was asked to serve as an ex officio member of the Board of Longitude, the organisation set up in 1714 for "finding the longitude at sea". He accepted, but in doing so stated (tongue in cheek) that he had not realized that it had been lost!

In January 1847 the Swedish Consul in Melbourne offered to bring out 600 Swedes to settle and farm at Augusta. The proposal was rejected.

Western Australia was exporting railway sleepers to India before there was a railway in the State.

On 20 December 1886 the sailing ship *Kapunda*, en-route to Western Australia, collided with the iron cargo vessel *Ada Melmore* 600 miles off the coast of Brazil. One third of the 268 passengers were young people, and many of these were young women. Some of the male passengers, who had been sleeping on the upper deck because of the heat, were saved, but there was great loss of life as many were trapped below decks.

The first lighthouse keeper at the Point Moore light in Geraldton was Joseph Wright, an Enrolled

Pensioner, who had recently arrived in Geraldton, with his family, from the Falkland Islands

The Coast Radio Station in Geraldton started operations on 12 May 1913.

When, on 31 March 1910, the steamer *Pericles* hit a rock and sank within a very short time off Cape Leeuwin, the survivors were taken ashore by ship's lifeboats. Mr Frank Smith, third class steward, related one of his experiences with a survivor: "I had barely landed with a boat load of passengers on the Flinders Bay beach, and was up to my very eyes in work when an excitable Jewish youth, with much gesticulation, seized hold of me in a vice-like grip and in loud tones demanded his ticket back".

The tunnel under the English Channel has been a possibility for many years. A short article in the *West Australian* for Friday 29 June 1880 reported that the British Parliament had rejected the Channel Tunnel Bill earlier that month.

The first anti-ship mine was invented in 1855. It consisted of a zinc cylinder 2 feet long and 18 inches in diameter filled with gunpowder. The charge was set off by breaking any one of a set of tubular glass detonators filled with acid. These mines were initially called torpedos, while self-propelled torpedos (as we now know them) were called locomotive torpedos.

The first incident in which a steam driven ship was involved in a battle occurred in 1824 when the Royal Navy paddle-wheel tug *Diana* under the command of Lieutenant Kellett attacked a Burmese flotilla during the First Burmese War.

Strain bands. Extra bands of canvas, usually only seen on large square sails, to give the same support to the bunt of the sail as the bolt-ropes do to the leeches.



Montevideo Maru—1 July 1942

In the last edition of this journal I wrote a short article on fate of the *Montevideo Maru* and over 1,000 Australians who were lost when she was torpedoed during World War II. I believe this disaster needs to be much more widely known. Permission has been obtained to reproduce two articles first published in *Una Voce*, the Journal of the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia Inc., in June 2008. The first is by Maxwell R. Hayes, R.P.N.G.C. and is titled:

66 YEARS ON - RECOGNITION FOR THE MONTEVIDEO MARU

At last the fate of the 1,053 unfortunate prisoners of war on this ill fated vessel has stirred the interest of many Australians who have never heard of this vessel and its sinking on 1.7.1942. Previously it was as if the fact that the Australian servicemen and civilians lost in the defence of the hopelessly indefensible obscure locations of New Britain and New Ireland didn't matter. After the war, in late 1945, details of the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru* were released but were only of concern to the grieving relatives. To the rest of the Australian population it didn't matter, after all, it was only one of many Jap ships sunk by American submarines during the war. So what? The battle on the Owen Stanley Ranges was much more important and was closer to home with survivors to return and tell their stories of unparalleled hardship, courage and defeat of a much larger Japanese force.

For many years family members and survivors of the 'Lark Force'; 2/22nd battalion, soldiers and civilians captured in early 1942, have been seeking answers to the absence of information due to the secrecy still surrounding Australia's greatest maritime loss of life due to an appalling lack of interest and insensitivity on the part of successive Australian governments over the last 63 years since the end of WW2.

The reason appears to be simple. The then Curtin Australian wartime government abandoned those unfortunate souls to their fate, when they could have been saved. It decreed that the loading of copra on the Norwegian freighter, the *Herstein*, was more important than evacuating those hopelessly outnumbered defenders of Rabaul and New Ireland and the male civilians remaining there. Little wonder that any government would want to give access to files testifying to its own betrayal of its citizens.

After years of trying, along with others, to get some publicity for this tragic event, I managed to get a lengthy letter printed in the Melbourne Age and an edited version in the Melbourne Herald Sun on 13.04.2008, though I feel this only came about by linking it, as I did, with the loss of HMAS *Sydney*. This seemed to cause considerable interest and I had many enquiries. As a result considerable public interest appears to have been created by events which follow below.

At this stage I must state that I am only one of many who have had the fate of those on the *Montevideo Maru* at heart but in the absence of others not writing an update for *Una Voce*, I feel compelled to do so.

The publishing of several books on events about the Japanese capture of Rabaul and Kavieng in January 1942, 'Rabaul 1942', Aplin 1980; 'Coconuts and Tearooms', Boys 1993; 'Hostages to Freedom', Stone 1995/1999; 'Betrayal in High Places', McKay 1996; 'Masked Eden', McCosker 1998; 'A Very Long War', Reeson 2000; 'Yours Sincerely, Tom', Henderson 2000; 'Uncle Joe's Story', Osley 2002; 'Yours Sincerely, Tom Revisited', Henderson 2005; 'He's Not Coming Home', Nikakis 2005; 'The Lost Women of Rabaul', Miller 2006, and other publications, none seems to have caused more than the slightest ripple of interest amongst the Australian population.

Considerable credit for also persevering with this quest is due to Albert Speer, MBE, a WW2 soldier in PNG as well as being a long serving PNG Administration officer who by dint of extensive searching, considerable expense and good luck finally located one of the Japanese seamen who managed to get ashore with several other seamen (several of whom were killed by Philippine guerillas). He is believed to be the only remaining sur-



vivor alive today. On a trip to Japan in 2002, Albert discovered an obscure publication, 'Japanese Merchant Ships at War', a history of the OSK Mitsui line (of which the *Montevideo Maru* was a part) by a Japanese historian, Hishahi Noma, who was able to put Albert in touch with Yoshiaki Yamaji. As a result of this it was deemed of sufficient interest to approach Max Uechtritz, then Director of News and Current Affairs, with PNG connections going back to the very early days of his great grandmother Phoebe Parkinson. Max then directed the ABC Tokyo correspondent to locate and interview Yamaji which resulted in a revealing report on the *Montevideo Maru* aired as part of the ABC 7.30 Report on 16.10.2003, but again the interest lapsed.

Some interest was shown by families when the *Montevideo Maru* Memorial was commissioned at Ballarat on 7.02.2004 as a minor part of the huge POW wall commemoration. This privately funded memorial (with funding refused by the Federal Government) and the commissioning aroused only slight, but quickly forgotten, interest.

Fast forward to 2008. Some action at last. Local and interstate newspapers are taking some interest. The Melbourne Herald Sun devoted two pages to the story of the 2/22nd battalion, (featuring Norm Furness, one of the handful of that ill fated unit) and the fall of Rabaul in the weekend magazine on 19.04.2008.

The Melbourne Age featured a full page article by Simon Mann on 25/26.04.2008 about a letter from his uncle, Eric Mann, (captured at Rabaul) and part of a bundle of letters airdropped by the Japs over Port Moresby in early 1942.

An ABC documentary TV crew filmed the Melbourne Shrine service held on 20.01..2008 (being the Sunday before the fall of Rabaul) and which was aired on TV as part of the Compass program on Sunday 20.04.2008. This program very largely revolved around the Brunswick Salvation Army band, which served as medical attendants of the 2/22nd battalion and which was lost with the exception of a single survivor still living in Victoria, Fred Kollmorgen.

Max Uechtritz, now Editor in Chief of Channel 9, put together a very extensive online multimedia

presentation on the fall of Rabaul with the focal point being the *Montevideo Maru* on 24.04.2008 and which remained, with links, for several days. These links focused on several aspects of the Rabaul debacle. One of these was a petition calling on the Prime Minister to fund a search for the wreck of the *Montevideo Maru* off Cape Luzon, Philippines, and for the declaration of this site as a war grave. As at the date of this report for *Una Voce*, nearly 1000 comments were logged on. Around 99% of those were in favour of the twin proposals. Many comments show that Australians are appalled that they have never heard anything about this disaster. Did these men give their lives for Australia's freedom just to be forgotten? They deserve some formal recognition. [You can read Max Uechtritz's original article at: <http://news.ninemsn.com.au/article.aspx?id=452388>.

There are several 'Related Links' attached to it, including one by Professor Hank Nelson.]

Our Editor, Andrea Williams, the granddaughter of Philip Coote, a victim of the sinking, made a live appearance on the Channel 9 'Today Show' on Anzac Day, and very creditably outlined the facts of the sinking.

The Sydney Morning Herald on Anzac Day ran an article entitled 'Ship carried 1051(sic) Australians to their grave', and 'The Australian' on 26.04.2008 picked up the sinking with a background article entitled 'Rudd may fund hunt for *Montevideo Maru*'. The May issue of the Victorian 'Senior' newspaper also gave a detailed report on this sinking and here the journalist had a personal loss in that of his uncle, Sgt. Stanley Padey. Many local, intrastate and interstate radio stations also gave coverage of this event.

So, will there finally be a search for the *Montevideo Maru*? Currently it is believed that Mr. Rudd is considering an appeal to provide funds for a search for the location, but not to retrieve, the *Montevideo Maru*.

That is where progress lies at this moment. We must keep up the impetus and I urge members of PNGAA (Inc) to use every means at their disposal to have this event, in which nearly twice as many Australians died as were lost on HMAS *Sydney*, enshrined as part of our war time history, the search to locate be made, and the site declared a war grave.



PRESSURE IS MOUNTING TO LOCATE MONTEVIDEO MARU

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has been asked to commit the Commonwealth Government to an expedition to locate the last resting place of the *Montevideo Maru* and the men she carried.

Of importance, too, is recognising the tragedy by declaring the site of the sinking a Commonwealth War Grave and erecting a monument at an appropriate place on the Philippines coast as a permanent memorial.

The sinking of the *Montevideo Maru* was Australia's greatest maritime disaster. Those with family involved in the tragedy can empathize with the families of those men lost on HMAS *Sydney*. It is just as important to locate the *Montevideo Maru*. The story of the *Montevideo Maru* should also have a significant place in our Australian history. Australia lost 1053 men who were said to be on board *Montevideo Maru* when it was torpedoed by 'friendly fire' off the coast of the Philippines on 01 July 1942. Whilst doubts exist over the final passenger manifest, the loss

of these men involved twice as many Australians as those who died in Vietnam and over 400 more than HMAS *Sydney*.

Max Uechtritz, together with the Ninemsn team, put together a comprehensive multimedia coverage which included an indication of potential support from Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. This featured on the Ninemsn news website on 24 April 2008. Links to these articles as well as several other articles and video links can still be accessed as follows:

<http://news.ninemsn.com.au/article.aspx?id=452388>
or
<http://news.ninemsn.com.au/article.aspx?id=452386>.

Ninemsn has launched a national petition to the government to fund the search for the *Montevideo Maru*. This is well worth a visit as it includes space for personal comments and reflection:

<http://news.ninemsn.com/article.aspx?id=451908>.

Montevideo Maru

Readers of the Maritime Heritage Association Journal may like to know a little more about the *Montevideo Maru*, a twin screw steamer, which originally held a British Board of Trade Passenger Certificate. Below are some of the ship's specifications:

Official Number:	28853
Builder:	Mitsubishi Zosen Kaisha Ltd
Place of Building:	Nagasaki
Date Launched	August 1926
Port of Registration:	Osaka
Length:	430 ft
Breadth:	56 ft
Depth:	36 ft
Tonnage:	7,267 gross, 6,088 underdeck, 4,378 net
Engine specifications:	2 x 12 cylinder 2S. C.S.A. oil engines; 1,164 NHP

The ship had three decks and seven bulkheads, and was fitted with a cellular double bottom 353 ft long which held 1,368 tons of fuel oil. Further fuel tanks were each side of the tunnel and held 719 tons of fuel, while a forepeak tank held 117 tons. The forecastle was 47 ft long, and the bridge had a length of 63 ft.

Reference: *Lloyd's Register of British and Foreign Shipping, 1941-42.*

Peter Worsley, Editor



BINTANG MAS, 1979

Part eight of Nick Burningham's Messing about in exotic boats

Dan's idea that we build something too big to row seemed like a good idea. We would have a *perahu lambo* built in Indonesia. We weren't particular ambitious, something about 13 metres (42ft) on deck was what we had in mind. It was to be a gaff rigged ketch so that we could drop the mainsail in a squall and continue beating to windward if necessary. A sloop-rigged *lambo* will not go to windward with only the jib set.

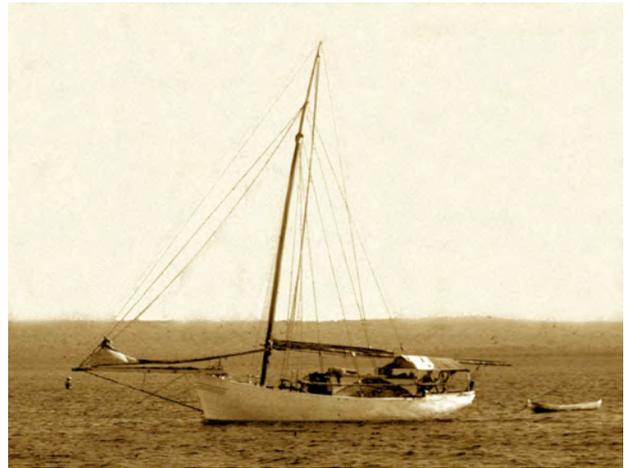
Dan sold SRI JUMBUK for not quite ten times what he'd bought her for and generously gave me part of the proceeds. We also did a bit of work. I worked caulking TUNAS HARAPAN for a while.

Peter Walker had sailed down to Darwin in BINTANG MAS ("Gold Star") a few weeks after we'd made the passage back from Bali in SRI JUMBUK. He'd made a slower passage across the Timor Sea although BINTANG MAS was clearly considerably faster than SRI JUMBUK.

We had a race for traditional sailing vessels in early May of 1979. BURONG BAHRI proved a little faster than SRI JUMBUK and BINTANG MAS sailed about twice as fast. We'd always known she was fast. I'd admired BINTANG MAS when I had ANTARTIKA and I'd seen her tacked out of Benoa early one morning by her Bajau crew who sailed her a bit like hoons doing wheelies in a car park; reaching back and forth across the channel in front of Tanjung Benoa village and tacking her in her own length by putting the helm hard down while letting fly the jib sheets, then backing the jib to push the bow round onto the new tack. They did that a few times until they'd warmed her up, then settled down to seriously tacking out to sea.

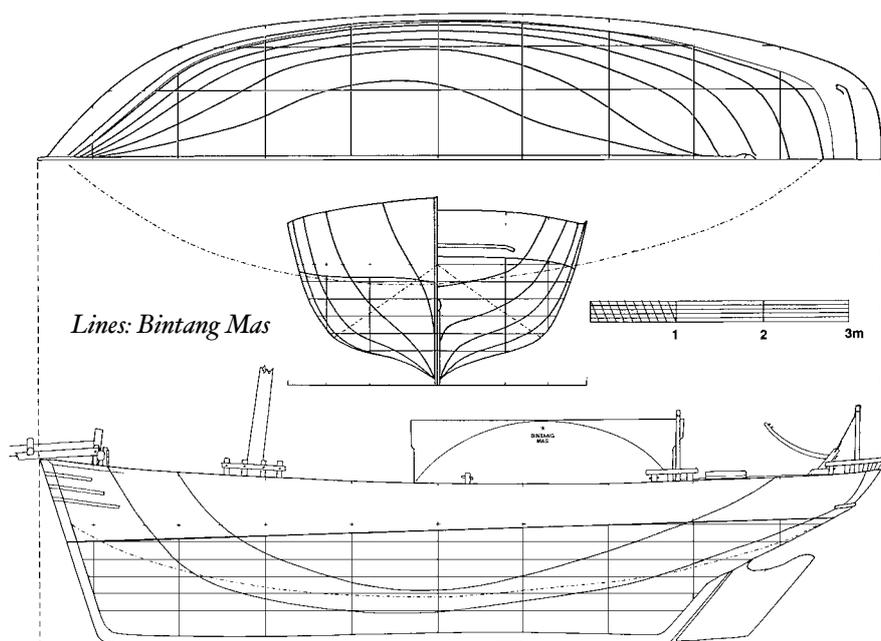
Peter was planning to sail back to Indonesia in the dry season of 1979 and thought he might go to Bonerate where BINTANG MAS had been built. We wanted to go to Bonerate to see about having a *perahu* built for us and perhaps to meet Haji Pehiring who owned HATI NORMAL.

The crew for the voyage was Peter and his brother Ron, Dan and his partner Vicki, me, and a young couple called Clayton and Alison. Clayton was a dopey young surfer with rich parents. He was very interested in the power of pyramids and in conspiracy theories involving the Freemasons, the CIA and extra-terrestrials which he often tried to discuss seriously with us. It was his mission that we recognise that one's body is one's temple and that we should not fill it with toxins (meaning booze). As I remember it, Clayton was not averse to smoking alkaloid-laden leaves.



We had a windy passage across the Timor sea that year. We were only two days and twenty hours from Darwin to raising the coast of Timor; three days and a few hours to the anchorage at Kupang. BINTANG MAS proved terrible to steer when running in a strong breeze with big seas, even with the mainsail deep reefed. She was a relatively new style of *lambo* with a short keel, a strongly raked sternpost and a very gradual run creating a lot of buoyancy aft of the rudder. She fought to round up much of the time. One had to exert a lot of energy steering her with a tackle on the tiller and often had the tiller over 20° to windward while she was still rounding up. The terrible thing was that every so often she would suddenly obey her helm and take a sheer to leeward, threatening to gybe. When that happened you had to cast off the tackle and heave the helm down as hard as you could. We changed from our usual three hour tricks on the helm to one hour tricks.

Eventually we did gybe, smashing the boom on the running back stay. Ron was on the helm at the time, it was daylight and the wind wasn't particularly strong. The problem was that we had just landed a nice fish and Ron was momentarily distracted. Peter punched him around a bit and then we fished the boom using the dinghy oars as splints, as we had seen the crew of a *bago* do the previous year. We sailed all the way to Kupang with the mainsail deep reefed. There was no need to shake the reef out even when beating into the anchorage at Kupang. We anchored at Namo Sain, a more picturesque anchorage than Tenau, closer to down-town Kupang. No new boom was available at Kupang so we sailed down to Baa, Rote. It was still very windy and sailing under the lee of Rote, on a broad reach in flat water BINTANG MAS occasionally



The following morning we were running between Pamana and Pulau Besar to open out Maumere bay when the wind went ahead for the first time since we left Darwin. We beat into the stiff breeze, luffing through gusts and getting a good soaking. BINTANG MAS would not point very high when beating and made plenty of leeway, but she kept up excellent speed through the water. She was actually a fairly dainty vessel below the waterline but had big shoulders to her bow above the waterline. When beating those shoulders slammed into each sea and sent buckets of water flying back over the whole vessel. She was always doused

sailed so fast in the gusts that her counter sank into her wake and water boiled up over the taffrail.

On Rote Pastor Franz Lackner used his new truck to take us looking for a new boom. Indonesian perahu usually have booms made of giant bamboo. Finding bamboo of the correct size is not too difficult, but finding bamboo with the right strength and wall thickness is more difficult. The bamboo we got in Rote was freshly cut, which is not good, and it looked to be only just strong enough. Peter was not happy with it especially when he had to pay about \$10 – a price he thought scandalously inflated.

However, we fitted the new boom, re-bent the sail and were ready to sail. We had been joined at Baa by Jerry Williams with his partner Helia and their two young boys sailing BURONG BAHRI. We sailed at the same time from Baa and agreed that we would meet up again at Maumere on the north coast of Flores.

Once again it was windy, the wind was a little aft of the beam going up the Sabu Sea to Flores Strait. There wasn't the same risk of gybing, but even with the jib sheeted fairly flat BINTANG MAS wanted to round up and sail further east; it was a constant fight to keep her on course. Again we stood one hour tricks on the helm. During the night not everyone put enough effort into keeping her on course.

We had a fast passage across the Sabu Sea in spite of getting too far to the east in the night, and ran on up through Larentuka Narrows where we perfected the controlled gybe: sheeting the main right in while running straight downwind to swap BINTANG MAS's two pairs of running backstays.

from end to end when beating in any sort of breeze. We were buffeting into the headseas nicely when I looked aft and saw the main sheet strop was constricting and cutting into the main boom, which, being still green, was rather soft. The end of the boom beyond the sheet was bending upwards in an unhealthy way. We fished the boom without lowering the sail, then eased sheets a bit and tacked on into Maumere with the main luffing. As usual the wind followed us round so that no matter where we were in the bay, it was always blowing directly from Maumere anchorage.

In Maumere we purchased a much more suitable boom and put an extra sheath of bamboo on it in way of the main sheet strop. We were there for a few days and became concerned that Burong Bahri didn't arrive. Then, one day, Jerry and Helia arrived in Maumere by bus from Ende on the south coast of Flores. In the strong winds on the Sabu Sea they had wearied of trying to keep up to the course for Flores Strait and had decided to run for Ende instead since it gave them a much more comfortable course.

From Maumere we sailed to the volcanic island of Paloe. We anchored there, partly so that we wouldn't reach our next destination, Bonerate, in the middle of the night. Paloe is a volcano that rises straight up out of the sea. It is very steep-to — there are few places where a perahu can anchor and no really safe anchorages. We anchored for the afternoon near a small spit of shingle where some perahu were beached, on the lee (northwest) side of the island. We went ashore and after a while we were invited to climb up a steep path and see the village where there were water-tanks built



with money from the Paloe divers who worked on Balinese turtle perahu based at Benoa — it was assumed we would know them personally since all tourists went to Bali. The village was a loose collection of huts built on stilts on the steep slope of the mountain. Some were more like treehouses. There are no water courses or ponds on Paloe, and very few wells. The people depend on collecting rainwater for cooking, and for drinking they harvest the sap of lontar and other sugar palms.

We stayed until about sunset. The village chief, thinking we might be staying after dark, called everyone to bring their kerosene pressure lanterns to his house in the hope that they might be able to assemble one working lantern from the parts of their several broken lanterns. We assured them it wasn't necessary, and as it grew dark we were escorted down the treacherous goat trail to the beach. We sailed a couple of hours later and reached Bonerate early the next morning.

Bonerate is a very barren limestone island, but it was the home of a large fleet of perahu that traded to Singapore and beyond, and eastwards as far as New Guinea. Until the middle of the 19th century it had been one of the more notorious pirate lairs in the region and the Dutch had very nearly lost the steam cruiser HECLA in the final battle against the heavily armed pirate ships. However, the anchorage at Bonerate is not good. There is a fringing reef, several hundred metres from the high tide line, but on the edge of a strait too deep for small craft to anchor in. You have to drop one anchor on the shallow reef and another over the edge of the reef and hope it holds somewhere on the submarine cliff.

When we were anchored to Peter's satisfaction, we went ashore where there were scores of perahu under construction all along the beach. Some of them were little *lambo sekoci* of a tonne or two, and towering over them were the hulls of big motor-sailers, up to about 250 tonnes. We soon learned that we had arrived at a very propitious time. Haji Syukri, a son of Haji Pehiring who we had come to see about building a perahu, was preparing to launch a large new perahu called HATI GEMBIRA (Elated Heart).

Dan and I had clear ideas about the design of a perahu lambo to be built for us. We wanted plenty of sheer in the stern so that waves would not break over the stern as they had done on TUNAS HARAPAN, and we wanted a good long sternpost, positioned well-aft so she would steer easily, unlike BINTANG MAS. HATI GEMBIRA did not have those characteristics, she had a very short sternpost positioned too far forward for our likings, but Haji Syukri assured us he could arrange for the building of what we required. It quickly



Haji Syukri

became clear that we would be dealing with Haji Syukri more than his elderly father Haji Pehiring. Later we learned that it was Haji Syukri who had built HATI NORMAL the perahu we had admired at Tenau. Perhaps because Syukri had been sailing the original HATI NORMAL (built by Haji Pehiring when Syukri was a young boy) when she was wrecked, Pehiring had assumed ownership of the second HATI NORMAL.

We were treated as guests of honour at the pre-launch ceremony—the drilling of the perahu's *poci* or navel. Before a lambo can be launched at Bonerate, a ceremony called *hada lomboa lele ika* must be performed. In this ceremony the *kepala pande* (master shipwright) bores a hole right through the keel at a position either one hand span or one fore arm length forward of the middle of the keel and between two floors. This hole is the navel of the vessel. (Called the *lele ika* in the language of Bonerate, *poci* to Bugis speaking Haji Syukri, or *pusat* in Indonesian). Before boring the *lele ika*, the *kepala pande* must compose himself and during the operation he must remain calm, breathing only through his nose, and holding his tongue so that it touches neither the roof of his mouth nor his teeth. This must be a considerable act of concentration since he has to drill right through a keel of very hard wood with a hand auger, whilst squatting in the bilge of the vessel, in tropical heat; and all this with a large white cloth draped over his head. Some builders enter a trance-like state and can divine things about the perahu's future. Scraps of the timber from boring the *lele ika* are collected and kept in a bottle in the home of the builder or the owner, so that the perahu will know where its home is and always return safely. After the *lele ika* has been drilled



Launching Hati Gembira

the builder cedes ownership of the vessel to the client, although he may continue to work on fitting out. For the *bada lomboa lele ika* the client provides the builder with a gold ring, a new shirt and sarong, and a length of white cloth. As with the laying of the keel, there is a festive meal to which everyone in the community is invited if the client is wealthy enough.

The *lele ika* is stopped with a temporary plug until the perahu is fitted out and ready to sail; at that time the *kepala pande* comes on board again, and with four candles burning around him he removes the temporary plug. Sea water spurts in through the *lele ika* which he quickly re-plugs with a carefully made tapered dowel, using a selected round stone as the hammer. The stone represents the heart of the vessel (*bati*: literally the liver, but Indonesians ascribe to the liver the role of determining character and emotion that the west traditionally ascribes to the heart). During this ceremony the *kepala pande* might also divine something of the vessels character and future prospects. In the only case of which I have personal experience, the builder's predictions proved remarkably apposite. The symbolic stone *bati* is kept in the bilge beside the *lele ika*; sometimes with a piece of cloth or rattan tied around it so that it cannot be mistakenly thrown out when discharging ballast.

The next morning — the day after the *bada lomboa lele ika* — was the launching. The launching of a perahu lambo at Bonerate was achieved by simply dragging the vessel to the water using manpower with no mechanical aid. There are no slipways, and capstans were not traditionally used though I believe they are used now. To launch a large lambo, a vessel of 100 tonnes carrying capacity and weighing perhaps forty or fifty tonnes, requires a great deal of manpower. Launchings are scheduled for low tide so that the vessel can be dragged to the water's edge where

she will float off at high tide. The launching is announced through the village headman, and all the available men are expected to contribute their labour as *gotong royong*—the unpaid contribution of labour to the village which is an essential element of all Indonesian communities. The men are also attracted to the launching by the prospect of a festive meal, especially if the lambo is large and the owner is wealthy.

In preparation for launching most of the shores (the props that hold the hull upright during construction) are taken out from under the bilge, and planks

are laid out in front of the vessel for the keel to slide on. Long steel cables are taken around the stern with their two ends led forwards towards the beach: lambo are built bow towards the sea. These cables need to be of considerable length since hundreds of men will be pulling on them. Rope is too elastic for the purpose: in the past, when steel cable was not available, ropes made up of large rattan vines were used. It was necessary to borrow all the available steel cables of Bonerate village to launch the large lambo HATI GEMBIRA.

Approximately two-thirds of the men who have gathered for the launching, line out on the cables ready to pull when the order is given. The rest of the men gather on each side of the hull to hold it upright when the last of the shores are removed. The workshy and the disabled lean on the stern and roll cigarettes. With all the shores removed the hull teeters on an even keel. The men on the cables take up the slack, but they do not heave on the cables like men in a tug of war or trimming the weather mainbrace of a square rigger. Instead they all give short sharp tugs on the cables, all tugging at exactly the same time. The cables have to be lined out absolutely straight so that there is no catenary elasticity in the lines when the tugging starts: the men nearest the vessel have to hold the cables above shoulder height to keep cables straight. The tugging is coordinated to the rhythmic chant yelled out by the leader of the launching party. When the cables are straight and taut to his satisfaction, he calls out "*Hela! Hela! Hela! Hela!...*", slowly at first so that everyone can fall into time, and then increasingly rapidly until, either the coordination breaks down, or the vessel begins to move. At the same time, the men holding the vessel upright rock her slightly and those under the counter attempt to lift her. If the friction on the keel that holds the vessel is broken and she starts to inch forward, a great shout goes up and the men on the cables begin to lean to



Hati Gembira anchored at Namu Sain.

their task and start dragging the vessel forward, shouting and whooping. With the initial friction broken they accelerate rapidly to a slow run. The men who are trying to hold the hull upright soon lose control and scatter as the vessel crashes down onto her bilge! She then slews round on her bilge and the men on the cables stop pulling. When they have gathered their breath, as many men as possible line up along the side she has fallen onto and prepare to attempt to lift her back upright. This is coordinated by the leader calling out an invitation to the perahu, "*Ari bangun! Satu, Dua, Tiga!*" (Let's get up! One, Two, Three!) with everyone lifting on the *Tiga!* With a large perahu it seems impossible that she could be lifted back to upright by manpower alone, and it is usually only achieved after several attempts and a great deal of straining — apparently Indonesian men are not prone to herniating. Once the hull has been brought upright, the whole process can begin again, and it is repeated until the vessel is at the water's edge and the men on the cables are in the water. The process is accompanied by much shouting, and splashing in the later stages; and it is a very exciting and festive scene combining coordinated manpower, almost on the scale of pyramid building, with great merriment. Sometimes several boats of different sizes are launched on the same tide.

HATI GEMBIRA refused to move despite several attempts, so the men and cables were all moved to a smaller lambo further down the beach which also awaited launching. That was quite simply achieved and got the men warmed up. They returned to HATI GEMBIRA and with great exhortation from the elderly *Syabbandar* ("harbour master") of Bonerate eventually got her down the beach to the waters edge.

The traditional launching on the mainland of Sulawesi is a similar but gentler process. Long beams are lashed across the vessel like huge outrigger booms and these are used to assist in lifting and pushing the

hull, and also to hold it upright so that it does not crash down onto one or other bilge several times during the launching. Why the men of Bonerate prefer such a violent launching is not clear, but they are proud that their perahu can withstand it.

During the afternoon Dan and I talked with Haji Syukri and Haji Pehiring about building us a new lambo of about 13m length on deck, 10m keel. We fairly quickly negotiated a reasonable price (Rp 2 500 000) and the purchase of a baulk of timber to make the keel in one piece. Haji Syukri naturally wanted a deposit, but we weren't carrying much cash. I think we gave him a very small amount of money and agreed to return from Bali with more cash once we got our visas extended. We were concerned about the lack of any legal contract although we quite understood that a legal contract would offer absolutely no protection if Haji Syukri intended to defraud us.

Haji Syukri had the answer. Come with me, he said, and took us down to where the perahu were being built on the beach. He climbed on to a large pile of lumber and called to all the shipwrights. Then he announced to them that he had contracted to build a lambo of the agreed dimensions for us, at the agreed price, and ended by stating emphatically that he had a reputation that he would not sell for Rp 25,000,000. That was more than just the promise of a man who was proud of his good name. Merchants such as Haji Syukri operated in a world where there were no useful legal documents and trust was essential, so they depended on their good name to do business. He was stating that his reputation in business was worth more than the Rp. 2,500,000 we had agreed to pay.

We were invited to sail up to Haji Syukri and Haji Pehiring's home island of Jinato, about 35 miles to the north, but Peter had other things to do. The next day the Hajis in their family yacht JINATO JAYA set off towing HATI GEMBIRA to be rigged and fitted out at her new home, and BINTANG MAS set sail for Bali, but not without some delay.

The anchor wouldn't come up. We sailed around it and pulled it from various directions, but it wouldn't come up. It was down in more than twenty metres of water, none of us could dive down to it, so we had to send ashore for a diver who demanded several tens of thousands of rupiah. Perhaps it was only five or ten thousands (a handful of dollars) but it seemed like blackmail particularly to Peter.

As far as I can remember we had an easy run down to Bali.



The *Byramgou* Cup

and the Extermination of Pirates

by Ross Shardlow

It is the singular practice at the *Superior Persons' Maritime Book Reading Club* to award extra points to those members who introduce a wine label of maritime significance during the readings. At a recent meeting, an esteemed member presented an agreeable Shiraz Grenache labelled 'Byramgou Park', claiming that the *Byramgou* was the name of a ship. The label displays a magnificent viticulturally embellished golden cup said to have been awarded to the commander, Captain Crockett, as a mark of esteem. The *Byramgou*, however, was not a name familiar to the Superior Members promoting a call for further research before acknowledging the status of the label.



THE PRESENT DAY GUARDIAN of the cup is Captain Crockett's great-great-grandson, Richard Crockett Knox; owner of the Byramgou Park winery estate situated eight kilometres east of Donnybrook. The inscription on the cup, which is reproduced on the back wine label, reads:

PRESENTED
to Captain Crockett¹
BY MAJOR GENERAL SMITH, C. B.
and the Officers of his Staff
PASSENGERS ON BOARD THE BYRAMGOU
during the Expedition to Arabia in 1821
as a mark of their Esteem.

As Western Australia was not colonised until 1829, I did not expect to find any association with this vessel and the Swan River Colony. A quick search through the colonial shipping records confirmed there was no vessel by that name on the listings; indeed, I could not find her on any listings. I tried various spelling variations such as *Birangou*, *Byrongoux* and *Byhramgoo*; until the adventitious perusal of *Lloyd's List* for 1820 disclosed: "Arrived BATAVIA, September 10 1819, *Byramgore*, Captain Riddle, from China."

Byram-GORE, not *Byram-GOU*! Armed with the new spelling and a reference to the China trade, the evidence of her existence (and the possibility that the cup had been misnamed) began to unravel. Moreover, further searching revealed that her proper name was *Shah Byramgore*, which required going back through the listings looking under S, not B. Presumably, *Shah Byramgore* was named after the 'Great King' (Shah) Bahramgur, the 14th Sassanid King of Persia (421-438).²

Having finally located *Byramgore*, I now found I had too many vessels by that name, four at least! In 1782, there was a reference of the East Indiaman *Essex* being dismasted and taken in tow to Bombay by the frigate *Byrangore*. She is probably the Bombay Country ship³ *Byrangore*, 'frigate' being a reference to 'frigate-built' rather than a ship of war. Built in 1775 in the Bombay dockyard, she was lost in 1785. Clearly, she is not the vessel described on the *Byramgou* Cup. Another

² Although *Shah Byramgore* is the ship's correct name, she is frequently referred to simply as *Byramgore*. Other spellings include *Shaw Byramgore* and *Byrangore*. The original names, spellings and italicising as described in the original references have been retained.

³ Country ships were privately owned vessels built in India, operated under licence from the Honourable East India Company and restricted to operating in 'Eastern Seas'. Built of teak and made to resemble British East Indiamen, they were admired as some of the finest merchant vessels ever built.

¹ Crockett is the correct spelling, but it also appears as Crocket and Crackett; I have, therefore, retained the spellings as they appear in the original references.

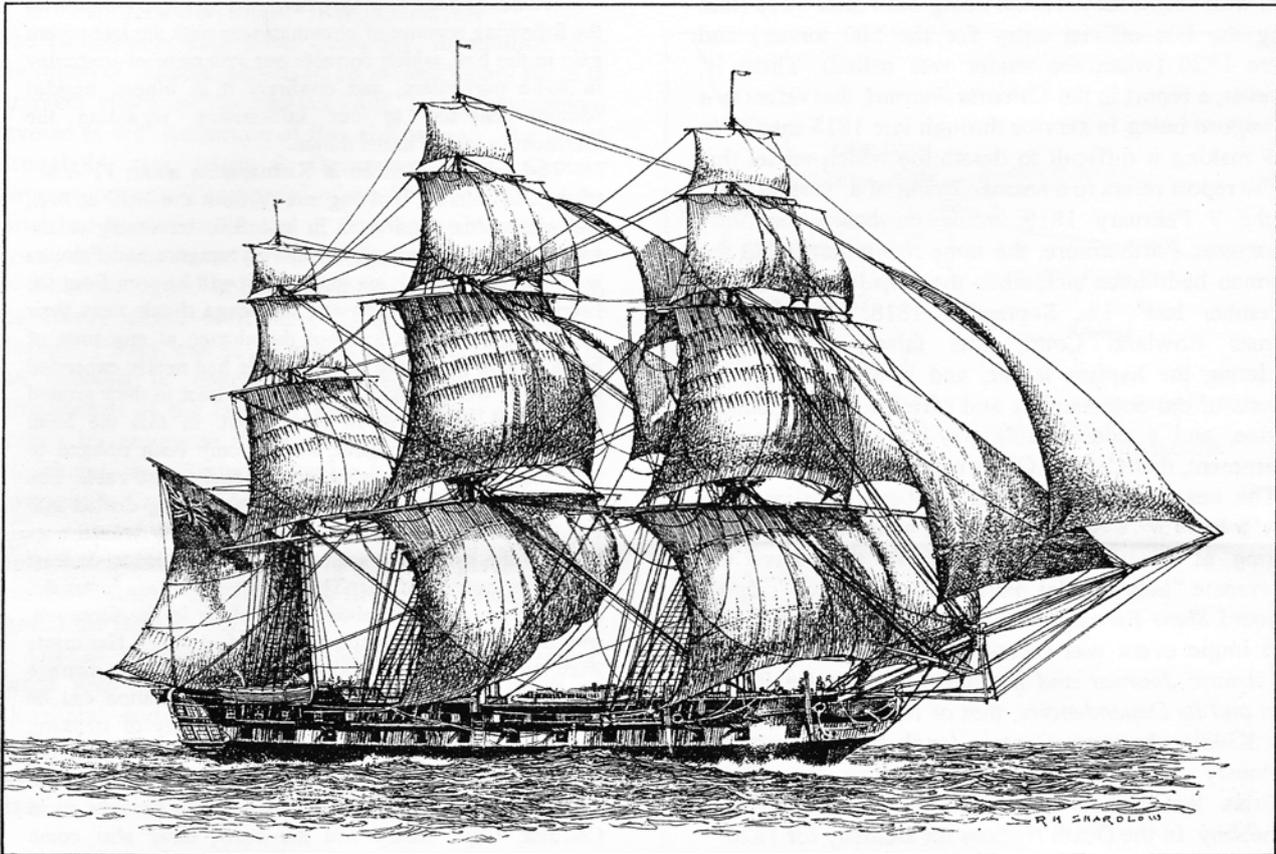


Illustration by Ross Shardlow of the Shah Byramgore, 791 tons, with a two-tier stern gallery emulating the prestigious East Indiamen.

Byramgore is mentioned in Item 7 of the *Dispatches of Field Marshall the Duke of Wellington, Egypt, 1801*:

His Excellency also directs me to remark, that the stores embarked in the ships *Shah Byramgore*, *Cecilia*, and *Anstruther*, contain provisions, which, in most articles, appear more than sufficient to meet the demand transmitted by you to the Governor of Bombay.

The British Critic: a New Review (1808) records that, "The *Shah Byramgore*, a country fhip, made a voyage, we are told, to England, and back to Bengal, with fifty-nine perfons on board, principally Lafcars, without the lofs of a fingle man ...". This almost certainly refers to the same ship mentioned in the Duke of Wellington's dispatches, a vessel built at Chittagong and variously described as being of 525, 550 and 560 tons. The last listing I can find for her is in 1818. There is another *Byramgore* recorded in the Birth Notices for Mauritius for 1827: "Oct. 20. At Bourbon, the wife of Capt. H. W. Beyts, of the grab bark *Shah Byramgore*, of a daughter."⁴ This vessel has also been listed as *Shaw Byramgore*, barque, seized for carrying prohibited goods from Penang. As she took Captain Henry W. Beyts to Calcutta in May 1830, 18 months after Crockett's *Byramgore* was lost (as we shall see later in this commentary), she too cannot be a contender for the cup.

⁴ The Indian 'grab' was a west coast trader with one or two masts, lateen rigged with an extended low bow, high poop and square counter stern. 'Grab barques' and 'grab ships', however, were rigged in the European manner with square sails.

The *Shah Byramgore* that ennobled the cup was a vessel described in a tender that was called on 13 December 1820 seeking vessels for hire as transports for a punitive expedition against the 'Arabs of Alashkarah'. Anne Bulley's *The Bombay Country Ships 1790-1833* (2000), details the vessel described in the tender:

Shah Byramgore 791 tons
Owner - Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy.⁵
2 decks, poop, forecastle. Double stern. Orlop deck.
Beams throughout planked only in the fore and after orlop.
Height of gun deck from beam to plank 4ft.
No. of ports - a tier on each side of upper deck.
9 large scuttles and 12 ports on each side of gun deck.
1 commander, 3 officers, one gunner, two carpenters, syrangs - 100 men.

Other accounts describe her as a full-rigged ship built at Calcutta; frustratingly, I could find no date for her construction. The question presents itself, are the 550 and 791 ton *Byramgore*s one and the same? Even allowing for different rulings in tonnage measurements, which didn't happen until 1836 anyway, a difference of 550 and 791 tons suggests two separate vessels; besides which, one was reported to have been built at Chittagong, the other Calcutta. It may be reasonable to surmise, therefore, that we are looking at two separate

⁵ Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy - Parsi businessman, cotton merchant, opium trader and philanthropist; in 1842 he was the first Indian to receive a British knighthood, and in 1857, the first Indian to receive a hereditary baronetcy. As his business interests included the manufacture of bottles, he was affectionately known as 'Mr Bottlewaller'.



ships with Jeejeebhoy's *Shah* being built after 1818 (that being the last official entry for the 500 tonner) and before 1820 (when the tender was called). There is, however, a report in the *Calcutta Journal*, that refers to a *Byramgore* being in service through late 1818 into early 1819 making it difficult to determine which vessel this is. The report refers to a seaman dying of a 'violent flux' on the 7 February 1819, while on board the *Shah Byramgore*. Furthermore, the same report states that the crewman had "been sick since the ship left Calcutta in September last", i.e., September 1818. The Captain, Thomas Rowland Court, was falsely accused of murdering the hapless lascar, and it was only by the protests of the commanders and officers of the Country Service, and a considerable pay-off to the Rangoon government, that Captain Court was acquitted.

The next entry is the one mentioned earlier from *Lloyd's List* for 10 September 1819, with Captain Riddle arriving at Batavia from China. We then have the unfortunate "lady of Maj. Parby, Madras army", dying on board *Shaw Byramgore* on 3 January 1820. An even more tragic event was recorded on 19 March 1820 in *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and its Dependencies*, that of the death of Captain John Kiddle, the same Captain (spelt Riddle) from the previously mentioned *Lloyd's List*. The report also confirms that this is the ship owned by Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy. In the Death Notices for Bombay for 1820:

19 March ... At the house of Mr. Nadir Baxter, Capt. J. Kiddle, (late commanding the ship *Shah Byramgore*, belonging to the respectable mercantile establishment of Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy), at the early age of only 24, after suffering a long and painful illness with the most exemplary fortitude and pious resignation, which shewed him to be a good man and true Christian, that together with the circumstance of the very great respect paid at the last sad rites of interment, by the attendance of almost every gentleman belonging to the shipping of the port, cannot fail to prove some consolation to his bereaved parents, relatives and friends, who are at a distance, as the best assurance of the esteem in which the deceased was held in his lifetime.

A few weeks later, the *Byramgore*, now under the command of Captain Dolge, found herself in serious trouble; *Lloyd's List* for 1820 published the following report:

The *Palmers*, Kemp, and another Ship name unknown, went down at their anchors at Madras, during a violent Gale between the 28th and 31st of March. The Officers and Crew of the *Palmers* were saved, and arrived at Bengal 12th April.

From the *Madras Government Gazette*, 6 April 1820, we learn the 'Ship name unknown' was the *Shah Byramgore*, though she did not go down at her anchors as the *Lloyd's* report suggests:

The ship *Palmers*, Capt. Kemp, was at anchor off Kistnapatam at the commencement of the gale, and was driven on shore; happily the crew of this ship were saved. The ship *Byramgore* is stated to have been dismantled.

We have been obligingly favoured by Capt. Dolge with the following account of circumstances with the late severe gale in the bay, which corrects our statement of yesterday in some particulars, and confirms it in others, besides adding generally to our information regarding the melancholy scenes under notice.

The gale commenced at Kistnapatam about 11 A.M., of the 30th March, blowing strong from the N.E. at first, and afterwards veering to E. and S.E. increasing at the same time in violence. The *Shah Byramgore* and *Palmers* were the only ships lying there and it will be seen from the bearings of the Armegon and Snallenga shoals from their anchorage, that they had not the chance at any time of being able to put to sea until the gale had nearly expended itself; they were obliged, therefore, to trust to their ground tackle, and endeavour to ride it out. In this the *Shah Byramgore* was successful, having only been obliged to cut away her main top-mast with an anchor and cable. She was, however, in considerable danger, having drifted into five fathoms water, where the sea made a fair breach over her, and the surf broke with tremendous violence, at least two miles outside of her. The *Palmers* was less fortunate, being driven on shore about ten o'clock in the forenoon, and thrown upon the beach into four feet water. Her masts were cut away when she took the ground, but the damage she has sustained is so great that no expectation can be entertained of her being got off. A quantity of treasure, however, which was on board, was transhipped after the gale to the *Byramgore*, together with the greater part of her cargo, and the whole has been accordingly brought on to Calcutta; Capt. Kemp and his crew, have also come passengers on the *Byramgore* to Calcutta.

Captain Kemp of the *Palmers* added a few other details in the *Calcutta Paper*, 13 April 1820:

At six the gale was on, and a tremendous sea that broke a mile without us; the *Byramgore* on our weather bow, with two anchors a-head, and her top-masts cut away. At seven she parted her small bower, and drove close to us. At the same time we parted our sheet but the chain held fast. The gale was now furious, and both ships riding in the midst of one continued break, the *Byramgore* still driving on us, till within about 10 yards. Immediate destruction seemed to threaten both ships and crews, for nothing could have saved either had we struck each other.

A terrible surge lifted the *Byramgore* terrifically grand above us, and we fully expected it would have closed the scene. The people set up a cry of "Alla, Alla, Alla!" for the scene was truly awful; providentially the recoil carried her off ...

Captain Kemp also added that one of his crew was drowned.

Towards the end of 1820, we have the first mention of Captain Crockett as commander of the *Byramgore*. An entry, partly obscured, appears in the Shipping Arrivals for Bombay in the *Bombay Gazette*, 6 December 1820:

(?) Ship *Shaw Byramgore*, Crackett.
(from) China 1st Nov.

Though *Byramgore's* precise arrival date is indecipherable, she was certainly in Bombay under the command of Captain Crockett when the tenders were called for the punitive expedition 13 December 1820.

THE OUTRAGE OF ALASHKARA

The Honourable East India Company, in alliance with the Imam of Muscat, embarked an expeditionary force to suppress piracy in the Persian Gulf. In an engagement revered as the 'Reduction of Ras al Khaimah', the pirate stronghold was taken 9 December 1819. Captain Thomas Perronet Thompson⁶ of the 17th Light Dragoons (who had been instrumental in drawing up the 'General Treaty of Peace') was left in charge at Ras al Khaimah as 'Political Agent' but was soon obliged to evacuate to the nearby island of Kishma (Qishm) in the Strait of Hormuz. Piracy was not confined to the Persian Gulf; in the interests of enacting the Treaty of Peace, the Government of the Bombay Presidency sent a letter of protest by envoy to the piratically inclined Arabs of Alashkara in Eastern Arabia.⁷ The Honourable Company's Cruizer *Mercury* delivered the envoy under a flag of truce, but when he went ashore near Alashkara the turbulent Bani bu Ali tribe 'cut him to pieces'.⁸ This was the 'outrage' that led to the first punitive expedition against the Bani bu Ali.

On 24 October 1820, Captain Thompson joined forces with the Imam of Muscat⁹ at Sur, north of Alashkara, and proceeded fifty-five miles inland to confront the Bani bu Ali at their fortified citadel, 'Bilad Bani bu Ali'. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, January 1821, gives an account of the action:

A Letter from Capt. Thompson, the political agent at Kishma, dated Muscat, Nov. 18, 1820, confirms the intelligence which had previously been received of the failure of the expedition against the Arabs of Alashkara ... The ill success of the expedition seems to have been occasioned by the cowardice of the native troops (Sepoys), who, when in front of the enemy, turned and fled from the scene of the action. The Imaum, who behaved most gallantly, was wounded by a musket-ball, which passed thro' his wrist. ... The loss of the detachment engaged was necessarily most severe, "as must always be the case," says Capt. Thompson, "when troops wait to be attacked with the sword, and then give way." Lieut. Boswell, 1st batt. 2nd regiment, and Capt. Thompson himself, were the only ones known to have survived, at the time of writing the dispatch.¹⁰

THE SECOND PUNITIVE EXPEDITION

Humiliated by the 'unfortunate failure', a second stronger expedition was assembled at Bombay with a force of over 4,000 made up of nine companies of H. M. 65th Regiment, 3rd Company Bombay Pioneers, 1st

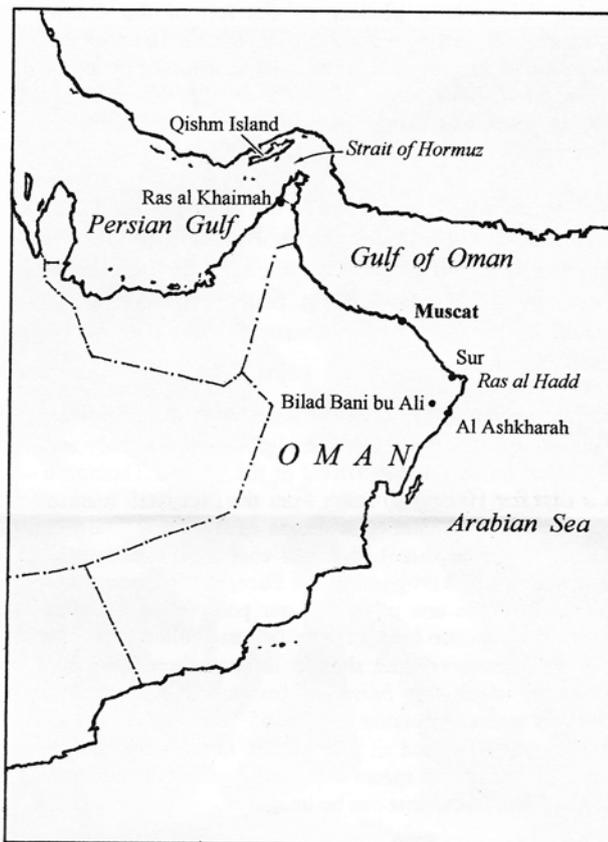
⁶ John Perronet Thompson (1783-1869): British Parliamentarian, first Governor of Sierra Leone, radical reformer and inventor of the adjustable fret guitar.

⁷ Al Ashkharah on the Arabian Sea south of Muscat, Oman, now a popular surf beach.

⁸ The Arab tribe Bani bu Ali were sectarian followers of the Wahibism theory of Islam and hostile to the Imam of Muscat. The earlier Beni Boo Ali spelling has been retained when quoting from the original references.

⁹ The Imam of Muscat (Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultan Al Bu Sa'idi) ruled 1805-56, a cooperative ally of British India, sought support from the Honourable East India Company to suppress the Bani bu Ali tribe that had long been at war against him.

¹⁰ The Imaum and about one third of the soldiers also survived, retreating overland to Muscat after the engagement.



Battalion 7th Regiment Native Infantry, the Bombay European Regiment, a detachment of field artillery, Commissariat followers and the newly formed Bombay Sappers.¹¹ *The Bombay Gazette*, 30 December 1820, verified: "We rejoice to find that measures are about to be taken that will ensure complete retribution." Major General Lionel Smith, C.B., the most senior King's Army Officer in Bombay, was placed in command of the expeditionary force.

A fleet of sixteen transports and eleven baghlas,¹² were brought into service for the campaign that was expected to last six months. The *Shah Byramgore*, Captain Crockett, largest vessel and flagship of the fleet, took on board 15 officers (including Major General Lionel Smith and his staff), 250 troops of the Bombay European Regiment and 173 Commissariat followers. The convoy sailed from Bombay on the morning of 11 January 1821 under the escort of the Honourable Company's brig of war *Vestal*, commanded by Lieutenant Robinson of the Bombay Marine. On 29 January the fleet anchored off Ras al Hadd on the Arabian coast and landed the troops in boats through heavy surf. *The Bombay Gazette*, 28 February 1821, reported that skirmishing took place after the force was encamped near Sur, four miles from the landing place:

¹¹ In 1831, the Bombay Presidency awarded all units that served in the expedition the battle honour *Beni Boo Ali*, including the Bombay Pioneers and the Bombay Sappers. *Beni Boo Ali* heads the list of battle honours of the Bombay Sappers to this day.

¹² Also described as bughala or bugla: usually two masted, lateen rigged Arabic trading vessel with long raked stem, truncated stern and high poop. The Government hired these vessels to carry provisions, horses and artillery for the expedition.



... on the night of the 10th inst. a party of the enemy, after having driven in a picquet on the left of the Camp, succeeded in getting into the rear of the lines of the European Regiment, and committed much serious injury before the Regiment could get under arms; but the moment that an array was formed against them, they fled in all directions.

Having awaited the arrival of the Imam, with 1,000 men, camels and cattle for transporting the provisions and ammunition, the division advanced to the interior on 24 February 1821. An extract from a private letter published in the *Madras Government Gazette* gives the following account:

We arrived before the Beni Boo Ali on the 2d instant, with our stores, 18-pounders and light guns, all ready and in capital order. On our arrival at the ground Thompson was defeated upon, two miles from the Fort (well marked by the bones and whole skeletons of our men who had previously fallen there), the Fort commenced firing; the third shot killed a corporal of the European Regiment, and knocked off the arm of one of our poor fellows: it then struck the opposite bank of a nullah, and rolled back into it. I have preserved the shot: it is one of our own six-pounders, which they *borrowed* from us, and returned in this very masterly manner. ... The 65th reg., and 1st bat. of the 7th, now advanced ... The enemy immediately rushed out with swords and spears in the most gallant, determined, and handsome stile that can be imagined.

The carnage was dreadful on both sides and the 7th Regiment were driven back, nonetheless by day's end "The British flags of the 65th and European regiment were now displayed on the highest walls under three cheers; and thus fell Beni Boo Ali."

On 3 March 1821, Major General Smith penned a letter to His Excellency Lieut. General the Hon. Sir Chas. Colville, G.C.B., Commander-in-chief, Bombay:

Sir: I have great pleasure in reporting to your Excellency, that the division which the Government did me the honour to place under my orders for service, against the tribe of Beni Boo Ali, having arrived before his capital yesterday morning, succeeded in repulsing a very spirited attack of the enemy, and in gaining complete possession of his whole fortified position before sunset in the evening.

Precisely what Captain Crockett and the officers and men of the *Byramgore* did to win the esteem of Major General Smith (other than being flagship of the fleet), I am not entirely sure, though recognition was given to the Honourable Company's Marines, and the volunteer seamen from the fleet off Sur, who "rendered the division great service, and underwent the most trying labour and fatigue in dragging heavy guns."

New peace treaties were drawn up, seven in fact, until the 'Maritime Truce' was evoked in 1839, only to be periodically reviewed until the definitive 'Treaty of Perpetual Peace' was concluded in 1853.

A postscript to the treaties is worth mentioning; on 15 September 1830, Captain Fremantle in HMS *Challenger* called at Muscat to pay his respects to the Imam. Having just left the newly established Swan River Colony, and consequently having *Challenger* surveyed

for repairs at Bombay after striking the Challenger Rock off Garden Island, Fremantle was issued with orders to "obtain a knowledge of the duties now fulfilled by the Bombay Marine by visiting the principal Ports and Places which lie within their range." Fremantle made the observation that "Piracy is at present quite unknown all over the Gulf and there has only been one case heard of during the last two Years, the perpetrators of which were fortunately captured and delivered up to the Sheik of the Port to which they were supposed to belong who immediately ordered their heads to be taken off." Fremantle found the Imam "a most mild and pleasing person, intelligent, affable and very well disposed towards the English ... he sent me a present of a Sword, a horse, and six bottles of Otto of Roses, besides two horses for the Admiral."

The *Byramgore* was the last of the fleet to return to Bombay on what proved to be the last occasion that Bombay Country ships were employed as transports. Captain Dolge is recorded to have been back in command when the ship returned 28 March 1821:

Ship *Shaw Byramgore*, Dolge, from Muscat. - *Passengers*: Lieut. col. and Mrs. Baker, Capt. Herbert, and Capt. Doomandel.

Shah Byramgore returned to duties in the Country Service. On 27 May 1821, the Bombay Marriage Registry recorded: "At St. Thomas's Church, W. P. Ranney, Esq., Chief Officer of the Ship *Byramgore*, to Miss Catharine Cuthbert, of Bombay." On 1 March 1823, Captain John Crockett was married at the same church to seventeen year old Caroline Langdon. Anne Bulley's *The Bombay Country Ships 1790-1833* (2000) gives an entry for *Byramgore* in 1825:

Five Country ships were to take cotton to China this season, Jamsetji's *Shah Byramgore*, *Milford* and *Edmonstone* also owned by Parsis; *Cumbrian*, owned by her captain, Clarkson and others and Remington Crawford's *Ann*. The last two would also carry opium.

THE LOSS OF *SHAH BYRAMGORE*

The ultimate fate of *Shah Byramgore* is summarised in the *Historical and Descriptive Account of British India*:

The shoals which bound the north end of the Laccadives are very dangerous. In 1827 the *Byramgore* was lost on a coral reef between the northernmost Laccadive and Cherbaniani Reef. This shoal was unknown till she struck on it; and the *Competitor* in the same year also struck on a shoal among the islands, whose geographical site is not yet determined.

Another account states: "On 17 November 1827 *Shaw Byramgore* of Bombay was lost on a coral reef off the Laccadive Islands. She was returning from China with treasure almost the same value as the ship." *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India* recalls: "loss of the *Shah Byramgore*, Crockett, among the Laccadive Islands", while *The Bombay Gazette* for 5 December 1827 concludes:



CAPTAIN JOHN C. CROCKETT

One of the China ships, the *Shah Byramgore*, Capt. Crocket, on her return to this port, struck at five o'clock A.M., of the morning of the 17th November, upon the Cherbaniani reef, among the Laccadives, and after every effort to save her, all hope was given up. By the latest advices no lives were lost. This accident is attributable to the reef being incorrectly laid down in Horsburgh, and to the state of the weather the day preceding, which prevented Capt. Crocket from taking any good observations. Capt. C. arrived at Mangalore on the 23rd November, with his wife and family, leaving the greater part of the crew on board. The cargo of the *Byramgore* is supposed to be worth twelve lacs.¹³ We have no time for further details.

The Laccadive Islands are in the Arabian Sea off the south west coast of India and are now known as the Lakshadweep Islands. The main island is Kavaratti, 404 kilometres west of Cochin. Some sources have assumed the reef is named after the Persian King Bahramgur; in reality, the reef is named for the ship that was lost there.



The wreck of the *Shah Byramgore* has yet to be found. The British Museum's *Encyclopedia of Underwater and Maritime Archaeology* (1979) reports:

A large number of ships sank in Lakshadweep waters between the 16th and 19th centuries. The British ship *Byramgore*, for example, which was carrying valuable cargo, sank on 17 November 1827. Attempts were made to rescue the crew and the vessel, but by the time the rescue ship could reach the station, *Byramgore* had broken up. MAC (Maritime Archaeology Centre - India) also participated in the survey in February 1992. Further survey is needed to pinpoint the wreck, however, which might have slid to a depth of 200m.

An article on maritime archaeology and exploration titled *Clues in a Ghost Ship* by Sandeep Unnithan that appeared in the journal *India Today*, 16 June 2003, disclosed that "Dr Rao, whose expedition on a Dutch merchantman off the coast of Tamil Nadu was called off for lack of funds in 1997, estimates that there are 210 shipwrecks around the 7600-km Indian coastline. These include the East India Company's treasure-laden *Byramgore*, lost without trace off the Lakshadweep islands."¹⁴



Captain John Crockett and his son John Fearon Crockett who was on the *Byramgore* when she was lost in 1827.

John Crockett was born in Scotland 1 December 1786. India Office and shipping records show that Crockett was a resident of Bombay in 1817, and was in command of the *Good Success*, another of Jeejeebhoy's Country ships in the China trade, from 1817 to 1820 before taking command of the *Byramgore* later that year. He was married at St. Thomas's Church in Bombay to Caroline Langdon, 1 March 1823. Caroline and her family were on board the *Byramgore* when the ship was wrecked in 1827.¹⁵ The Shipping Arrivals in the *Bombay Courier* indicate that Crockett took command of the *Charlotte* after the loss of the *Byramgore*; certainly, he was *Charlotte's* captain when she arrived at Bombay from Manilla and Singapore on 19 January 1829 and when the family moved to China in June 1830. Within a year he received a new appointment, the lucrative command of the opium storeship *Jane* owned by Dent & Co. *An East India Company Cemetery: Protestant Burials in Macao* (2006) by Lindsay and May Ride, relates how "Captain Crockett had abandoned a life afloat in the 1830s for the command of the *Jane*, which he found much more profitable, as it gave him many occasions to supplement his salary, such as in 1835 when he advertised for sale the large quantity of opium salvaged from the *Sylph*." The *Jane* was moored at Lintin Island in the centre of the Pearl River estuary with

¹³ 1,200,000 rupees

¹⁴ The *Shah Byramgore* was not an East India Company vessel.

¹⁵ India Office records suggest they only had their four year old son John Fearon on board at the time of the wreck.



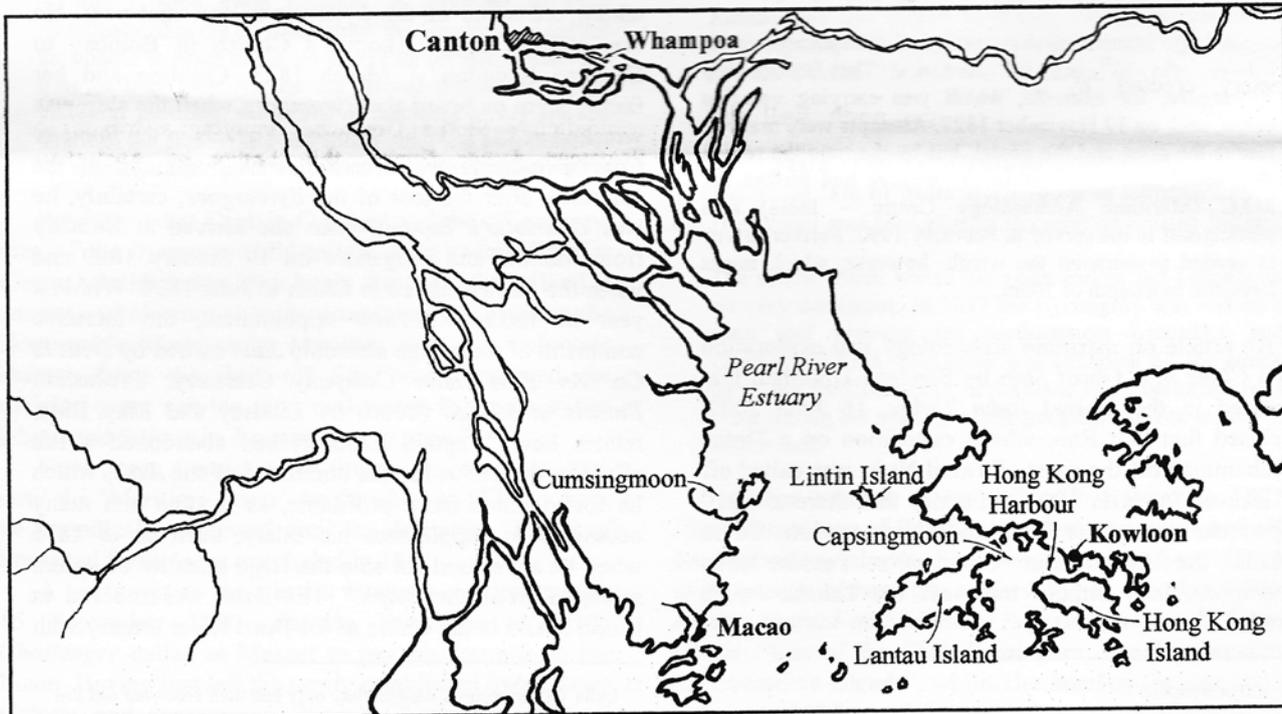
Macau (Macao) at the entrance and Canton and her port Whampoa further inland on the Pearl River (Canton River). British merchants began to smuggle Indian opium into China from 1773, employing Country ships so as not to discredit the Honourable Company's Indiamen with the illicit trade. After 1821, storeships (also called receiving or deposit ships) were employed to receive the opium at Lintin Island, which was beyond the jurisdiction of the Mandarin of Customs and Whampoa's port charges, and sufficiently sheltered to allow the trade to continue all year round. *The Bombay Country Ships 1790-1833* by Anne Bulley, gives a first hand observation made by a passenger to China:

Constantly moored in the roadstead, are armed vessels, which were formerly employed in the same manner, but which are now kept as receiving ships for the others. The opium is trans-shipped from the clippers into the *Jane*, the *Agnes*, or the *Bombay*, according to the house to which it is consigned, and it is then sent up country, in the night-time, by native boats, called, from the number, of their oars, centipedes.

Another astute observer of this singular trade, was none other than Captain Charles Fremantle in HMS *Challenger*, recently returned from Muscat. Fremantle was dispatched to deliver a letter (by British warship) from Lord William Cavendish Bentick, Governor-General of India, to the Viceroy of Canton, protesting over a disruption to British interests in the China trade, tea in particular, which was paid for largely with Indian opium. As 'National Envoys of Foreign and Barbarous Nations' were not well received at Canton, Fremantle was obliged to anchor the *Challenger* at Lintin Island while he pondered the nuances of a newly introduced Chinese word to the English language - *kowtow*. Ann Parry, author of *The Admirals Fremantle 1788-1920* (1971), reproduces an extract from a letter from Fremantle to his brother:

At this anchorage a smuggling trade of Opium is carried on to the amount of nearly 3 millions Sterling in the very face of the Chinese Government and against all the Edicts and proclamations of the Emperor the penalty being death to any body who is found selling it; still the Ships bring it from India, this year as much as 19,000 chests, anchor at Lintin either sell it at once and it is smuggled from there into Canton or along the Coast or if they wish to return immediately deposit it in Ships that remain at Anchor all the year round to receive it, the very Custom House boats or bandarain boats as they are called being often employed in carrying it, so much for the Chinese Government. It is perhaps the most extraordinary trade carried on in any part of the World, immense fortunes are made by the English and a dirty Master of a Merchant Ship (one of the deposit Ships) told me this morning that his fees alone on the Opium that went in and out of his ship were alone £5,000 annually, the injury that is done throughout China by it is terrible as it is spreading everywhere and is smoked from the Emperors Palace to the lowest person who can afford to purchase it.

Fremantle arrived at Macau 3 December 1831 and was at Lintin for the first few months of 1832 - but there is no suggestion that the 'dirty Master of a Merchant Ship' was Captain Crockett, although he was there at that time. Fremantle employed his spare time acting as agent provocateur for the Commander-in-chief, Rear Admiral Sir Edward Owen, noting: "Whenever it may be necessary to take any offensive measures against China, I agree with Your Excellency that the point of attack ought to be Canton". Fremantle added that it would be necessary to first take possession of one of the nearby islands or part of the mainland to establish a base. "I am of the opinion that the town of Cowloon situated on the Main Land is well adapted for all the purposes that would be required, it is rather a large Town possessing a beautiful Harbour formed by the Island of Hong Kong opposite which makes the passage called Lye Moon used by the Vessels from the Northward bound to





Captain John Fearon Crockett with his son Lionel Lamont Crockett at Calcutta c.1866.

Canton". Fremantle concluded, "If there should be an objection to a possession on the Main Land I would recommend that the Island of Lantao be occupied, and the Capsing Moon (where the Opium Ships resort for protection in bad weather) would form the Harbour".¹⁶

It was at Capsingmoon while aboard the *Jane* that John Crockett died on 25 June 1837 at the age of 50, leaving behind a wife and five children. He was buried in the Old Protestant Cemetery at Macau. Since 1557, Macau had been a Province of Catholic Portugal and there was no provision for Protestant or foreign burials until 1821 when Portuguese authorities conceded a burial ground to the Honourable East India Company.¹⁷ The most conspicuous monument in the whole of the cemetery, erected "by those belonging to the Lintin Fleet", is a tall column near the north wall that commemorates the life and death of Captain John Crockett. Also buried there is their infant daughter Ann, aged 21 days, who died at Macau September 21 1835, followed soon after by the death of their eldest daughter, Caroline Rebecca who died at Lintin 21 November 1835. Their niece, Louisa Ilbery (née Crockett), is also buried at the Macau cemetery; she died 21 August 1837 aged 20, two months after John and 15 months after the birth of her daughter Louisa Crockett Ilbery.

¹⁶ Capsingmoon (Capsuimoon or Kap Shui Mun) forms a sheltered anchorage at the northern end of Lantao Island and should not be confused with Cumsingmoon (also a sheltered anchorage) on the western shore of the Pearl River Estuary north of Macau. Capsingmoon Passage forms the western entrance to Hong Kong Harbour (Victoria Harbour).

¹⁷ The dedication plaque is inscribed 'Protestant Church and Old Cemetery (East India Company 1814)', signifying that a number of older burials from outside the city were exhumed and relocated to the cemetery after it was opened in 1821. The earliest recorded death, however, is for George W. Biddle of Philadelphia, USA, who died in 1811.

BYRAMGOU PARK

Having established that the *Byramgore* did actually exist, we now felt compelled to see the *Byramgou* Cup for ourselves. Accordingly, a large contingent of Superior Persons advanced on the picturesque Byramgou Park winery near Donnybrook where Richard Crockett Knox and his charming wife Geraldine warmly received us. While we indulged in some serious wine tasting, Mr Knox proudly presented the magnificent golden cup for us to admire. There was no doubting the spelling of *Byramgou* – we can only conclude the engraver, or the person who gave him the instructions, simply got it wrong. Richard was well aware the correct spelling for the ship is *Byramgore*, but elected to name the estate more for the cup, rather than the ship, to keep a unified spelling and avoid obvious censure – clearly he had not anticipated a visit from the Superior Persons. As we sauntered from the Grenache Rosé to the basket pressed Cabernet Sauvignon, Richard confirmed that there were two *Byramgores* and claimed that Crockett had held commands for *both* of them. We also learnt that the India Office cites, "J. C. Crockett of London, Mariner" who was indentured for the then large sum of £500, with sureties provided by "Richard Barlow of Fish Street Hill and Thomas Nash, Hop Factor of the Borough."

While we lingered over the peppery Shiraz, obviously a clever similitude between the Persian city of Shiraz, Shirazi wine and the Sassanid King of Persia (Shah Bahramgur), Mr Knox informed us that Caroline Crockett remarried after the captain's passing, while still aboard the *Jane* at Capsingmoon. The Crockett's firstborn, John Fearon Crockett, went to sea for Jardine Matheson as captain of the brig *Lanrick* and SS *Clan Alpine*. His son Murray also went to sea, training on the *Worcester* before embarking as apprentice on Willis's famous *Halloween*, and *Blackadder*. He transferred to steam on the SS *Glengarry*, *Erik* and *Quen Sang* before taking his first command on the SS *Hin Sang*.

Perhaps it is the Scottish connection that preoccupies the Crocketts with Shiraz; their delightfully contradictory Shiraz Grenache implying a tribute to Scotsman James Busby, the 'Father of Australian viticulture', who introduced Shiraz to this nation in 1831.

It was another son of John Fearon, Lionel Lamont Crockett, who settled in Western Australia to become Warden and Magistrate in the Dundas Goldfields and later, Resident Magistrate at Bunbury. Richard Crockett Knox is descended through that line, and it is by that means that the *Byramgou* Cup so fortuitously ended up in a winery in Western Australia.

The Superior Persons' Maritime Book Reading Club has no hesitation in investing the Byramgou Park label to our Association. We are most grateful for the generous hospitality we received from Geraldine and Richard Knox, for their willingness to share their epochal heritage, and for the privilege of beholding the *Byramgou* Cup.



QUIZ

Answers to June

1. The *Vianen* is the only known VOC vessel to have gone aground on the Western Australian coast on the return journey to Holland.
2. Heirisson Island was named after sub-lieutenant Antoine Bonniface Heirisson on 18 June 1801. He was a member of the Baudin Expedition.
3. Breaming is an old method of cleaning the bottom of a vessel by using fire then scraping off the resultant melted pitch, or other coating, along with any weed growth and barnacles.

Questions

1. In March 1772, at Shark Bay, St Allouarn claimed Western Australia for France. Where in WA is the island named after him?
2. Corposant—the fiery balls that some times appear at the masthead or yardarms of sailing ships. What is its more commonly known name?
3. Where on a ship would you find limber holes, and what are they for?

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