

# MARITIME HERITAGE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

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

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Taking advantage of a low tide, the crew of the West Country ketch *Ceres* scrub the hull

See article p14



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

Recently this association received a valuable addition to its archives. The Albany Historical Society had a number of photographs from their extensive collection which were surplus to their requirements, and Rod Dickson obtained them for the MHA. The photos cover a wide period from late 19th century to modern colour photos. At present those photos needing conservation are being treated by Jill Worsley, while I am scanning many so that they will become available to anyone interested. The cataloguing and storage of the photos will be a fairly long-term project, due mainly to the time factor, as Jill and I are both extremely busy on various other projects.

I wish to record here the association's thanks to the Albany Historical Society for their generous donation, and to Rod Dickson for arranging the

donation of the collection to the MHA.

I recently gathered information on some of the ships on which various forebears of mine voyaged to Australia. It seems that with the knowledge and talent of members of MHA, they might be able to assist others with an interest in finding out more about the vessels that brought their families to Australia. Enquiries may be directed through the editor. Please let me know if there is a general interest in this offer of a service.

### Vale

On 22 June 2012 Western Australia lost a remarkable yachtsman and sailmaker, Roland "Rolly" Tasker, aged 86. This association extends its deepest sympathy to his family.

## Things They Would Rather Have Not Said

He is forgetful, careless, unpunctual, irregular in every way...If he is unable to conquer this slovenliness he will never make a success of public school.

H.O.D. Davidson, Housemaster at Harrow, 12 July 1880

The housemaster at Harrow was writing a considered opinion on one of his pupils – Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill, later to become First Lord of the Admiralty—twice! The first time on 23 October 1911, and the second in September 1939.



## Christmas in July

On Sunday 1 July the members of the Maritime Heritage Association held a 'Christmas in July' get-together at the Hicks' Private Maritime Museum. With a good number of invited guests in attendance, about 75 people enjoyed Barry and Doris's hospitality, and Doris's culinary masterpieces.



The main part of the proceedings was a book launch of Rod Dickson's latest work - *HMS Guardian and the Island of Ice: The Lost Ship of the First Fleet and Lieutenant Riou 1789-1790*. Ross Shardlow made the introduction and Rod spoke of his research and writing, then Ross formally launched the book. Peter Bridge, the owner of Hesperian Press who has published so many of Rod's books, was there with a small collection for sale of just a few of Rod's two dozen books.

Interest in the association was expressed by a number of the guests, and it is hoped that this will lead to an increase in membership numbers.

Ross Shardlow and Rod Dickson at the launch of Rod's book

Photo: David Nicolson

## MHA End of Year Windup

**When: 10 am, Sunday 25 November, 2012**

**Where: Hicks' Private Maritime Museum  
49 Lacy Street, East Cannington**

**For catering purposes please let Doris know if you will be there.  
email: [hicksmaritime@bigpond.com](mailto:hicksmaritime@bigpond.com)  
Tel: 9451 6828**



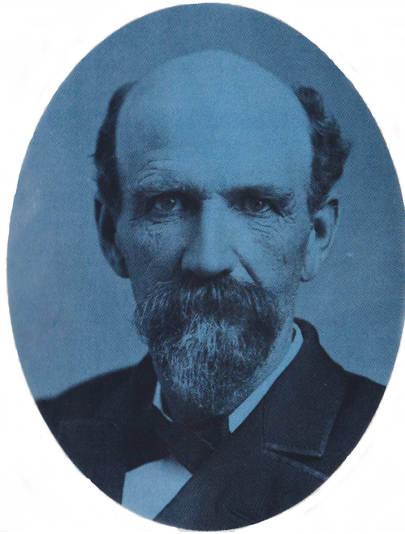


## ROGUES' GALLERY

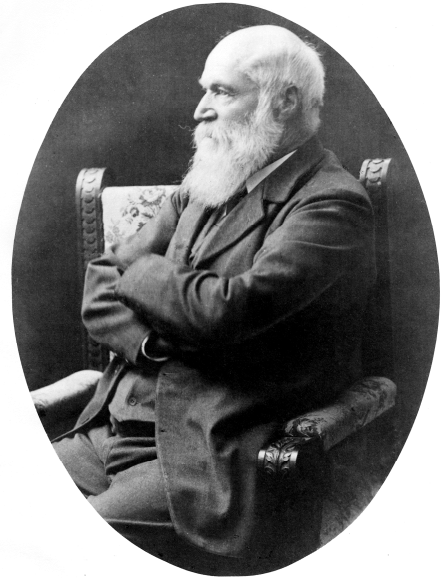
Can you identify these well-known people, and name the vessels they are best associated with from the list below?



1



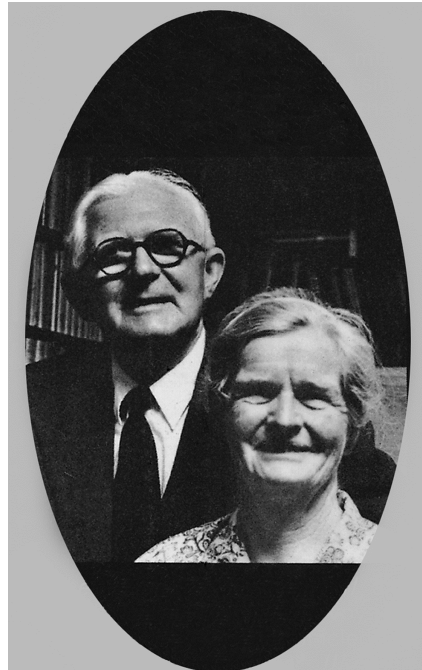
2



3



4



5



6

*Pen Duick, Siska, Kon-Tiki, Wanderer, Endeavour, Jolie Brise, Ice Bird, Spray, Windward Passage, Norwegian life & pilot boats, Ragamuffin, Suhaili, Cutty Sark, Shamrock, Gypsy Moth, Ondine, Valsheda, Serrafyn, Jack de Crow.*

*See answers on page 19*



# 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!)*



In 1978 a gang of workmen engaged in maintenance work on the Chesterfield canal near Retford, UK, dredged up the end of a massive iron chain. Deciding that it represented a hazard to navigation, the foreman attached the chain to a winch on their boat and reeled it in. Conscious of a morning's work well done, the gang then took their lunchbreak. On returning to their vessel at 2.35 pm the workers found it sitting high and dry on the canal bed. They had, literally, pulled the plug out.

In 1887 English artist John Thomas Baines was on a vessel which called at King George Sound. To take the ship to its mooring, the pilot arrived (according to Baines' journal) in a whaleboat crewed by Aborigines 'one of whom was clothed in shirt, trousers and cap, while the rest rejoiced in their native costume of grease, red ochre and kangaroo skin'. Fashions have certainly changed for employees of Western Australia's various Port Authority staff who crew today's pilot boats.

In 1942 an Albany fisherman came under suspicion because, being of German descent, he might use his fishing boat to lay German mines off Torbay. How he would obtain and lay mines, even if he wanted to, was not explained. In fact, the 'suspect' was Australian born like his father before him. Moreover, father and son had built the Albany war memorial after the First World War.

The well-known proverb *Don't spoil the ship for a ha'p'orth of tar* does not (despite appearances) have a nautical origin. It refers to the use of tar to keep sheep from being flyblown, 'ship' being a dialect pronunciation of 'sheep'.

To *sink or swim* links back to the ducking of a woman suspected of witchcraft. It was not an attractive choice – either the woman sank and was drowned or she floated and was therefore proven to be a witch, with its own nasty consequences.

Strictly speaking, a *jack* is the small flag flown at the bow of a ship. Therefore, the British *Union Jack* should rightly be called the *Union Flag*, its original name given over two hundred years ago after the union of Scotland and England. It was modified to its present form at a later date when Ireland joined the union.

WALRUS – To the Anglo-Saxons the walrus must have looked like a horse, as they called it the *horschwael*, 'horse-whale'. We owe our name to the Dutch, who took the same Saxon idea but reversed it: the *wal-* part is 'whale' and *rus* is from 'horse'.

*The Success sprung her mainmast during the heavy weather some time since, and it was replaced at the Vasse by a red gum spar. This accident has been the cause of her long detention.*  
(*Inquirer*, 29 June 1859: 2d)

In 1604 King James I had the noted shipbuilder Phineas Pett build a scaled down version of HMS *Ark Royal* so that his son, Henry, Prince of Wales, could learn to sail. Phineas wrote:

*This little ship was in length by the keel 25ft, and 12ft in breadth, garnished with painting and carving both within board and without. I laid the keel the 19th day of January...*

The ship was launched on 6 March, and three days later sailed down the Medway to the Thames. The 'ship' had 'ordnance and powder' on board, so it must have been a very exact, if miniature, replica. All built in 3 months!

The stimulus for opening the blowhole of a newborn humpback whale calf is air. As it is born underwater and has no air in its lungs the calf tends to sink, so the mother may have to push it to the surface for its first breath.. At birth a humpback calf is about 15 ft long and weighs around 1,500 lbs. It consumes 120 gallons of ultra rich milk per day.



# Ships of the State Shipping Service

By Jeff Thompson

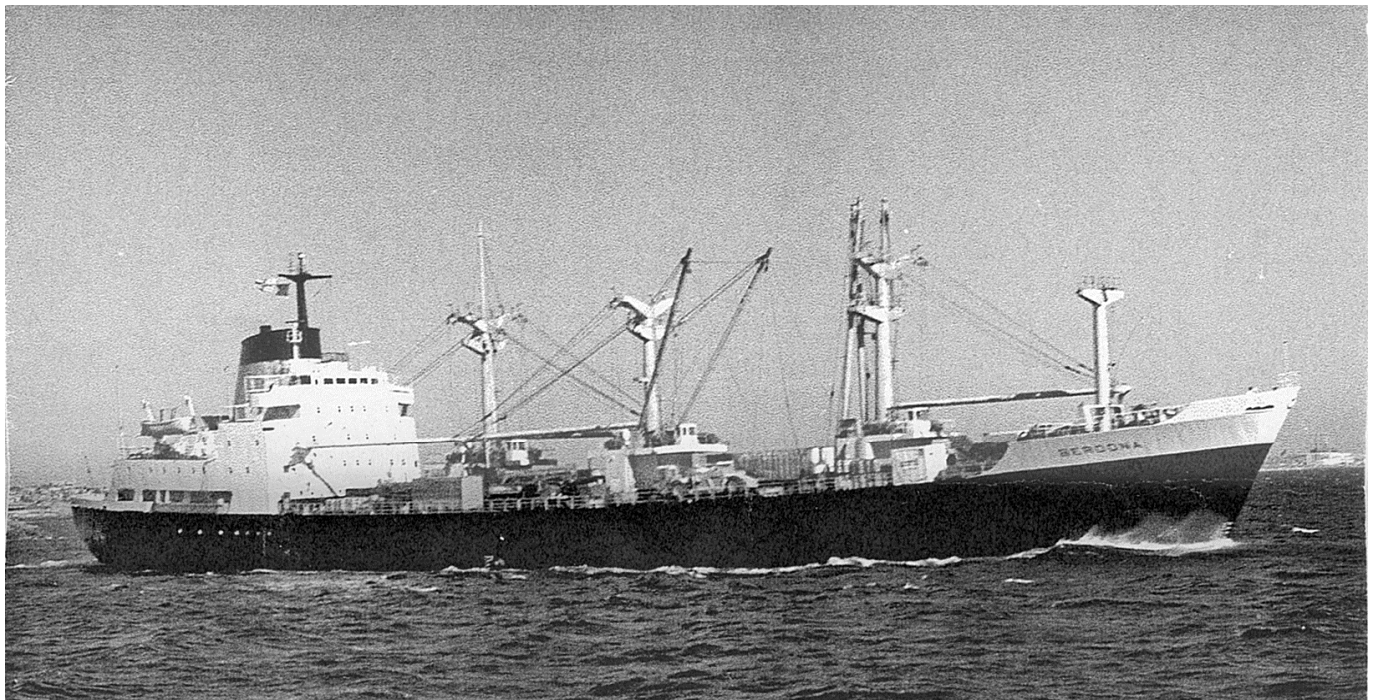
**No. 29: BEROONA Official Number: 303887**

The second of the unit-load vessels purchased was a sister ship of the recently bought *Parthia*, this was the *Media* to be renamed *Beroona*, bought on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1971. The *Beroona* was originally built as the *Media* for the Cunard Line for their cargo services in the North Atlantic by John Readhead and Sons Ltd, South Shields, being delivered in October 1963. As built the *Media* was 5,586 gross registered tons, 7,300 deadweight tons, 133 metres overall, 18.3 metres breadth 7.3 metres draft with a Hawthorn-Sulzer 7RD68 diesel to give a service speed of 17 knots on a single screw.

Later in 1971 it was extensively altered by Taikoo Dockyard, Hong Kong, to suit the operational requirements of the Service.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> December 1978 it was sold to Seaforth Investment Trust Inc., Monrovia, and later resold and renamed *Palm Trader* under the Greek flag.

Whilst lying at Bandar Abbas a fire broke out on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1983 in the accommodation, causing considerable damage to the bridge and engine room. Subsequently declared a constructive total loss and sold for scrapping.



## A Moral Outlook

To my way of thinking, I have never been able to conceive that there was justice or even fairness on the part of the European in seizing, in the name of their government, a land seen for the first time, when it is inhabited by men who have not always deserved the title of savages or cannibals that has been freely given them; whereas they were still only children of nature and just as little civilized as your Scotch Highlanders or our Breton peasants, who, if they don't eat their fellow men, are nevertheless just as objectionable.

Nicolas Baudin, said to Phillip Parker King in 1803.

(Note: This sentiment is not endorsed by the editor)



## The "Whale" Cure

**This article is from *A Memory of the Sea* by Louis Lewis Becke. Australian born, Becke lived from 1855 to 1913 and wrote prolifically on the South Pacific around the turn of the 20th century. His stories were mainly, but not wholly, works of fiction, so this "cure" does not have the full endorsement of the editor!**

Once heard a man who for nearly six years had been a martyr to rheumatism say he would give a thousand pounds to have a cure effected.

"I wish, then, that we were in Australia or New Zealand during the shore whaling season," remarked a friend of the writer; "I should feel pretty certain of annexing that thousand pounds." And then he described the whale cure.

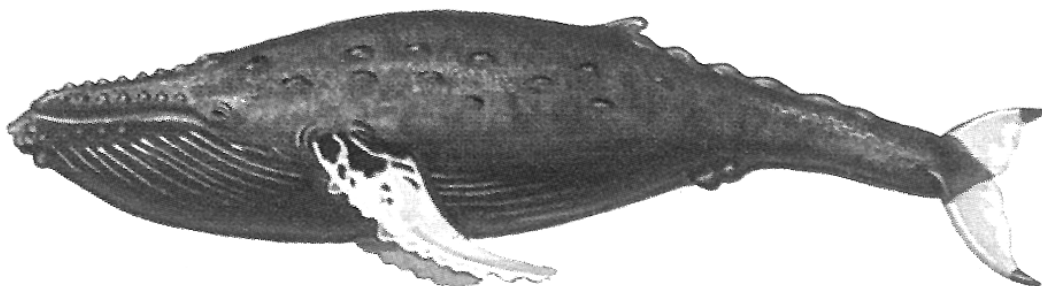
The "cure" is not fiction. It is a fact, so the whalemens assert, and there are many people at the township of Eden, Twofold Bay, New South Wales, who, it is vouched, can tell of several cases of chronic rheumatism that have been absolutely perfectly cured by the treatment herewith briefly described. How it came to be discovered I do not know, but it has been known to American whalemens for years.

When a whale is killed and towed ashore (it does not matter whether it is a "right," humpback, finback, or sperm whale) and while the interior of the carcass still retains a little warmth, a hole is cut through one side of the body sufficiently large to admit the patient, the lower part of whose body from the feet to the waist should sink in the whale's intestines, leaving the head, of course, outside the aperture. The latter is closed up as closely as possible, otherwise the patient would not be able to breathe through the volume of ammoniacal gases which would escape from every opening left uncovered. It is these gases, which are of an overpowering and atrocious odour, that

bring about the cure, so the whalemens say. Sometimes the patient cannot stand this horrible bath for more than an hour, and has to be lifted out in a fainting condition, to undergo a second, third, or perhaps fourth course on that or the following day. Twenty or thirty hours, it is said, will effect a radical cure in the most severe cases, provided there is no malformation or distortion of the joints, and even in such cases the treatment causes very great relief. One man who was put in up to his neck in the carcass of a small "humpback" stood it for sixteen hours, being taken out at two-hour intervals. He went off declaring himself to be cured. A year later he had a return of the complaint and underwent the treatment a second time.

All the "shore" whalemens whom the writer has met thoroughly believe in the efficacy of the remedy, and by way of practical proof assert that no man who works at cutting-in and trying out a whale ever suffers from rheumatism. Furthermore, however, some of them maintain that the "deader" the whale is, the better the remedy. "More gas in him," they say. And any one who has been within a mile of a week-dead whale will believe that.

Anyway, if there is any person, rheumatic or otherwise, who wants to emulate Jonah's adventure in a safe manner (with a dead whale), let him write to the Davidson Brothers, Ben Boyd Point, Twofold Bay, N.S.W., or to the Messrs. Christian, Norfolk Island, and I am sure those valorous whalemens would help him to achieve his desire.







## The West Country Ketch *Ceres*

**The *Ceres* must be the one of the few, if not only, vessels to have had a continuous 125-year working life.**

The *Ceres* (52 tons) was built at Salcombe in Devon in 1811 for William Lewis of Bude, Cornwall. Under his command it was to be used in the Spain-London fruit trade. However, during the latter half of the Peninsular War (1808-1814) *Ceres* was employed in carrying stores for the British troops on the continent, including to the ships blockading the French port of Brest. William Lewis died in 1829 and his son became master until 1855 when the ketch was sold to P.M. Petherick, also of Bude. He sailed it until 1866 when his eldest son, W.W. Petherick took over command. His younger son, Walter Pretherick took command in 1884, and was the *Ceres's* captain for 46 years until his retirement in 1930.

During the 1860s *Ceres* was lengthened, which raised its cargo capacity to 85 tons. In 1912 a 30 hp semi-diesel engine was fitted. In WW I the *Ceres* again did duty, this time carrying cargoes of munitions for the British army in France.

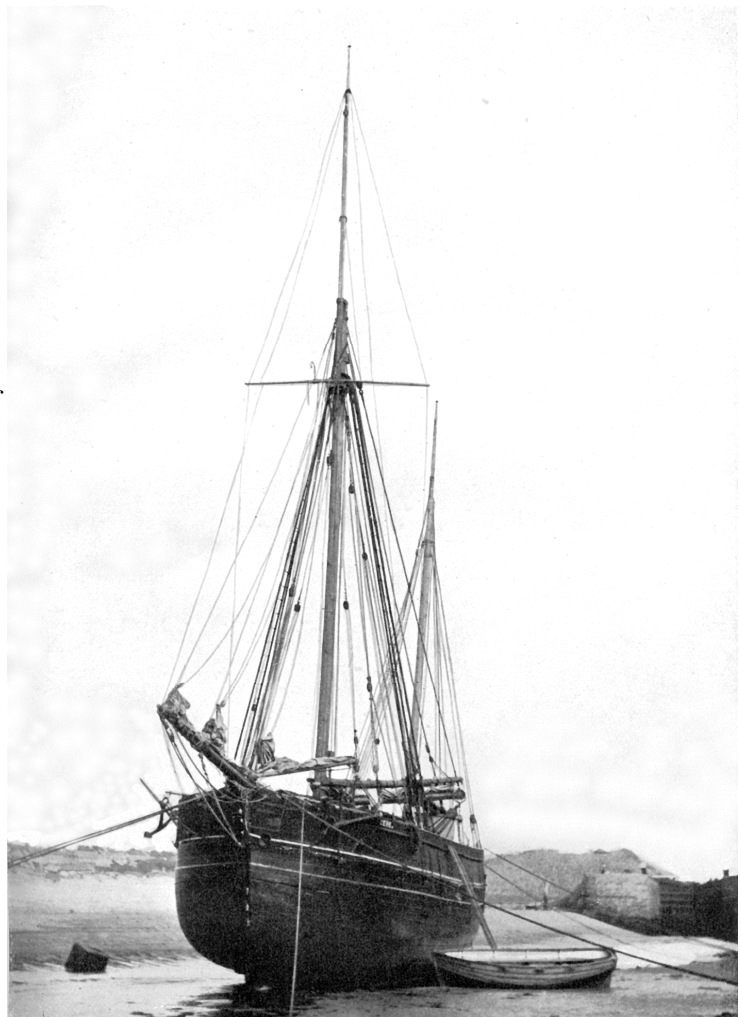
In 1936, still owned by the Petherick family, the *Ceres* was under the command of Oswald Jeffrey with Walter Ford as mate. Both men were from Appledore in north Devon. A newspaper report reads:

*We left Swansea on Tuesday bound for Bude with a cargo of slag. Because of the weather we intended to go in over the Bar for the night as it was too rough to venture on to Bude. At 8 o'clock [in the night] I went below to rest for an hour, leaving the mate in charge. An hour later he told me there was water in the engine room. We manned the pumps. We tried to get the ship over the Bar, but the water made her roll badly, and I gave the order for the ship's rowing boat to be launched. I fired two rockets, and we abandoned the vessel. We lay in the shelter of the *Ceres* which was sinking, and were taken onboard the lifeboat.*

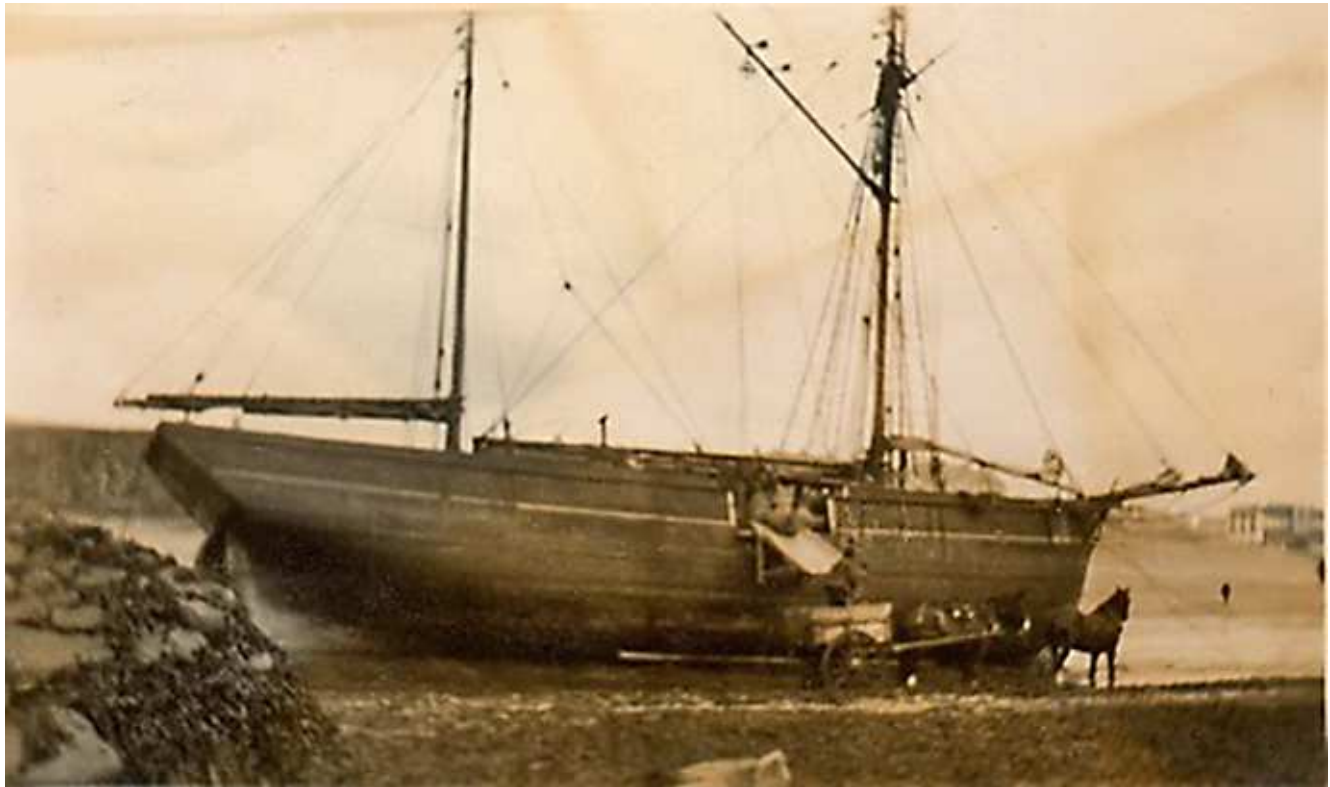
*Dr. Valentine stood by in case medical assistance was needed, but although wet through, neither the captain nor his mate appeared any the worse for this ordeal. (Bideford Weekly Gazette, 1 December 1936).*

The *Ceres* had been working hard for 125 years when it sank in Bideford Bay. The mate, Walter Ford, always maintained that it sank because the vessel had recently had a new timber set in, and this had swollen and had displaced the much older timbers which surrounded it.

At the time it was lost, this was the oldest vessel to still be working around the coast of Great Britain—and perhaps in the world.







*Unloading the Ceres in a drying harbour.*

*The Ceres under mainsail only sails into Bude.*





# Lieutenant James Barker Emery

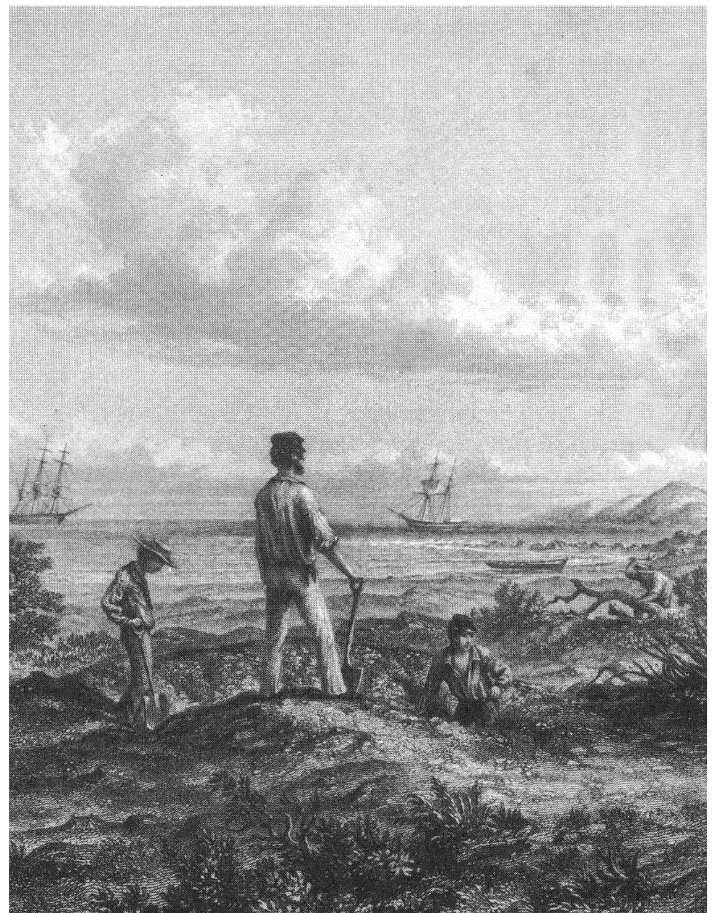
An article to accompany a copy of one of Ross Shardlow's magnificent paintings.

In 1837 HMS *Beagle* began its third voyage of exploration and surveying with Commander John Clements Wickham as commander and surveyor, and Lieutenant John Lort Stokes as assistant surveyor. There were two other lieutenants on board, James Barker Emery, first lieutenant, and Henry Eden, second lieutenant. During the many times the ship anchored so that exploration parties could go ashore, take boats up rivers and take soundings. as part of the surveys it became Lieutenant Emery's task to find water. The replenishment of water was vital to the *Beagle* being able to spend months on unexplored lengths of coastline, and it was the first lieutenant's job to find it. Her tanks held 2,800 gallons of water, to fill these meant finding water in reasonably large quantities and at a place close to the boats, so that the filled barrels could be easily taken out to the anchored *Beagle*.

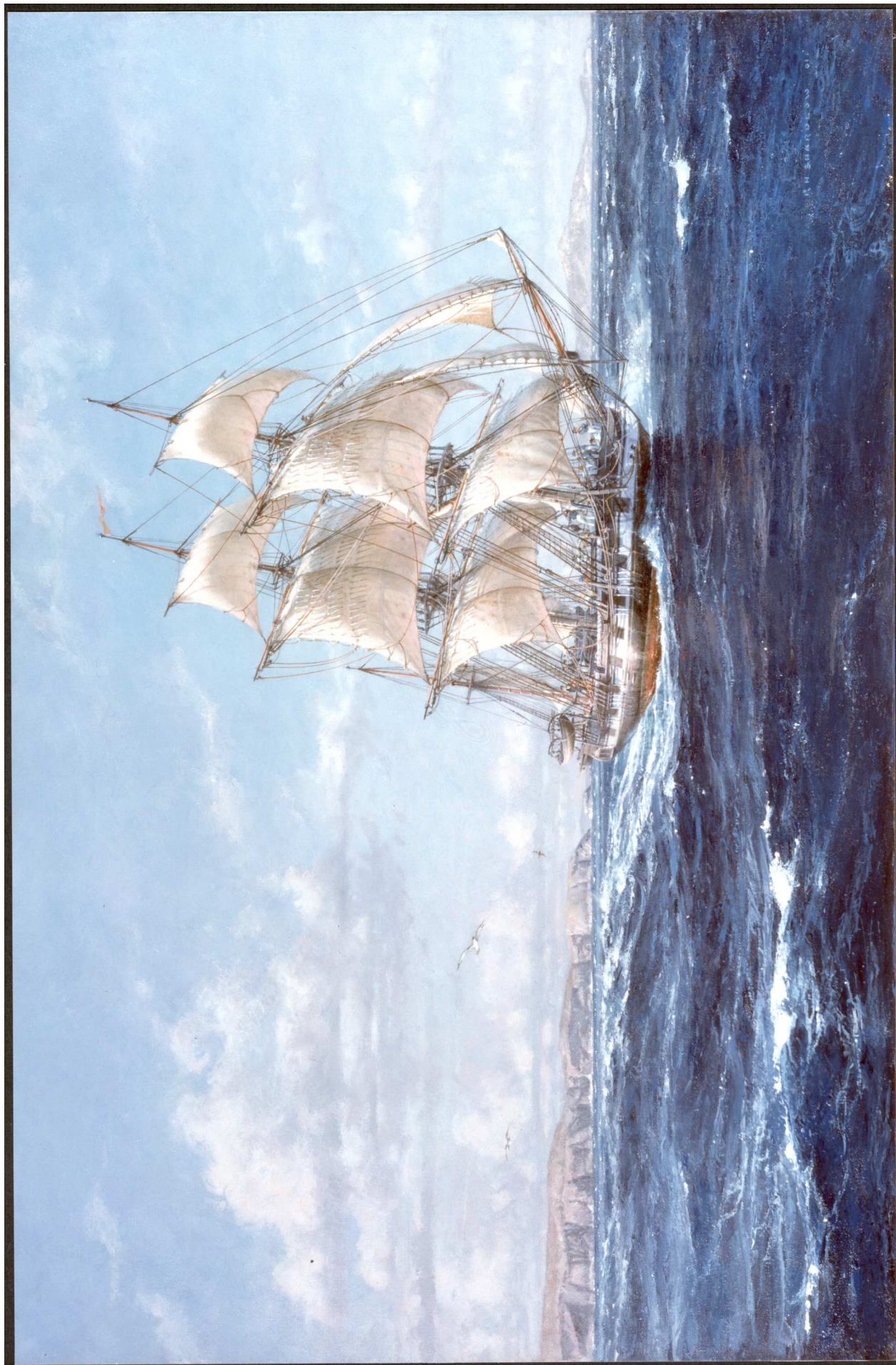
Emery became something of an expert at locating where to set his men digging for water. He was often unhappy at the job, much preferring to join the others in exploration. The lengths to which his small party would go to get water were quite incredible, especially so when one considers that at times the men were digging in the northern part of Australia during hot weather. In September 1839, for instance, they began a survey of a harbour which they had named Port Darwin after the *Beagle*'s famous passenger on the previous voyage. Emery set his men digging, first through eight feet of a mixture of ironstone and white clay, then sixteen feet of sandstone before they reached two or three feet of sandy mud. This proved more promising, but it was not until they had dug to a depth of thirty-three feet that they found sufficient clear water to enable them to fill the barrels and take them to the ship, where they were carefully poured into the tanks. The process involved more than just hard digging as sheer legs had to be set up over the well so that the dirt could be removed, and so that later the barrels could be lowered, filled and then hoisted one by one. Because of Emery's success in finding water, a nearby point of land was named Point Emery. The hard-working men got little mention.

However, Emery was not always successful. On another occasion while at Depuch Island on Western Australia's northwest coast they attempted to get water, having read that Baudin had obtained some from two springs there. Emery and his men dug nine separate wells. The first eight varied between eight and fifteen feet deep before being abandoned. The ninth, after using crowbars and pick axes to break through some rock, suddenly yielded water at twenty-one feet depth. However, to their great chagrin it proved to be salt, so that all their efforts were in vain. Luckily the *Beagle*'s surgeon, Benjamin Bynoe, discovered purely by chance a large pool of good water. It was a mile from the sea and therefore meant that the sailors had to carry the small barrels, seven gallons in each, over the rough ground that distance to the boats until six tons of water had been taken on board. Seven gallons of water weighs 70 pounds plus the weight of the barrel, a heavy load.

Peter Worsley







***Beagle off Breaksea Island***  
By Ross Shardlow

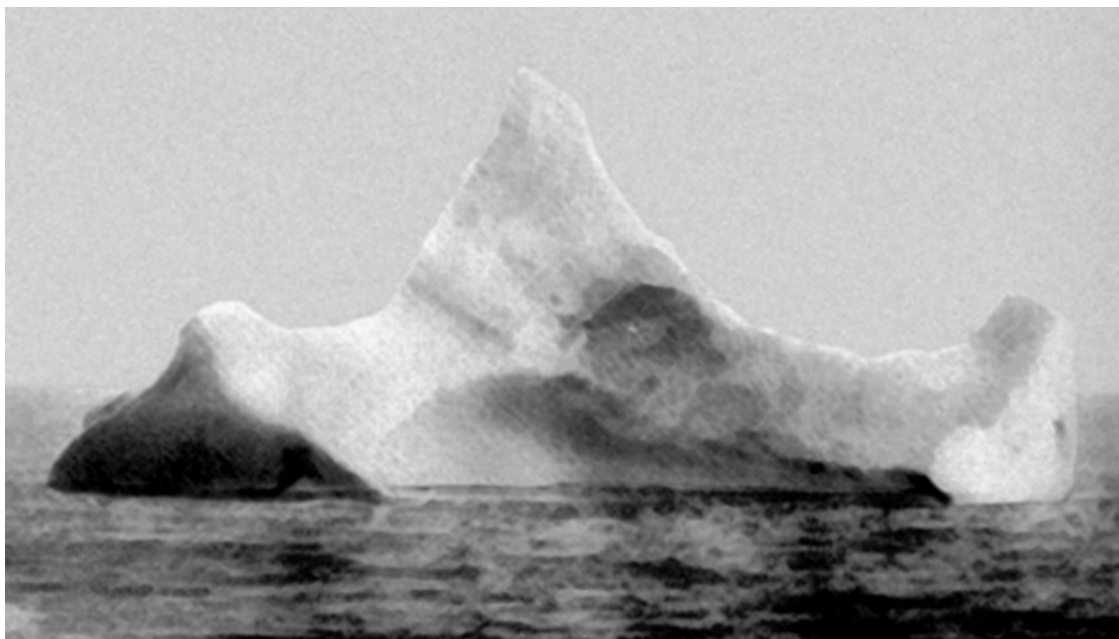


# Whatever Happened to the Iceberg That Sank the Titanic?

The following article and illustrations are from the Web (<http://io9.com/5901952/whatever-happened-to-the-iceberg-that-sank-the-titanic>) by Alasdair Wilkins

One hundred years ago, an ocean liner struck a block of ice and sank in the North Atlantic. The story of the ocean liner has been told hundreds of times. This story is about the block of ice.

These two photos are quite possibly the only known photographic evidence of the actual iceberg that struck the *Titanic*. Understandably, nobody had bothered to snap any photographs while the ship was actually sinking, so it's impossible to make an absolutely confirmed positive identification. But both photographs feature the telltale sign of a collision with a ship, and likely a recent one at that: a streak of red paint.



The photo above was taken by the chief steward of the German ocean liner *SS Prinz Adalbert*, which on April 15 was sailing through the North Atlantic mere miles away from where the *Titanic* had sank the night before. At the time, the chief steward hadn't yet learned of the *Titanic*'s fate, so he wasn't even on the lookout for icebergs. He simply spotted a streak of red paint along the iceberg's base, which most likely meant a ship had collided with it in the last twelve hours.

This next photo (opposite) was taken by a Captain De Carteret of the *Minia*, one of a few cable ships - vessels ordinarily used to lay deep sea cables, such as those for telecommunications - sent to the site of the shipwreck to recover corpses and debris. The captain claimed this was the only iceberg in the area, and the red paint was again a clear sign that a ship had recently struck it. There's some disagreement over whether this was the *only* iceberg in the area, but it certainly seems likely that *something* had hit it, and the odds are good that that something was the *Titanic*.

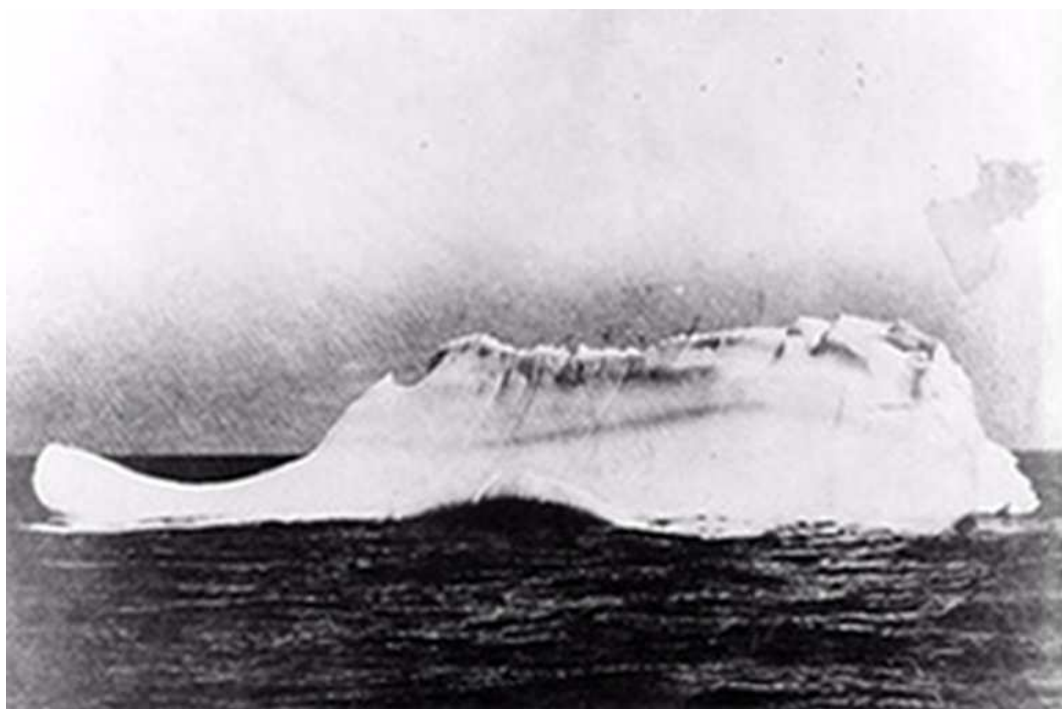
If you were to trace the story of the *Titanic* to its earliest human origins, you couldn't really go

much further back than 1907, when the White Star Lines first drew up plans to build the three largest ocean liners the world had even seen: *Olympic*, *Titanic*, and *Gigantic*, which was later renamed *Britannic* and sank in the Mediterranean during

World War I. From conception to sinking, the *Titanic* really only lasted about five years, although obviously its memory has endured far longer.

But by comparison, the iceberg began its slow journey to the North Atlantic *over three thousand years ago*. Again, we can only guess at the exact details, but the story likely began with snowfall on the western coast of Greenland somewhere around 1,000 BCE. After a few months, this





The water temperature on the night of the *Titanic* sinking was thought to be about 28 degrees Fahrenheit, just below freezing. Such a temperature was of course lethally cold for all those passengers who had been forced to take to the open water to escape the sinking ship.

But such temperatures are far too warm to sustain icebergs for very long. The average life ex-

pectancy of an iceberg in the North Atlantic is only about two to three years from calving to melting. That means it likely broke off from Greenland in 1910 or 1911, and was gone forever by the end of 1912 or sometime in 1913. In all likelihood, the iceberg that sank the *Titanic* didn't even endure to the outbreak of World War I, a lost splash of freshwater mixed in imperceptibly with the rest of the North Atlantic.

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But once all that's done, the iceberg's life was a short one. We know that because the *Titanic* sank in the North Atlantic, rather than the Arctic, which means the currents must have taken the iceberg far south of where it was calved. Starting on the Greenland coast, it would have moved from Baffin Bay to the Davis Strait and then onto the Labrador Sea and, at last, the Atlantic.

The *Titanic* iceberg was one of the lucky ones, so to speak, as the vast, vast majority of icebergs melt long before they reach that far south. Of the 15,000 to 30,000 icebergs calved each year by the Greenland glaciers, probably only about 1% of them ever make it all the way to the Atlantic. On April 15, 1912, the iceberg was some 5,000 miles south of the Arctic Circle.





## Can You Help?

1. Kim Leever recently purchased a 75-year old, classic Sydney yacht named *Waitere*. He has been refused insurance on the Huon pine yacht by one company, as they state that the yacht is too old. He wants to know whether any MHA member, or journal reader, is aware of a sympathetic insurance company? Or, as Kim asks, is this an oxymoron?

2. Peter Board from the Nelson Society of Australia has written to ask if the members of MHA can help with information on the loss of the destroyer HMS *Sturdy* on 30 October 1940 off the island of Tiree, Inner Hebrides, Scotland. He is asking on behalf of Ms Dawn Springett, whose father was one of the crew at the time of the ship's loss. She has already carried out a lot of research on the loss. If anyone can help would they please contact Peter Board at:



HMS *Sturdy*

3 Parkland Road  
STONEVILLE, WA 6081  
Tel: (08) 9295 1450.  
Email: loub@inet.net.au

## A Wheel-rigged Ship

Rod Dickson sent the following article from a Perth newspaper of 1850. How different might our shipping history have been had this idea been taken up.

Among the singular inventions, and contrivances which great emergencies have called forth, we may now mention the patent wheel-rigged ship. Mr Browne the patentee, proposes, by his invention, to remedy the numerous desertions of the crews from vessels arriving at different ports in California. The vessel is to be navigated by blind, one-armed and one-legged men, in preference able-bodied men - the former, from their helplessness, would remain by the vessel, while the latter would immediately desert for the gold region. The ship (which can either be a sailing vessel or a steamer) is to have five or six large masts; to these are attached square-rigged sails, which are worked simultaneously by a wheel; the blind man at this wheel, which likewise steers the vessel, taking the word of command, larboard and starboard, from the commanding officers. There is but one range of sails - no ropes or any ratlines to climb; and the reefing is performed by machinery, which causes the sail to fold to the mast. In tacking, one sail can backed,

and wheeled round with facility. A second range of sails could be adopted, which might be easily worked; but the inventor at present confines its practicability to one. The construction of the sails appears somewhat similar to those used by the Russian lodges in the White Sea; these, however, are worked by hand instead of machinery. Their voyages are solely confined in going from headland to headland; and in cases of foul weather they invariably drop their anchors. The idea appears to those who have examined the details of the plan perfectly feasible, the machinery being excessively plain, and susceptible of great improvements. However simple and crude the invention may appear at present, probably an intelligent and practical shipwright, on examination of the details, would be able to throw out such suggestions as would enable the patentee to apply his invention to some purposes of nautical utility, particularly at this period, when a preventive to the abandonment of valuable property is so much needed.



# La Pérouse

## An interesting addition to the disappearance of the French expedition in 1788.

Most readers of the journal will have heard of Jean-François Galaup, Comte de la Pérouse, and the disappearance in 1788 of his two ships and all of those on board. There is an interesting sideline to the disappearance which many may not know.

In 1785 la Pérouse had been commissioned by King Louis XVI of France to undertake a voyage of exploration to the Pacific. His ships, the *Boussole* and *Astrolabe*, sailed from Brest on 1 August 1785, and after rounding Cape Horn they explored the eastern Pacific as far north as Alaska. From there they sailed to Manilla and north to Macau, China and the Kamchatka peninsula. Here he received orders from France to investigate the proposed new settlement in New Holland. He arrived in Botany Bay via Samoa only days after the arrival of Captain Arthur Phillip and the First Fleet. After a stay of over six weeks la Pérouse sailed on 10 March 1788, and he, his men and his ships disappeared. Despite a number of searches it was not until 1827 that the mystery of the disappearance was solved.

Captain Peter Dillon, formerly a master in the employment of the Honourable East India Company, was sailing the *St Patrick* in the western Pacific, and called at the island of Tikopia to renew contact with a Prussian named Martin Bushart. He had assisted Bushart some years earlier. Bushart showed Dillon some French objects found at Vanikoro in Vanuatu. Subsequently Dillon went to Vanikoro and located the remains of the two French ships which had been wrecked by a cy-

clone while at anchor. According to the islanders at Vanikoro some of the survivors had built a small two-masted vessel and sailed away.

All this is well-known history. What is not so well known is that in 1861 the wreck of a small vessel was found on Temple Islets near Cape Palmerston south of McKay in northern Queensland. These three islets lie between one and two and a half miles offshore, the outer two are bare rocks but the inner is wooded and reaches a height of 108 feet. The wreckage was from a vessel of European design, built largely of unseasoned native wood cut from trees of the same type as those growing on Vanikoro. It was thought at the time that this was probably the boat that the survivors of the *Boussole* and *Astrolabe* had built, and that they were most likely to have been heading for Koepang in Timor when they suffered another shipwreck.

Peter Worsley

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Commissariat Office, Perth  
March 2, 1837.

TENDERS in Triplicate will be received at this office on Monday the 13<sup>th</sup> Instant, at 12 o'clock, from such person or persons as may be willing to contract for building a Rammed-Earth and Shingled Barrack and Store at the Vasse Inlet; the same to consist of two buildings, one 18 by 18 6 in., and the other 18 by 10, and 11 feet high. Specifications can be seen, and further information obtained, at this office, or from the Civil Engineer.

John Lewis  
Deputy Assistant Commissary General





## Eulogy to a Grand Old lady

Tony Duvollet, MHA member from Darwin, writes in praise of the well-known ketch *Aloha*.

It is with sadness that I bring word of the passing of a well-known west coast cruising identity, the recent loss of the ketch *Aloha* off the Zuytdorp Cliffs, north of Kalbarri, Western Australia. That story is best told by the survivors, Roger and Kim LeEVERS. [Editor's Note: This story will appear in the December journal.]

Joseph Conrad wrote in his story *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, "It is not the ships, but the men in them". Whilst a valid truism, there are always exceptions to the rule, and *Aloha* was definitely an exception.

*Aloha* was built in 1947 at Bunbury, of jarrah planks on karri ribs by a plumber named Henry Olsen from a design by *Rudder*, a now defunct US yachting magazine. As a crayboat she had a

I saw *Aloha* for the first time late 1973, the day I arrived from the Kimberleys to settle with my family in Geraldton. A magnificent sight as she reached up the harbour under full sail, including mizzen stays'l. I took a photo, not realising that four years later I would be part of her crew. That was the day that I wandered down to the fishermen's pens with a spray jacket under my arm, at a bit of a loss; for the yacht I usually sailed on was not racing that day. Graham, whom I only knew as a nodding acquaintance, must have seen the long look on my face and said, "You got a boat?" "Nope". "Right, jump on *Aloha*".

In our short human lives there come defining moments, some small episode that changes your life forever. For me this was just one of those moments.



*Aloha as a crayboat before her conversion to a ketch*  
Painting: Roger LeEVERS

working life of some twenty years. In 1960 the freeboard was raised by three strakes at West End Beach, Geraldton. She was bought by Graham and Roger LeEVERS from Roy Hines in 1972.

landing through Africa...just for something different. None of which would probably have happened if it was not for that chance meeting all those years ago.

Crewing that one Sunday race soon became crewing every Sunday race, crewing every twilight race, crewing every trip to the Abrolhos Islands (of which there were more than 15), an education in seamanship, navigation, boat handling, unique experiences and priceless friendships. Ultimately becoming a boat owner (with another 15 Abrolhos Islands trips), becoming a live-aboard yachting for the past 26 years, sailed three times Fremantle to Darwin, sailed to England, then over-





Graham, in his own quiet way, and *Aloha* taught me so much that you cannot get out of books, courses, or even the internet. In the midst of a potential disaster, with the crew running around like headless chooks (not an original analogy, but appropriate), Graham would very quietly, precisely and succinctly give orders, remaining calm throughout. Qualities, I would like to think, he has passed on to others...and perhaps even me!

Graham has a wonderful philosophy on life. One, which in this "hurry up" world in which we live, many should heed. One Sunday race, when yet again we came last, I asked Graham, "Don't you get sick of coming last all the time?" "Naw, we get in more sailing time", was the laconic reply; an insight which I would like to think I live by today. Another of his axioms is, "The best time to leave on a voyage is in the middle of a storm...the weather can only get better!"

*Aloha* was a sea-kindly vessel and could be seen out in all kinds of weather. In stormy conditions she broke her oregon bow-sprit, so I offered to make a new one, thinking Grahame would buy a nice piece of expensive, select No. 1 clear oregon. Instead I was given a 4m section of ex PMG telegraph pole, hard as the hobs of hell, cost: one carton of beer; but somehow I managed to fashion it into something resembling a bow-sprit. I had to fit it to the stemhead and to do this I had laid one end on the foredeck and the other on the catwalk handrail. I was kneeling on the bow-sprit, checking in a mortice, completely absorbed in the task, when a trawler went past, setting up a set of waves that pitched *Aloha* fore and aft. So rapt was I in the job at hand that I did not notice that the motion had worked the end of the spar off the deck and suddenly I was somersaulting, head over heels into the water with a hammer in one hand and a chisel in the other; it went through my mind that the hammer was mine, the chisel was *Aloha's*...so I threw the hammer on the deck and dropped the chisel in the water and still had time to grab the toerail. How my mind was able to work so fast is still a mystery to me for I am not noted for my quick thinking. However, hanging there with my feet in the water, I realised the absurdity of the situation and laughing to myself I let go and slipped into the aqua. It was only later on that I recovered the ship's chisel.

The trips to the Abrolhos (Portuguese for "Keep yer flamin' eyes open") Islands from Geraldton

required leaving port at midnight to be able reach the outlying islands between 0800 and 0900hrs with the rising sun behind you so as to pick out the passages through the coral reefs. One such night it was blowing a storm and I was relieved, when at midnight, Graham said "Too rough, lets see what is like in the morning", and with that we all bunked down. At dawn I awoke to the howling of wind in rigging. "Good", thinks I, "we're not going". On deck Graham sniffs the air and says, "Right we're going". I expressed my nervousness to one of the crew (whom I had never met before) and he replied, puffing out his chest, "Storms? Don't talk to me about storms...trawler man me" thumping his inflated chest. Well, four or five hours later the jib blew out and we were both ordered to go forward and drop the tatters and bring them aft. So over heaving deck we made our way to the main mast and I said "I'll go out on the bow-sprit and when I give the signal, let go the halyard and as I unhook the jib and haul it back to you with the sheets". A nod of approval from him and carefully judging my moment I made my way across the pitching deck to the even wilder pitching bowsprit and locking myself into the pulpit (no lifejackets or harnesses those days) I signalled 'let go the halyard', no response. I signalled and called out. No response. A third signal and shout. No response, so I looked aft to see our T/M, arms firmly wrapped around the mast with a look of absolute terror on his frozen, ashen face. Somehow I lost any faith in him after that.

By mid-afternoon with no islands in sight, (this was the pre-Sat Nav, GPS, or Chartplotter era), Graham gets a tad concerned. "Should see something by now", and then switched on the ancient (paper-type) depth sounder. "Mmm, not reading", so he changed course from westerly to due north. Some hours later when the sounder read 23 fathoms (I told you it was ancient) we headed back west again, and just before it got dark we picked up the lone hut on Jacko's Island. (Huts are usually the highest point as most of the islands are composed mostly of piles of dead coral some with low scrubby bushes and devoid of trees. The exceptions being West and East Wallabies, highest point, 40ft (12m) above sea level. These crayfishermen's huts often serve as leads and triangulation points to keep track of where you are.) It was dark and cold before we picked up Jacko's mooring, a 44-gallon drum which with the drag of *Aloha* against the wind was soon lying clear of the



water. But that didn't bother me for we were now soon down below, dry, warm and safe. I was full of wonderment at the use of the depth sounder as a tool to estimate your position. But I have since worked it out. The Geelvink Channel between the Abrolhos Islands and the mainland has an average depth of 23ftms, if the sounder is not reading the depth is over 100ftms and ergo our position is too far south. Bleedin' obvious, innit!

Another trip, albeit with much kinder weather, we made for Serventy Island in the Easter Group of the Abrolhos Islands. After working our way through a small gap in the outer reef and, using one side of the coral wall of Leo's old hut (Leevers Leads), through an even smaller gap in the inner reef we nudged the bow on the beach, stepped ashore and placed a bow line over a post onshore. With *Aloha* lying quietly bow to the prevailing southerly wind we went off to check the nearby seal nursery nestled in amongst the almost impenetrable mangroves.

Sometime the next day the weather came in from the north-west and Graham knew we could be trapped there for days so we got under way. The first gap near Leo's Old Camp was no problem, but once into the main lagoon the outer reef was a seething, confused mass of boiling waves and wind-driven spume. No nice clear lateral markers here. "Where is the flamin' entrance? Tony? Go out on the bowsprit and see if you can find it" (me, why me, why me again? But having a misguided high regard for the skipper and *Aloha*, and seeing no way out of it, I did as I was told). In the relative calm of the lagoon I was soon out at my station, looking into this mass of boiling water when Graham drove *Aloha* forward. Bang! "No, that's not it". He backed off and tried again further along. Bang! "No, that's not it

either". Four "bangs and no that's not it either" later, by the grace of the soul of *Aloha*, we were through! We were out in open waters and driving into large breaking seas and I suddenly found myself trapped on the end of that flamin' bowsprit describing a large proportion of the arc of a circle, one minute some 6m above the sea, next minute plunging waist deep through the waves. Which is where had to I stay until we were finally in the lee of a nearby island. I must point out here that at no time was there any danger or risk of damage, for the 'bangs' took place inside the relative calm of the inner lagoon and *Aloha's* keel was a solid lump of railway iron securely bolted through keel and keelson with six 2-foot

*The ketch Aloha with Tony on the bowsprit  
Illustration: Roger Leever*





(605mm) x 1 ½in. bolts made from a 12ft stainless steel prop shaft.

It has never ceased to amaze me that after trips like that that I haven't sold up and bought a block of land in Alice Springs!

By 1986 I was back in the Kimberleys, working on Koolan Island. One Sunday someone, who knew I had once lived in Geraldton, told me that there was this old blue yacht from Geraldton in the port. I got quite excited for that description could fit only one boat. And sure enough, after driving 14kms, in a borrowed vehicle, down minesite roads I came to the wharf; and there she was, ever the same, lying at anchor in The Canal, the deep, narrow strait that separates the island from the rest of the continent, quarter of a mile away. So, borrowing the harbour master's dinghy (with permission) I motored out. Coming alongside neither Graham nor Roger seemed surprised to see me in such a remote location and Graham just said, "we're goin' over to Crocodile Creek, you cummin'?" "Too right" I said, and scrambled aboard the familiar deck. Crocodile Creek is one of those special places that few people see. The spectacular anchorage can only be reached at high water on the 12m spring tides. Once there you are surrounded by red cliffs and the soothing sounds of the nearby waterfall. Instructing Graham and Roger to tie up to the ringbolts set into the cliffs and lay off in the centre of the pool, I left them to it and headed back to Koolan as it was getting dark. Somehow, during the night, on the outgoing tide *Aloha* settled on an outlying rock and started to heel alarmingly, taking on water, the two Whale gusher bilge pumps were not working properly (in fact Roger struggled to somehow keep them working all the way down the west coast), they couldn't use the engine pump because the heel was such that the raw water intake was out of the water. Roger managed to get an extended main halyard ashore and using the foredeck winch (which I had always thought was actually a museum piece, conversation piece or just decoration) heaved her upright and saved her. *Aloha* was not ready to go just yet. Incidentally, that winch was bought from Manny

Manolis off his Carlberg crayboat FV *Dawn*, in Broome using Kimberley Currency...half a carton of long browns! That episode was just many of a long voyage she made from Geraldton to New Guinea, Solomon Islands and North Queensland, (no gearbox between Cairns and Darwin). Another trip was across the Indian Ocean to Christmas Island, Cocos Island, Rodriguez Island and Mauritius. It was on the return leg in the roaring forties of the Southern Ocean that *Aloha* was knocked down, bending the spinnaker pole at right angles...which made it a bit awkward to use after that.

My last trip on *Aloha* was about five years ago when I flew down from Darwin to visit my daughter's family in Geraldton. I was fortunate enough to find a berth on *Aloha*, with Roger as skipper, for a trip over to the Southern Group. A walk along the seaward side of Pelseart Island (also known locally as Long Island) makes wonderful beachcombing; and this trip was no exception for we found Japanese glass net floats, beer bottles from countries near and far, paper nautilus shells (so fine and delicate that you can see your hand through the shell, yet somehow they survive intact being tossed ashore above the high tide line during winter storms.) as well as a perfectly sound commercial PFD, which I gave to *Aloha* as I would not be allowed to carry it on board the flight back to Darwin due to the compressed gas container. According to Roger this gift was conducive to their survival after the sinking of *Aloha*...after they worked out what it was!

With the loss of *Aloha* off the Zuytdorp Cliffs, an important and defining part of my life has gone...but her legacy lives on.

I am sure that she felt it was time to go, under her own terms, with sails aloft, off her familiar west coast, proud to the end, forever in the element for which she was created.

*Aloha*, you touched so many in your long and eventful life,

Vale, old friend.

**Answers to the quiz on page 3:** 1. David Lewis (*Icebird*), 2. Joshua Slocum (*Spray*), 3. Colin Archer (Norwegian life & pilot boats), 4. Robin Knox-Johnson (*Suhaili*), 5. Eric & Susan Hiscock (*Wanderer*), 6. Sir Francis Chichester (*Gypsy Moth*).



# QUIZ

## Answers to June

1. The Vergulde Draeck ran aground on 28 April 1656.
2. Muntz metal is a brass made from a mixture of copper (60%) and zinc (40%). It was used to sheath the underwater part of the hull on timber ships, being a cheap substitute for copper, and was normally referred to as 'yellow metal sheathing'.
3. George Vancouver named Michaelmas Island on Michaelmas Day, 29 September 1791.

## Quiz

1. Which vessel is the longer—the sail training ship *Leeuwin II* or the famous fishing schooner *Bluenose*?
2. When talking of sailing ships, what is meant by the word steeve?
3. Who named Esperance Bay where the town of Esperance is now situated, and when?

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