

# MARITIME HERITAGE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

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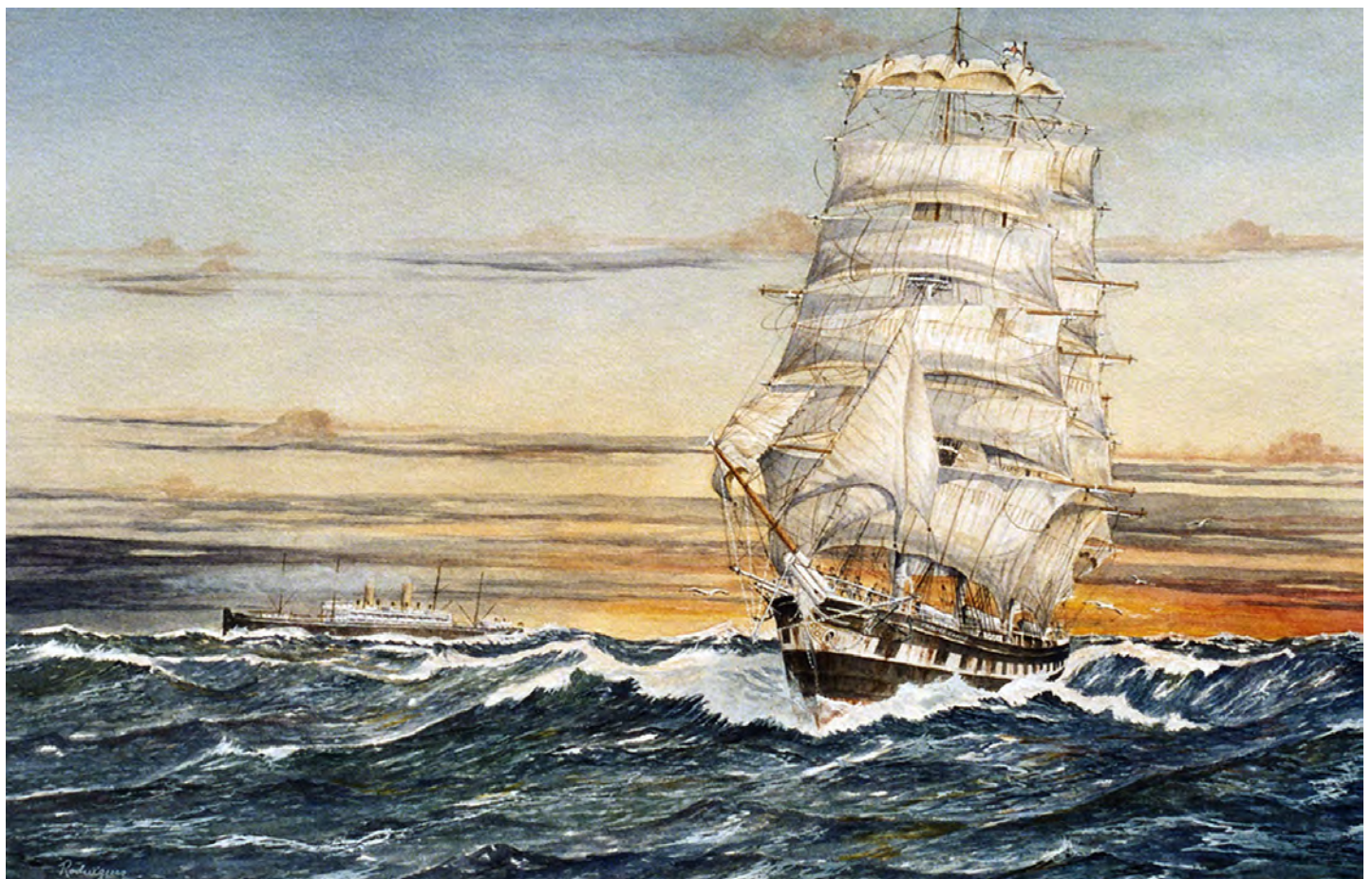
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The Last Sunset  
Pat Rodriguez's painting of the *Carlisle Castle*

See article page 8



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

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# MHA End of Year Windup

**When: 10 am Sunday 19 November 2017**

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

For catering purposes please let Doris know if you will be attending

**Email: [hicksmaritime@bigpond.com](mailto:hicksmaritime@bigpond.com)**

Or

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## Did You Know?

On 29 December 1801 near the Cape Verde Islands male convicts mutinied on the transport *Hercules* en route Cork to Sydney. In the fighting that ensued thirteen convicts were killed. After the convicts had been overpowered and forced below, the captain of the *Hercules*, Captain Luckyn Betts, shot a convict, Jeremiah Prendergass. Betts considered Prendergass to be the ring-leader of the mutiny. During the rest of the voyage Betts kept the remainder of the convicts in close confinement in harsh conditions, resulting in another 30 dying before the ship reached Sydney.



# Vale Rod Mackay – Consummate Modeller

RODERIC DHU MACKAY  
19 October 1930 – 9 February 2017



*Rod and Dorothy Mackay, 1995*  
Photo courtesy Mackay private family collection

I met Rod and Dorothy (Dor) Mackay through my parents who lived in Waikiki and, like Rod and Dor who lived in nearby Shoalwater, used to go camping ‘up-north’ every year in winter. It was only a matter of time before they found themselves together in the same camping grounds – and it was only a matter of time before Rod and I found we had a common interest in maritime history and became mates. That was over thirty years ago. Rod was a very easy man to be mates with, we always found a wealth of maritime matters to talk about, projects to share, and had a lot of laughs.

RODERIC MACKAY was born on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 1930 in Northam to Jock and Vera Mackay. He was supposed to be named Roderic Dhu as the family had a connection with a ship of that name, but family legend has it that Jock had a few too many celebratory drinks at the birth of his first son and left out the middle name at the registry office. Rod’s father was the Postmaster in Northam and played in the Northam Band as well as entertaining the locals with his own ‘Jock Mackay’s Band’. Jock also had an interest in boats. Rod said that his father had a half-decked, gaff-rigged cutter built for him by a local boat builder some time before 1930. Named *Kuleto*, the boat was later renamed *Roderic Dhu*.

In 1949 when Rod was 19 years of age his par-

ents moved to Safety Bay after they bought the



*Rod’s father and uncles built many boats. Rod’s Uncle Alec Mackay built Kuleto 3, seen here.*

Photo courtesy Mackay private family collection

shop at Mersey Point, Safety Bay, opposite Penguin Island. In conjunction with Mr M. A. MacGoun, Jock secured the first private lease of Penguin Island, built a jetty at Mersey Point and established a ferry service to the island. Jock was



also a member of the Rockingham Road Board. Rod remained in Northam as he had taken up an apprenticeship as a watchmaker-jeweller. In 1951 Rod moved to Fremantle to work at Caris Brothers and on weekends he would travel to Safety Bay to work in his parents' shop.

When Rod's father passed away in 1952 Rod moved to Safety Bay to run the shop with his



Rod with some of the hire-boats at Mersey Point in 1953.

Photo courtesy Mackay family private collection

mother and also operated a fleet of dinghies and boats-for-hire along the foreshore. Rod carried on the family tradition with boats and boating and built quite a few boats of his own – mainly speed-boats and a yacht. Soon after losing his father Roderic met Dorothy Allen at the Safety Bay Yacht Club. One of their early dates involved sailing in a yacht race from Safety Bay around Sandy Beach Island and back. Dorothy had never sailed before that. They were married on 3 October 1953 and built their home in South Como where they lived for twenty years and had five children. Rod found new employment working for J & W Bateman and then Plymar Hardware, both businesses associated with the boating industry. Rod's mother eventually sold the shop in Safety Bay and moved back to Perth. To maintain their association with the area, Rod and Dor purchased a beach cottage in Shoalwater to use as a weekender.

When Rod went into semi-retirement in 1980, they moved from Como into their beach cottage in Shoalwater. Rod found maintaining wooden boats was becoming difficult, besides which, he used to get seasick, so he turned his skills to building camper trailers and caravans to go camping 'up-north' every year in the winter – and as well they did, or we might never have met them.

To maintain his love for all things nautical, Rod took up building model ships, the first of which

was the *Rockingham*. It was through this project, thirty years ago, that Rod and I first got together with me supplying the drawings and Rod doing the construction work. My knowledge of the *Rockingham*, however, was limited, and it was not until I went to London the following year to do some research that I discovered I had omitted certain details on the plans. Though I knew Rod was nearing completion of the model I sent an urgent message: "STOP EVERYTHING! – ROCKINGHAM HAS QUARTER GALLERIES." Though we might imagine his despair, Rod, being the consummate modeller that he was, rebuilt the model confident in the knowledge that it was now as accurate as he could make it.

Following the formation of the Maritime Heritage Association in 1990, Rod was entrusted with the collection of model making tools, timbers, books and plans that had been donated to the MHA by the family of the late Alec Upjohn. Included in the collection was Alec's unfinished model of HMS *Success*. Rod took on the task of completing the model and made a wonderful job of it. Such was the quality of Rod's work he would include items below decks even to furnishing the officers' quarters and placing a coin to 'pay the ferry-man'; hidden details unseen and unknown by the viewer.

Rod joined the MHA as member 146, served on the Committee and made regular contributions to the Journal, which he held in high esteem. He went on to make about twenty models, many of which have been exhibited in state and local museums. I recall the day he came round to my studio to show me his latest model, the beautiful little colonial brig *Lady Nelson*, and asked, "What do you think of that?" When I said it was perfectly sublime he replied, "then you can have it," and I nearly fainted.

For the last year or so Rod was suffering from dementia and had to give up modelling ships as his hands shook too much to work the rigging – so he took up modelling lighthouses instead! Rod's son Grey said the end came quickly after Rod was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. "We had to help him walk and do everything," Grey recalled, "we got him up and he would sit in his chair in the lounge room reading his Maritime Heritage newsletters all day."

The last time I spoke with Rod I asked him how



he liked living at Shoalwater. Rod replied thoughtfully, “It is a nice place to grow old in. Dor and I walk down to the beach every day, we just like to sit on the beach and look out to sea.”

The Maritime Heritage Association extends its deepest sympathies to Dorothy and to Annie, Robyn, John, Grey, friends, family, colleagues and shipmates.



*Rod's model of Saint Allouarn's Le Gros Ventre made in 2007.*  
Photo courtesy Mackay family private collection

Compiled by Ross Shardlow with special thanks to Grey Mackay for biographical information supplied by the Mackay family.

In 2016 the wreck of the *Washington*, a 36-ton sloop, was discovered in Lake Superior, USA. Built in Eerie, Pennsylvania, the sloop was launched in 1801. The *Washington* departed Kingston on 6 November 1803 carrying a crew of five and a cargo worth \$20,000. The vessel was struck by a storm, overwhelmed and sank. All on board died. This is the 2nd oldest wreck discovered in the Great Lakes, and like most others is in a remarka-

ble state of preservation.





# 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 maximum number of yachts permitted to participate in the Fastnet Race is 340. For the 2017 race this quota was reached 4 minutes and 24 seconds after online registration was opened.

In the March 2017 Ditty Bag I referred to the origins of the World War II amphibious truck known as a DUKW. One recently sold for £68,700 at auction in England.

The designated area for sea burials in England is offshore from The Needles on the Isle of Wight. The coffin must be made of softwood, have 50, 2 inch diameter holes in it, and have a 440lb weight attached.

When first cast, each of the liner *Queen Mary's* 4-bladed bronze propellers weighed 53 tons. During the subsequent machining 18 tons was removed, leaving each propeller weighing 35 tons.

Lloyd's began its agent system in 1811. The criteria to become a Lloyd's agent at the many ports round the world was that they were 'resident and well-established at the place concerned, and of high commercial status and integrity'.

The last vessel to carry slaves to the USA was the 86-ft schooner *Clotilde* (Captain William Foster), which arrived at Mobile, Alabama, in autumn 1859. It was then burned and sunk. The last slave brought in on that voyage died in 1927.

Batavia, the old name for Holland, later the Netherlands, derives from the Batavi tribe who lived a few miles south of present day Utrecht.

During the 19th century, besides the famous Bristol Channel pilot cutters, there were many others based at various ports in England. Based in the Scilly Islands were cutters whose pilots would take ships up the English Channel into the North Sea. The pilot would then find another ship heading west and return home. At times gales swept these ships out into the Atlantic taking the pilot with them. At least one pilot was recorded as reaching Australia.

During World War I the 63rd Division of the British Military Forces was composed of Royal Navy personnel. The battalions forming the division were named after famous admirals—Anson, Benbow, Collingwood, Drake, Hawke, Hood, Howe and Nelson. The uniforms and equipment of the sailor/soldiers was standard army pattern apart from their insignia. They served with distinction in the Dardanelles and on the Western Front.

The largest reciprocating engine in the world is the 2,277-ton, 14-cylinder Wärtsilä-Sulzer RTA96-C turbo-charged diesel engine. Each cylinder is 1,820cc. The engine is 87ft long, 44ft high, 87.6ft wide, and produces 190,000bhp.

The first recorded whaler to visit Western Australia was the French *Caroline du Sud* (Captain James Whippey), which reached the coast of 'New Holland' on 14 December 1790. The ship was anchored in Shark Bay from 18 to 29 December before heading north to Java.

The Rowley Shoals, 160 miles north-west of Broome, were named after Captain Josias Rowley of HMS *Imperiuse* who first sighted them on 30 December 1800. The southern-most of the three atolls is named after his ship.

All the sea lions in the Fremantle area are males. Every 18 months they travel north to the Jurien-Cervantes area to mate with the females, all of whom live in that area.

In 1821 Henry Reveley, WA's first civil engineer, saved the life of the famous poet Percy Shelley following a boating accident in Italy. Among other achievements he designed and oversaw the construction of the Round House at Fremantle. This building cost £1,603.10s to build. The flagstones at the entrance were quarried in Yorkshire, and came out as ship's ballast.

**Slush:** The fat and grease off boiled meat, the perquisite of the cook who profited by selling it. Some slush was retained to grease the masts, blocks, etc.



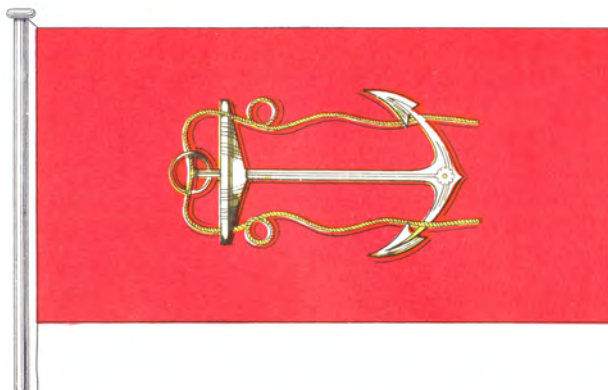
# QUIZ

## Answers to June

1. The captain of the *Hooghly* was Captain Peter J. Reeves.
2. Stirling named Point Walter after his favourite older brother.
3. Gantheaume Bay (Kalbarri) and Gantheaume Point (Broome) were named in 1801 by Nicolas Baudin after Admiral Honoré Joseph Antoine Gantheaume.

## Quiz

1. A knee is an L-shaped strengthening structure on a vessel. What is the difference between a hanging knee and a lodging knee?
2. What flag is this—it has a yellow anchor on a red background?
3. The 3-masted iron barque *Sepia* (715 tons, Captain Hugh Thomas) was wrecked near Carnac Island, and is one of the well-known wrecks off Fremantle. On what date was the *Sepia* wrecked?



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Silver Medal, Cornwall Polytechnic, 1893.





# The Last Sunset

## *Carlisle Castle*

### 1868–1899

**Pat Rodriguez has researched the loss of the *Carlisle Castle* and completed a painting. As usual he provided information on the vessel (published below) to go with the painting.**

One of three beautiful clippers built by R & H Green's Blackwall Yard at their East India Docks on the River Thames. The ships were all iron construction with the traditional profile of the Blackwall line.

These ships were the:

<i>Superb</i>	1451 tons	1886
<i>Carlisle Castle</i>	1458 tons	1868
<i>Melbourne</i>	1857 tons	1875

These three ships were noted for their modern iron bow, long poop and high bulwarks. Their rig was lofty, with *Carlisle Castle* carrying double top sails and could set no less than five headsails.

*Carlisle Castle* was one of the finest iron passenger ships built and had few peers in the mercantile marine.

Her specifications were: Length 230ft, beam 38ft, depth 23ft. Registered tonnage 1458 tons.

She was engaged by her owners, R & H Green, principally on the England–Australia passenger/migrant/wool run for most of her life. In this role she was consistently noted for her sea worthiness, dryness, comfort safety and reliable fast passages. In late May 1899 *Carlisle Castle* sailed from Liverpool on passage for Fremantle carrying general cargo and passengers. On the night of 12<sup>th</sup> July 1899 at the height of a howling gale with mountainous seas, the ship struck Coventry Reef near Rockingham. The terrible storm, poor visibility

and navigational miscalculation were the cause of her loss.

The first indication of this tragedy was when two damaged lifeboats and life buoys with the ship's name on them were washed up on the beach near Rockingham.

There were no survivors nor were any bodies ever recovered.

On the same night the iron full rigged ship, *City of York* (1218 tons) was wrecked on the northern side of Rottnest Island, becoming a total loss with 12 survivors from the crew of 23.

Just prior to sunset on 12<sup>th</sup> July the P&O *Oceana* under the command of Captain L. H. Crawford CB, passed astern of *Carlisle Castle*. At the subsequent enquiry into the ship's loss, the Captain and officers of the *Oceana* stated that in their opinion that *Carlisle Castle* was carrying a heavy press of sail for a vessel on a lee-shore with a rapidly falling glass and with obvious heavy weather coming on.

The wreck and her cargo were auctioned at Fremantle on the 29<sup>th</sup> July, the wreck bought five guineas and the cargo and sundries twenty one guineas.

The painting depicts the last sighting of *Carlisle Castle* by the liner *Oceana* at sunset on the 12<sup>th</sup> July 1899.

## How to cook whale meat

**This recipe comes from a cook who worked at the Norwegian whaling station at Grytviken, South Georgia, prior to its closing in 1968.**

1. Hang whale meat in the open air until it turns black. By that time it should be exuding drops of oil.
2. Remove blackened area and cut into slices 1/3 inch thick.
3. Soak in a solution of 3 parts water and 1 part vinegar for one hour.

4. Drain, dry and fry with onions.







# The Loss of Ensign Parkison & the SC-751

A little-known incident in Western Australia during World War II

The United States Navy submarine chaser SC-751 was built by the Robertson Marine Construction Company, Benton Harbour, and launched on 28 July 1942 as Patrol Craft (PC)-751. The ship was reclassified Submarine Chaser (SC)-751 in April 1943. It was one of many similar SC-497 Class submarine chasers built during World War II for the US Navy. The vessels of this class exhibited a wide range of armament depending on operational areas. On 21 June 1943 SC-751 under the command of Captain Bobbie C. Davis in company with three other vessels, the steamer *Isabel* and the USS Navy vessels *PY-10* and *Ondina*, were sailing from Fremantle towards Exmouth. At 9.30am position was established with a good running fix on Red Bluff near Kalbarri. At 7.40pm, heading on a course of 340°, the Senior Officer of the small group, Lieutenant Franklin D. Buckley on board the *Isabel*, realised that they couldn't reach Ex-

yards astern of the *Isabel*, kept catching up. Captain Davis therefore reduced speed to 7.5 knots. At midnight the vessels extinguished their lights, and Captain Davis lost sight of the other vessels. He increased speed to catch up with the other ships, but after an hour still had not seen any sign of them. By this time the wind had reached 25 knots and the seas were starting to increase. Davis ordered an increase of speed to 9.3 knots, and at 2.00am on 22 June he ordered a course change to 084°. By this time the wind had reached 30 knots, higher in squalls, and waves were beginning to break over the wheelhouse. Captain Davis estimated his speed to be 8 knots. Visibility was only 500 yards.

At 3.20am the third officer, Ensign William D. Golfarb, took over the watch and Davis went below. He claimed to have left orders to be called at 5.00am, but this did not occur. At about



*There is no known photograph of SC-751, but SC-761 was built to the same design during the same period.*

mouth Gulf that night. He gave the signal to head more northerly, zig-zag during the night until 2.00am, when the course would be changed to 104°, still zig-zagging. When daylight came the following morning they would head east. The group's speed was 8.3 knots, and SC-751, 1,500

5.30am Ensign Thomas K. Parkison took over the watch, and 25 minutes later the ship struck a reef. No one had seen the reef or any white water to indicate its presence. Captain Davis rushed to the bridge, had the starboard engine stopped (the port had stopped when the ship struck), and then put



both engines hard astern. However, the *SC-751* had a list to port resulting in the starboard propeller being mostly above the water while the port was jammed in the reef and wouldn't turn. The ship was pounding, taking water in the engine room and the transmitter generator was underwater. This meant that they had no radio.

Captain Davis ordered all secret and confidential publications placed in a weighted bag, but at this stage did not have them thrown overboard as they were in shallow water. Both life rafts were launched and secured alongside. It was light enough to see that they were about three and a half miles from land. The seas eased, and at 8.15am the 12ft ship's boat was lowered, and Ensign Parkison and three sailors, Del Fattore, Aceto and Cifone, attempted to make the shore to obtain help. At 10.30am when they were about halfway to shore a squall struck and the boat filled with water. The crew got in the water which by now was only chest deep and clung to the boat. They tried unsuccessfully to empty it, but the rising seas prevented this. The seas then overturned the boat, seriously injuring Aceto's head. They decided to swim back to the ship. Del Fattore helped the injured Aceto. Cifone, a strong swimmer, tried to get Ensign Parkison to let go the boat and return to the *SC-751*, but Parkison refused to release his hold. The wind by this time was blowing at 30 knots, and the seas increasing. By midday the three enlisted men had got onto the reef about a mile from the ship and were half wading and half swimming towards *SC-751*. Ensign Parkison had meanwhile let go of the boat and was swimming, but had drifted outside the breakers to seaward. The three enlisted men gained the ship at about 1.00pm, but Parkison was seen to be still swimming, and appeared to be making some headway towards the ship. A half hour later he could still be seen still struggling in the waves when a heavy rain squall struck. When it cleared he had vanished.

Captain Davis had both the 20mm cannon and Very pistol fired as distress signals. This noise was heard on the shore by some Australian Army personnel who raised the alarm. Those on board *SC-751* remained on the ship until 8.30 the following morning when, as he thought the ship might break up, Captain Davis gave the order to abandon ship. The crew walked across the reefs towing the two life rafts which had been lashed together, and then began paddling and swimming towards the shore. However, after a short while the offshore wind blew them back onto the reef. At 2.30 that afternoon a PBY Catalina landed and

took the men to Exmouth Gulf where they were put on board the sea plane tender *USS Childs*.

The following day Captain Davis and Ensign Goldfarb boarded the submarine rescue ship *USS Chanticleer* and after reaching the site of the wreck were taken by surf boat across to *SC-751*. They found the ship resting solidly on the reef, no damage to the starboard side but a hole in the port side which had caused the engine room to flood. After salvaging the documents, radio, and other vital gear the party returned to Exmouth. An investigation into the wreck of the *SC-751* was held and concluded that the ship was as much as 15 miles south of Captain Davis's dead reckoning position. An expert witness testified that this could be attributed to the strong winds and tides and inconstant currents.

When a salvage party returned to the site on 4 July 1943 they found that the seas had moved the *SC-751* a quarter of mile north along the reef. Using a base camp on the beach, the party managed to remove the main and auxiliary engines, guns, ammunition, foremast, mainmast, pilothouse, shafts, struts, rudders and propellers so as to lighten the ship. This work could only be carried out at low tide, and took two months. At extreme low tide tractors were taken to the reef to roll the ship onto its starboard side and enable repairs to be made to the hole on the port side. Pumps were then rigged, water pumped out, and, after several attempts the *SC-751* was towed off the reef by a landing barge. Two-and-a-half months had passed since salvaging had started. *USS Chanticleer* then took the *SC-751* in tow, but within minutes of commencing the tow the stern of the *SC-751* rose and it quickly sank in 55 fathoms of water. The exact position of the sinking is not known, although it was estimated at the time to be at 21° 56'S, 113° 53'E.

#### ***SC-751* specifications:**

**Length:** 110.8ft  
**Beam:** 17.0ft  
**Tonnage:** 148  
**Draft:** 6.5ft  
**Engines:** Two 880bhp General Motors 8-268A diesel engines, two shafts and propellers.  
**Speed:** 16 knots.  
**Armament:** One 40mm Bofors, two .50 cal machine guns, two 'Y' depth charge projectors, two depth charge tracks.  
**Complement:** 28

Peter Worsley



# My Time on *Singa Betina*

## The tenth episode of Ted Wheaker's Tale

When I saw John Parry again with the Dhipirri survey results, he asked me how I felt about delivering a 60-foot windmill, water tank and associated piping and gear for a bore installation at a place called Raymangirr, in Arnhem Bay. The windmill would be in kit form, with six-metre maximum pipe lengths, and the Southern Cross water tank panels would be in a crate. I was delighted with the prospect, and even more so when he suggested that I could go to Darwin to pick up the load and cart it back. In terms of economics, the Department was faced with regular barge freight from Darwin to Gove, then the logistics of getting the gear from Gove to Raymangirr. The barge operators charged \$3,000 at that time for a diversion to a non-standard destination, on top of the usual cartage rate. In addition, John asked me to add into my price a three-week contract period to assist with the windmill erection post-delivery. I spent a couple of days mulling over the proposition, and tendered a price that was accepted forthwith.

We set off for Darwin on March 24, taking along Cabbage and Shan's seven-year old son, Josh, for the ride. We dropped off a roll of two-inch poly pipe and unloaded a forty-four of petrol at Mata-Mata on the way, then went on to Elcho to deliver four more rolls of poly pipe and fittings to an outstation in the Howard Channel, called Mapuru. New navigation markers leading over the shallows into Cadell Strait were a welcome surprise. The old outer pole had been replaced with port and starboard markers, and another new outer pole placed a little further out. The new poles, complete with top-markers, made it easier to follow the channel, but they were still difficult to find on high spring tides when there was not much showing above water. Another new marker had also been placed further down the channel to indicate the narrow passage where the course required a switch from one side of the strait to the other between two consecutive sandbars.

Mapuru Landing was about ten miles from the barge landing at Wapuruwa, and the channel was formally uncharted as far as depths and hazards were concerned. We hired a local dinghy, transhipped the poly pipe, and I set off with a local bloke from the outstation, called Bakbirr, who was to guide me to the landing. We travelled over the low tide so I could draw up a mud map of the

twists and turns and obstacles, and anchored for a while at the bottom of the tide, near a shallow reef obstructing the channel, to get accurate soundings with a lead line.

Bakbirr was an intelligent and serious young man in his late twenties who understood English enough to make some communication possible. I noticed that his conversation was frequently interjected with the word "nowie", and after a time I asked, "Bakbirr, what does "nowie" mean?" He looked thoughtful as he murmured to himself, "Nowie... nowie... what dat "nowie" mean?" After a reflective pause, he gathered his thoughts, and explained, "When you want to know something (pause), and you don't know what dat something is (pause), den (- with an air of triumph:) dat "nowie" tell you what dat something is!" I took it that he was referring to some benign spirit that was called upon to supply answers to the unknown, and I was bemused later to discover that "nowie" is in fact a simple filler word, much the same as "um" or "ah" in English. With elegant simplicity, Bakbirr's explanation was perfect.

A couple of days later, we headed off from Elcho to Darwin. A light south-easterly wind had been tending for a few days, heralding the beginning of the Dry Season, and we had a smooth and uneventful trip, mainly day sailing and anchoring in shelter along the way overnight.

We were in Darwin for three weeks while *Singa Betina* was careened and anti-fouled, supplies and spares restocked, and the windmill and water tank loaded on board by crane from a local jetty. Bundles of angle-iron framing, piping and equipment were manhandled down below, with some longer pieces and odd bits that would not fit in the jigsaw puzzle of available space being secured on deck. The water tank panels came packed in a low crate, which sat tightly between the engine room hatch and the compass binnacle on the back deck. Fuel was cheaper in Darwin than Gove, so we filled up our forty-fours, and spent another day or two lashing everything down and rationalising the weight distribution. A couple of bulky rolls of two-inch poly pipe added to the clutter on deck, and getting around the obstacles became a nimble exercise.



The 30<sup>th</sup> April 1983 saw us on our way for the delivery to Raymangirr. As we cleared the harbour and set course for the Vernon Islands, I was perturbed to find the compass behaving erratically. The presence of the metal mass of the water tank in the crate so close to the compass was affecting the magnetic field and throwing the readings out wildly. We resorted to the use of our spare hand-bearing compass, and plugged on.

After passing through the Vernons, there was a considerable swell rolling down from the north; the remnants of the northwest monsoon and recent low-pressure systems of the past Wet Season. Late in the afternoon, young Josh was perched on the taffrail attempting to relieve himself over the stern when we pitched into another oncoming swell, and in the corner of my eye I noticed a windmill-flurry of arms and legs as he lost his balance and fell overboard. We were motor sailing, and with the sails up it would take a few minutes to drop the rig and turn around to pick him up. I yelled out, "HANG ON – WE'LL COME BACK FOR YOU!", and then saw him grab the trailing lure line. With awful visions of him being trolled along behind us like a big fish when the lure got to him and stuck in, I shouted forcefully at him to "LET GO!!", which he did, fortunately. All of Cabbage and Shan's kids were good swimmers, so the situation was not disastrous, and we dropped the sails and came about to pluck him from the swells.

We passed abeam Cape Don lighthouse around midnight, and altered course to the east as we rounded the cape. The wind had picked up from the northwest, slowly veering to northeast as the night progressed and increasing to 15-20 knots. We were flying along, and I was enjoying the speed, although a bit concerned about the accuracy of our navigation. Around 4.30am Jude came up from below, looking concerned, and suggested that we perhaps we should reef the main. Absorbed in the fast sailing, I was surprised at the suggestion, and looked up at the mainsail. At that exact moment the top panel of the sail blew out and the halyard parted in front of our eyes. The sail came crashing down abruptly into the lazy-jacks, and with the loss of steadying force, *Singa Betina* began to roll heavily. The engine was hastily started and the boat pointed up into the wind while the main was secured and the jib taken down. The wind seemed to be all over the place, and the state of the sea was confused and very rough, buffeting us mercilessly. Gear stowed on deck was beginning to shift as the tie-down lashings were tested, and I frantically re-tied every-

thing, then went below to secure gear which was being thrown about inside the boat, then did another round on deck to re-secure anything I had missed the first time.

We cut engine speed and did our best to keep the bow into the shifting winds. It was raining steadily, and the sea was rougher than anything I had ever experienced. When all was secure, I felt an urgent fight-or-flight necessity to void my bowels. With Jude on the tiller, I made my way to the shrouds. I was wearing jeans, a shirt, and one of those overall type raincoats with a one-piece hood attached. *Singa Betina* was being tossed about like a cork while I hung onto the stays and undid the raincoat buttons, slipped the hood off my head and shrugged out of the top part of the raincoat, dropping it with my trousers around my ankles. I hitched up my shirt, squatted over the gunwale, and the business took place in a speedy fashion. A fortuitous wave slapped my rear end when done, and I straightened up to rearrange my clothing. Trousers up and shirt down, I wiggled my arms back into the upper part of the raincoat and pulled the hood on over my head, grimly clutching the stays with one hand as the boat was tossed about. I felt a nice warm feeling as I buttoned up the raincoat, and realised that something had gone amiss – the hood had been dangling below my nether regions, and had filled up with crap! When I realised what had happened, the incongruous nature of the event provoked hysterical mirth, and our immediate plight suddenly lost an edge of its fearsome seriousness. The value of cosmic humour was well and truly appreciated at the time.

We idled about until dawn to a wild sight I will never forget. The grey, featureless sky had lowered to just above our heads, with slashing rain and grey, mountainous seas heaving about in all directions. At times we were battered about down in the valleys of the troughs, surrounded by towering waves and wondering if we would ever make it back out of the depths. At other times, we were jostled and bounced around on top of the plateaus and peaks, looking down into the troughs and bracing ourselves for the descent to the bottom. The depth sounder had ceased to function, and as I was taking a hand-bearing compass reading part-way up the ratlines away from magnetic interference, it slipped out of my hand. The lanyard slid off my wrist, and the compass bounced once on deck, and disappeared over the side. There was absolutely nothing by which to navigate anywhere around the horizon.



I had only a very vague idea of where we were, and confused myself even more by assessing the charts and pondering on what might have happened to our course in the strong currents that swirl around Cape Don. A decision on direction was required, and after a long examination of the sky looking for evidence of the rising sun's position, we eventually picked the most likely lightening of the gloom as an indication of the sun's possible position, and headed off at a right angle to the south, hoping to re-discover the coast of Australia. Several hours later, with conditions unabated, we took heart from the sight of a lonely seabird skimming over the waves, and eventually sighted land again, finding our way into Port Bremer to anchor in most welcome shelter a little after midday.

I later learned from others that in times of transition from the northwest winds of the Wet Season to the southeast winds of the Dry Season, the arrival of the Dry Season proper is often announced by a violent front that sweeps westwards along the Northern Territory coast. The currents around Cape Don can create strong tidal rips and rough water in mild breezes; in a gale it can become a maelstrom. An understated entry in the log at

1030, while still fifteen miles offshore from Port Bremer, summed up the conditions succinctly: "Log 145.5. Altered course to 160 degrees on main compass. Land in sight off starboard bow. NW swell rolling in with reflected swell off coast. Additional SE wind chop with E-W current variations – crap water."

There was an Indonesian *perahu lambo* anchored in Port Bremer. *Fajar Menyingsing* was owned by a fellow called Geoff, a casual, laid-back Pom from the North Country, and his Kiwi partner. They had left Darwin a week or so earlier on their way to Gove with a couple of crew on board. Their boat had no engine, and they were waiting for a lull in the current easterlies before moving on. Geoff had bought his boat in Pantai Mola, a Bajo village on Wangi Wangi, off Southeast Sulawesi. He had her re-rigged as a ketch, and he and his partner had sailed her down to Darwin on their way to Queensland. Geoff was of small build; his girlfriend was even smaller, and it was no mean feat for the two of them alone to have accomplished the journey from Sulawesi to Darwin with no motor.

We spent four days recovering lost sleep, tidying up the boat and mending the rips and gashes in the mainsail. The rag had done its day, suffering badly from the effects of time and weather, and really needed to be replaced. From then on, apart from a couple of brief occasions, the sails were reserved for emergency use only, and we motored everywhere we went. We intended to get new sails made when we could afford it, but it never happened, and other than on one occasion of necessity a month or so later when the old rags were called upon in a tricky situation, *Singa Betina* was not





seen under serious sailing rig again for almost three decades.

We moved further east to Raffles Bay when the winds subsided a little, anchoring late in the afternoon. There was a Paspaley Pearling farm operating in the bay, and the next day, Josh and I were off fishing in the dinghy when a pearling tender appeared with half a dozen Japanese and Thursday Islanders on board. They were a little paranoid about poachers and passers-by raiding their pearl beds, and wanted to know what we were doing there. Neither Josh nor I was wearing any clothes, so I grabbed an old hessian sugar-bag off the floor of the dinghy and draped it over my lap as a concession to modesty, but there was nothing available for Josh. Fortunately he was no stranger to nakedness, and it did not matter if he had no clothes on; Josh was always Josh.

The pearlery seemed a bit taken aback with us, and when I told them that we were moving on in a couple of days, insisted that we had to come down to anchor at the bottom of the bay where their camp was situated, so they could keep an eye on us. I did not want to camp in company, and told them we would stay put where we were that night, and leave the following morning. They did not like us being there, but accepted the arrangement and left us to our fishing. I was disappointed that parts of the country were becoming inaccessible, with Raffles Bay becoming another port to pass without any chance of further exploration. The new navigation markers in Cadell Strait had seemed a bit like the first coming of traffic lights; a sure marker of the creeping spread of civilisation's tentacles over the planet, and Raffles Bay was an inevitable progression of the subdivision of coastal real estate. It's a shrinking world out there.

We moved on to Malay Bay, in the lee of Cape Cockburn. The easterlies picked up again, and despite attempts over the next few days to continue on to Goulburn Island, the rough conditions around Cape Cockburn and De Courcy Head had us scuttling back to shelter each time. The waves breaking on the cape had a long fetch of over 200nm of unbroken sea stretching east to the Wessel Island chain, giving them considerable power, and the easterlies were then blowing at up to twenty-five knots during the day.

After four days of waiting it became make-or-break time. Our drinking water was getting low, and if we did not go on to Goulburn, we would have had to backtrack to Croker Island to replenish

supplies. Going backwards on a journey is anathema to me, so we double-checked the lashings all round, battened the hatches, girded our loins and headed onwards in the early morning. It was rough, and we were tossed about, but managed to maintain our way and finally loosened the grip of De Courcy Head, arriving to anchor at the South Goulburn Island barge landing in the mid-afternoon.

The next morning George Steele, the community Essential Services Supervisor in charge of power, water and sewerage, turned up at the landing. He took us into Warruwi, and we saw the council to explain our presence. We were a little apprehensive about our reception after the cold courtesy of our first visit when we had been unceremoniously removed from the community, but fortunately, council elections had taken place since then, and there was a new chairman who raised no difficulties for us. The presence of classificatory relatives of the Burarrwanga clan, particularly a younger brother married to a local with whom we established contact, no doubt helped with our acceptance. Not having a Government photographer on board probably helped as well. We bought a few items from the store, and were given a lift back to the barge landing to fill our water containers from a tap at the beachhead.

George and his wife Denise, the community bookkeeper, picked us up later that afternoon and graciously let us use their shower facilities, and we enjoyed a nice evening meal with them. Conversation flowed, and drifted around to the subject of kava. Kava is a mild soporific drug made from the pounded roots, and sometimes stems, of the shrub *Piper methysticum*, a relative of the pepper plant, and is widely used as a social lubricant and traditional ceremonial drink throughout the South Pacific islands. There were some Fijian missionaries along the Northern Territory coast who brought small quantities of kava with them, and sometimes shared it with the local men. Denise was concerned about the increasing use of the drug at Warruwi, and had a small bag of the powder that she had obtained locally. I was quite interested in the subject, and when we left, Denise gave me the bag of kava.

Back on board *Singa Betina* later that night, we sampled the kava mixed with water in a jug. It had a muddy taste, and left a very slight tingle of the tongue and lips, with no noticeable effect otherwise. We decided it was not worth the bother of preparation, and the remaining powder was put away on the shelf as a curiosity.



## Cyprus

# The First Australian Vessel to visit Japan?

This article suggested by information sent to the editor by Murray Kornweibel.

In August 1829 the brig *Cyprus* was owned by the Tasmanian Government, having been purchased from Captain Briggs some two years previously. Various references state that the *Cyprus* was 108 tons, 78.7ft long with a beam of 19.7ft. In the *Lloyd's Register of British and Foreign Shipping, 1826* there is only one vessel with this name, a snow (a two-masted vessel almost identical to a brig) built in Sunderland in 1816, of 108 tons and having a fully-loaded draught of 10ft. This vessel had been sheathed with copper over boards, a practice not normally carried out at that time unless the vessel was heading for or across tropical waters. There is no evidence that the brig owned by the Tasmanian Government is that mentioned in *Lloyd's*, but it is possible.

On 5 August 1829 *Cyprus* under the command of Captain Harrison with mate Burns and eight crew departed Hobart for Macquarie Harbour. Also on board were Lieutenant Carew, his wife and two children, Surgeon Williams, Commissariat Clerk Underhill, a sergeant and nine privates, two soldier's wives and a child plus 33 convicts. The latter were being shipped to the notorious Sarah Island in Macquarie Harbour. There was a quantity of stores on board destined for Sarah Island, but not a great deal of water.

As the wind was heading the ship and no progress could be made, on 9 August the *Cyprus* took shelter in Recherche Bay. The vessel took in firewood and water while waiting out the weather. During the evening Lt Carew, a soldier and one of the prisoners went fishing about 250 yards from the *Cyprus* in one of the boats. Only two of the guards were left as sentinels on deck, the others were down below at supper. Also on deck were five convicts, four of whom were 'double-ironed'. The convicts knocked down the soldiers and fastened the hatches, trapping those below. Those soldiers below fired up through the hatches, but the convicts poured boiling water down and threatened to throw down kettles of boiling pitch if they didn't surrender their arms. Lt Carew came back but the convicts refused to let him aboard, and in fact attempted to fire at him. However, before surrendering their muskets the soldiers had wet the powder rendering them temporarily ineffective.

The convicts put everyone ashore including those convicts who would not join the mutiny. Those left at Recherche Bay were left with 60lbs of biscuits, 20lbs sugar, 20lbs flour, 4lbs tea, 8 gallons of rum, a tinder-box, a lighted stick and one musket with just a few rounds of ammunition. They suffered considerably for almost a fortnight until rescued by the *Oriel*.

Eighteen convicts remained on the *Cyprus*, which sailed to New Zealand, by-passed Tahiti then spent six weeks at Niutopotapu (Keppel's Island). During this voyage one man fell over board and was drowned. Seven of the convicts chose to remain on Niutopotapu, the remaining ten sailed the *Cyprus* to Mugi on Shikoku Island, Japan, arriving there on 16 January 1830. At that time Japan had an isolationist policy and all foreign vessels were to be fired on. Any foreigners who landed were to be killed. After some days of contact, with the crew of the *Cyprus* desperately trying to obtain water and firewood, the brig was eventually fired on and driven away. It then sailed to Whampoa, China, where the crew (who had renamed it *Edward*) scuttled the *Cyprus*. They then approached the authorities claiming to be shipwrecked sailors, and were repatriated to England. However, their true identities were eventually discovered, and they were put on trial for piracy. Two, George James Davies and William Watts, were hanged, the last men hanged for piracy in Britain. Another, James Cammy, was hanged at Hobart. The leader of this act of mutiny/piracy was William Swallow who had a string of aliases including William Brown, William Walker, William Waldon, William Watson, William Todd and William Shields. He had served time in the Royal Navy, and assumed command of the *Cyprus* after the mutiny. Interestingly, he was found not guilty, having convinced the court that he was forced into sailing and navigating the brig by threats on his life. He was sentenced to life imprisonment for the escape from custody, and sent back to Tasmania where he died four years later at Port Arthur.

During his trial for piracy Swallow told of having sailed to Japan, but was not believed. It was not until this year that an amateur historian, Japan-based English teacher Nick Russell, connected



two obscure Japanese reports, *Illustrated Account of the Arrival of a Foreign Ship* by Makita Hamaguchi and *A Foreign Ship Arrives of Mugi Cove* by Hirota, with the piracy of the *Cyprus*. The Japanese reports stated that the commander of the ship placed tobacco in ‘a suspicious looking object, sucked and then breathed out smoke’. One Japanese chronicler stated that the crew of the brig had offered gifts. He later drew a picture of one of the gifts showing an object remarkably like a boomerang. Illustrations made by the Japanese at the time show a brig flying a British flag, and another showing one of the sailors wearing what may have been a British military officer’s jacket.

*Hamaguchi’s drawing of a British-flagged brig which arrived at Mugi, Japan in January 1830*

The arrival in Japan of the *Cyprus* in January 1830 appears to be now accepted as fact, which would make this the first Australian vessel known to visit that country.



*Makita Hamaguchi’s drawing of a sailor wearing what was considered could be a British officer’s jacket.*

*It has been conjectured that this drawing is of William Swallow. The dog from the brig ‘did not look like food. It looked like a pet.’*





# Sailability

**Mike Igglesden has sent this article for your information and consideration.**

‘Sailability?’ “What is that?” was my immediate reaction to a friend’s suggestion that I should consider this organisation, as I may be able to blunt my over whelming feeling of loss, as I am unable to continue sailing my beautiful old boat.

Eddie Ramsden is an English friend, stalwart of all things nautical, especially when Royal Yachting Association (R.Y.A.) are involved. He explained to me that Sailability started in Britain as a successor to the RYA Seamanship Foundation in the 1970’s, and has spread worldwide through World Sailing (also known as ISAF). He has been Chairman of the RYA Paralympic Steering Committee Group for the past two Paralympic cycles, which have been responsible for developing and selecting the English Paralympic team using Sailability centres from which to develop a pathway to elite disabled sailing. Sadly, Paralympic Sailing has been dropped from the 2020 Games. A very big mistake.

The following information has been taken from the Royal Perth Yacht Club Sailability Programme and its reproduction here is authorised by convenor Anne Hodgkinson who can be contacted on Phone 94235526 or 0404145499 or [sailability@wa.co.au](mailto:sailability@wa.co.au)

## What is ‘Sailability’?

Sailability programs provide sailing opportunities for people with a disability regardless of their ability, mobility or circumstances. A variety of vessels are utilised, from small stable 2-person dinghies to 20 foot and larger yachts. The sailing areas are safe protected waters and all activities are supported by a safety boat.

## SAILABILITY WA

Sailability WA Inc is a ‘Not for Profit’, Incorporated Association, organised by an Operational Committee and a part-time coordinator. The programs are run by trained and experienced volunteers. It is governed by a constitution and has audited accounts. It is dependent on the generosity of private donations and sponsorship, limited government grants, and its volunteers, who are passionate about sharing their love of sailing with people with disabilities.

Sailability WA began following the Gold Medal success of Noel Robins, Jamie Dunross and Graeme Martin at the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games,

when the Royal Perth Yacht Club decided to develop a programme for people with disabilities to participate in all manner of Club sailing activities, from trying sailing to club racing and high performance competitions.

Today the Sailability WA program offers three integrated levels of activity; Supported Sailing, Club racing and training, and High Performance Competition Sailing.

## Supported Sailing Programs hosted by Royal Perth Yacht Club

On a weekly basis during the sailing season places on boats are provided to give people with a disability the opportunity to sail. They can be from agency networks or living independently within the community. They can be assisted by a support worker or family member or be independent, sailing in easily accessible, stable and safe boats under the control of an experienced skipper. The Hansa 2-person dinghy Class has been specifically designed to be extremely stable and simple to operate. Several larger yachts are also utilised, which can accommodate more participants. Hoists are available to transfer wheelchair users into the boats provided. All volunteers are trained in safety and first aid, and a support powerboat is provided for all activities.

## Associated sailing groups in WA

Additional programs are available at:

### **The South of Perth Yacht Club, Applecross**

For more information go to the Sailability page of the club website at: [www.sopyc.com.au](http://www.sopyc.com.au)

### **Princess Royal Yacht Club, Albany.**

For more information contact The Co-coordinator at [sailability@prsc.com.au](mailto:sailability@prsc.com.au) or visit the salability page of the club website at [www.prsc.com.au](http://www.prsc.com.au)





## Publications by MHA Members

***They Kept this State Afloat*** by Rod Dickson. 328 pages, published 1998.

The author starts off by stating that 'the subjects of this book, are, I believe, some of unsung heroes that diligently day and day plied their trade without expectations of fame and fortune. These men were the backbone of Western Australia. They were the tradesmen and workers, the shipbuilders and shipwrights, without whom the progress of exploration, coastal settlement, fisheries and trade would have been greatly hampered.'

This history of the shipbuilders, boatbuilders and shipwrights of Western Australia from 1892 to 1929 presents personal and business details on over 300 artisans and their myriad of vessels. Over 200 photographs, letters and documents illustrate their endeavours.

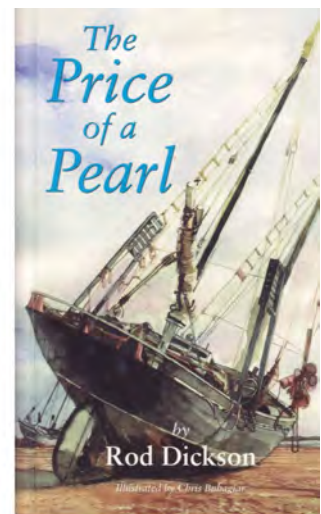
Available: Hesperian Press, good book stores.



***The Price of a Pearl*** by Rod Dickson. 192 pages, published 2002.

Incidents of pearling life, shipwrecks and murders in the North West of Western Australia, never before told. Divers, tenders, crewmembers, shellopeners, skippers and owners all paid the ultimate price through carelessness, wild nature, storms and cyclones. More than a thousand deaths with hundreds of luggers, schooners and ketches wrecked all for the price of a pearl.

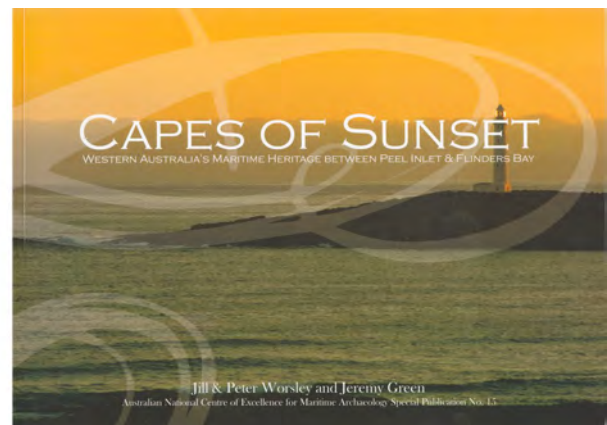
Available: Hesperian Press, good bookstores.



***Capes of Sunset: Western Australia's Maritime Heritage between Peel Inlet and Flinders Bay*** by Jill & Peter Worsley, edited by Jeremy Green. 417 pages, published 2012.

This is the second book in a series that form part of the Australian National Centre of Excellence for Maritime Archaeology Special Publications Series. Part I covers the shipwrecks and strandings that occurred between Peel Inlet and Flinders Bay up until 1945. It gives particulars of the vessels, their owners, cargo and how they were lost. Part II concentrates on the reason the vessels were there—the fishing, timber, whaling, export of farm produce and related matters.

Available: Western Australian Museum.



## Old Nautical Sayings

When the wind backs and the weather glass falls,  
Then be on your guard against gales and squalls.

Rainbow to windward, foul fall the day,  
Rainbow to leeward, damp runs away.

At sea with low and falling glass,  
The greenhorn sleeps like a careless ass.  
But when the glass is high and rising  
May soundly sleep the careful wise one.



# The Kaiser's Cup

By Peter Board

The Royal Yacht Squadron, based at Cowes on the Isle of Wight, has been the world's foremost yacht racing and cruising club since soon after its birth in 1815. Since its heyday in Queen Victoria's reign its members have included Royalty from many nations and some of the world's wealthiest business people, many of whom have employed the most talented marine designers and builders of their day. Not surprisingly, perhaps, some odd and eccentric personalities were to be found amongst this elevated section of society. One of these was the Marquis of Ormonde, one time Squadron Vice Commodore. As a leading committee member Lord Ormonde had the disconcerting habit of replying "Certainly not, certainly not" to any new suggestion put to the committee. On one occasion the Club's youngest committee member, 'young' Phillip Perceval – his father, Phillip, was also a member – had to obtain a ruling on a certain racing signal. "Shall there be one gun or two guns" he asked. "Certainly not, certainly not" Lord Ormonde replied. Young Phillip tried again with, "Do you, sir, want the Squadron races run properly or not?" "Certainly not, certainly not" the Marquis replied again, at which everyone, including the Marquis, burst into laughter.

In 1889 Queen Victoria's grandson, Emperor Wilhelm II of Germany, became a member, and two years later he purchased the 1887 America's Cup challenger *Thistle*, renamed her *Meteor*, and raced her at Cowes with an all-British crew in 1892, as there were no German hands capable of racing her at the time. The Kaiser was not a very popular member of the club, because of his refusal to adhere to the strict dress codes and his habit of taking charge of events in which he had no right, not being a committee member. On one occasion his uncle, the Prince of Wales, future Edward VII, was heard to say 'The regatta used to be a pleasant relaxation for me, but since the Kaiser takes command it is a vexation.' The Kaiser was to vex more than the Royal Yacht Squadron later with the outbreak of World War I, but in the meantime, in 1902, he donated a large gold cup as a trophy for the winner of the first transatlantic yacht race. Twelve years later when the war began it was

deemed inappropriate to race for a trophy donated by the enemy and the cup was given as a donation towards the war effort. But when it was broken up it was found to be made of heavy pewter with thin gold plating. The Kaiser's Cup was a dud.



Kaiser Wilhelm II

## *Meteor* ex *Thistle*

A cutter designed by G.L. Watson and built in Glasgow by D.W. Henderson & Co.

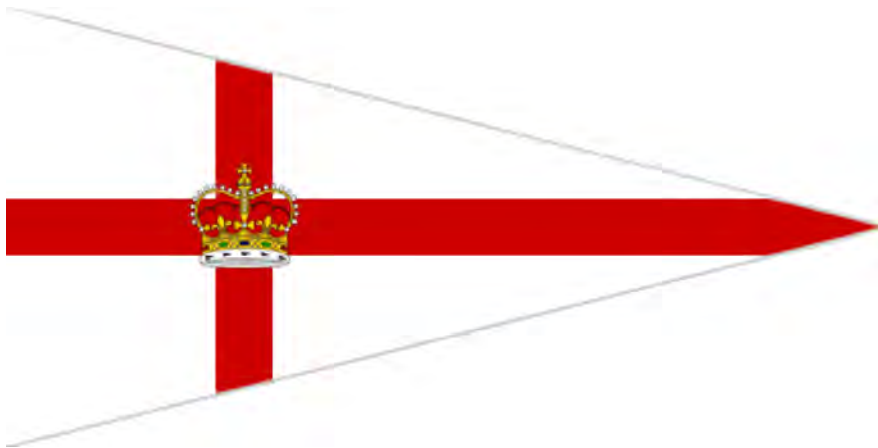
Extreme length	152.2ft
Length on deck	112.0ft
L.W.L.	83.0ft
Beam	20.3ft
Draft	12.0ft
Displacement	115 tonnes

See over





*Kaiser Wilhelm's yacht Meteor*



*Burgee of the Royal Yacht Squadron, founded 1815*

**Maritime Heritage Association Inc.**  
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